International Labour Organization





Employment and decent work in refugee and other forced displacement contexts

Compendium of ILO's lessons learned, emerging good practices and policy guidance

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Foreword

Engaged in supporting refugees' access to jobs since its inception over 100 years ago, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is mandated to protect rights at work for all categories of workers, including those forcibly displaced from their homes. In recent years the ILO has increasingly developed guidance and tools to help constituents adopt decent work response strategies in areas hosting refugees and other forcibly displaced persons (FDPs). [1]

As forced displacement has become more protracted, access to employment and sustainable livelihoods for both refugees and host communities has emerged as the bridge between humanitarian action and development cooperation and as a means of reinforcing social cohesion.

Yet too often, displaced populations are concentrated in poor-quality informal employment or under-regulated sectors where they are susceptible to decent work deficits and discriminatory treatment. Hosting countries and communities, particularly those with pre-existing socio-economic challenges, can struggle to absorb large numbers of displaced persons into their labour markets. A range of factors, such as the socio-economic conditions of the host country, legislation and policies around the protection of refugees and the right to work, as well as other practical issues, mediate people's capacity to access the labour market and decent jobs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how these underlying structural challenges can be compounded in times of crisis, exacerbating negative effects on displaced populations while reducing their access to coping strategies. The urgency of addressing these challenges and strengthening the resilience of communities affected by forced displacement are critical to ensuring that the gains made in securing livelihoods among both refugee workers and host communities are not lost in future crises.

The ILO's mandate and its unique tripartite structure, as well as its growing operational experience in contributing to refugee response, have enabled the organization to guide its constituents and other partners on labour market access and decent work for refugees. The 2016 ILO Guiding Principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market, together with the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205) and the Global Compact for Refugees (December 2018),

[1] For the purposes of this compendium, the term "refugees" should be understood broadly, as defined in international and regional instruments, particularly the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, and include refugees who are recognized and granted a lawful status to stay in the host country as well as refugees who have not yet been recognized but who seek international protection. The term "other forcibly displaced persons" should, in the context of this briefing, be understood to include internally displaced and also persons who are outside of their country or origin and in need of international protection and who may face existential threats, but who do not qualify as refugees under international or regional law.

have established global momentum for addressing issues of refugee access to labour markets through a rights-based approach.

The compendium is developed in close alignment with the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, and with the ILO's role as co-sponsor of the Global Refugee Forum's Jobs and Livelihoods theme. The compendium is built on the ILO's expertise in providing access to decent work, notably through its large-scale and comprehensive interventions since 2013 in responding to the Syrian refugee situation in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. The ILO has more recently engaged in supporting constituents to address the labour market challenges posed by the Venezuelan displacement situation and is also rapidly expanding its work in the Horn of Africa and North Africa under the Dutch-funded partnership for Improving Prospects for Host Communities and Forcibly Displaced Persons (PROSPECTS).

This compendium makes the case as to why employment and decent work should be part of a comprehensive response for refugees and FDPs and host communities, and for the ILO's increased engagement in this area. Through the compendium, the ILO also seeks to reinforce coordination and coherence across its technical branches and field offices, as well as with partner organizations in operationalizing access to decent work for refugees and other FDPs.

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List of acronyms

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
AIMS	Approach to Inclusive Market Systems
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
EIIP	Employment Intensive Investment Programme
ESC	Employment Services Centre
EYB	Expand your business
FAFO	Norwegian Institute for Applied International Studies
FDP	Forcibly displaced person
FPRW	Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
GFJTU	General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions
GYB	Generate your business idea
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace
IDP	Internally displaced person
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITCILO	International Training Centre of ILO
IYB	Improve your business
JPR	Jobs for Peace and Resilience
LED	Local economic development
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoFLSS	Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSEs	Micro and small enterprises
NGO	Non-governmental organization

ODA	Official development assistance
OSH	Occupational safety and health
PES	Public employment services
PROSPECTS	Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
SIYB	Start and improve your business
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
SYB	Start your business
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
VCA	Value chain analysis

Executive summary

The number of people forcibly displaced by armed conflict, generalized violence and human rights violations stands at an all-time high.[2] The increasing scale, duration and complexity of the global displacement crisis in a globalized world has facilitated a growing recognition of the need to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of large-scale displacement on host countries, as well as the necessity of transitioning to sustainable livelihoods for refugees and hosts. Recent years have seen a decisive change in discourse, policy and, increasingly, action, which recognizes that development assistance must complement humanitarian assistance in providing opportunities for refugees and nationals to gain access to decent work and sustainable development, and in improving the self-reliance of refugees.

For refugees, the opportunity to access decent work is fundamental to their protection and well-being, to restoring refugees' dignity and life purpose. Decent work strengthens resilience, enabling the fulfilment of social and economic rights and attaining durable solutions and social justice.[3]

In accessing decent work, refugees and forcibly displaced persons can bring new skills, entrepreneurship, professional experience, goods and economic as well as social services to their host countries. They fill shortages in labour and skills, or gaps in local markets,[4] bring increased tax revenues and benefits to both refugees and the host communities through diversification, growth and increased prosperity. Furthermore, legal access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities improves the stability and safety of refugees and host communities, and can help foster a climate of trust and peaceful coexistence.[5]

The opportunity to access decent work is also fundamental to the realization of human rights and is inherent to and inseparable from human dignity. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees provides and protects the right of refugees *to* work and their rights *at* work in their country of residence. Furthermore, the ILO's mandate specifically includes the "protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own".[6]Hence, in principle, all ILO Conventions and Recommendations apply to refugees to the extent they are workers, unless otherwise stated.

Recognizing that refugees and the communities that host them deserve special attention, in 2016 the ILO held a tripartite technical meeting to provide practical guidance on the application of policy measures to facilitate the access of refugees and other FDPs to the labour market. The meeting resulted in the adoption of Guiding Principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market (hereafter the "Guiding Principles") in July 2016, a set of voluntary, non-binding principles rooted in relevant

[2] UNHCR (2020).
[3] UNHCR (forthcoming).
[4] UNHCR (2014).
[5] UNHCR (forthcoming).
[6] Constitution of the International Labour Organization, preamble.

international labour standards and universal human rights instruments, and inspired by good practices implemented in the field.[7] The following year, in June 2017, the ILO's tripartite constituents adopted the new Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205) (hereafter "Recommendation 205"), an innovative normative instrument providing guidance to member states, organizations and practitioners dealing with employment and decent work in fragile settings.

The ILO has a century-long experience in promoting decent work and sustainable development in areas hosting refugees, in partnership with governments, employers and workers, as well as other UN agencies. This is in fulfilment of the ILO's institutional mandate of protecting rights at work, promoting social justice and creating decent jobs for all categories of workers, including the forcibly displaced.

Currently, the ILO manages a substantial development cooperation portfolio to enhance the access to decent work for host communities and refugees. In response to the Syria crisis, the ILO has been active since 2014 in Lebanon and Jordan, and since late 2015 in Turkey.

In 2018, the ILO joined the partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities (PROSPECTS), spearheaded by the Government of the Netherlands and bringing together the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank. The programme focuses on eight countries across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and the Horn of Africa: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda.

In the Sahel region, the ILO is working in partnership with the UNHCR in communities affected by protracted Malian displacement in both Mauritania (since 2018) and Niger (since 2020).

In Asia, the ILO has also partnered with UNHCR to address youth unemployment among refugees and local communities in Indonesia since 2018.

In Latin America, to respond to the Venezuela crisis, in 2019 the ILO kick-started seed interventions related to the socio-economic integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. In 2020, the ILO and UNHCR began the implementation of a regional project to promote the socio-economic integration of refugees and FDPs in Mexico, Costa Rica and Honduras.

In line with the structure of the ILO's Guiding Principles,[8] this compendium synthesizes the main lessons learned and emerging good practices that have been more systematically captured since 2015 in the areas related to governance framework, economic and employment policies, labour rights and equality of opportunities, along with partnership, coordination and coherence.

[7] ILO (2016e).
[8] ILO (2016e).

Governance frameworks on access to labour markets

- **Addressing needs of displaced and host communities alike.** Cooperation on the access of refugees and FDPs to labour markets should be built on trust and dialogue with governments through early and equal emphasis on the development concerns of host communities. Local communities hosting refugees or receiving returnees have their own development needs, and accessing livelihoods remains among their foremost priorities.
- **Combining quick tangible results with longer term institutional building and policy development.** Development partners may pursue a downstream-upstream approach[9] to lay the groundwork for policy development and sustainable capacity-building with quick and tangible socio-economic improvements in host communities. Downstream measures, which rapidly enhance employability, create jobs and improve local infrastructures, can build the credibility of international development partners in the eyes of governments, hosting communities and displaced populations.
- **Bringing world of work actors "to the humanitarian table".** World of work actors – governments, employers, and workers organizations - need to be actively engaged to enhance inclusion of refugees and host communities in labour markets. They have the labour market expertise but may also need to be brought up to speed on refugee issues.
- **Collecting rigorous evidence to allow for sound policy reform.** Reliable empirical evidence on the impact of forced displacement on local labour markets and social cohesion can be a first step towards policy development and reform. The ILO has directly linked sound local labour market assessments with legislative and policy advocacy towards rights at work and respect for the decent work agenda. Close relationships with the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and social partners contribute to efficient policy advocacy.
- **Linking work permits to workers, not employers.** Delinking the distribution of work permits from individual employers, and involving social partners in the process, can greatly speed up and simplify work-permit processing and improve job matching, but it can also offset unequal power relations between workers and employers by allowing refugee workers to change jobs or move across economic sectors.

Economic and employment policies for inclusive labour markets

- **Linking employment-intensive investments to long-term economic development.** Integrating labour-based infrastructure works into medium- to long-term development planning and skills programmes may maximize long-term impact on local economic development.

[9] Downstream measures address immediate needs at community level, while upstream measures aim to change policies and build long-term capacities at local, national and regional level (ILO 2016c).

- **Profiling and recognizing prior skills.** The fact that refugees possess significant skills based on prior learning or experience is often neglected. This results in a large number of overqualified, frustrated refugee workers as well as economic inefficiencies, as there is often demand for semi-skilled workers in sectors in which national citizens are reluctant to work. An effective and efficient strategy to reduce the costs of hosting and integrating FDPs has been the recognition of their qualifications and prior learning.

- **Promoting local integration and employment through apprenticeships.** Given that apprentices learn in real work contexts at the workplace, apprenticeship programmes are an effective means both for promoting local labour market integration and favouring contact and social cohesion between refugee and host community workers.

- **Promoting Inclusive Market Systems for refugees and hosting communities.** In close collaboration with UNHCR, the ILO developed the Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS). AIMS adapts market systems development principles through a push-pull framework, where push interventions aim to enhance the skills and capacities of the target population (supply side), and pull interventions promote the functioning of high-potential value chains with a view to integrating the target population (demand side).

- **Promoting entrepreneurship and developing sustainable businesses.** Entrepreneurial training programmes such as "Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB)" provide host community members and refugees with the skills and assets required to pursue their own business ideas.

- **Linking jobs supply and demand through employment services.** Public Employment Services (PES) offer core services to enhance refugee mobility and access to work. The ILO has supported both the set-up of new emergency employment services in post-crisis situations, and the integration of more inclusive and effective employment services for FDPs within existing PES.

- **Promoting peaceful coexistence and social cohesion through employment and decent work programmes and systematically conducting conflict analysis.** It is key to systematically conduct "conflict-sensitive and peaceful coexistence analysis" in order to analyse potential conflict between the communities that could arise from the programme, but also to look at existing resilient and inclusive initiatives that could be reinforced or upscaled.

Labour rights and equality of opportunity and treatment

- **Supporting the distribution of work permits and assessing their impact on the quality of work.** Having a work permit, though an important step in regularization of employment conditions, does not automatically lead to more decent work. Further research is needed to further assess the value of work permit distribution as an

instrument to increase not only the quantity of formalized jobs, but also the quality of jobs.

- **Promoting social dialogue.** While it is important to get refugees into work early, social dialogue is instrumental in maintaining and improving working conditions for all workers.
- **Promoting decent work through incentives for formalization and better enforcement of rights at work.** Providing incentives and raising awareness of employers to support formalization of their workforce improves working conditions while also having positive impacts on the fiscal balance.
- **Moving towards inclusive social protection systems.** Transitional social protection schemes can support the gradual integration of refugees into public social security systems. In several countries, the ILO has assessed the current social protection policy and regulatory frameworks and programmes, with the aim of covering the entire population with basic social protection floors and progressively improving coverage over time.
- **Addressing child labour and forced labour.** The ILO aligns its work with national action plans against child labour and forced labour to ensure that labour rights that were respected before the crisis are not jeopardized as a result of a displacement situation. In addition, including child labour within vulnerability assessment frameworks and raising awareness about labour exploitation is an effective way to prevent decent work deficits and work-related abuses.
- **Avoiding unfair competition for jobs between refugees and migrant workers.** Understanding how migrant workers are impacted by large-scale arrivals of refugees, as well as related employment and decent work interventions, such as work permit regulations and procedures for refugees, is critical for the development of inclusive, conflict-sensitive interventions.
- **Targeting strategies to aspirations and needs of women.** Early gender analysis and impact assessments for evidence-based advocacy can improve women's access to the labour market and gender equality. Their concerns and needs must be included in national and international frameworks and decent employment programmes. Women refugees and those in host communities benefit from conditions where they and their families feel they can engage in jobs (for instance through the provision of transport, childcare centres, and so forth) where discrimination in the workplace is systematically tackled.
- **Including psychosocial support in employment programmes.** The psychosocial effects of displacement can seriously impede people's capabilities to integrate successfully into society and the labour market. In order to address these issues, this dimension requires special attention and closer engagement with partners with specific expertise.

Partnership, coordination and coherence

- **Integrating assistance to refugees with long-term development planning.** Aligning refugee initiatives for decent work with national development plans is key to ensuring national ownership and the sustainability of outcomes, and to strengthening social stability.
- **Partnering closely with local governments and social partners.** Building close partnerships with government officials through tripartism and social dialogue at national and local levels creates opportunities for advocacy work and capacity building, and further aligning refugee programming with national development priorities. The ILO helps to establish and/or strengthen coordination and dialogue mechanisms among and between national and international actors, including the main government institutions, social partners and the private sector.
- **Promoting cross-governmental and international knowledge exchange.** Tailored training courses bringing together relevant government departments and social partners within host countries may serve as important platforms to exchange knowledge and experiences. Specific South-South events where national actors are able to exchange good practices across countries affected by similar challenges are especially valued by ILO partners
- **Institutionalizing partnerships across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.** The success of actors across the HDP nexus depends on the ability of agencies to collaborate, despite diverging timeframes and indicators of success. Institutionalizing the partnership between the ILO and UNHCR through an inter-agency Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Joint Action Plan has been crucial to combine effectively the UNHCR's protection expertise with the ILO's development expertise.
- **Focusing on the ILO's key added value of mainstreaming decent work.** Through its co-facilitation of coordination structures, the ILO can assist other UN organizations in mainstreaming the Decent Work approach into their programmes and actions. Supporting access to decent work is the ILO's key differentiator compared with other development partners.

Throughout the document, the reader will find references to the respective ILO policy guidance documents and specific country examples as well as other material on promoting employment and decent work for FDPs and their host communities.

1. Introduction

Since 2009, the number of refugees, asylum seekers and people displaced within their own country rose dramatically: from 43.3 million in 2009 to more than 79.5 million in 2019, of whom 26 million people were refugees, 4.2 million asylum seekers and 45.7 million internally displaced people.[10] TThis number of forcibly displaced people worldwide thus stands at an all-time high. Some 68 per cent of refugees and Venezuelan displaced abroad came from five countries: Syria (6.6 million), Venezuela (3.7 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), South Sudan (2.2 million) and Myanmar (1.1 million).

The increasing scale, duration and complexity of forced displacement[11] worldwide led to the growing recognition of the need to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of large-scale displacement on host countries, as well as transitioning to sustainable livelihoods for forcibly displaced and hosting communities alike.[12] The breakout of a pandemic in 2020, COVID-19, has put significant challenges on public health as well as livelihoods and well-being for millions of people, including migrants, refugees and other FDPs.

Recent policy frameworks, such as the Global Compact for Refugees and ILO's Guiding Principles, emphasize that development assistance must complement humanitarian assistance in increasingly protracted situations of displacement. In the spirit of Agenda 2030 and with a view to reaching the Sustainable Development goals "for all nations and peoples and all segments of society", this ensures that those who are affected by complex humanitarian emergencies and most at risk of being excluded from development gains are not left behind.[13]

Recent policy frameworks emphasize the need for governments and international organizations to strengthen the "humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus", which conceptualizes how international protection, socio-economic development and sustaining peace are interlinked.[14] Facilitating equal access to local labour markets and creating decent work are some of the main avenues through which this can be achieved. For refugees, the access to formal labour markets and rights at work is a vital prerequisite for reducing vulnerability, enhancing resilience, promoting social cohesion, and securing dignity, both during and after displacement.[15] For hosting communities, employment promotion and local economic development (LED) interventions which benefit hosts and refugees equally can transform displacement from a development challenge into an opportunity.

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10 UNHCR (2020).

11 The term "forcibly displaced persons" (FDPs) is used throughout this document to describe the main target group, which, depending on context, can encompass any category of those UNHCR persons of concern who are in continued displacement and have not yet returned home: refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

12 Gordon (2019: 2).

13 UN General Assembly (2015), paragraphs 4 and 23.

14 On the HDP nexus, see ECOSOC (n.d.).

15 Zetter and Ruaudel (2016: vi).

Furthermore, as policymakers continue to develop and adapt measures to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to integrate refugees into recovery and development strategies as full participants in order to ensure cohesive, sustainable recovery, and also to preserve the fragile gains made in securing livelihoods among refugees and host communities.[16]

This compendium illustrates why employment and decent work should be part of a comprehensive response for forcibly displaced and host communities (section 2), followed by a brief overview of relevant normative and policy frameworks on refugees' access to labour markets, as well as historical milestones in ILO's work in forced displacement settings (section 3).

In line with the structure of ILO's Guiding Principles, section 4 then synthesizes the main lessons learned and the good practices emerging in the following four areas:

- Governance frameworks on access to labour markets;
- Economic and employment policies for inclusive labour markets;
- Labour rights and equality of opportunity and treatment;
- Partnership, coordination and coherence.

This compendium builds on the findings of a desk review of relevant ILO programmes and projects, the findings of comprehensive learning processes in Lebanon and Jordan (2018) and Turkey (2019), as well as a dozen interviews with ILO staff in HQ and the field. The compendium seeks to highlight how institutional and social change have been obtained in the countries of interventions, and potentials for replicability. For further reading, relevant ILO policy guidance documents and other material on each of these four areas are referenced throughout the compendium.

[16] ILO (2020a), Protecting the rights at work of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons during the COVID-19 pandemic Recommendations for Policy-makers and Constituents.

2. The case for employment and decent work for refugees and their host communities

2.1. Impact of displacement on host countries and limits of a humanitarian approach

The search for durable solutions for refugees[17] has become ever more difficult, reflecting the nature of conflicts that drive forced displacement and for which political solutions remain elusive, for example, in Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the difficult economic reconstruction after years of protracted conflict and destruction of the economic and social fabric.[18] With an increasing average length of displacement, humanitarian "care and maintenance" approaches have long been criticized for keeping beneficiaries in a continued state of dependency, vulnerable to the volatility of humanitarian funding, particularly after the immediate emergency phase of a crisis has passed.[19] The limits of solely humanitarian approaches are also evidenced by the choices that refugees make themselves, when confronted with the lack of autonomy and income possibilities in most refugee camps. Globally, more than half of all refugees now live in cities, often engaging in informal work and without assistance from the international community.[20]

For host communities, the arrival of large numbers of FDPs may equal a demographic shock, with adverse consequences for local labour markets and public infrastructure and services.[21] At the same time, assistance to those countries hosting refugees has not been at a scale sufficient to relieve the burden. Some 85 per cent of the world's refugees are hosted by developing countries, while the Least Developed Countries provided asylum to 27 per cent of that population.[22] Middle-income or upper-middle-income countries hosting significant numbers of FDPs, such as Jordan, Lebanon, Colombia or Turkey, may often not qualify for Official Development Assistance (ODA) while at the same time they have to deal with significant economic difficulties of their own. As a result, they are often left with little assistance to handle impacts on local labour markets and community cohesion, while having to manage significant domestic labour market challenges in parallel.[23]

In addition to the mere economic impact of large and sudden displacement, if displacement occurs in fragile, conflict or post-conflict contexts, there is an increased risk of exacerbating

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17 UNHCR's 2017 "Note on International Protection" defines a "solution" for refugees as "achieved when a durable legal status is obtained which ensures national protection for civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights", with durable solutions encompassing (1) voluntary repatriation to the country of origin, (2) local integration in the country of asylum and (3) resettlement to a third country.

18 UNHCR (2017a); Stamnes (2016: 1).

19 Verme et al. (2016: 15).

20 Betts and Collier (2017).

21 World Bank (2017).

22 UNHCR (2020).

23 UNHCR (2019).

latent conflict and existing grievances in host countries as in Lebanon and Colombia, which have already experienced decades of conflict and civil war. Lebanon has taken the most refugees per capita, and this large number exacerbated pre-existing economic and political difficulties and weak public services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated how situations of displacement – and the vulnerabilities of those affected by it – can also become exacerbated at the onset of new or emerging crises. Low- and middle-income countries, where the vast majority of refugees are hosted, have experienced the greatest losses in employment and working time, with workers in the informal economy particularly affected by income losses due to the combined effects of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown and containment measures. As many refugees and host communities are already in low-wage, informal or precarious employment with limited workplace protections, they may be ill-equipped to face additional hardships, such as loss of income, rising prices of daily commodities or unforeseen health costs. At the same time, a combination of legal and practical barriers, including precarious legal status, restrictions on mobility, and exclusion from social protection measures, can effectively limit their access to coping strategies. The crisis can also ignite or exacerbate grievances, discrimination, mistrust and sense of injustice over access to health services, decent jobs and livelihoods, which are potential conflict drivers that could undermine development, peace and social cohesion.[24]

Large-scale displacement can also have a negative effect on the environment in contexts already affected by climate change. In fragile and arid conditions such as those of Mauritania, the arrival of refugees and their livestock impact heavily on the environment, exacerbating the impact of climate change manifested through desertification and drought, by reducing economic opportunities for both refugees and local communities. Moreover, the mitigation of these impacts is still rarely addressed by humanitarian intervention.

Finally, in ongoing displacement situations, pending the realization of durable solutions, refugees and other FDPs are at risk of falling into a poverty trap and being kept in limbo, with lasting impacts that can extend across several generations. Protracted displacement often leads to gaps in education, prolonged unemployment or precarious work, aggravating vulnerability to unacceptable forms of labour – including forced labour, child labour and debt bondage.

2.2 The key role of employment and decent work in the HDP nexus

Humanitarian assistance, which focuses on the short-term alleviation of suffering, needs to be complemented by a development and peacebuilding approach that addresses the medium to long-term socio-economic dimensions of the crisis, to improve the self-reliance, rights protection and peaceful coexistence of host communities and refugees alike.[25] Decent

[24] ILO (2020).
[25] Betts and Collier (2017).

employment for refugee and host communities is complementary to the humanitarian protection agenda and the urgent focus on short-term crisis responses, and one of the most important tool in translating the 'humanitarian-development-peace nexus' into tangible action.

For refugees, the opportunity to access decent work is fundamental to their protection and well-being, to restoring refugees' dignity and life purpose. Being able to access employment, maintain and expand their skills and find a decent job prevents prolonged aid dependence and extended gaps in people's working lives. Decent work strengthens resilience, enables social and economic rights more broadly and helps to attain durable solutions and social justice.[26]

In accessing decent work, FDPs can bring new skills, entrepreneurship, professional experience, goods and economic as well as social services to their host countries. They fill shortages in labour and skills, or gaps in local markets,[27] bring increased tax revenues and benefits to both refugees and the host communities through diversification, growth and increased prosperity. Micro-, small- and medium-size enterprises established by refugees can create job opportunities for locals as well as other refugees.[28] Furthermore, legal access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities improves the stability and safety of refugees and host communities. It also minimizes the refugees' need to rely on welfare assistance or private charity, the risk of resorting to negative coping strategies such as sex work and child labour, including its worst forms, or to destitution – which could compel some refugees to return to a place where they risk being persecuted.[29] Furthermore, working allows for more interaction between refugees and host communities and helps foster a climate of trust and peaceful coexistence.[30] Construction of infrastructures also addresses short-term needs and creates the environment for development in rural areas.

The positive impact of access to decent work extends beyond the time of ongoing displacement. There is evidence that promoting economic activity and decent work during and after displacement is key for the success of voluntary repatriation, the preferred solution for most refugees.[31] For those who come back with resources, skills and networks, the difficult process of socio-economic reintegration may be much easier.[32] Following voluntary return, employment promotion can equally facilitate sustainable (re-)integration, as the impact of return on receiving communities is in many respects similar to the impact of forced displacement on host communities during ongoing displacement.

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26 UNHCR (forthcoming).

27 UNHCR (2014).

28 New American Economy (2017); International Finance Cooperation (2018).

29 Zetter and Ruaudel (2016).

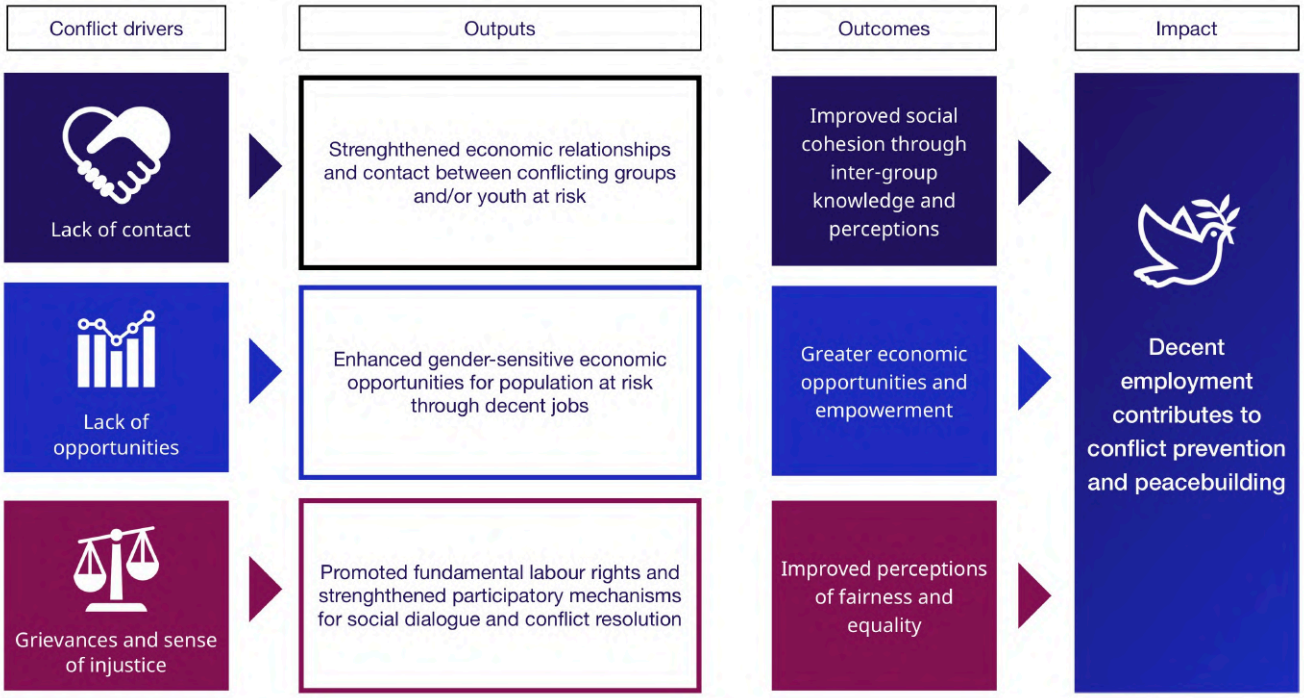
30 UNHCR (forthcoming).

31 See e.g. UNHCR ExCom Conclusions: No. 68 (XLIII) (1992); No. 99 (LV) (2004); No. 104 (LVI) (2005); and No. 109 (LXI) (2009).

32 Circumstantial evidence for this exists with the repatriation operations from the 1990s and early 2000s involving groups that did have the chance to work: Rwandans returning from Uganda after 1994, Mozambicans going back in the first half of the 1990s, who played a key role in peacebuilding and reconstruction, and returning Bosnians in the early 2000s, after having acquired new skills in Western Europe (Omata 2012; Betts and Collier 2017: 151).

Furthermore, based on a joint ILO/PBSO/UNDP/World Bank comprehensive review of the academic literature and more than 450 employment programmes in fragile situations,[33] including forcibly displaced contexts, three main drivers of conflict were identified that have been linked to unemployment, sense of injustice, insufficient rights and quality at work and peaceful coexistence: a lack of contact across different social groups, particularly between host communities and forced displaced population; a lack of economic opportunity; the existence of grievances and a sense of injustice towards the State or another community. As illustrated in the figure below, the mechanisms of *constructive contact, sustainable opportunities and addressed grievances*, in turn, provide plausible "theories of change" of how employment and decent work may contribute to peace and social cohesion as part of a broader framework of inclusive and sustainable development.

Figure 1. Addressing three potential conflict drivers to contribute to peace and social cohesion.
Source: ILO 2019d.



[33] Brück et al. (2016), Jobs Aid Peace; ILO, UNDP, PBSO and World Bank (2016), Employment Programmes and Peace.

Contributions of employment and decent work in displacement situations and towards durable solutions

- The ability to provide for themselves and engage in decent work contributes towards enabling displaced persons to retain their dignity in times of immense hardship. This can be central for their psycho-social well-being, both during and after protracted displacement.
- Skills gained and maintained through training and employment during displacement can be an asset for durable (re-)integration once durable solutions have been found.
- The self-reliance of forcibly displaced persons reduces the burden on host communities and governments. Accessing labour markets and opening up sustainable businesses enables FDPs to participate in and contribute effectively to the economies and societies of hosting countries or regions. This can help turn the discourse around displacement away from the fears of states or local authorities of welcoming large numbers of people and towards the benefits and potentials stemming from the skills and motivation of incoming populations.
- Inclusive employment and decent work create economic opportunities that mitigate impacts on local resources, promote contact between displaced and host communities, and reduce grievances and the sense of injustice, thus promoting social cohesion in hosting regions.

3. Normative and policy framework and historical milestones of the ILO's work in forced displacement settings

3.1. Normative framework

The opportunity to access decent work is fundamental to the realization of human rights and is inherent to and inseparable from human dignity. The *right to work* is enshrined in several international and regional human rights instruments, including the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. *Rights at work*, that is, just and favourable conditions of work,[34] are provided for by human rights,[35] refugee law standards and international labour standards, [36]notably those set by the ILO.[37]

The ILO was formally in charge of refugees since its inception in 1919, and its mandate specifically includes "the protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own".[38] In principle, all ILO Conventions and Recommendations apply to refugees to the extent they are workers, unless otherwise stated. This includes areas of key importance for refugees, such as Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW), Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), social security and social protection – not just for workers but as a basic human right for all people and protection of conditions of work through labour inspection. Furthermore, two ILO Conventions specifically protect migrant workers and provide a framework for addressing refugees and FDPs who enter labour markets outside their home countries: the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143). The Convention on Equality of treatment of social security, 1962 (No. 118)[39] is also highly relevant to refugee workers.

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees provides and protects the right of refugees *to* work and their rights *at* work in their country of residence. Specifically, they are entitled to the right of association, including in relation to trade unions (Article 15), as well as "the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country in the same circumstances" with respect to the right to engage in wage-earning employment (Article 17)

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[34] UNHCR (forthcoming).

[35] Particularly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and views of the UN Committee of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).

[36] Including the 1951 Convention, its 1967 Protocol, the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, (1969 OAU Convention) and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees.

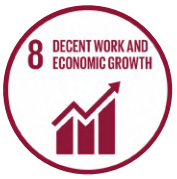
[37] International labour standards are legal instruments drawn up by the tripartite constituents of ILO, i.e. governments, employers and workers' organizations, setting out basic principles and rights at work. They are either Conventions or Protocols, which are legally binding international treaties once ratified by member States, or Recommendations, which serve as non-binding guidelines. See: ILO (2019c).

[38] Constitution of the International Labour Organization, preamble.

[39] The provisions of this Convention apply to refugees and stateless persons without any condition of reciprocity. (Art. 10.1).

and "treatment as favourable as possible and, in any event, no less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances" with respect to the right to self-employment (Article 18). Yet, while the 1951 Convention contains a right to wage-earning employment, many signatory countries that ratified it did so with reservations on Article 17.[40]The Convention (Article 24) also sets out that refugees should enjoy access to health services equivalent to that of the host population, while everyone has the right under international law to the highest standards of physical and mental health. However, in practice, the COVID-19 pandemic made evident the continued exclusion of many refugees from national programmes for health promotion, disease prevention, treatment and care, as well as from social health protection schemes.[41]

ILO's Decent Work Agenda



The ILO defines "decent work" as work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. Decent work for refugees is fundamental to their resilience and self-reliance, benefiting both refugees and host economies and societies.[42]

During the UN General Assembly in September 2015, decent work and the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda – employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue – became integral elements of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda calls for the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work, and will be a key area of engagement for the ILO and its constituents. Furthermore, key aspects of decent work are widely embedded in the targets of many of the other 16 goals of the UN's new development vision.

In 2019 the UN General Assembly has adopted a resolution welcoming the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work. The resolution emphasizes the need for a human-centred approach to the future of work. It endorses the Declaration's stance, that "full and productive employment and decent work for all are key elements of sustainable development, and should therefore be a priority objective of national policies and international cooperation".[43]

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40 Even in those countries having ratified Art. 17, there are often significant gaps between principle and reality (Zetter and Ruaudel 2016).

41 WHO (2020).

42 ILO, Decent Work Agenda.

43 UNGA (2019), UN General Assembly endorses ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

In June 2017, the ILO's tripartite constituents adopted the new Recommendation 205, an innovative normative instrument providing guidance to member states, social partners, organizations and practitioners dealing with employment and decent work in fragile settings. The Recommendation updated the guidance of an earlier ILO Recommendation,[44] particularly by widening the focus of the ILO's reconstruction and recovery work to include prevention and preparedness. The Recommendation calls for states, including those states hosting refugees but not themselves in situations of conflicts and disasters, to "pay special attention to population groups and individuals which have been made particularly vulnerable by the crisis, including, but not limited to (…) internally displaced persons (IDPs), migrants, refugees and other persons forcibly displaced across borders". The Recommendation dedicates an entire section (XI) to refugees and returnees covering their access to the labour market and also voluntary repatriation and reintegration of returnees.

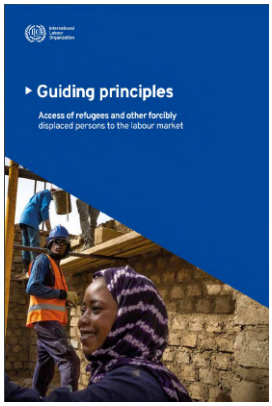
3.2. Recent policy frameworks

With the tremendous rise in the number of FDPs, the past years have seen the global governance of forced displacement move to the top of the international agenda.[45] Recognizing that refugees and the communities that host them deserve special attention, particularly in the current context of large movements of people, in 2016 the ILO held a tripartite technical meeting to provide practical guidance on the application of policy measures to facilitate the access of refugees and other FDPs to the labour market. The meeting resulted in the adoption of Guiding Principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market in July 2016, a set of voluntary, non-binding principles rooted in relevant international labour standards and universal human rights instruments, and inspired by good practices implemented in the field.[46]

ILO's Guiding Principles

Access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market (2016)

These guiding principles are addressed to all member states of the ILO and employers' and workers' organizations as a basis for the formulation of policy responses and national tripartite dialogue on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market. Specifically, the principles provide guidance on:



[44] Recommendation 205 replaces Recommendation No. 71 on Employment (Transition from War to Peace) of 1944.
[45] Gordon (2019).
[46] ILO (2016e).

A. Governance frameworks on access to labour markets;
B. Economic and employment policies for inclusive labour markets;
C. Labour rights and equality of opportunity and treatment;
D. Partnership, coordination and coherence;
E. Voluntary repatriation and reintegration of returnees;
F. Additional pathways for labour mobility.

The Guiding Principles appeal for "the provision of decent work opportunities for all, including nationals, refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, in countries of origin, host and third countries" and identifies ILO's contribution to the international response "through its mandate to promote social justice and the Decent Work Agenda, its international labour standards, its labour market expertise and unique tripartite nature".[47] Furthermore, they advise member states to formulate national policy and action plans to ensure the protection of refugees and FDPs in the labour market, in consultation with the most representative organizations of workers and employers.

In September 2016, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which put a particular emphasis on means to link humanitarian and development responses to better support refugees and their hosts. The New York Declaration lays out a vision for a more predictable and more comprehensive response to these crises, known as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). It calls for greater support to refugees and the countries that host them.[48]

The Declaration also laid out a process for the development of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), which built on lessons drawn from the roll-out of the CRRF and was affirmed by the UN General Assembly on 17 December 2018, after two years of extensive consultations. The GCR is a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation. It provides a blueprint for governments, international organizations and other stakeholders to ensure that host communities get the support they need and that refugees can lead dignified, productive lives. Its four key objectives are to:

- Ease the pressures on host countries;
- Enhance refugee self-reliance;
- Expand access to third-country solutions;
- Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

Employment and livelihoods, as specified in Section 2.2. of the GCR, contributes to all four objectives. On access to work, the GCR references two key ILO guidance documents: the 2016

[47] Guiding Principles, paras. 4 and 7.
[48] See UNHCR (n.d.), Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, for more information on the CRRF and the GCR.

ILO Guiding Principles on the access of refugees and other FDPs to the labour market,[49] and the Recommendation 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience.

In 2019, for its 100th anniversary, the International Labour Conference (ILC) adopted the ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work,[50] which provides guidance on how its members can realize a human-centred approach to the future of work, including technological innovations, demographic shifts, climate change and globalization. Relevant for decent work in forced displacement settings, the Declaration calls on the international community to intensify engagement and cooperation within the multilateral system with a view to strengthening policy coherence, in line with the recognition that "decent work is key to sustainable development, addressing income inequality and ending poverty, paying special attention to areas affected by conflict, disaster and other humanitarian emergencies" (section 2.A.xvii).[51]

3.3. A historical account of the ILO's engagement in forced displacement settings

In 1919, when the International Labor Organization (ILO) was established, Europe was in the grip of a refugee crisis. In 1917, more than a million refugees had fled Russia to escape first the Bolshevik Revolution and then Civil War. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 and the Greco-Turkish civil war displaced millions more people. During its early years, the ILO provided assistance in finding employment for refugees as well as helping them to resettle in third countries.

Protecting refugee workers from exploitation as well as employment promotion for refugees and their hosts is an early feature of the ILO's work. From 1924 to 1929, the International Labour Office emerged as the main implementing agency of the League of Nations' refugee policy concerning the hundreds of thousands displaced in the Russian Revolution and the First World War.[52] From early on, this was informed by the realization that with time, the general issue of refugees becomes increasingly linked to the problem of their employment.[53]

With the Second World War, large numbers of refugees were left stranded throughout Europe. The 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia thus renewed the call for including migration within the ILO's core efforts in stating that the Organization should "further among the nations of the world programmes which will achieve: (a) full employment and the raising of standards of living; (…) (c) the provision, as a means to the attainment of this end and under

[49] ILO (2016e).

[50] Declarations are resolutions of the ILC used to make a formal and authoritative statement and reaffirm the importance that the constituents attach to certain principles and values. Although declarations are not subject to ratification and are not binding, they are intended to have a wide application and contain symbolic and political undertakings by the member states. (Greg Vines, ILO 2019).

[51] ILO (2019f).

[52] Gordon (2019: 6).

[53] United Nations Archives Geneva, available at http://biblio-archive.unog.ch/detail.aspx?ID=256.

adequate guarantees for all concerned, of facilities for training and the transfer of labour, including migration for employment and settlement". Focusing on the decades since the late 1970s, several milestones indicate that the ILO has been continuously involved in the design and implementation of refugee assistance projects to create employment and income.

In 1978, the ILO's Anti-Apartheid Programme began to initiate and implement projects that provided direct technical assistance to victims of apartheid, particularly the thousands of mostly young men and women affiliated with their national liberation movements fleeing South Africa and Namibia into neighbouring countries. Activities ranged from the establishment of fully equipped vocational training institutions for Namibians in Angola and South Africans in Tanzania, to fellowships, study tours, research, and seminars and workshops for representatives of workers' organizations. The ultimate objectives of the programme focused on assistance to front-line and neighbouring states to decrease their economic and social dependence on South Africa, and on strengthening the planning and administrative capacity of national liberation movements and trade unions for the transition to democracy in South Africa and independence in Namibia.[54]

ILO programmes in **Somalia** and **Sudan** targeting the livelihoods of refugees in camps were implemented under contextual conditions more similar to current challenges.[55] Already in 1984, the ILO aimed to direct its assistance for refugees in Eastern and Central Sudan "towards self-reliance". Reflecting on experiences made in ILO projects in Somalia, Sudan and South Africa, Eugenia Date-Bah and Eve Hall were similarly concerned with "refugees themselves becoming captives of their dependence on outside supplies" and argued for "promoting their self-reliance through income-generating and other activities".[56]

Projects implemented in the 1990s in **Central America, the Balkans** and **Cambodia** in turn emphasized the core role of decent employment for reintegration of those displaced by conflict while ensuring social cohesion in hosting communities. These projects championed and refined the Local Economic Development (LED) approach, which has since remained a core instrument at the ILO's disposal both in displacement and return contexts.[57]

3.4 Recent approaches and intervention models

In the 2000s, involvement in post-conflict and post-disaster reintegration and reconstruction continued, while inter-agency cooperation was significantly strengthened: from 2003 to 2007, the "ILO-UNHCR Partnership through Technical Cooperation" developed projects on socio-economic integration of refugees, returnees and IDPs, including the improvement of livelihoods opportunities through enterprise development, access to finance, and the extension of social health protection.[58] Currently, both organizations are collaborating

[54] Hall (2003).
[55] Date-Bah and Hall (2003).
[56] Date-Bah and Hall (2003: 167).
[57] UNOPS (2015).
[58] ILO (2007).

towards the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and an inter-agency MoU and Joint Action Plan to promote decent work, increased employment and better protection for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons as well as host communities. The two organizations are also collaborating through the PROSPECTS partnership Programme and other initiatives.

The ILO's flagship Jobs for Peace and Resilience (JRP) programme is guided by Recommendation 205. It combines various ILO approaches to create jobs, reinforce skills and promote private sector and LED as ways to contribute to more peaceful and resilient societies. Through a modular, local resource-based approach, the JPR focuses on the following key objectives:

- Providing direct and immediate job creation and income security through employment-intensive investments;
- Improving employability through skills development;
- Generating decent and productive employment through entrepreneurship, enterprise and cooperative support;
- Bridging labour supply and demand through employment services.

Considering that weak governance, lack of dialogue and rights violations can slow down or impede crisis recovery and peace processes, the JPR also places a strong focus on institution building, social dialogue and FPRW.[59] Since 2016, JPR programmes have been implemented in 30 countries across the world.



[59] ILO (2018b).

3.5 ILO current portfolio of refugee projects and programmes[60]

Currently, the ILO manages a substantial development cooperation portfolio to enhance the access to decent work for host communities and refugees. In **Lebanon, Jordan** and **Turkey** – the states hosting the greatest number of **Syrian refugees** – the ILO has been active since 2014 in Lebanon and Jordan, and since late 2015 in Turkey, gradually scaling up its response. A clear outcome of the 2016 London Conference was the increased support towards transition to livelihoods and the recognition of the centrality of decent work to the responses. In parallel there was also increased demand by the communities themselves for decent livelihoods and jobs. As a result, ILO's agenda gained more traction among both host states and donors. These experiences in relation to the Syrian response contributed to positioning "world of work" issues within the international response to refugee situations in other geographical regions.



©**ILO/Kivanc Ozvardar,** Syrian refugee response in Turkey.

[60] This list is not exhaustive but captures the ILO's large operations in refugee contexts, as well as some smaller ones listed here for their relevance.

In the **Sahel** region, the ILO, in partnership with the UNHCR, has developed new interventions to enhance access to labour markets, employment and economic opportunities in remote and fragile environments affected by protracted Malian displacement in both **Mauritania** (since 2018) and **Niger** (since 2020). These programmes take an integrated approach combining infrastructure building projects and skills development for refugees and host communities that contribute to developing local value chains, thereby creating conditions for increased jobs opportunities. These programmes promote decent work as a vector for development, thereby reducing dependence on humanitarian aid. The synergies between the UNHCR and the ILO have been essential to developing durable livelihoods strategies.



©ILO/Alfredo Caliz, The ILO and UNHCR have been collaborating in Mauritania to improve the employability and market opportunities in the construction sector for refugees displaced from Northern Mali and host communities. The project includes skills upgrading and certification components to facilitate mobility and foster durable solutions for refugees while promoting gender equality, social cohesion and social transformation.

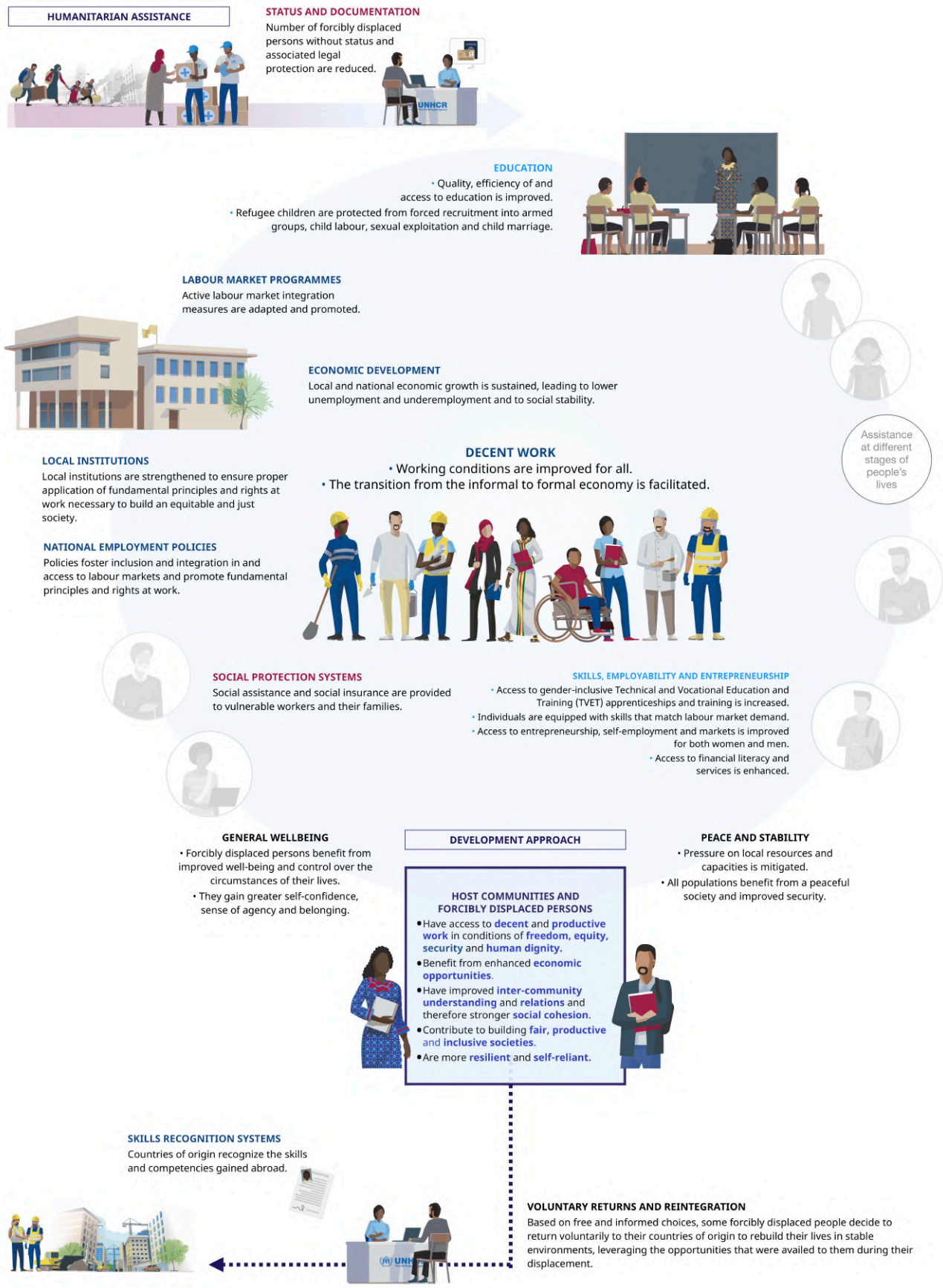
In Asia, collaboration with the UNHCR has resulted in joint advocacy and projects. In **Indonesia**, the ILO and UNHCR joined forces in 2019 in a pilot project to contribute to reducing youth unemployment and improving self-reliance opportunities for refugee and local youth. The pilot offers learning opportunities on entrepreneurship, business management and soft skills.

The partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities (PROSPECTS),[61] developed in 2018 as a joint and fully integrated approach to respond to forced displacement, aims to shift the paradigm from a humanitarian to a development approach in responding to forced displacement crises, over a four-year-period, focusing on eight countries across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and the Horn of Africa: **Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan** and **Uganda**. The partnership aims to transform the way governments and other stakeholders, including the social partners and the private sector, respond to forced displacement crises, by fostering an enabling environment for socio-economic inclusion, improving access to education and protection for vulnerable children on the move, and strengthening the resilience of host communities. The partnership will focus on three broad areas that are critical to enabling FDPs to overcome their specific vulnerabilities, and host communities to pursue their own development efforts in transformed environments. The three areas are education and learning, jobs and social protection, and protection and legal status.

In this partnership, the ILO brings significant expertise and experience to support enabling environments, in order to underpin inclusive socio-economic growth and decent work, to strengthen labour markets, and to promote access to improved working conditions and fundamental rights at work, including by involving its tripartite national constituents. The ILO stimulates labour market demand and immediate job creation through employment-intensive investment, local economic and business development and promotion of specific value chains and market systems. It provides targeted support to labour market institutions, services and compliance and monitoring mechanisms that facilitate the integration of refugees into the labour market in accordance with its strong normative foundation of international labour standards. The ILO also brings expertise on technical and vocational education and training, as well as on the recognition of prior learning for certifying the skills of refugees to better ensure access to the labour market, in addition to methods for assessing labour market demand to provide the right skills to refugees needed by employers.

[61] Spearheaded by the Government of the Netherlands and bringing together the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank.

Figure 2. Expected outcomes of the International Labour organization within the PROSPECTS partnership.



To respond to the crisis in Venezuela, leading to the largest displacement in the modern history of Latin America, in 2019 the ILO kick-started seed interventions related to the socio-economic integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in **Colombia** (Barranquilla and Cali), **Ecuador** (Quito, Guayaquil, Cuenta, Manta and Santo Domingo), and **Peru** (north and Metropolitan Lima, Piura, Arequipa, and Trujillo). The ILO has taken on a coordination role in the area of intervention on Socio-economic and Cultural Integration within the Platform for Inter-institutional Regional Coordination (R4V) of the United Nations System established in 2018, under the coordination of the UNHCR and IOM.[62] In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic response, the ILO is promoting social cohesion in host communities through interventions that ensure the visibility of Venezuelan workers' contribution to the mitigation of COVID-19, with a special focus on the health sector and other essential services.



©ILO/ Lucio Boschi, Venezuelan Refugee Response.

In 2020, the ILO and UNHCR began the implementation of a regional project to promote the socio-economic integration of refugees and FDPs in **Mexico, Costa Rica** and **Honduras**. The project seeks to strengthen public employment services, enhance technical and professional training and facilitate financial inclusion and access to social protection for the tens of thousands of people who have been forced to flee in the region. The ILO and UNHCR will develop the institutional capacities of governments to improve, integrate and/or adopt responsive policies, programmes and services so that refugees and IDPs have access to employment, self-employment and social protection in a sustainable and dignified manner. Activities will also be carried out with employers' organizations, unions, private companies, civil society organizations and journalists to promote the integration of refugees and to

[62] ILO (2020h).

visualize the economic and social benefits for the countries. In response to the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, the joint project began granting money transfers to refugees and displaced persons who lost their jobs and are developing an information campaign on refugees' rights, as well as relevant COVID-19 response measures and policies taken by governments. In addition, training methodologies developed by the ILO, such as SIYB, are being adapted to online formats to accommodate movement restrictions.



©ILO, Project in Central America.

In a number of displacement contexts in which the ILO is active, including in Latin America, Africa, the Arab States and Europe, the ILO is supporting governments in their efforts to include refugees in the COVID-19 response and recovery process. Notably, the ILO is supporting evidence-based policymaking and crisis response through the adaptation of monitoring and rapid assessment tools to measure the impact of COVID-19 on various countries, sectors and groups, including refugees and other displaced persons. The ILO's development cooperation activities are being reoriented to assist governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America to ensure that national health and safety regulations and campaigns, social protection and social security, skills development and recognition, lifelong learning and economic and employment policies are equally inclusive of refugee workers. Together with other UN entities and ILO tripartite constituents, the ILO is also contributing to joint guidance and operational approaches to address the pandemic in humanitarian and non-humanitarian settings.[63]

[63] For example, the ILO has participated in drafting the UN policy brief: COVID-19 and Human Rights.

4. Main lessons learned and emerging good practices

This section presents the main lessons learned and emerging good practices from the ILO's work in assisting its constituents to promote employment and decent work for host communities and FDPs.[64] For consistency, lessons learned and good practices were organized in accordance with the first four sections (A–D) of the 2016 Guiding Principles.[65]

4.1. Governance frameworks on access to labour markets

Restrictive legislation and policies combined with practical constraints, such as language barriers and administrative hurdles, continue to limit severely the access of refugees to formal jobs and learning opportunities in most refugee-hosting countries. To access livelihoods, refugees have moved in greater numbers to urban areas to work in the informal economy, or undocumented and risking exploitation. COVID-19 has exacerbated these constraints even further.

Recently negotiated global policy frameworks such as the ILO Guiding Principles, Recommendation 205 and the Global Compact on Refugees of 2018 express a general commitment of states and other international stakeholders to better integrate refugees into local labour markets and protect their rights at work. Despite this commitment, the normative, political and economic desirability of inclusive labour market policies – including laws, work permit issuance procedures and the role of the social partners in the process – need to be substantiated and negotiated in each specific context. The influx of a large number of refugees and other FDPs poses a political as well as a formidable technical challenge to host governments. The ILO's tripartite constituents need strong support from the ILO and other members of the international community to address these challenges, particularly with regards to access to labour market policies, inclusive economic growth and job creation.

Addressing needs of displaced and host communities alike

Cooperation on the access of refugees and FDPs to labour markets should be built on trust and social dialogue between governments and social partners through early and equal emphasis on the development concerns of host communities. Local communities hosting refugees or receiving returnees have their own development needs, and accessing livelihoods remains among their foremost priorities.[66]

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[64] Building on recent learning documents: ILO (2018a) Lessons learned and emerging good practices of ILO's Syria crisis response in Jordan and Lebanon, and ILO (2019a) Lessons learned of ILO's refugee response programme in Turkey: Supporting livelihood opportunities for refugees and host communities.

[65] While the last two sections of the Guiding Principles (E – Voluntary repatriation and reintegration and F – Additional pathways for labour mobility) are important for the ILO, there have been fewer projects focusing on these, and consequently there is insufficient data to cover them on the lessons learned and emerging good practices section.

[66] ILO (2016a); World Bank (2017).

While focusing on one community rather than another may reinforce social divides, grievances and a sense of injustice, joint participation in employment programmes may bring hosts and displaced communities together, thus contributing, and not undermining, social cohesion and local peace. As an incentive to governments to facilitate the access of FDPs to the labour market, support should be given to programmes that create quick, tangible benefits but with a longer-term strategy to ensure sustainable solutions to both communities, such as vocational training, business development services and job creation through employment-intensive investment. Ensuring equitable benefits for both hosts and displaced communities may be achieved through the definition of context-specific quotas of host community beneficiaries, but also for specifically vulnerable target groups such as women, people with disabilities and those with particularly low income.

Creating employment for refugees and host communities through EIIP

A 2015 ILO labour market study undertaken in Jordan found that 50 per cent of Jordanians and 99 per cent of Syrians were working in the informal economy, harming the quality of jobs, while job competition had led to social tensions. This was of particular concern in the northern governorates, in Zarqa, Irbid and Mafraq, as well as in Amman, where the share of Syrian refugees was greatest. The objective of ongoing programmes in Employment-Intensive Investment Programmes (EIIPs) in **Jordan** and **Lebanon** is therefore to improve the living conditions of Syrian refugees and nationals alike, through improved rural infrastructure, access to the labour market and increased employability. Job opportunities created are distributed equally among Syrian refugees and members of their host communities. In Jordan and Lebanon, the daily wage rate in employment-intensive investment programmes was set slightly higher than the minimum wage rate to help participants sustain themselves beyond the short-term period of employment and to invest savings for longer-term training opportunities.

The ILO is also able to assist with the immediate response in crisis situations. In the aftermath of the Beirut explosion in **Lebanon** in August 2020, the ILO has mobilized its Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme in Lebanon to clear rubble. Over 100 short-term decent jobs clearing debris and rubble from the streets of Beirut have been created for Lebanese nationals and Syrian refugees. In coordination with UN agency working groups, led by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the EIIP team is working closely with the Municipality of Beirut to ensure that support reaches the areas that were hard hit by the explosion.[67]

[67] ILO (2020f).

In 2014–2015, an employment project for Somalian refugees returning to **Baidoa, Somalia** from Kenya combined immediate employment opportunities through the EIIP and unconditional cash grants with longer-term assistance to build the capacity of returnees to participate in local markets and restore income stability among them. The project successfully reached its target of 30 per cent host community members among the 2,814 man days of work created through the reconstruction of a road.[68]

In **Mauritania**, youth from refugee and host communities in Bassikounou who worked together during an on-the-job training programme in the construction sector were encouraged to set up building cooperatives. The youth were provided with coaching and entrepreneurship skills focused on enhancing group work and joint initiatives.

Combining quick tangible results with longer term institutional building and policy development

Development partners may pursue a downstream-upstream approach[69] to lay the groundwork for policy development and sustainable capacity-building with quick and tangible socio-economic improvements in host communities. Downstream measures, which rapidly enhance employability, create jobs and improve local infrastructures, can build the credibility of international development partners in the eyes of governments, hosting communities and displaced populations. For instance, job-rich infrastructure works with quick, visible benefits, that are respecting working conditions in terms of minimum wages, OHS and living conditions, can demonstrate that the inclusion and employment of displaced populations, including women and people with disabilities, may indeed be an opportunity, instead of a threat, for sustainable development. This can provide governments with the political space they need to gradually reform regulations and laws pertaining to the access of FDPs to local labour markets. This approach contributes to building trust in the ILO and the decent work approach from governments, social partners and other national and international partners.

Furthermore, in the framework of the HDP nexus, this downstream-upstream approach is the opportunity to showcase the importance to go beyond short-term cash for work approaches, which are not sustainable in the long term and could therefore exacerbate tensions and frustration.

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[68] ILO (2016f).

[69] Downstream measures address immediate needs at community level, while upstream measures aim to change policies and build long-term capacities at local, national and regional level (ILO 2016c).

Jordan: Linking ground level interventions to advocacy

In Jordan, the ILO's ground level (downstream) interventions have fed useful first-hand information to evidence-based advocacy and policy efforts (upstream) which ultimately enhanced the access of Syrian refugees to the labour markets. It took the ILO significant efforts to establish similar work conditions between Syrians and Jordanian workers, and the EIIP was an effective entry point to trial good practice by large scale implementation. This work allowed for enhancing the decent work approach on the ground. There is now, for instance, a set of Standard Operating Procedures that cover all aspects of decent work, and some changes have been noted in terms of work conditions. An example is the inclusion of Friday as a paid day. This work also enabled the ILO to upscale its interventions by mobilizing resources from additional donors, and to engage in broader policy issues based on concrete experiences.[70]

Bringing world of work actors "to the humanitarian table"

World of work actors need to be actively engaged to enhance inclusion of refugees and host communities in labour markets. Labour ministries, as well as employers and workers organizations, are not the traditional interlocutors in displacement contexts. Yet they need to be brought "to the humanitarian table" to contribute their labour market expertise – but they may also need to be brought up to speed on refugee issues.

The ILO has been active in building the capacity of social partners and governments, in particular MoL, to engage in refugee response through training, operational research and labour market specific position papers to feed into humanitarian coordination processes, and also in facilitating links and coordination between humanitarian response actors and actors of the world of work.

All the components of ILO programmes require strong tripartite and social dialogue and partnership that reach out to a broad range of actors, especially in developing, implementing and monitoring effective policies.

[70] ILO (2018a).

Jordan: Social partners and cooperatives take an active role in work permit delivery

In **Jordan**, both agricultural cooperatives and trade unions served as focal points for the Jordanian MoL to deliver work permits in the rural areas of Mafraq and Irbid. Social partners enhanced outreach at the local level through field offices that were closer to where workers lived. Seminars and training sessions were conducted to build the capacities of social partners and cooperatives to support labour rights and OSH. In the construction sector, work permits are delivered through the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU), while in agriculture 33 local cooperatives play this role.[71]

Collecting rigorous evidence to allow for sound policy reform

Reliable empirical evidence on the impact of forced displacement on local labour markets and social cohesion can be a first step towards policy development and reform. Host community contexts are often characterized by scarce data on the consequences of refugee flows for local labour markets and economic development, with the ensuing risk that misinformation dominates the political debate and policy-making process. In such situations, development partners and national research agencies can fill information gaps with reliable evidence on risks and opportunities for local labour markets in the affected host communities. The ILO has worked to strengthen the capacity of National Statistical Offices to ensure sustainable approach to regular data collection, promoting the use of relevant international concepts and standards, including the International Conference of Labour Statisticians Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration.[72] In its own work, the ILO has directly linked sound local labour market assessments with legislative and policy advocacy towards the right to work and respect for the decent work agenda. Close relationships with the MoL and social partners contribute to efficient policy advocacy.[73]

Filling knowledge gaps on labour market impacts of refugee workers, including in the context of COVID-19

Data on the impact of the Syrian crisis on the Jordanian and Lebanese labour market were limited until 2014. Therefore, the ILO advocated building knowledge among national and international actors. In **Lebanon**, in order to assess the impact and identify the ramifications of an increasing number of Syrian refugees, the ILO implemented an initial assessment of their impact and a survey of their

[71] Section adapted from ILO (2018a).

[72] International Conference of Labour Statisticians Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration.

[73] ILO (2018a).

employment status in four regions (Akkar, Tripoli, Beqaa and the South).[74] In 2020 the ILO decided to undertake a follow-up survey on vulnerability and informality amongst Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians. In **Jordan**, in partnership with the Oslo-based Norwegian Institute for Applied International Studies (FAFO), the ILO carried out an assessment of the impact of the Syrian refugees on the Jordanian labour market.[75]

These assessments contributed towards filling the knowledge gap relating to the employment profile of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, and directly influenced the interventions and policy messages of the ILO and its advocacy work aimed at the government, as well as other international agencies and donors.[76]

In 2020, the ILO partnered again with FAFO to conduct rapid assessments in **Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq** to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic and government regulations have affected local economies and labour markets, including informal economic activity, as well as inter-community relations, and the emerging needs and expectations of refugees and the communities that host them. The analyses serve as a baseline for follow-up surveys to be conducted in subsequent months which will look at the longer-term impacts of the crisis, as well as to identify opportunities which could be generated around the post-recovery response phase in refugee-hosting areas.[77]



©ILO/ Abdel Hammed Al Nasier, ILO training programme, conducted by the Madaba Institute for Mosaic Art and Restoration (MIMAR) in Jordan, trained 61 Syrian refugees and Jordanians. The large majority of the trainees are persons with disability, who are eager to learn new skills to boost their employment opportunities.

[74] ILO (2014c).

[75] ILO/FAFO 2015.

[76] The 2018 assessment carried out by FAFO as an update to this study (2018a).

[77] ILO/FAFO (2020 a&b).

Linking work permits to workers, not employers

Delinking the distribution of work permits from individual employers, and involving social partners in the process, can greatly speed up and simplify work-permit processing. In many countries, work permits are obtained through the employer, not the worker – a burdensome practice that can limit a worker's ability to access formal employment, to change employers and jobs, and to move across economic sectors. From a protection standpoint, when work permits are tied to employers, these last have a disproportionate power over the workers, who depend on them for the right to work and to delineate their rights at work. Also, as experience with migrant workers across several countries has shown, this can lead to cases of serious abuse and exploitation and leaves workers with few resources to defend and protect themselves.[78] Likewise, administrative complications and lengthy bureaucratic processes can discourage the transition to formality. Ensuring that the design of work permit programmes take into account the needs and realities of both workers and employers is key to promoting their application.

Facilitating access to work permits for refugees

In **Jordan**, since 2016, the ILO and UNHCR have collaborated closely with the World Bank and the government of Jordan, who jointly designed the Program for Results: Economic Opportunities for Jordanians and Syrian Refugees. This programme has supported Syrian refugees' formal access to the Jordanian labour market to enable them to be self-reliant and contribute towards the Jordanian economy. The extension of the four-year programme until June 2022 will support the government of Jordan in providing Syrians with more flexible work permits to reduce informality and ensure they are covered under the labour law. Moreover, work permits will be issued to Syrians when they renew their ID cards or where they work through mobile work permit stations organized with the support of the ILO.[79]

In **Jordan**, the ILO also helped the government to delink work permit applications from specific employers. Flexible permits in agriculture have been ongoing since 2017, allowing 24 cooperatives to apply for Syrian refugee work permits. In agriculture and in other sectors, the ILO found that initiatives encouraging a grace period for work-permit fees acted as safeguards to prevent forced return. Refugees' access to work permits in and outside camps or settlements contributed to expanding their access to decent work. Helping Syrians to move within sectors open to non-Jordanians, to work for more than one employer, and to move between employers or from one governorate to another, were also ways

[78] Gordon (2019: 30).
[79] World Bank (2020).

of increasing refugee access to decent work. To extend impact and speed up the implementation of measures around work permits, the ILO in Jordan, in cooperation with the MoL, disseminated clear information to the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU), cooperatives and workers. Furthermore, the ILO conducted information campaigns with refugee communities on work permit application procedures, as well as on their rights and entitlements under labour laws.[80] The ILO also helped resolve issues that refugees encounter with MoL offices (for example, refusal of permits for an occupation that the MoL directorate considers to be closed to foreign workers, but in fact is not).

In **Turkey**, Syrians under temporary protection as well as persons under international protection have been able to obtain a work permit through their employer since 2016, while the share of refugee workers in a company is restricted to 10 per cent.[81] Despite an increased number of work permits issued within the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS), and a reduced work permit fee for Syrians under temporary protection – approximately USD75 compared to a regular fee of USD174 as of 2020, which, however, does not apply to non-Syrian refugees – it is estimated that only around 3 per cent of refugee workers obtained a work permit so far.[82] To increase awareness on the importance and added value of work permits, the ILO conducted workshops together with the MoFLSS as well as the Social Security Institute and distributed information material targeting both employers and workers. While some legal and practical barriers remain, it has been noted that the number of work permits issued in 2019 substantially increased.

In **Mauritania**, while refugees are entitled to legal access to the labour market, in practice they require a work permit to access the labour market and social security coverage, as is the case for other foreign workers. Several barriers, mainly administrative, have challenged the enforcement of this legal framework. Advocacy on access to work permits, employment services and social security coverage was led in cooperation with the UNHCR and resulted in a pledge by the Mauritanian government at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019 to grant access to the labour market to refugees under the same conditions as nationals.

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[80] ILO (2018a).

[81] Turkey adopted the 2016 Regulation on Provision of Work Permits for People under Temporary Protection as well as the Regulation on Work Permit of International Protection Applicants and International Protection Status Holders, which allows officially registered refugees under temporary protection and international protection, respectively, to obtain a work permit through their employer six months after registration.

[82] According to a recent a WFP/Kizilay assessment that is representative of 2.4 million refugees, see: WFP, Kizilay: Refugees in Turkey – Livelihoods Survey Findings, 2019, available at https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/70508.

4.2. Economic and employment policies for inclusive labour markets

ILO intervention models on economic and employment policies and programmes have been developed and implemented in a variety of countries and as part of different policies. Instead of creating specialized approaches and responsibilities within a parallel structure, the ILO has adapted *existing* employment instruments used by different ILO departments to the needs of forcibly displaced and the communities hosting them. The most relevant and common employment policies and instruments include:

- Employment-intensive investment programmes;
- Skills development and technical and vocational training;
- Employability/core skills and recognition of prior learning;
- Entrepreneurship promotion and business development services;
- Local economic development and value chain development;
- Employment services.

Linking employment-intensive investments to long-term economic development

Integrating labour-based infrastructure works into medium- to long-term development planning and skills programmes may maximize long-term impact on LED. "Cash for work" interventions are common in places affected by sudden inflows of FDPs. Yet, while they manage to "keep people busy" in the short term and provide immediate income opportunities, their impact on sustainable development is often marginal, and they can run the risk of exacerbating grievances towards the displaced. To mitigate such deficiencies, the ILO integrates its EIIPs into a more comprehensive LED approach**.** The EIIP is a local resource-based strategy to increase the impact of labor-intensive investments in infrastructure and other sectors on employment creation and poverty reduction. In a participatory, community-based process, needs for local infrastructure improvement are identified and implemented through ILO's labour-intensive methodology. The labour intensity of public works in all infrastructure-related construction and service sectors is assessed to ask which sectors can – and which cannot or should not – be increased in employment intensity. Furthermore, sustainability of measures is enhanced by carefully setting the level of wages paid to workers employed in the funded public works so that workers are able to save, and also by tying EIIP to measures building the capacity of the private and public sector to create decent jobs. While EIIPs thus help vulnerable communities to expand their employment and livelihood opportunities rapidly, they can provide a key entry point to a more comprehensive and integrated LED and decent work approach.[83]

[83] EIIP Page.

Skills certification for improved employability and employment opportunities

In consultation with social partners it is important to provide recognition of work experience in labour-based programmes through certification of competences,[84] and by linking work with training, especially for young women and men. This serves as an exit strategy by broadening their employability and employment opportunities.[85] In **Mauritania**, refugee youth from Mali and host community youth are being given on-site construction training in labour-intensive construction works, including training on mud earth masonry, building electricity, plumbing and other activities. Formally recognized skills certificates of occupational competence, the first level of national qualifications, was implemented in Bassikounou district for the first time in this Wilaya of Hodh El Chargui. Moreover, in the absence of technical and vocational training facilities, the ILO constructed a new training centre in the Mberra refugee camp and developed a scheme for implementing combined classroom and on-the-job training in rural areas. This initiative will contribute towards promoting vocational training in the region and combating school drop-out, both objectives of the National Vocational Training Strategy. Technical and vocational skills and programmes were linked to needs identified in the planning process and through value chain studies carried out in the region.[86]



©ILO, EIIP project in Lebanon. The EIIP project aims at creating decent work opportunities for both Lebanese and the Syrian displaced population in Lebanon.

[84] See ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195).
[85] ILO (2018a).
[86] ILO (2019e).

Profiling and recognizing prior skills

Skill-profiling studies inform about qualification levels, prior experience and the skills of refugees. Skill-recognition mechanisms can promote their access to middle- or higher-skilled occupations. Most refugees work in low-skilled sectors such as agriculture, construction and manufacturing, and they face major obstacles to accessing middle- or higher skilled occupations. Employers may prefer to hire refugees for simple tasks, and skill-development programmes supported by development actors also tend to focus on low-skilled occupations. The fact that refugees possess significant skills based on prior learning or experience is often neglected. This results in a large number of overqualified, frustrated refugee workers as well as economic inefficiencies, as there is often demand for semi-skilled workers in sectors in which national citizens are reluctant to work or high-skilled occupations such as medical doctors, where labour shortages exist in hosting countries.

An effective and efficient strategy to address these concerns has been the recognition of their skills and qualifications, including prior learning.[87] Many refugees find it challenging to obtain recognition of their skills and experience, certifications and professional degrees – in part because of their difficulty to provide proper documentation or because of language barriers. Recognition of prior learning is one way to address these barriers. The cases of Jordan and Turkey serve as good examples of how Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can help refugees in a fragile environment integrate into formal employment through recognition and certification of their skills. Recognition of prior learning has proven to be key in relation to the COVID-19 situation as it enables refugee health workers to practise as medical professionals in their host countries.[88]

Turkey: Skills profiling studies for targeted training and recognition of prior learning for refugees and host communities

In Turkey, to better tailor training to refugees' needs and their pre-existing skills, the ILO has been conducting skill-profiling studies targeting Syrian and non-Syrian refugees. This information helps programmes to implement more targeted training – ultimately maximizing the economic contribution that refugees can bring to national economies.[89]

In Turkey, access to vocational qualification centres has allowed refugees to have their prior learning, skills, and qualifications recognized. So far, referrals of TVET graduates to vocational qualification test centres have been facilitated for three occupations that require certification (steel welding, construction painting and

[87] Lessons learned and best practices in the recognition of skills and prior have been synthesized in a second edition of ILO's publication, How to Facilitate the Recognition of Skills of Migrant Workers: Guide for Employment Services Providers (2020).
[88] ILO (2020c).
[89] ILO (2019a).

machine maintenance).[90] Some 26 per cent of the beneficiaries were successful and received an internationally recognized certificate.



©ILO/Kivanc Ozvardar, Syrian refugee response in Turkey.

In **Jordan**, the ILO has been providing support to Jordanian nationals and Syrian refugees in accessing job opportunities in Jordan's labour market through skills development and RPL, leading to a certificate by the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA) and a work permit. Since the start of its Programme of Support to the Crisis Response in 2019, and up to the end of the year, the ILO helped to train and certify more than 11,200 Jordanian nationals and Syrian refugee jobseekers, using RPL, in the constructions and manufacturing sectors.[91]

The programme helps refugee workers with work permit issuance in selected sectors, including employment support services, through an ILO-developed web-based platform aiming to assist job seekers, workers and employers across Jordan, with a focus on refugees and vulnerable host communities. To do so, it provides users with up-to-date information on job and capacity-building opportunities (including internships and traineeships). The system is continuously under improvement with a component of career guidance for best possible matching.

[90] ILO (2019a).
[91] ILO (2020c).

Technical and vocational skills development in refugee contexts should contribute to social cohesion. Therefore, the ILO developed a guide for TVET teachers and trainers to strengthen their conflict sensitivity, enable them to create inclusive learning environments, and promote social cohesion through skills training.[92] In 2019, this guide was piloted in seven Turkish provinces with a group of 25 TVET teachers within the national apprenticeship system. During the training the participants were equipped to:

- Analyse the implications of the Syrian refugee situation in Turkey for the design and provision of TVET training and assess the challenges faced by different vulnerable groups;
- Develop specific practical exercises which prompt social contact between refugees, host communities and other groups while actively contributing to improved communication and conflict management skills;
- Develop cross-curricular strategies to establish an inclusive learning environment and embed skills for social cohesion in practical tasks and work processes;
- Lean about the importance of supplementary outreach, guidance, and post-training support measures, and explore how access to existing services could be improved.

The ILO intends to pursue its close collaboration with the Ministry of National Education by extending the training to other provinces, once the COVID-19 context will permit such activities to resume.

In addition to developing technical and vocational skills, it is essential to include core skills for employability into all training programmes. These include communication, problem-solving, teamwork, OSH and financial literacy, among others. It is also critical to inform refugees about their rights and obligations, and to enhance their job search skills. In addition, in countries where refugees do not speak the host community's language, skills development should be complemented by language training. Indeed, speaking the language greatly improves one's chances of finding a job.

Building refugees' soft skills through basic labour market skills training and information

In **Turkey**, basic labour market skills training (BLMS) and employment services, in combination with basic life skills training (PES&BLS), have been implemented since 2018. The majority of vocational skills graduates, among them a significant number of refugees who have lower levels of technical and employability skills but want to participate in the labour market, were provided with either of these training programmes. Both programmes last for two days, but their objectives and contents differ slightly. The BLMS focuses on informing the refugees who received TVET courses and are job-ready about labour legislation and their rights

[92] ILO. Promoting Social Cohesion and Peaceful Coexistence in Fragile Contexts through TVET. Guide for TVET practitioners (*forthcoming*).

at work, and how to access available employment services. PES&BLS focuses on building life skills for employment and labour market transitions for refugees with low employability and who need dedicated support to navigate the labour market. The ILO's BLMS and PES&BLS programmes were reported to support better labour market access, effective job matching and sustainable employment. The majority of refugees participating in these programmes reported high levels of satisfaction and said that the programme had met their expectations with regard to their labour market access.[93] The ILO applied a training of trainers (ToT) approach in both of these programmes and engaged job and vocational counsellors of the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) to roll out PES&BLS programmes. The ToT methodology proved particularly helpful in enhancing the counseling skills of staff working in the public employment service and improving their understanding of the particular needs of refugees.

Furthermore, few Syrians speak Turkish upon arrival. A Kizilay/World Food Programme study found that language skills improved rates of employability: some 50 per cent of refugees with beginner level Turkish were employed full time, compared with 60 per cent among refugees with intermediate or advanced Turkish. Similarly, refugees with advanced Turkish earned considerably more per month than those with beginner levels. The ILO has therefore supported language training for refugees, seeking to improve their quality by tailoring them to Arabic speakers and targeting refugees able to work in priority sectors within the Turkish economy.[94]

In **Mauritania**, specific soft skills and job counselling for accessing the labour market were developed, and counsellors were trained. A counselling network is deployed locally, including Mauritanians and refugees. The network facilitates a follow-up and understanding of end beneficiaries. The counsellors have a large range of competencies. Indeed, this programme includes innovative methodology to enhance personal and group initiatives in many different areas such as financial education, career counselling and skills self-evaluation and coaching. The sessions last for six months alongside technical training with a regular follow-up, and it allows the trainees to work together, to understand labour market opportunities and to develop basic self-reliance and entrepreneurial skills. It follows a detailed training plan. Trainees' certification is awarded and constitutes the first step towards a standardized job counselling offer.

[93] ILO (2019a).
[94] ILO (2019a).

Promoting local integration and employment through apprenticeships

Apprenticeship programmes have proved to be a promising means for increasing access to decent work – while promoting local labour market integration. Given that apprentices learn in real work contexts at the workplace, apprenticeship programmes are an effective means of favouring contact and social cohesion between refugee and host community workers. In many countries with large informal economies, informal apprenticeship remains a major provider of skills for the local economies. If the quality of informal apprenticeships is improved and the skills acquired are recognized, upgraded informal apprenticeships can also support the labour market integration of refugees and host communities.[95]

Turkey: Apprenticeship programmes for refugee youth

In **Turkey**, the ILO started supporting referrals to the apprenticeship system in 2018. Under the apprenticeship programmes, refugee youth are trained in a given profession for two to four years, depending on the type of occupation. During this time, the apprentices spend one day per week at a vocational training centre to complement their work-based training with theoretical courses. On the other workdays, apprentices are supervised by master trainers at their workplaces. Given that Turkey's apprenticeship system is robust and long-standing, it was a natural path for Syrian refugees to access decent work. In cooperation with chambers of merchants and artisans, vocational training centres and vocational training specialists, these programmes combine theoretical and practical training. In addition to providing skills, trainers at vocational training centres follow up with regular visits to ensure that apprentices were learning and being treated well, and that employers were pleased with their work.[96]

Promoting Inclusive Market Systems for refugees and hosting communities

In close collaboration with UNHCR, the ILO developed the Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS), which aims to promote inclusive local market systems and value chains for refugees and hosting communities. AIMS builds on the supply and demand dynamics of local markets and value chains and recognizes that in order to sustainably integrate refugees and hosting communities into productive and decent employment, two conditions need to be fulfilled:

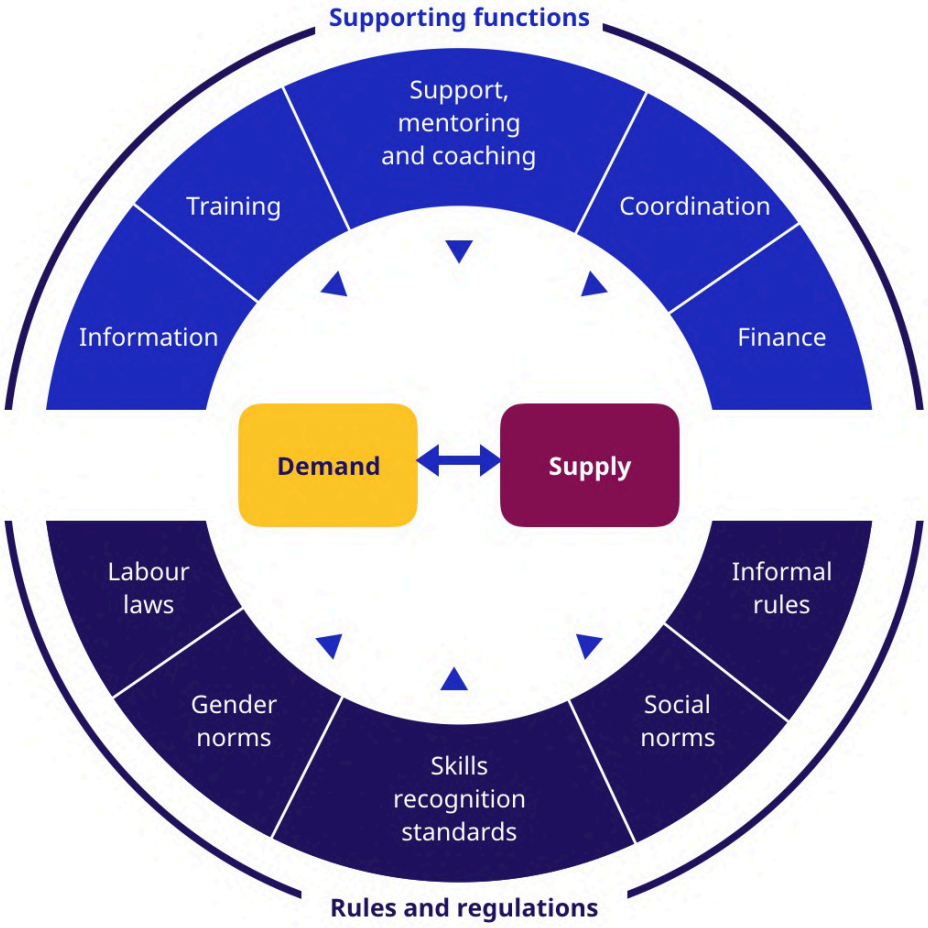
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95 Upgrading informal apprenticeship, A resource guide for Africa, ILO (2012).
96 ILO (2019a).

- Refugees and hosting communities need to be equipped with the relevant skills and capacities to seize local economic and employment opportunities (supply side);
- There need to be sufficient economic and employment opportunities available in local market systems and value chains (demand side).

As a result, AIMS works on both supply and demand sides in parallel.

Figure 3. Market Systems Framework.



AIMS adapts market systems development principles through a push-pull framework, where push interventions aim to enhance the skills and capacities of the target population (supply side), and pull interventions promote the functioning of high-potential value chains with a view to integrating the target population (demand side). As a first step, AIMS therefore requires thorough analysis of the target populations' skills and capacities as well as of existing local markets and value chains and refugee economies, as specified in the Guide to Market-Based Livelihood Interventions for Refugees (ILO and UNHCR 2017).[97] On this basis, interventions to strengthen the skills and capacities of the target population where relevant are designed (push/supply side). Furthermore, the analysis helps identify value chains with the greatest potential for economic opportunities, job creation and poverty reduction for

[97] Betts et al. (2014).

refugees and their hosting communities.[98] Sustainable intervention strategies that play on the incentives and capacities of local market actors are then devised to promote overall functioning and growth of the value chain, as well as, ultimately, the economic inclusion of refugees and hosting communities into such value chains.[99]

The ILO is supporting UNHCR economic inclusion officers in more than 16 UNHCR field operations in implementing AIMS and has conducted rapid market systems analyses and devised detailed recommendations for UNHCR economic inclusion strategies.

Market systems analysis and value chain assessments to improve market access for refugees and host communities

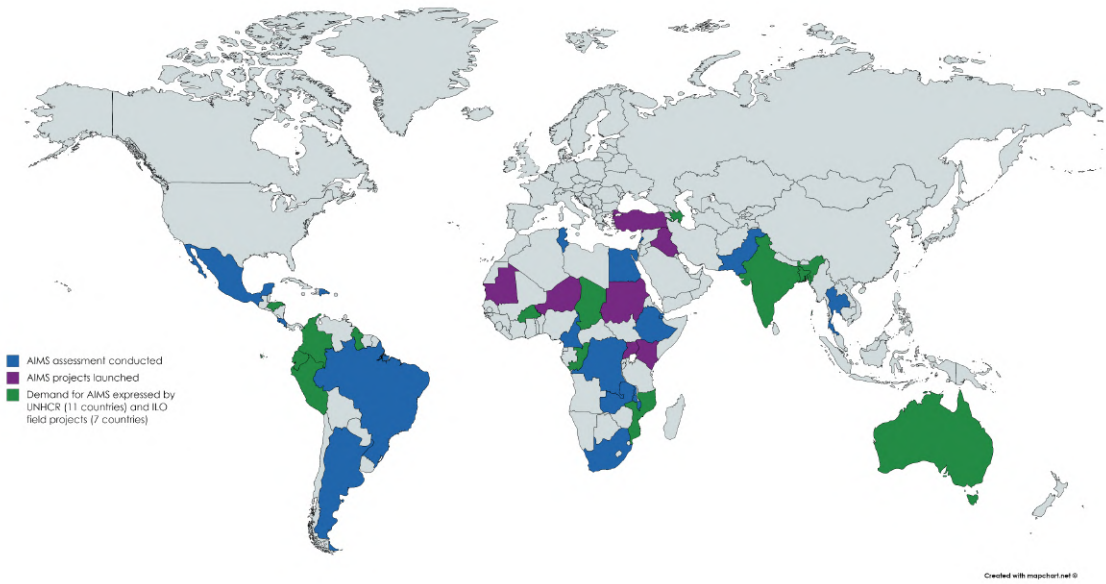
A joint ILO-UNHCR market analysis aimed at improving overall market access for refugees in urban sectors took place in greater Cairo, Alexandria and Damietta, **Egypt** in 2014. An initial sector selection exercise found that the food sector in Egypt showed significant potential for growth and employment promotion. At the same time, a target group assessment found that approximately 13 per cent of the refugees were already engaged in income-generating activities in the food sector, and that a significant percentage of the remaining refugees had the right profile to be included in the sector. A detailed analysis was then made of the food sector, including existing constraints and bottlenecks that might inhibit the inclusion of refugees, and following the analysis five initiatives were designed to address the underlying constraints to the creation of employment in the food services sector in Egypt, for both Syrian refugees and the host community. These were: promoting targeted and demand-driven business development services (BDS) provision; strengthening entrepreneurial skills; promoting home-based enterprises for women; setting up an information database to improve access to information on market trends, suppliers and standards; and setting up food cooperatives to reduce transaction costs and strengthen cooperation among producers. On the basis of this analysis, the UNHCR's livelihoods programme in Egypt provided entrepreneurial training and start-up grants to women to create home-based food micro-businesses.[100]

A market systems analysis by the ILO in Jijiga, **Ethiopia** also showed that the activities of refugees and host communities relating to the production and trading of small ruminants was the most promising value chain through which to support the generation of refugees' livelihoods and their self-reliance. By analysing the livestock value chain, the ILO identified bottlenecks that hindered refugees and

98 ILO (2015).
99 ILO & UNHCR (2017).
100 ILO, Market Systems Analysis for Syrian Refugees in Egypt (2018).

host communities from fully participating in the chain and increasing their incomes. The ILO project then supported refugee and host community livestock owners in aggregating their livestock and accessing relevant information about market opportunities. It connected them to local slaughterhouse trader networks, [101]thereby helping to increase the resilience as well as the economic outlook of refugee and host community livestock herders in the Jijiga region of Ethiopia.[102]

Figure 4. Approach to Inclusive Market Systems for Refugees and Host Communities: the nexus between Humanitarian Assistance and Long Term Development.



In **Mauritania**, a market systems analysis also identified the small ruminant sector as a promising economic avenue for refugees and host communities. On this analytical basis, a set of activities were launched to develop new economic opportunities for adding value to agro-processing, for instance quality dried meat. The support provided by the ILO included the construction of the agro-processing transformation facilities, technical training and management skills.

In **Lebanon** and **Jordan**, the ILO is developing and implementing increasingly comprehensive and long-term oriented LED strategies in particularly hard-hit regions. In Lebanon, the development of the value chain brought cooperatives from different confessions together for the first time. All market players developed awareness and were motivated in favour of the common cause: successfully planting new varieties of potatoes, meeting the requirements and conditions for exporting to the EU, and then achieving such exports. Thus, value

[101] ILO and UNHCR (2017).
[102] ILO and UNHCR (2017).

chain development appears to be a good approach for use in post-conflict countries fragmented by internal conflict and division.[103]

Many refugees from Angola now qualify for a local integration programme launched by the Government of **Zambia**. Through this programme, more than 1,000 Angolan refugee families from the Meheba refugee camp were given permission to stay and have received land in the areas surrounding the camps. A joint ILO-UNHCR target group assessment in 2015 showed that most of these former refugees had little education but had engaged in subsistence farming practically all their lives. At the time, market demand for agricultural products in the region was increasing, fuelled by growing mining activities nearby. Given the expanding market demand for agricultural products, the farming background of the refugees, and the recent grant of arable land, the decision to focus on agricultural value chains was an obvious one. VCAs were conducted for the three fastest-growing agricultural products – maize, beans and other vegetables – and "quick win" interventions were proposed to connect the former refugees with market actors such as input dealers and aggregators, and to organize "market days" to help farmers join with potential customers.[104]

Promoting entrepreneurship and developing sustainable businesses

Entrepreneurial training programmes such as SIYB provide host community members and refugees with the skills and assets required to pursue their own business ideas. The programme has four inter-related packages – Generate Your Business Idea (GYB), Start Your Business (SYB), Improve Your Business (IYB) and Expand Your Business (EYB).[105] Providing refugee households with broad financial education programmes combined with offering of saving tools aims to foster savings and further instill a saving culture among refugees. Business development services, on the other hand, can be directed at micro and small enterprises (MSEs), which can face a variety of constraints due to poor levels of education, weak management, competitive markets, low quality products and/or services, lack of marketing skills, inefficient infrastructure and lack of familiarity with the local economic environment. The ILO has summarized its best practices in this area in 'A rough guide to entrepreneurship promotion in forced displacement contexts'.[106]

[103] ILO (2018a).
[104] ILO and UNHCR (2017).
[105] ILO SIYB Information Page.
[106] ILO, A rough guide to entrepreneurship promotion in forced displacement contexts (2019).

Entrepreneurship training to enhance skills and business development

In Turkey, the ILO offers entrepreneurship training in partnership with universities and technology parks following the training modules of the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) and the Small and Medium Industries Development Organization (KOSGEB). These training courses include mentorship support, and after completion of the training, successful participants receive certificates giving them the right to apply for KOSGEB and TÜBİTAK grants as well as ILO's micro grants to start their own business. The training courses are also a networking opportunity, and provide a forum to both Turkish and refugee participants to bridge social tensions.[107]

In **Indonesia**, the Ready for Business programme has enabled refugee and local students to select a business idea to develop during the training programme, ultimately helping to increase entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. Students work on their business plan throughout the programme and can apply to receive additional coaching and funding at the end of it to further develop their businesses.



©UNHCR, In Indonesia, the ILO and UNHCR have joined forces in a pilot project to contribute to reducing youth unemployment rate and improving self-reliance opportunities for refugee and local youth.

In Jijiga, **Ethiopia**, the ILO used its SIYB entrepreneurship programme to reinforce the entrepreneurial skills of refugees and host communities (supply side), while on the demand side, sectors and the value chain with potentials of increasing the number of job opportunities for both displaced and host communities were strengthened.[108] The ILO partnered with local organizations such as the TVET Centre, the Jijiga University, the Microfinance Institute as well as refugee-serving international NGOs to ensure the sustainable implementation and availability of entrepreneurship trainings to refugees and hosting communities.

In **Mauritania**, ILO Business Development Services were created and adapted for a rural population context with the support of the ITC-ILO. This training methodology draws on several ILO tools such as SIYB, Mycoop, Teampreneurship and financial inclusion materials. The approach involved developing a network of certified training providers among humanitarian and development actors working with refugees and potential BDS providers, through a "training of trainers" strategy.

[107] ILO (2019a).

[108] Additional lessons learned and good practices for entrepreneur promotion in forced displacement contexts are summarized in ILO A rough guide to entrepreneurship promotion in forced displacement contexts.

Linking jobs supply and demand through employment services

Public Employment Services (PES) offer core services to enhance refugee mobility and access to work. ESCs are crucial for registering and matching jobseekers and vacancies, referring affected populations to special employment programmes such as public works, job training, social services and other relevant support initiatives and institutions, and for collecting labour market information. They may also link other programmes funded by various donors and implemented by different UN agencies. Two main approaches have been used in ILO's work: setting up new (emergency) employment services in post-crisis situations; or rendering pre-existing employment service systems more inclusive and effective for FDPs. While the latter approach should be preferred, programmes must always build on a careful analysis of existing capacities in specific contexts. Enhancing the capacities of PES to assist refugees and IDPs in finding work and building skills often involves the development of integrated services. Improving the outcomes for this category of jobseekers usually requires a combination of services to address both direct barriers to employability and other challenges (such as poor literacy, long-term illness, housing and financial constraints) that might influence job-search ability. The aim of this approach is to ensure that jobseekers receive the necessary support from PES, and that they are referred to other government initiatives or local specialist providers offering complementary services and support, including unemployment benefits, welfare programmes, skills training, prior-learning recognition and entrepreneurship.[109]

Supporting the extension of employment services to refugees, IDPs and host communities

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the ILO have taken practical steps towards improving the access of Palestinians to decent work in **Lebanon**. This effort began in 2008 through a joint programme to establish Emergency Employment Service Centres (ESCs) in north Lebanon in response to the 2007 Nahr el Bared crisis. As Palestine refugees do not have access to public employment services, this joint programme has sought to provide alternative labour market information and job matching services, specifically targeting the Palestinian refugee population, which had lost much of its livelihood during the crisis. The ESCs (a) approached local employers for potential vacancies for Palestine refugees; and (b) provided jobseekers with relevant and up-to-date advice and assistance on vocational training, employment and self-employment opportunities. Based on the success of the first ESCs in the Nahr el Bared and Beddawi camps, UNRWA established three more ESCs in the cities of Saida and Tyre in south Lebanon, and in Beirut. Between 2012 and 2017, more than 11,076 jobseekers were registered in the four ESCs. Through the

[109] ILO (2020c).

Service Centres, UNRWA has since been able to provide for a certain level of professional labour market governance in refugee camps – and play a more enabling role for the self-reliance of refugees.[110]



©ILO, ILO project in Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Since 2014 and up to the time of writing, more than one million Ukrainians have been displaced by the conflict in the Donbass region. Influxes of working-age IDPs to certain areas have exacerbated an already deteriorating situation in **Ukraine**'s labour market by increasing competition for available jobs and putting downward pressure on wages. To support data-driven and evidence-based policy-making aimed at the successful integration of IDPs, an ILO study released in 2016 provided extensive information about professional qualifications and specific needs of IDPs (supply) and the needs of employers (demand).[111] The report highlighted five priority areas to overcome employment-related problems, including the improvement of government services linking IDPs with available vacancies, and more training and apprenticeship opportunities for IDPs. This assessment has more recently been followed up through ILO technical assistance for the extensive Employment Service reform targets that the Ukrainian government has set for itself, particularly with regards to services for the most vulnerable groups, including IDPs.

In **Turkey**, the ILO has supported staff within chambers of industry and artisans to provide integrated employment and guidance services both in Turkish and Arabic. More specifically, workers and employers were able to receive information about formal work in Turkey, including the situation regarding work permits, as

[110] Kherfi et al. (2018).
[111] ILO (2016d).

well as information on the possibilities for enterprises to be formalized through counselling services, enabling them to be registered with chambers of industry and chambers of merchants and artisans In a near future, the establishment of one-stop shops will be supported by the ILO, thus providing comprehensive employment services in key locations.

In August 2020, the ILO and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) in the Kurdistan Region of **Iraq** (KRI) signed an implementation agreement aimed at boosting formal employment among IDPs, refugees and host community members in targeted governorates impacted by displacement and conflict. The agreement will see the establishment and upscaling of employment service centres run by the MoLSA to create more decent jobs through integrated services, such as job and skills matching, career guidance and counselling, as well as on-the-job training opportunities. The ILO will notably build the capacity of ministry staff, help develop and upgrade an existing online employment system, and train employment officers on the on-line platform as well as on business counselling, to further facilitate job-matching between jobseekers and employers. The agreement will also ensure that 50 per cent of jobseekers benefiting from the centres' services are women. This agreement is part of efforts under PROSPECTS, and activities will be closely implemented with UNHCR to reach in-camp refugee populations, as well as with UNICEF in an effort to reach younger jobseekers and workers.[112]

Promoting peaceful coexistence and social cohesion through employment and decent work programmes and systematically conducting conflict analysis

Employment and decent work programmes can actively contribute to sustaining peace and social cohesion between refugees and host communities by promoting contact between FDPs and their hosts, increasing sustainable economic opportunities and addressing grievances and sense of injustice as illustrated in Figure 1.

First, in-group bias is one of the key social issues in the forcibly displaced context. There is evidence that if conflict is driven by negative perceptions among refugees and host communities, employment and decent work programmes may promote peaceful coexistence by increasing constructive inter-group contact. By bringing people together, and by strengthening opportunities for dialogue among refugees and the host communities, including between the government, workers and employers' organizations, employment programmes may break down stereotypes and increase social cohesion. Furthermore, group-based grievances can arise from inequality, non-respect of human and labour rights,

[112] Additional referral pathways for enterprise training will be coordinated with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), ILO (2020g).

exclusion, lack of participatory mechanisms and dialogue as well as feelings of injustice. It is when an aggrieved group assigns blame to others or to the state for its perceived economic, political, or social exclusion that its grievances may become politicized and risk tipping into violence. It follows that inclusive and transparent employment and social protection programmes, which aim to improve equality in opportunities and livelihoods, as well as the quality and rights at work, could reduce the risk of conflict by addressing individual grievances.

Therefore, it is key to systematically conduct "conflict-sensitive and peaceful coexistence analysis" in order to analyse potential conflict between the communities that could arise from the programme, but also to look at existing resilient and inclusive initiatives that could be reinforced or upscaled. On this basis, programmes can address the potential conflict drivers and specific social cohesion related outputs, and outcomes should be designed in project strategies to ensure that projects are better equipped to promote peaceful coexistence and social transformation, as a more deliberate outcome of employment interventions.[113]

In particular, workplace level interventions targeting both host community and refugee workers foster constructive inter-group contact, build social cohesion and foster integration and should be scaled up.

Building social cohesion through joint trainings and mentorships for refugees and host communities

In **Turkey**, the workplace adaptation programme has proved a successful way of building relationships between Syrian and Turkish workers. As part of this programme, Turkish and Syrian workers are paired and participate in a training that covers occupational safety and health, labour rights, gender equality and intercultural communication. Afterwards, they are asked to spend time together (inside or outside the workplace), which has also fostered language skills. Since the start of this programme in 2018, more than 1,000 Syrian and Turkish workers have been reached.

In **Lebanon**, under the framework of the ILO/UNDP/UNICEF project "Employment and Peacebuilding: Building bridges amongst 'Youth at Risk' in Lebanon" financed by the Peacebuilding Fund, the ILO provided Lebanese and Syrian refugee youth in the Bekaa area with financial and non-financial support for the establishment of Lebanese-Syrian joint income-generating initiatives. This initiative was an effective way of creating employment opportunities and encouraging interaction and fostering social stability between host communities

[113] See the joint ILO, UNDP, PBSO and World Bank statement on Employment Programmes and Peace (2016) and the recent ILO Handbook on how to design, monitor and evaluate peacebuilding results in Jobs for Peace and Resilience programmes (2019).

and Syrian refugees. Between 2018 and 2019, some 1015 Lebanese and refugee youth, of whom 54 per cent were women, received training on my first Business Programme and more than 100 job opportunities were created.[114]

In **Indonesia**, the Ready for Business entrepreneurship programme applies an activity-based, peer-to-peer learning approach highly suitable for refugees. The methodology strengthens social connections in the community and empowers training participants. In learning sessions, participants work together in small groups to solve problems through sharing existing knowledge and experiences. The programme also uses social media as a micro-learning component, which helps to further connect refugees and local youth. Indeed, many refugee students reported new friendships and stronger positive feelings of being part of the local community at the end of the programme. The ILO and UNHCR also found that it was essential to provide additional networking opportunities with the local business community. For refugees to be able to start businesses in Indonesia, they need to identify a local partner. By organizing networking events to which local entrepreneurs are invited, the programme can increase the chances of refugee students identifying a partner with whom they can start up a business – potentially fostering social cohesion between the two. Furthermore, these events increased the motivation levels of students who found it inspiring to learn more about the journey of local entrepreneurs.

In **Mauritania**, labour-based construction projects aimed at promoting decent work for both refugees and host communities also drew on local businesses, further helping to stimulate the local economy, build relationships with local businesses, and generate goodwill towards projects targeting refugees and host communities. Infrastructure constructed by youth used local materials to create decent employment opportunities and promote local economic activities. Private companies were selected to lead labour-based construction works following national and the ILO's standards of bidding, monitoring and supervising the labour-based construction works carried out. A vocational training centre in Mbera camp was also constructed with an ongoing mechanism of sustainable maintenance and usage by refugees and the host community. These activities promoted the use of local and appropriate materials and new technologies through collaboration with selected construction companies and local enterprises in the construction works of the Mbera vocational training centre, thus further providing opportunities for refugees and hosts to connect.[115]

114 Employment and Peacebuilding for "Youth at Risk" in Lebanon.
115 ILO (2019e).

4.3. Labour rights and equality of opportunity and treatment

Large and sudden inflows of FDPs may not only adversely impact the overall level of unemployment on local labour markets but may equally impede the quality of work and exacerbate the risks faced by the displaced and host workers alike. For host countries, the arrival of large numbers of refugees, especially over a short span of time, can lead to adverse work quality-related consequences for local labour markets. It can disrupt the balance on local labour markets or can add to pre-existing deficiencies and inequalities in the labour market. The risk of increased informalization, the dilution of fundamental principles and rights at work, and the diminishing of occupational safety and health and working conditions are all exacerbated in refugee contexts, as some employers can easily exploit people's vulnerability.[116] Many refugees, on the other hand, are faced with no other choice than to enter the informal economy, often at risk of exploitation and exposure to hazards. In turn, this can also lead to the emergence of situations such as trafficking, forced labour and child labour.

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable workers in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq

In the Arab States, the ILO is leading a regional initiative aimed at assessing the impact of COVID-19 on workers and enterprises in **Iraq, Jordan** and **Lebanon.** Findings from rapid assessments conducted by the ILO in collaboration with the Norwegian Institute for Applied International Studies (FAFO) in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq from April to June 2020, using telephone surveys, confirmed that those in informal employment and working in poor conditions at the start of the pandemic saw their conditions further deteriorate during the pandemic, whereas those that were in formal and decent work were relatively less affected. Syrian refugees were found to be the hardest hit by the crisis, largely as a result of their informal working arrangements. Among the impacts of COVID-19 on employment, it was found, in particular:[117]

- In Jordan and Lebanon, more Syrian refugees than nationals were laid off permanently or temporarily;
- In Lebanon, the nationals and refugees surveyed saw their income decrease by more than two-thirds, mainly due to lay-offs and reduced working time;
- In Jordan, there was a considerable decrease in household income, mainly among Syrians in informal employment;

[116] Gordon (2019).
[117] ILO and FAFO (2020 a).

- In Lebanon and Jordan, Syrian refugees were less likely than nationals to be in workplaces with measures in place to mitigate the risk of infection;[118]
- In Iraq, there is a high level of informal employment among younger workers and almost no social security for workers;
- In Iraq, unemployment rates are particularly high among women;
- In Iraq, about a quarter of those who were employed prior to the lockdown reported that they were permanently laid off, and one in three enterprises indicated that they were not confident that their businesses would survive, owing to the effects of COVID-19.[119]

Given these negative implications of displacement for host communities and FDPs' rights at work, and their exposure to risks of exploitation in multiple forms, domestic and international actors should strive to promote not just any work, but *decent* work. Importantly, decent work for host communities and FDPs will not be achieved as an add-on but needs to be included in planning from the beginning.[120] Therefore, the following sections focus on the main lessons learned by the ILO when addressing employment for host and displaced communities from the perspective of labour standards and quality.

Supporting the distribution of work permits and assessing their impact on the quality of work

A significant part of labour market governance efforts as described in section 4.1. focuses on regulatory changes in the legal right to work, the more effective distribution of work permits and the formalization of informal work. This is done with a view to increasing both the quantity and quality of jobs for FDPs. Yet, having a work permit does not automatically lead to more decent work, i.e. improved income and work conditions. As Gordon notes,[121] building on case studies of the Jordan and Ethiopia Compacts, "rights are not self-executing, and refugees will require ongoing institutional support to realize them. It is essential that agreements to grant work rights to refugees be tied to support for host governments, and in particular host labour ministries and their labour inspectorates, so that they can ensure that firms employing refugees are doing so in compliance with applicable labour standards." The evidence on the impact of work permits and formalization on job quality and labour rights is scarce. Further research in several countries is needed to further assess the value of work permit distribution as an instrument to increase not only the quantity of formalized jobs, but also the quality of jobs.

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[118] ILO and FAFO (2020 a).

[119] Iraq assessment has different population groups including: Iraqi IDPs, Iraqi returnees, Iraqi from KRI , Iraqi host communities and a small percentage of Syrian refugees, ILO; FAFO. 2020b.

[120] Gordon (2019): 4.

[121] ibid.: 32.

ILO survey highlights decent work deficits

In 2018, the ILO carried out a survey of 1,125 Syrians in **Jordan** working in agriculture, 95 per cent of whom held valid work permits, as well as their employers.[122] The possession of a work permit was perceived to have opened up new job opportunities by almost half of the Syrians surveyed. Although 41 per cent felt it offered protection of their labour rights, it is not clear which rights they had in mind in responding to the question.[123] This survey and other efforts to assess the conditions under which Syrians now labour in Jordan indicate that Syrian permit-holders still face many violations of basic decent work principles.[124] Eighty-two per cent of the agricultural employers surveyed by the ILO – all of whose Syrian workers had permits – reported children under the age of 15 working on their farms. There are no regulations governing health and safety protections for farm workers, whether Jordanians, Syrians or those from other countries, and few reported being trained or given protective equipment. Most farms had never been visited by a labour inspector, and when inspectors did come, the purpose of the visit was often to check on the validity of work permits rather than on compliance with labour standards. Moreover, most Syrian permit-holders doing agricultural work were paid less than the monthly minimum wage that applies to foreign workers in other sectors.[125]

Promoting social dialogue

While it is important to get refugees into work early, social dialogue is instrumental in maintaining and improving working conditions for all workers. As FDPs are vulnerable to exploitation, targeted efforts must be undertaken to ensure fundamental principles and rights at work, improve the quality of jobs and the formalization of work and inclusion in social protection, and fight child labour, forced labour, including human trafficking. The ILO engages with tripartite constituents to support the strengthening of an enabling environment for the workplace protection needs of host and refugee workers. These activities can be reflected in the review of national Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs),[126] as well as identifying opportunities to mainstream the application of decent work principles across national development plans and strategies among others.

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[122] ILO (2018c).
[123] Gordon (2019: 19).
[124] Ibid.
[125] ILO (2018c), cited and summarized in Gordon (2019: 19).
[126] Decent Work Country Programmes are the main cooperation framework through which the ILO provides support to its member countries.

Engaging with social partners to enhance rights at work

As part of PROSPECTS, the ILO has systematically engaged with social partners from the inception of the programme. In **Kenya** the ILO has produced assessments of opportunities and capacity gaps/needs for workers` and employers`organizations to expand their services into refugee-hosting areas. This is especially useful since employers' and workers' organizations in Kenya, for instance, have not had previous engagements with refugees or even host communities. The assessment of the situation therefore provides perspectives on experienced realities of host and refugee communities, as well as entry points for mobilization by workers' and employers' organizations.

The Federation of Kenya Employers is investigating the provision of business support services to the informal sector with regards to formalization. Many of the informal enterprises are not registered with local authorities and have no book-keeping measures, which makes them miss opportunities that could support their business growth, including access to finance, among others.

For Kenya's Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU-K), the mobilization of workers in both the formal and informal sectors is key to ensuring they can enjoy the benefits of representation, including collective bargaining.

The ILO supports tripartite constituents and other partners to address situations of exploitation and to ensure that all workers are aware of their rights, and also that they are empowered, through participatory approaches, to make certain that these rights are respected and protected. Awareness-raising campaigns may be designed and launched to enhance efforts to reinforce fundamental principles and rights at work for all workers.

In **Turkey**, since 2016, more than 60,000 brochures on labour rights, public employment services, the importance of formal and decent work, as well as social compliance guidelines, were distributed to workers, companies and the wider public.

Furthermore, in 2017, the ILO assessed the needs of employers' and workers' organizations, relating to the promotion of decent work opportunities for Syrians under temporary protection. Among other things, it was found that it was important to establish contact points for Syrians under temporary protection within workers' and employers' organizations, to have more coherent and rights-based labour market policies, and to have more platforms for social dialogue.[127]

In **Jordan**, on the 24 farms that the ILO is targeting through its interventions, the ILO has helped set up 21 labour committees that include 113 members of both

[127] ILO (2018), Promoting decent work for Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey: What should workers' and employers' organizations do? Needs analysis on building capacity in workers' and employers' organizations.

genders and various nationalities. While the general role of these committees is to oversee the needs and concerns of workers in relation to their wages, housing and safety, they have played a crucial role in raising awareness on the dangers of COVID-19 since its outbreak, as well as ensuring that workers and employers take appropriate health and safety measures on the farms to protect workers from infection. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the ILO has been distributing audio and visual materials to labour committees on health and safety measures, as well as updates provided by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour. It has also been holding on-line meetings with committees to discuss the challenges that workers face, and to provide support to workers and farm owners. Furthermore, the ILO is now working on an Occupational Safety and Health manual for the agricultural sector in response to COVID-19, in cooperation with its partners, to further assist farms in taking the necessary measures to protect their workers.[128]

Promoting decent work through incentives for formalization and better enforcement of rights at work

Labour-based infrastructure programmes can be an entry point for better working conditions, including decent wages, fundamental principles and rights at work, and occupational safety and health. Throughout its employment-intensive investment programmes, the ILO makes sure that jobs created through its own projects are safe, that those employed earn a decent wage and have access to social protection and health/accident insurance; it has advocated for other agencies to implement such standards. The ILO promotes legal employment relationships governed by the local labour code, different from the various humanitarian cash for work programmes in place.[129]

Providing incentives and raising awareness of employers to support formalization of their workforce improves working conditions while also having positive impacts on the fiscal balance.

[128] ILO (2020e).
[129] ILO (2018a).

Turkey: Incentive scheme to support refugees' transition to formality

In **Turkey**, the ILO has introduced an incentive scheme to support the transition to formality through the incentive Transition to Formality Programme (KIGEP), in collaboration with the Social Security Institution (SSI) and the DG International Labour Force of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services. The ILO is working with NGOs, government ministries, chambers of industry and social security institutions in order to promote formal employment of Syrian refugees under temporary protection. This includes an incentive scheme to employers in several Turkish provinces, covering work permit fees and social security premiums for up to six months for each newly hired Syrian worker, as well as for the same number of Turkish workers by the same employer. Overall, the programme has contributed towards strengthening labour rights through formal employment, better working conditions for Syrian and Turkish workers, and ultimately, fair competition through formal employment. Up to January 2020, in all 2,863 Syrians under Temporary Protection and 1,709 Turkish citizens benefited from the incentive schemes organized by the ILO.

In addition to incentive schemes, the ILO has found it effective to raise awareness among employers and workers on the importance of formal work and technical details of the work permit application procedure. Besides a lack of financial incentives, many refugees lack information on the process of obtaining a work permit and often do not see the advantage of working formally.

Building capacity to ensure enforcement and compliance with labour law

To strengthen enforcement and compliance with the labour law, the ILO in **Turkey** has conducted training courses for labour law judges, social security auditors and labour inspectors in 2018 and 2019. Owing to COVID-19 restrictions, training for 2020 had to be postponed. So far, close to 15 per cent of all social security auditors, 20 per cent of all labour inspectors and 20 per cent of all labour judges have been trained on relevant legislation protecting the labour rights of refugees. This was of fundamental importance given that the legislation applying to refugees is relatively new – as such, the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, and the subsequent Temporary Protection Regulation as well as Work Permit Regulations for temporary and international protection applicants and holders respectively, and the International Labour Force Law, were all adopted between 2013 and 2016.

Moving towards inclusion in social protection systems

Transitional social protection schemes can support the gradual integration of refugees into public social protection systems. In several countries, the ILO has assessed the current social protection policy and regulatory frameworks and programmes, with the aim of covering the entire population with basic social protection floors and progressively improving coverage over time.

Since 2014, through a partnership on social health protection, the ILO and UNHCR have worked in several West and Central African countries, but also in Jordan, to strengthen advocacy and provide technical support towards the inclusion of refugees in national social health protection systems. The aim of this partnership is to identify opportunities and strategies to integrate refugees into national social protection systems, with health as a starting point.

Rwanda: Advocating for refugees' integration into national health protection system

A promising example in this regard has been **Rwanda**. In 2017, the Rwandan Government pledged to integrate refugees gradually into the national social health protection system. The ILO and UNHCR conducted a technical feasibility study the following year. In September 2019, the enrolment of refugees living in urban areas began, and the Rwandan government started issuing identity cards. The feasibility study effectively revealed close links between legal protection measures for refugees, such as access to identification documents in the host country, and administrative barriers to accessing social protection and care. Just over 6,200 adults and children are now covered by the national community-based health insurance scheme (CBHI).[130] The short-term goal is to enrol the 12,000 refugees living in urban areas onto the system, with this coverage to be extended to those living in camps at a later stage.[131] Adaptations are discussed in the context of an MoU between the ministry responsible for refugees, the CBHI and UNHCR, with the aim of ensuring that refugees can access conditions similar to those enjoyed by host communities. This will involve applying a contribution categorization system to refugees, with registration and membership renewal procedures similar to those available to Rwandan households operating in the informal economy. In the future, the cost of health coverage will be shared between refugees and the UNHCR, which will continue to cover contributions for children, people in vulnerable circumstances and those with specific needs.

[130] As of November 2019.
[131] UNHCR and ILO (2019).

Social protection has also proved to be an indispensible element of the COVID-19 crisis response. The inclusion of refugees in government measures relating to social protection benefits, notably social health protection and cash transfers, is critical to preventing them from slipping further into poverty.[132]



©UNHCR/ Anthony Karumba, Urban refugees in Kigali are enrolled in the national social health insurance scheme (contributions paid by UNHCR) which covers primary and secondary healthcare as per nationals.

Addressing child labour and forced labour

Displaced persons are vulnerable to violence and exploitation including forced labour, child labour, debt bondage and human trafficking. While the ILO actions on forced labour (including human trafficking) in situations of displacement have been relatively limited on the ground, the organization is conducting further research in this area with the objective of tailored interventions to tackle this major protection challenge. It is common to observe negative coping strategies among refugees and other FDPs in sending children to work rather than school, with a spike in child labour in host countries. Responding to this two-fold challenge, the ILO aligns its work with national action plans against child labour to ensure that labour rights that were respected before the crisis are not jeopardized as a result of a displacement situation. In addition, including child labour within vulnerability assessment frameworks is an effective way of increasing knowledge around protection and work rights

[132] ILO (2020a).

for refugees. At the global level, the ILO and UNHCR are strongly involved in a number of initiatives addressing these issues, including Alliance 8.7, aimed at meeting Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 through "immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms".[133]

According to the ILO, owing to the COVID-19 situation, approximately 42–66 million children could fall into extreme poverty.[134] The disruption in education and the absence of e-learning opportunities in developing nations could contribute towards increased child labour practices. The loss of employment opportunities and the signification reduction of wages have driven families to push their children into labour to generate additional income. Because of lockdown measures, many schools are closed, and most of the children are engaged in the informal economy where they can easily be absorbed as unskilled labourers.[135] In addition to the risk of child labour, many children, especially girls, might have to undertake more household duties, including care responsibilities for younger siblings. Criminal networks may use this global crisis as an opportunity to further exploit children, and the disruption of a protection system might push the children to accept the worst forms of child labour.

Combating child labour and forced labour in displacement contexts

Realizing that child labour was quickly becoming one of the biggest child-protection challenges among the Syrian refugee communities in both **Lebanon** and **Jordan**, the ILO has ensured that international labour standards and human rights, specifically the Fundamental Conventions C.138 and 182 on the worst forms of child labour and minimum ages of work, were respected and better understood. At a regional level, the ILO worked with UNICEF and UNHCR to design and publish a strategic plan to eliminate child labour as part of the refugee crisis response.[136] In Jordan, the ILO has a specific focus on child labour in the agriculture sector, which has set up case management systems in agricultural communities in coordination with UNICEF. Child labour was included within the vulnerability assessment framework population study of Syrian refugees in Jordan, an area where the ILO was able to contribute information useful to both the protection capacity and jobs and livelihoods clusters. In addition, two child-labour assessments were carried out to determine the nature, pattern, distribution, dynamics and causes of child labour in the informal agricultural and urban sectors for Jordanians and Syrian refugees. Recommendations were made

[133] Alliance 8.7.

[134] ILO (2020), COVID-19 impact on child labour and forced labour: The response of the IPEC+ Flagship Programme.

[135] ILO and UNICEF (2020) COVID-19 and child labour: A time of crisis, a time to act.

[136] See ILO (2018a: 40–41) for a detailed case study of tackling child labour among host and refugee communities in Lebanon.

regarding policy options, including regulations and protective measures to tackle child labour.[137] The ILO was involved in the 2019 Vulnerablity Assessment for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon which confirms stable figures in terms of child labour from 2018 to 2019.[138]



©UNHCR/S.Baldwin.

In **Syria**, the ILO has been promoting rights at work and preventing child labour by supporting UNHCR community centre case managers, as well as local school principals through training aimed to help them monitor and identify cases of the worst forms of child labour among the internally displaced and host population, and to offer follow-up to address these cases.

In **Mauritania**, within the different economic activities among refugees and the host population, forced labour exploitation can take several different forms. It can range from servile practices still found among groups of religious kinship who develop agricultural, pastoral (cattle) and commercial activities requiring a significant supply of labour, to more modern forms, such as abuse in sub-contracting informal construction or service providers. These are the so-called vestiges of slavery, because of long-standing practices of ethnic and social discrimination. In July 2019, the ILO, together with local authorities and trade unions, convened the first forum in the area of Bassiknou (close to the Malian border) to raise awareness among refugees and host communities about labour exploitation and the importance of decent work conditions and OSH. The ILO's current intervention intends to address the roots of forced labour in the rural/ informal economy. This means, above all, tackling the decent work deficits that increase susceptibility to forced labour, linked to the vestiges of slavery in Mauritanian and Malian society.

[137] ILO (2014a) and (2014b).

[138] UN 2019, Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.



©ILO/Alfredo Caliz, ILO project in Mauritania.

In 2016, Mauritania ratified the Forced Labour Protocol and Recommendation, providing the country with the necessary legal and policy framework to prevent forced labour and the worst forms of child labour. The ILO has organized awareness-raising and training sessions in Bassikounou in 2020 to promote fundamental principles and rights at work, discuss minimum standards in OSH as well as discussing basic social security guarantees by promoting regional health insurance funds in coordination with the Ministry of Health (SDG Fund on social protection). The approach will be based on a "tripartite plus"[139] sector dialogue in the key economic sectors of the region, such as the livestock and the domestic sectors, promoting informal worker associations and collective bargaining.

This will be organized in parallel to the existing interventions to build the vocational and technical skills of rural and informal economy workers as part of a broader approach to addressing informality.

Avoiding unfair competition between refugees, migrant workers and nationals

Understanding how migrant workers and nationals are impacted by large-scale arrivals of refugees, as well as related employment and decent work interventions such as work permit regulations and procedures for refugees, is critical for the development of inclusive, conflict-sensitive interventions. This is also important for the development of forward-looking strategies that consider the labour-market needs of the respective host countries in the medium and long terms.

[139] The term "tripartism plus" refers to situations where traditional tripartite partners (governments, employers, and workers' representatives) choose to open up the dialogue and engage with other civil society groups, to gain a wider perspective and consensus on issues in and beyond the world of work.

Avoiding competition for jobs between locals, refugees and migrant workers

In **Jordan** there are now distinct groups of workers: Jordanians, migrant workers and Syrian refugees. Because all three groups are present in significant numbers, the challenges for any group must be addressed within the context of the labour market as a whole. The 200,000 jobs that were to be created for Syrian refugees under the Jordan Compact[140] are secured through the formalization of existing jobs, while reliance on migrant workers in certain sectors – workers who might be consequently excluded from the labour market – is decreasing. Indeed, Jordan has put a moratorium on the entry of new migrant workers in all sectors apart from domestic work and the garment sector. There is a higher level of competition emerging between local workers, migrant workers and refugees in the informal economy. While 190,000 work permits have been issued by Jordan to Syrian refugees since 2016, and while ILO Jordan assisted with the job placement of about 13,500 beneficiaries up to end of 2019 (out of which about 4,750 were refugees), these numbers do not coincide strictly with the actual number of refugees who find sustainable employment.[141] Informality ultimately places downward pressure on working conditions and wages in the formal sector. In accordance with the ILO Fair Migration Agenda, ILO interventions seek to ensure that migrant or national workers are not adversely affected, through increased labour market segmentation and competition for lower wages and working conditions and that all workers have access to decent work. In this work, advocacy work is ongoing with other UN and development partners.[142]



©ILO, ILO Support to Syrian refugee and hosting communities in Jordan. Local residents of Irbid receive training on olive tree pruning which is part of ILO's efforts to help local communities enhance their production of olives.

[140] Through the Jordan Compact (2016), Jordan committed to improved access to the labour market for its Syrian refugees, in return for significant grants, loans and preferential trade agreements with the European Union (see Gordon (2019) for a detailed analysis of ILO involvement in the Jordan and Ethiopia Compacts).

[141] ILO's Support to Syrian Refugees and Host Communities: Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt.

[142] ILO (2018a).

Targeting strategies to aspirations and needs of women

Gender can be another disadvantage for refugee workers. In Turkey, for example, according to an ILO analysis of national labour force survey data, Syrian men workers earned 95 per cent of the minimum wage, while Syrian women earned only 77 per cent.[143] In the context of economic recession or crisis, as in the COVID-19 crisis, women are often the first to lose their jobs. This can be because of the significantly greater care demands on women and the reduced time available for paid work, leading them to take up non-standard forms of employment, such as part-time work. Women's over-representation in the informal economy, notably in the services sector, which has been hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 crisis, also contributes to keeping them out of jobs.[144]

To support working women as well as the access of women to the formal labour market, long-term and targeted strategies that take into account women's specific challenges and needs have to be designed.[145] In displacement situations, some women may find themselves propelled into the labour market as the primary breadwinners although they had never worked before, or they may take on additional caring roles in the absence of state services. Opportunities for women to take up new roles may emerge from such sudden changes, challenging traditional power dynamics while significant risks must also be addressed. The labour force participation rate of female refugees in host communities is often low, even though many refugee households are headed by women. They are often more vulnerable to discriminatory practices, and ensuring their inclusion requires specific actions. Early gender analysis and impact assessments for evidence-based advocacy can improve women's access to the labour market and gender equality. Their concerns and needs must be included in national and international frameworks and decent employment programmes. Women in host communities and among refugees benefit from conditions where they and their families feel they can engage in jobs (e.g. through the provision of transport, childcare centres, and so forth) where discrimination in the workplace is systematically tackled. Programmes that support refugee women through home-based work and business, including selling food or handicrafts, may be well adapted in certain contexts. Having separate spaces for women's training and activities may also help women to feel at ease to learn and engage.[146]

SADA Women Development Solidarity Center: inclusive approaches to livelihoods assistance

In Gazantiep, **Turkey**, the SADA Women Development and Solidarity Centre, managed by UN Women with the support of the Gaziantep municipality, the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) and the ILO,

143 ILO (2020b).
144 ILO (2020a).
145 Gordon (2019: 31–32).
146 ILO (2018a, 2019a).

is a good example of how livelihoods assistance can reach women. The SADA centre uses a holistic approach and in addition to psychosocial and legal support, women can access livelihoods assistance.

The ILO is providing vocational courses as well as basic life and market skills training programmes and has established a role model system for the empowerment of women. Furthermore, in 2019, the ILO supported the establishment of the SADA women's cooperative giving women access to income-generating activities. In March 2019, 50 Turkish, Syrian and Afghan women established a cooperative with a diverse portfolio, producing handbags and wallets, besides providing catering services and manufacturing home textiles. With their motto "stronger together", the women's inclusive, economically and socially cohesive business model was chosen as one of the top ten successful scale-up projects out of 114 showcased at the Paris Peace Forum 2019 – a Global Platform for Governance projects.



© **ILO/Gamze Orhun,** SADA Women Development and Solidarity Centre participated in the 2nd Festival of Women's Cooperatives organized by Antalya Muratpaşa Municipality in Turkey.

By diversifying economic sectors and setting specific quotas for women participants, the number of women benefiting from employment-intensive investment programmes can be increased. As long as the sectors selected are male-oriented, such as construction, it will be difficult to have a large impact on women's access to the labour market beyond agriculture.[147]

[147] ILO (2018a).

Providing new employment opportunities for women through EIIP

In **Jordan**, a specific gender strategy was developed for EIIP programmes, [148]including, beyond a quota of 10 per cent female women beneficiaries, the promotion of gender-friendly work environments and raising awareness of the community, institutions and EIIP staff to address gender stereotypes and have zero tolerance for sexual harassment and violence, both physical and verbal, at work. Ultimately, through these procedures, the participation of women in the project increased from 13 per cent soon after the project started in 2016 to around 26 per cent by the end of 2019.[149]

In **Mauritania**, through the EIIP project, some 30 per cent of the beneficiaries targeted were women. By feminizing jobs traditionally reserved for men, the ILO is providing new opportunities for excluded women. They are trained as masons, bricklayers and over the importance of renewable energies. Training includes specific themes to prevent gender discrimination and promote social change for the inclusion of women in the labour market.

Including psychosocial support in employment programmes

Refugee inclusion work programmes must consider psychosocial aspects of displacement. Refugees attempting to access employment are faced with a range of psychosocial concerns from cultural differences to language barriers, as well as trauma encountered in the country of origin and during displacement, which can all serve as obstacles in adapting to the workplace. The psychosocial effects of displacement can seriously impede people's capabilities to integrate successfully into society and the labour market. In order to address these issues, this dimension requires special attention and closer engagement with partners with specific expertise.

Psychosocial support in Indonesia

In **Indonesia**, psychosocial well-being sessions were included in the Ready for Business entrepreneurship programme. Refugees were provided with self-care techniques and given tools for dealing with depression, loss and grief by the Lifespring Counseling and Care Center.

[148] The ILO has also developed specific guidelines on how to include gender into EIIP programmes (ILO 2015).
[149] The current phase is not concluded yet, and the latest figures might vary at the end of the phase.

4.4. Partnership, coordination and coherence

A variety of international, bilateral, national and non-governmental organizations provide assistance to FDPs. Development-type interventions form an increasingly integral part of the CRRF, which addresses the immediate and long-term needs of FDPs and host communities. In managing challenges arising from different objectives, timelines and organizational cultures, it has been crucial for the ILO to build a strong institutional partnership with the UNHCR and other UN agencies. This is fundamental to contributing towards a comprehensive effort from the onset, learning from each other and building synergies based on a pragmatic analysis of their respective comparative advantages.

Integrating assistance to refugees with long-term development planning

There is a need to integrate and maximize positive interplay between assistance to refugees and local and national development plans. Furthermore, as governments continue to develop measures to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, it is critical that refugee workers be integrated into the recovery and development strategies as full participants to ensure cohesive, sustainable rehabilitation. The crisis also offers an opportunity to value the important contribution of refugee workers to societies and economies, while reconsidering the structural barriers to their labour market integration.

Aligning refugee initiatives for decent work with national development plans is key to ensuring national ownership and the sustainability of outcomes, and to strengthening social stability. To this end, the ILO has brought together the government, social partners and various other stakeholders to integrate measures across the HDP nexus in forced displacement settings with medium- to long-term development plans and sustainable development goals.

Supporting the integration of refugee and host communities into national and regional development plans

In **Turkey**, the government has adopted a resilience-based development approach, closely aligned with the National Development Plan as well as the National Employment Strategy and supported by the international community through the Turkey chapter of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). The 3RP constitutes a strategic partnership mechanism between governments, donors, UN agencies and NGOs which has led to the creation of a refugee response combining humanitarian and development elements. In this context, the ILO has an important role to play in bridging the humanitarian-development divide: the ILO is supporting the strengthening of linkages between the protection/basic needs sectors and the livelihoods sector under the 3RP, so that protection issues are addressed and durable solutions are found.

The Government of **Uganda** serves as a model example in affording refugees in Uganda access to the same rights as its citizens, including the right to work. Within the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework for Uganda, the government integrates host and refugee communities' specific development concerns in its national and regional development plan. Recently, Uganda's Second National Development Plan (NDP II, from 2015–16 to 2019–20) aims to assist refugees and host communities by promoting socio-economic development in refugee-hosting areas through the Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA).[150]

In **Jordan**, an ILO Response Coordinator was embedded within the government to facilitate advocacy work and build capacity. This in turn garnered a closer relationship with the MoL and its partners, which contributed towards greater opportunities to advocate for change around access to the labour market for Syrian refugees.[151]

Partnering closely with local governments and social partners

Building close partnerships with government officials at national and local levels creates opportunities for advocacy work and capacity building, and further aligning refugee programming with national development priorities. The approach of working through national institutions ("embedded approach") from the beginning of a crisis is an efficient and effective way of working that ensures national ownership and sustainability of outcomes. However, early investment in institutional capacity building is critical.

Tripartism and social dialogue are essential for the effective and locally legitimate access to work interventions and an essential comparative advantage of the ILO. Refugees are not always allowed to join a union or to own a business, despite clear ILS and statements of the Committee on Freedom of Association as to the obligations of governments in this regard, as well as government obligations under ILO Convention 87 to allow all workers to join a trade union. In these situations, advocating for changes in legislations or government regulations is needed for more inclusive social dialogue. The ILO helps to establish and/or strengthen coordination and dialogue mechanisms among and between national and international actors, including the main government institutions, social partners and the private sector. This is done to improve efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of action related to labour market protection for host and refugee workers.

[150] Government of Uganda (2019).
[151] ILO (2018a).

Building social dialogue for refugee response

As with the issuance of work permits in **Jordan** and **Lebanon**, or the matching and recognition of skills in **Turkey**, the ILO has effectively worked with and through the social partners, as well as chambers and cooperatives, to facilitate innovative, effective approaches to enhance labour market access of refugees and other FDPs. Consultation of employer and worker organizations has equally ensured that reservations as well as practical challenges associated with enhanced labour market access inform ILO approaches early on, contributing to the buy-in that ILO activities have subsequently enjoyed among local social partners and hosting communities. Partnerships with workers and employer organizations also ensure that skills training is tailored to immediate and medium-term labour market needs. In some refugee contexts, vocational training is treated as a goal in itself, rather than an instrument to support employability and access to the labour market. To ensure a link to actual job opportunities, the needs of the labour market and the validity of existing training programmes have to be assessed in partnership with workers and employers' organizations, including chambers of industry.



©ILO, ILO and constituents share experiences and good practices on the inclusion of refugees and displaced persons in the labour market during a two-day knowledge-sharing event.

Promoting cross-governmental and international knowledge exchange

Tailored training courses bringing together relevant government departments and social partners within host countries may serve as important platforms to exchange knowledge and experiences, thus supporting specialized aspects of labour market governance. A wide range of national and local actors, including social partners, labour inspection and labour administration actors, and other partners addressing protection needs in the labour market, deal with the decent work dimension of forced displacement to their country. In this context,

coordination is key, but often difficult. Moreover, specific South-South events where national actors are able to exchange good practices across countries affected by similar challenges are especially valued by ILO partners. A large majority of refugees are hosted by neighbouring countries – many of them developing countries. While each context is specific, with governments and social partners dealing with unique circumstances, similarities in political and technical challenges are also encountered, and the sharing of experiences in dealing with them may be valuable and potentially replicable. For these reasons, the ILO supports the organization of international conferences, South-South workshops, and study trips.

Sharing knowledge and experiences across countries

In 2018 the ILO in **Turkey** supported the organization of a knowledge- and experience-sharing international conference on social protection and migration. Supporting SSI, the ILO invited international experts on social security from the ILO, which represented a great opportunity for partners to learn more about international standards and good practices to include migrants and refugees in social security schemes.

In 2019, the ILO Office for Arab States, in cooperation with the ILO in Turkey, brought together tripartite constituents from **Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey** and **Iraq** to engage in an ILO-led South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) initiative. During a study tour to sites and interventions in Turkey, followed by a similar study tour and regional conference in Jordan, constituents were able to exchange knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how in addressing the employment and livelihood needs of Syrian refugees and members of their host countries in the region. The initiative allowed constituents to gain first-hand experience on achievements and ways to address challenges faced in their respective countries in promoting decent work and job creation in crisis settings. The constituents who participated in this initiative did appreciate the opportunity to exchange and discuss approaches and to further build cooperation and coherence to promote decent work in their respective countries.[152]

At the end of 2019, the ILO and the ITCILO in Turin organized a two-day knowledge-sharing workshop in Jordan that brought together ILO experts and constituents from across the Arab region, Turkey and Ethiopia, to exchange case studies and good practices on the inclusion of refugees and displaced persons in the labour market with a humanitarian development focus. Participants did learn from sharing experiences and not just in terms of success stories, but also from the challenges faced in regional and global crisis responses. This knowledge exchange followed a two-day study tour of sites, including farms and a garment

[152] For more information on the ILO-led South-South and Triangular Cooperation see: Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey.

factory and interventions such as ILO employment centres being implemented by the ILO in Jordan as part of its Programme of Support to the Jordan Compact, which promotes economic growth, job creation and quality service delivery in the country. This initiative contributed towards ILO's efforts to encourage a more coherent approach to the promotion of decent work in crisis settings through adaptation and improvement of its programmes and responses in future interventions.[153]

Institutionalizing partnerships across the HDP nexus

The success of actors across the HDP nexus depends on the ability of agencies to collaborate, despite diverging timeframes and indicators of success. The overall effectiveness of international efforts to promote self-reliance and achieve comprehensive decent work approaches for the forcibly displaced depends on effective coordination and collaboration across the HDP nexus, and among development agencies themselves. Diverging timeframes of humanitarian and development actors, and associated differences in standard operating procedures regarding funding, programme planning and implementation and reporting, continue to make cooperation across the HDP nexus difficult in practice. As a *development* agency, the ILO tends to have longer programming cycles, many of its interventions take time to show results, and administrative procedures continue to hamper the quick deployment of staff on the ground. Humanitarian actors, on the other hand, work on more short-term budgetary cycles towards necessarily quantifiable targets of quickly delivered services to target populations, with short cause and effect relations between assistance and outcomes.[154]

Coordinated action and coherence thus lies at the core of the comprehensive refugee response framework, the Global Compact on Refugees, and the overall ongoing reform of the United Nations humanitarian and development system, which addresses fragmentation and duplication. Progress made on the "New Way of Working" includes the country-wide definition of collective outcomes – concrete and measurable results that humanitarian, development and other relevant actors want to achieve jointly over a period of three to five years, to reduce people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities and increase their resilience.[155]

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[153] A two-day knowledge-sharing event on the Inclusion of refugees and displaced persons in the labour market with a humanitarian development focus; for more details on the case studies, models of intervention and good practices, see the workshop booklet.

[154] Yet this is true mostly of the more immediate crisis response context, whereas in ongoing displacement crises such as that of Palestinian refugees under UNRWA protection, the differences in time frames are usually a lot less significant.

[155] UN (2019).

ILO-UNHCR Collaboration

Increasing institutionalization of the partnership has been crucial to combine effectively the UNHCR's protection expertise with the ILO's development expertise, both at headquarters and in the field. Between 2003 and 2007, the "ILO-UNHCR Partnership through Technical Cooperation: Socio-economic integration of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons"[156] was established. The partnership promoted sustainable livelihoods of refugees, returnees and IDPs, as well as durable solutions to displacement in 15 countries in Africa, Latin America, Central and South Asia and South Eastern Europe. In recent years, the ILO has collaborated with the UNHCR on its 2014–2018 "Global Strategy for Livelihoods" as well as its 2019–2023 "Economic Inclusion Strategy". In this context, the ILO's Small and Medium Enterprises Unit and UNHCR's Livelihoods Unit have teamed up to conduct market and value chain analysis in 16 countries, which have then formed a basis for UNHCR economic inclusion and livelihoods strategies in these same countries. Furthermore, an annual ILO-UNHCR Training Course on the Approach to Inclusive Market Systems helps build the capacity of UNHCR economic inclusion and refugee livelihoods staff as well as other development practitioners on market-based approaches to refugee livelihoods, thus contributing to mutual learning between the organizations.

Moreover, under the same partnership, ILO and UNHCR conduct joint market assessments, rapid market appraisals and value-chain analyses, which then inform UNHCR livelihood strategies and constitute the basis for joint ILO-UNHCR fundraising and programmes on refugee livelihoods. For instance, a recent ILO-UNHCR market systems assessment using the Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS) in Niger led to a BPRM-funded three-year project, developed on the basis of the recommendations from the assessment, which is being implemented by ILO Niger with the support of UNHCR Niger.

Not only has the ILO-UNHCR collaboration on refugee livelihoods enabled effective LED strategies for hosting communities and refugees, but it has also served as a mutual learning exercise between the two agencies. On the one hand, the ILO serves a strong demand among UNHCR colleagues who aim to build their capacity to plan and implement market-based livelihood activities for refugees' self-reliance effectively. On the other hand, the project has equally helped the ILO to better adapt its LED and employment instruments to the specific needs of FDPs and their hosting communities, as well as to the additional political and geographical challenges inherent to development cooperation in asylum situations.[157]

[156] ILO (2007).
[157] ILO and UNHCR (2017).

Underpinned by the application of the CRRF and its programme of action, the ILO and UNHCR renewed their joint commitment to support the access of refugees to decent work and sustainable comprehensive solutions through a revised ILO-UNHCR Memorandum of Understanding in 2016. The MoU is further reinforced through the development of a concrete and comprehensive operational joint action plan to maximize combined institutional strengths and cross the divide between humanitarian action and development cooperation. The joint action plan, initially for the 2017–2019 biennium and now for the 2020–2021 period is formulated around three key goals:

- Improved governance of access to the labour market and decent work for refugees and their host communities, and other persons of concern to the UNHCR;
- Strengthened ILO fundamental principles and rights at work, improved working conditions and social protection for refugees and other persons of concern to the UNHCR;
- Increased opportunities for jobs, skills and lifelong learning, income and livelihoods for refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR, as well as for host communities.



© **ILO/Abdel Hameed Al Nasier,** Syrian refugee response in Jordan. The Zaatari Office for Employment, set up by the ILO and UNHCR, facilitates access to formal work opportunities across Jordan for refugees living in the camp.

Focusing on the ILO's key added value of mainstreaming decent work

Through the Decent Work Agenda, the ILO seeks to link effective employment creation to broader aspects of its core mandate: improving the quality of jobs, ensuring fundamental principles and rights at work; boosting social protection; facilitating – and working through – social dialogue between the government, workers and employers; addressing informality and fighting unacceptable forms of work and child labour.

Maximizing ILO's added value through an upstream/downstream approach

In **Jordan** and **Lebanon** especially, the ILO's consistent inclusion of national workers has gained it a reputation as being unbiased and reliable, while its tripartite structure creates a built-in emphasis on working with and through local structures, namely local governments, employers' and workers' organizations. On the downstream level, the ILO's involvement is seen as an "insurance" that jobs created through assistance projects will be decent, including social protection measures and appropriate pay. Upstream, the ILO has emerged as a "go-to partner" for host governments to design policies and define the terms of access to labour markets which also meet the needs of host communities and the local work force. Implementing an upstream/downstream model is therefore key to maximize ILO's added value.[158]

Through its co-facilitation of coordination structures, the ILO can assist other UN organizations in mainstreaming the Decent Work approach into their programmes and actions. Supporting access to decent work is the ILO's key differentiator compared with other development partners. Whenever the ILO was able to take over organizational duties within the UN structure, the scope of its employment interventions widened significantly, and the ILO was able to further promote its Decent Work agenda.

[158] ILO (2018a).

Supporting harmonized cash-for-work programmes

Highlighting one way to mainstream decent work across the HDP nexus, the ILO, as a 2018 co-facilitator of the livelihoods/employment task force of the **Jordan** Response Plan (JRP), has been supporting the government to harmonize practices related to cash-for-work programmes implemented by various agencies, in order to bring them under the scope of the labour code.[159] Core principles have been agreed with these agencies, including standard wages, and a manual is being designed to elaborate on them. It will serve as a reference for practitioners on future knowledge-management efforts, but also for the government, donors, and potential new agencies starting activities in this field.[160]

[159] The ILO played a similar facilitator role through the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCPR).
[160] ILO (2018a: 50).

5. Conclusion

Forced displacement is one of the defining international challenges of our time. The arrival of large numbers of FDPs impacts labour markets and the economic development of affected countries and regions. This is true of situations of internal as well as cross-border displacement. Even if governments choose not to extend the right to work to refugees and asylum-seekers, many will seek informal income opportunities, with potentially harmful consequences for both incoming and hosting populations.

Through its programmes, the ILO has been advocating for decent and productive work as a durable solution to displacement which can benefit everyone, as a win-win approach lessening dependency on humanitarian assistance, giving back dignity to those affected by displacement and fostering LED in regions hosting those seeking refuge. Moreover, employment creates development opportunities for host communities and refugees alike, promotes social cohesion through inter-group contact and can address grievances and the sense of injustice, hence helping to prevent localized social tensions around displacement crises.

The ILO has applied a balanced, comprehensive approach to employment and livelihood promotion of hosting and forcibly displaced communities, building their skills and assets as well as boosting – and tackling hurdles to – the demand for labour in hosting regions. Increasingly institutionalized partnerships, which builds on a clear understanding of respective comparative advantages, have improved coordination and joint working. The ILO continues to adapt its toolbox of employment instruments to the specific circumstances and needs of its constituents in hosting states, FDPs and members of hosting communities. As ILO work in this area is expected to grow further throughout the coming years, continuous learning and refinement of instruments is called for, to which this compendium has aimed to contribute.

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