



TRANSATLANTIC  
COUNCIL *on*  
MIGRATION

*A Project of the Migration Policy Institute*

---

# BUILDING LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFUGEE POPULATIONS: LESSONS FROM PAST PRACTICE

---

By Karen Jacobsen and Susan Fratzke

# **BUILDING LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFUGEE POPULATIONS**

## Lessons from Past Practice

Karen Jacobsen and Susan Fratzke

September 2016

# Acknowledgments

The authors thank Joel Hernandez for his excellent research assistance, and Lauren Shaw and Michelle Mittelstadt for their editing and support preparing this report for publication. Finally, the authors thank the participants of the January 2016 Transatlantic Council on Migration meeting for their substantive comments and feedback.

This research was commissioned by the Transatlantic Council on Migration, an initiative of the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), for its fifteenth plenary meeting, held in Berlin in January 2016. The meeting's theme was "Development, Mobility, Protection: Building Opportunity into Refugee Solutions," and this report was among those that informed the Council's discussions.

The Council is a unique deliberative body that examines vital policy issues and informs migration policymaking processes in North America and Europe. The Council's work is generously supported by the following foundations and governments: Open Society Foundations, Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Barrow Cadbury Trust, the Luso-American Development Foundation, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and the governments of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) also provided generous support to the Council for the January 2016 meeting and this series of reports.

For more on the Transatlantic Council on Migration, please visit: [www.migrationpolicy.org/transatlantic](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/transatlantic).

© 2016 Migration Policy Institute.  
All Rights Reserved.

Cover Design: Danielle Tinker, MPI  
Typesetting: Liz Heimann, MPI

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from the Migration Policy Institute. A full-text PDF of this document is available for free download from [www.migrationpolicy.org](http://www.migrationpolicy.org).

Information for reproducing excerpts from this report can be found at [www.migrationpolicy.org/about/copyright-policy](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/about/copyright-policy). Inquiries can also be directed to [communications@migrationpolicy.org](mailto:communications@migrationpolicy.org).

Suggested citation: Jacobsen, Karen and Susan Fratzke. 2016. *Building Livelihood Opportunities for Refugee Populations: Lessons from Past Practice*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.



# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	1
<b>I. Introduction</b> .....	2
<b>II. Implementing Livelihood Programming for Refugees: Goals, Actors, and Strategies</b> .....	4
A. Goals of Livelihood Programming.....	5
B. Livelihood Strategies .....	6
<b>III. Evaluating the Pitfalls and Potential of Livelihood Programs</b> .....	11
A. Political and Economic Constraints .....	12
B. Refugee Motivations and Experience .....	19
C. Insufficient and Unpredictable Funding.....	22
D. Lack of Experience and Skills among Implementing Partners.....	23
E. Inadequate Incorporation of Host-Community Actors in Programming.....	25
<b>IV. Conclusions</b> .....	27
<b>Works Cited</b> .....	30
<b>About the Authors</b> .....	38



## Executive Summary

Most refugee situations are not resolved quickly. Instead, they become protracted, stretching over years or even decades, often without a clear end in sight. Because of this, it has become more important than ever to find ways to better integrate refugees into countries of first asylum, particularly by ensuring they have access to livelihoods and economic opportunities. For aid agencies, helping refugees become economically self-sufficient holds the promise of reducing mounting costs—particularly in a time of dwindling budgets—and of helping refugees find long-term solutions to their displacement. For countries that contribute humanitarian support to refugees in first-asylum countries, there is an element of self-interest in pursuing livelihood programming: creating viable long-term solutions elsewhere may serve to slow the arrival of refugees at their own borders, many of whom are fleeing poor conditions in first-asylum countries in addition to persecution at home. Yet despite the surging interest and investment, including at the highest political levels, refugee livelihoods is a relatively new field that must work through a number of growing pains and implementation challenges before it can live up to its potential.

---

*It has become more important than ever to find ways to better integrate refugees into countries of first asylum.*

---

Livelihood programs and interventions have typically been designed and implemented by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), often in collaboration with international humanitarian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Donor governments exert a certain amount of influence on program design and goals by directing funding to particular projects or regions, while host governments exert control over the legal and policy frameworks in which interventions are implemented. Recently, efforts have been made to draw nontraditional partners, such as diaspora groups and the private sector, into program design and implementation.

Livelihood programs are generally divided into “supply-side” strategies (programs that aim to boost refugee employability or facilitate entrepreneurship) and “demand-side” strategies (initiatives to create work opportunities or connect refugees with employers). Supply-side strategies include skills-building programs (such as vocational, language, and job skills training), technology access and training programs, and microfinance and credit initiatives. Demand-side strategies can take the form of job-creation programs that pay refugees for work, initiatives to support refugee participation in agriculture and farming, and efforts to connect refugees to online work opportunities.

Whether aid agencies and donors choose to invest in supply- or demand-side initiatives, the success of livelihood efforts is generally shaped by factors external to the programs themselves—factors that are often not accounted for in program design. These include in particular:

- ***The political and policy context in the host country.*** Although refugee access to work is protected under the 1951 Refugee Convention, many of the countries that host the largest refugee populations are not Convention signatories or choose not to fully comply with the spirit of the Convention. Governments may explicitly deny refugees legal status or work permits, or refugees may face other practical or legal barriers (such as fees or restrictions on employment outside of shortage occupations) that limit their access to work in practice. Programs to build the skills or entrepreneurship capacity of refugees will find little success in a restrictive policy environment. In addition, the political mood of governments toward their refugee populations can change quickly, making it difficult for agencies and refugees themselves to implement long-term livelihood strategies.



- ***The types and extent of economic opportunities available in the host economy.*** Humanitarian agencies will only be able to successfully connect refugees with employers or train them for specific jobs if such opportunities actually exist in the host-country economy and if employers are willing to hire refugee workers. Livelihood programs are often not designed with the local labor market context and needs in mind, with the result that even those refugees who successfully complete training programs may not be able to find work. Employers may be reluctant to hire refugees, even after legal barriers are removed, due to concerns about refugees' skills, security concerns, or discrimination.
- ***The capacity and willingness of refugees to invest in livelihoods.*** The willingness of refugees to commit to finding legal work or developing livelihood strategies in first-asylum countries cannot be taken as a given. In many cases, refugees remain interested in eventually returning to their country of origin or moving onward (illegally or through resettlement) to settle in a third country. In these cases, refugees may be reluctant to invest in work or programs (e.g., to learn the host-country language) that they see as tying them to the country of first asylum. Finally, the scope of livelihood programs is limited by the capital and capacity of refugees themselves. A refugee population with very low levels of basic education or literacy is unlikely to be quickly connected with opportunities in labor markets that emphasize higher level skills.

Refugee livelihood programming tends to be hindered by a number of other shortcomings. Programs are launched without first mapping the local political and economic landscape, and therefore are not designed with context-specific barriers or opportunities in mind. Second, livelihood initiatives are not subject to sufficient evaluation. To date, monitoring efforts have focused on how well programs meet targets (such as the number of beneficiaries served) rather than their impact on the lives of refugees. Third, there is a lack of coordination between the plethora of international agencies, NGOs, and local actors that engage in refugee support and livelihood development, with few international efforts aiming to complement existing local livelihood initiatives. Finally, as a relatively new and emerging field, refugee livelihood programming suffers from a lack of trained and knowledgeable staff to design and implement initiatives.

As efforts to promote refugee self-sufficiency in first-asylum countries gain traction, international agencies, donor governments, and implementing partners can improve programming by taking several simple actions. First, donors and international agencies should conduct market, political, and policy mapping of the local context before investing, and ensure that programming is designed on the basis of these findings. Second, donor governments could pair livelihood assistance with diplomatic advocacy to promote host-country policies that grant refugees the right to work. And finally, implementing agencies and partners should prioritize the knowledge of refugees, host communities, and local actors, who are best placed to understand local needs and opportunities.

## I. Introduction

Since the delegation of international responsibility for refugees to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) after the Second World War, the dominant response to refugee situations has been focused on the “care and maintenance” of refugee populations, often in large-scale camp settings. Humanitarian agencies provide relief in the form of basic needs (food, health care, shelter, and other services) to refugees in camps, and “maintain” them as long as the situation in their country of origin prevents them from returning.

The care and maintenance approach was built on the assumption that refugee situations are temporary and that refugees will soon return to their countries of origin. Yet of the 65.3 million forcibly displaced



people worldwide—some 21 million of whom were refugees as of 2016—more than 40 percent are in situations that have become protracted (ongoing for five years or more).<sup>1</sup> Protracted crises have become the norm. According to a recent study, between 1978 and 2014 less than one in 40 refugee crises were resolved within three years, and more than 80 percent were unresolved after ten years or more.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the rate at which refugees returned to their countries of origin in 2015 was the second lowest of any point in the preceding three decades.<sup>3</sup>

When return is not possible, there are two other “durable solutions” for refugees: creating a permanent home in the first-asylum country (becoming integrated into the local community) or finding another country that will allow them to settle there permanently, known as third-country resettlement. Because resettlement will only ever be an option for a very small number of refugees,<sup>4</sup> the most realistic solution for many is local integration. Most host countries, however, are reluctant to allow refugees to settle permanently and resist policies that encourage local integration. Unable to pursue citizenship and normal lives, refugees are forced to settle for a provisional existence, with connections to the formal labor market, education opportunities, and local services that are tenuous at best.

---

*Because resettlement will only ever be an option for a very small number of refugees, the most realistic solution for many is local integration.*

---

The legal and practical obstacles that block refugee access to self-sufficiency are among the biggest challenges facing the humanitarian community today, with long-term implications for regional stability, economic development, and social cohesion. The care and maintenance response is widely recognized by UNHCR and the humanitarian community as insufficient and ineffective, particularly in the face of the growing social and economic challenges refugee situations pose. Care and maintenance frequently fails to meet the basic needs of long-term refugees (especially when the assistance pipeline dries up or becomes blocked),<sup>5</sup> and it neglects their human development needs, preventing refugees from contributing to their own wellbeing and to economic and social development in their host countries.

---

1 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2016), [www.unhcr.org/576408cd7](http://www.unhcr.org/576408cd7).

2 The study included 91 refugee crises that had displaced 5,000 or more individuals between 1978 and 2014. See Nicholas Crawford, John Cosgrave, Simone Haysom, and Nadine Walicki, *Protracted Displacement: Uncertain Paths to Self-Reliance in Exile* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2015), 1, [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9851.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9851.pdf).

3 UNHCR, *UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2015* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2015), [www.unhcr.org/56701b969.html](http://www.unhcr.org/56701b969.html).

4 Globally, and over the past decades, less than 1 percent of refugees have been resettled in third countries. In 2014, out of 14,385,300 registered refugees under UNHCR's mandate (which excludes Palestinians), just 0.5 percent or 73,000 were able to be resettled in a third country through UNHCR (and of these, 48,911 were resettled in the United States). See UNHCR, *UNHCR Refugee Resettlement: Trends 2015* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2015), 7, [www.unhcr.org/559ce97f9.html](http://www.unhcr.org/559ce97f9.html); UNHCR, *World at War: Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2014* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2015), 21, <http://unhcr.org/556725e69.html>; U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2016* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 2015), ii, [www.state.gov/documents/organization/247982.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/247982.pdf).

5 Providing full assistance to camps is expensive, and as the number of refugees grows these costs increase. Camp budgets are routinely underfunded, and basic services unmet. Relief agencies frequently provide details of the underfunding of camps. In Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, for example, a shortfall in funding a year after the camp received an influx of refugees in 2011 led to a serious decline in camp conditions in 2012. See, Oxfam, *The Human Costs of the Funding Shortfalls for the Dadaab Refugee Camps* (Oxford: Oxfam, 2012), [www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/the-human-costs-of-the-funding-shortfalls-for-the-dadaab-refugee-camps.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/the-human-costs-of-the-funding-shortfalls-for-the-dadaab-refugee-camps.pdf).



Recognizing these limitations, donors and international agencies have increased their investments in programs that focus on the skills, experience, and economic value of refugees. The recent emphasis by UNHCR in particular on self-reliance and livelihood programming reflects recognition by the agency of the importance of local integration in sustainable responses to displacement. This report outlines the types of livelihood efforts that aid agencies have undertaken in countries of first asylum and explores the challenges they face in realizing the full promise of these approaches. The section that follows briefly describes the goals and approaches used by assistance providers to support livelihoods. Section III considers the limitations and shortcomings of such programs. Finally, the report concludes with observations on where political and financial investments by aid agencies and donors are most likely to yield rewards.

## II. Implementing Livelihood Programming for Refugees: Goals, Actors, and Strategies

Livelihood programs generally seek to increase the capacity of households and individuals to provide for themselves by protecting or enhancing their income, skills, and assets in ways that support their own priorities and goals.<sup>6</sup>

A wide range of traditional and new actors, including those from the private sector, are directly implementing various refugee livelihood initiatives. These actors include large international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), national and local NGOs, faith-based organizations, and various government departments. In recent years, most INGOs working with refugees have taken on livelihood programming and pro-livelihood advocacy both in camp and out-of-camp contexts.

---

*A wide range of traditional and new actors ... are directly implementing various refugee livelihood initiatives.*

---

UNHCR, as the largest actor and coordinator of humanitarian response in refugee situations, has been a major player in recent years, incorporating livelihoods as a major element of its response. The agency created a dedicated Livelihoods Unit in 2008 with the remit to undertake market and value chain analysis of refugee situations in order to identify potential employment and economic opportunities.<sup>7</sup> The unit acts in an advisory capacity to governments, aid agencies, and regional offices in devising their livelihood strategies. In 2014, UNHCR launched a Global Strategy for Livelihoods that promotes livelihood development as core UNHCR programming and offers guidelines for national and local operations.<sup>8</sup> The strategy is, however, still new and there are no monitoring data or evaluations yet to assess its medium- and long-term success in protracted refugee situations.

---

6 Livelihood programs can also include advocacy to encourage the government to prevent or stop patterns of abuse, restore personal dignity, ensure adequate living conditions, and foster an environment conducive to respect for the rights of individuals in accordance with the relevant bodies of law. Sylvie Giossi Caverzasio, *Strengthening Protection in War: A Search for Professional Standards* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 2001), [www.icrc.org/en/publication/0783-strengthening-protection-war-search-professional-standards](http://www.icrc.org/en/publication/0783-strengthening-protection-war-search-professional-standards).

7 For further information on the creation of the Livelihoods Unit and its mandate, see UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2014), [www.unhcr.org/530f107b6.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/530f107b6.pdf).

8 Ibid.





The scale of livelihood programs is growing in parallel with the increased interest of donor and humanitarian actors. According to UNHCR, between 2011 and 2012 funds allocated for livelihood activities increased by more than 25 percent, rising a further 15 percent in 2013.<sup>9</sup> Programs supported by these funds primarily targeted refugees (62 percent), although some also benefited internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees. Most programming, even in camp settings, is increasingly aimed at both refugees and the host population—a development that is generally seen as positive due to the importance of building host-community resilience and support in order to preserve protection space for refugees.<sup>10</sup>

## A. Goals of Livelihood Programming

UNHCR and various INGOs have utilized livelihood programming and advocacy in recent years in pursuit of four main goals.

First, these programs are seen to promote “self-reliance”—the ability of refugee individuals and households to support themselves while reducing the likelihood they will become impoverished or dependent on government and humanitarian welfare. The need for self-reliance is pressing because funding for humanitarian assistance inevitably runs out or dwindles significantly as crises drag on.<sup>11</sup> In addition, long-term humanitarian funding targeted only at refugees can create tensions with host governments and communities.<sup>12</sup>

---

*The need for self-reliance is pressing because funding for humanitarian assistance inevitably runs out or dwindles significantly as crises drag on.*

---

A second reason for the growth of livelihood programming is a perception among humanitarian agencies that promoting self-reliance will make durable solutions, particularly repatriation, more likely.<sup>13</sup> Self-reliant individuals who are able to build and protect personal assets and capital may be more willing to return home and better able to do so in a sustainable way. UNHCR has promoted this argument,<sup>14</sup> but the evidence base for the link between self-reliance and return is not robust (see Section III).

Host community concerns about the impact of refugee populations on local economies and resources frequently lead to restrictions placed on refugees by host governments, which become barriers to the

9 For all figures in this paragraph, see *ibid.*

10 See for example T. Alexander Aleinikoff, *From Dependence to Self-Reliance: Changing the Paradigm in Protracted Refugee Situations* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute [MPI], 2015), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/dependence-self-reliance-changing-paradigm-protracted-refugee-situations](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/dependence-self-reliance-changing-paradigm-protracted-refugee-situations); Kathleen Newland, *Rethinking Global Protection: New Channels, New Tools* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2015), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/rethinking-global-protection-new-channels-new-tools](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/rethinking-global-protection-new-channels-new-tools).

11 See, again, the example of Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. Oxfam, *The Human Costs of the Funding Shortfalls*.

12 In 2013, a mapping exercise by Mercy Corps in Jordan, for example, found that some host communities perceived distribution of aid to Syrians alone to be unfair, particularly in areas where Jordanians were also suffering from poverty. This contributed to tension between the host and refugee communities. See Mercy Corps Jordan, *Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions in Mafraq and Ramtha, Jordan* (Amman, Jordan: Mercy Corps, 2013), <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=2962>. More recently, a 2014 secondary data review by REACH, found that Lebanese respondents felt Syrian refugees had received an unfair amount of support from international agencies relative to host communities. See United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), *Informing Targeted Host Community Programming in Lebanon: Preliminary Analysis for Sector Planning* (Geneva: UNOCHA, 2014), [www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach\\_lbn\\_report\\_hostcommunityvulnerabilityassessmentpreliminaryanalysis\\_oct2014\\_0.pdf](http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_lbn_report_hostcommunityvulnerabilityassessmentpreliminaryanalysis_oct2014_0.pdf).

13 UNHCR, *Livelihoods Programming in UNHCR: Operational Guidelines* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2012), 9, [www.unhcr.org/4fbdf17c9.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/4fbdf17c9.pdf).

14 See, for example, Aleinikoff, *From Dependence to Self-Reliance*.



protection and local integration of refugees. A third and perhaps primary reason UNHCR and donors promote livelihood programs—especially those that serve host communities as well—is that such programs stimulate the local economy, generating benefits for host populations and potentially increasing their inclination to continue hosting refugees. Such activities can also serve to build connections between refugee and host populations. The Danish Refugee Council’s Farmer Field Schools program in Uganda, for example, trained refugee and local farmers alongside one another in an effort to reduce tensions and build connections between the two groups.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, an evaluation of UNHCR Community Technology Access (CTA) centers, which provide access to computers and wireless internet in communities hosting refugees, found the centers help foster interactions between refugee and native populations.<sup>16</sup>

Agencies sometimes pursue explicit protection objectives through livelihood activities. For example, the Dutch government provided funding in 2015 to UNHCR and the Dutch NGO ZOA to implement livelihood programming in refugee camps near Shire, Ethiopia. Many of the Eritreans these camps serve plan to migrate onward through Sudan and beyond, a dangerous journey that will expose them to multiple risks.<sup>17</sup> One of the primary goals of the Shire livelihood programs is to try to dissuade the refugees from making the journey by giving them livelihood options in Ethiopia.

Other reasons for livelihood programming include the humanitarian goals of restoring the personal dignity and independence of refugees, preventing households from slipping into poverty, and enabling them to support their own communities in the country of origin through remittances or increased employment opportunities upon return.<sup>18</sup>

## B. Livelihood Strategies

Livelihood programming for refugees can be sorted into “supply-side” strategies that seek to maximize the human or financial capital of refugees, and “demand-side” strategies that improve the economic context for refugees by ameliorating obstacles related to market access, host community and employer perceptions, or government policies.

### I. Supply-Side Strategies

Supply-side programs focus on the human or financial capital of refugees, seeking to build up their skills or education, increase their access to information and communication technologies, or provide them with livelihood assets or financial resources. Specific strategies often include the following:

**Skills-based interventions that seek to improve refugees’ access to wage employment or self-employment.** Such programs are often designed for specific target groups, including women, youth, and ex-combatants who are reintegrating and rebuilding livelihoods. The most common program type is vocational training, sometimes referred to as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Other training programs include language programs to build proficiency in either the languages used in

15 See Section II.B.2 of this report for more on agricultural support strategies and the Farmer Field Schools program. See also Danish Refugee Council, *Livelihood Support Project Funded by UNHCR: Impact Assessment Report, Uganda—West Nile Region 2012* (Copenhagen: Danish Refugee Council, 2012), [www.drc.dk/media/1311867/final-unhcr-livelihood-impact-assessment-report.pdf](http://www.drc.dk/media/1311867/final-unhcr-livelihood-impact-assessment-report.pdf).

16 Jessica Anderson, “Policy Report on UNHCR’s Community Technology Access Program: Best Practices and Lessons Learned,” *Refuge* 29, no. 1 (2013), 21–29, <http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/37503/34040>.

17 Netherlands Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, “The Netherlands Engaged with Eritrean Refugees in Shire (Northern Ethiopia)” (news release, October 12, 2015), <http://ethiopia.nlembassy.org/news/2015/10/the-netherlands-engaged-with-eritrean-refugees-in-shire-northern-ethiopia.html>.

18 See, for example, Roger Zetter, “Reframing Displacement Crises as Development Opportunities” (paper presented at the Global Initiative on Solutions, Copenhagen Roundtable, April 2-3, 2014), [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/publications/other/pn-reframing-displacement-crisis-2014.pdf](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/publications/other/pn-reframing-displacement-crisis-2014.pdf).



the host country or international languages (such as English or Spanish);<sup>19</sup> training in business skills such as accounting, business planning, marketing, and risk management (these skills are often requested by refugees when asked what kinds of skills training they would prefer); and training in “soft skills” that foster employment readiness, including negotiating a job, obtaining fair wages, and combating discrimination.

***Programs to increase refugees’ access to information and communications technologies.***

Particularly in remote areas, facilitating access to computers and mobile phones can help refugees participate in local markets by enabling them to obtain information about the demand, supply, and pricing of goods and services, and to advertise and market their products. The UNHCR Community Technology Access (CTA) program, for example, creates computer labs and technology centers where refugees and local community members can access the internet, participate in digital or online courses, take advantage of online work opportunities, or keep in touch with family and friends.<sup>20</sup> CTA programs were piloted in Rwanda at Kiziba Refugee Camp and in Bangladesh at the Kutupalong and Nayapara camps. By the start of 2015, 29 countries had CTA centers (for a total of 60 CTAs worldwide), and UNHCR plans to further expand the program.<sup>21</sup> Another initiative, UNHCR Exchange, provides refugees with online learning tools and support to create their own courses in subjects where they have identified a demand.<sup>22</sup> Most recently, UNHCR has also emphasized promoting mobile connectivity for refugees, and in 2016 launched a connectivity strategy that includes improving mobile phone and data access as key goals.<sup>23</sup>

***Cash or voucher assistance rather than in-kind support.*** UNHCR and the World Food Program (WFP) have used cash-based interventions (CBIs) since the 1990s to replace or supplement food assistance with direct cash transfers or vouchers.<sup>24</sup> In humanitarian situations, CBIs are intended to provide an adaptable, safe, and cost-effective means of supporting populations of concern, allowing individual beneficiaries to adjust how they allocate their resources as their needs evolve.<sup>25</sup> CBIs can facilitate payment for food, rent, health care, and other essential needs (known as consumption-smoothing),<sup>26</sup> and are an expanding part of the UNHCR response arsenal. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of UNHCR country operations utilizing cash or cash alternative assistance expanded from 15 to 60 with a total budget of \$465 million.<sup>27</sup> In February 2013, UNHCR further designated the expansion and systematization of CBIs a top institutional priority.<sup>28</sup>

- 
- 19 Programs that combine language education with skills training have proven particularly beneficial in other contexts, helping learners quickly develop the knowledge they need to access employment. See Margie McHugh and A.E. Challinor, *Improving Immigrants’ Employment Prospects through Work-Focused Language Instruction* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2011), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/improving-immigrants-employment-prospects-through-work-focused-language-instruction](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/improving-immigrants-employment-prospects-through-work-focused-language-instruction).
- 20 In Gabala, Azerbaijan, the Regional NGOs Resource and Training Centre has 15 workstations and is expected to train 50 young people per month in computer literacy to increase their chances of employment. The center is available to both IDPs in the region and to members of the host community. See Liene Veide, “UNHCR Computer Centres Offer Education, Jobs and a Future in Georgia” (UNHCR news release, October 1, 2010), [www.unhcr.org/4ca5f3806.html](http://www.unhcr.org/4ca5f3806.html).
- 21 See UNHCR, “Community Technology Access,” accessed January 7, 2016.
- 22 See UNHCR-Exchange, “About Us,” accessed August 11, 2016, <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/fuse-public-assets/Public+assets/UNHCR/about2.html>.
- 23 UNHCR, *Connecting Refugees: How Internet and Mobile Connectivity Can Improve Refugee Well-Being and Transform Humanitarian Action* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2016), [www.unhcr.org/5770d43c4.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/5770d43c4.pdf).
- 24 Cash-based interventions (CBIs) may be conditional or unconditional. Unconditional cash transfers are direct grants without conditions or the requirement that funds be repaid; recipients can use the money however they wish. Conditional cash transfers have restrictions on how cash may be spent, such as on reconstructing shelters or paying school fees. Often, however, there is no way to ensure cash is used as required. Another form of conditional cash transfer is Cash for Work programs, in which payment is provided as a wage for work usually in public or community programs. Vouchers can be redeemed by holders at participating outlets for a defined amount of cash or quantity of a commodity or service.
- 25 Leah Campbell, *Cross-Sector Cash Assistance for Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Lebanon: An IRC Programme* (Oxford: Cash Learning Partnership, 2014), 6, [www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-case-study-lebanon-web.pdf](http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-case-study-lebanon-web.pdf).
- 26 UNHCR, *An Introduction to Cash-Based Interventions in UNHCR Operations* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2012), [www.unhcr.org/515a959e9.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/515a959e9.pdf).
- 27 UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme, *Innovation: Cash-Based Interventions* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2015), [www.unhcr.org/5596441c9.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/5596441c9.pdf).
- 28 This growth may in part be driven by the shift in focus among UNHCR and others away from camps and toward urban environments, to which CBIs are particularly well suited. *Ibid.*



While improving livelihoods is not often a goal of traditional CBIs, such interventions may, in some circumstances, indirectly protect or improve individuals' means of earning a living.<sup>29</sup> Access to cash, for example, increases the purchasing power of a household and may thereby allow them to protect their assets, particularly productive assets that can be crucial to their means of earning a living (such as a vehicle or property). In Kenya, for example, a 2006 evaluation of one-time cash transfers (of \$435) following the onset of a severe drought found that the cash enabled beneficiaries to meet their immediate needs without selling animals and depleting their herds.<sup>30</sup> Extra cash may further allow households to invest in or recover their livelihoods by purchasing needed goods or tools, or enabling access to training or capital.<sup>31</sup> Indirectly, supporting household income may lower the risk that recipients will resort to harmful coping mechanisms, such as child labor, that may be damaging to future economic outcomes.<sup>32</sup>

**Microfinance to facilitate access to needed capital.** In addition to government restrictions on economic activity, one of the main constraints facing refugees who wish to start or grow their own businesses is access to credit and capital.<sup>33</sup> Aid agencies have seized on microfinance as a way to help refugee entrepreneurs through services that include the provision of credit (known as microcredit), savings facilities, and insurance (known as microinsurance). The field of refugee microcredit has, however, weathered serious critiques, including that loans are inappropriate for refugees who may not have the resources or knowledge to effectively repay them.<sup>34</sup>

## 2. Demand-Side Strategies

Demand-side strategies aim to improve the link between refugees, employers, and markets for labor, goods, and services by either directly creating jobs or connecting refugees to employers. To improve refugee access to markets, especially for agricultural producers, programs try to ameliorate the informal obstacles refugees encounter in host communities or in the form of restrictive government policies.

**Support for individual agricultural initiatives.** In rural areas where refugees live within the host community, rather than in camps, UNHCR often promotes agricultural and livestock advancements, including through programs that facilitate access to agricultural extension services,<sup>35</sup> assist with adaptation

29 Michelle Berg and Louisa Seferis, *Protection Outcomes in Cash Based Interventions: A Literature Review* (Oxford: Cash Learning Partnership, 2015), [www.cashlearning.org/downloads/erc-protection-and-cash-literature-review-jan2015.pdf](http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/erc-protection-and-cash-literature-review-jan2015.pdf).

30 World Food Program (WFP), *Strategic Evaluation of the Effectiveness of WFP Livelihood Recovery Interventions* (Rome: WFP, 2009), 20, <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/reports/wfp225425.pdf>.

31 For instance, UNHCR cash grants to Burundian returnees allowed them to acquire land and agricultural tools; secure modes of transport; and purchase building materials, food, and medication. This afforded them a degree of self-sufficiency and insulated host communities from the costs of providing for returnees as they re-establish themselves. And in a 2008 CBI program targeting 1,000 displaced families Kenya, Action Against Hunger (ACF) found that while most recipients spent the first instalments to satisfy immediate needs, two-thirds saved later disbursements or used them for long-term, livelihood-enhancing investments. See UNHCR, *An Introduction to Cash-Based Interventions*, 14; Silke Pietzsch, "Making Cash Work: A Case Study from Kenya," Humanitarian Practice Network, July 2009, <http://odihpn.org/magazine/making-cash-work-a-case-study-from-kenya/>.

32 International Rescue Committee (IRC) monitors of a 2013 CBI program for Syrians in Lebanon made anecdotal observations that the transfers enabled beneficiaries to pull their children from the workforce and enroll them in school, and that financial training workshops improved budgeting practices among beneficiaries. This finding was further supported by an evaluation of the larger IRC winterization CBI program that served 90,000 Syrian and Lebanese families. Beneficiaries were less likely to rely on child labor than similarly-situated families who did not receive transfers, and also less likely to engage in dangerous work or sell productive assets in order to satisfy short term consumption needs. See Leah Campbell, *Cross-Sector Cash Assistance*, 12-13.

33 See, for example, Evan Easton-Calabria and Naohiko Omata, "Micro-Finance in Refugee Contexts: Current Scholarship and Research Gaps" (Refugee Studies Centre working paper 116, Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford, June 2016), [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/micro-finance-in-refugee-contexts-current-scholarship-and-research-gaps](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/micro-finance-in-refugee-contexts-current-scholarship-and-research-gaps).

34 If aid agencies do not adequately assess the ability of a household to service its loans, the household will struggle to make payments (especially if loans are used for consumption rather than investment, as is often the case with very poor households). This could lead the household to fall into worse debt (e.g., from moneylenders) in order to service the original loan. See, for example, *ibid*.

35 Agricultural extension services are educational and advisory services, typically in rural areas, provided by governmental and research institutes to promote sustainable rural or farm-based livelihoods as well as health and well-being.





to climate change, and identify new markets and value chains to aid producers in production and marketing. Agricultural projects for refugees often have multiple goals, including enhancing self-reliance, food security, and host community cohesion and integration. The Farmer Field Schools in northern Uganda are one such example.<sup>36</sup> The project clustered farmers into local groups to receive training, guidance, and agricultural assistance for one to two years. Beneficiaries were provided with training in crop agronomy, post-harvest handling, business management skills, and energy conservation.

**Programs that directly employ refugee workers.** Traditional forms of employment creation include short-term public works projects and job creation schemes associated with relief efforts, often in camps. Both types are usually funded and implemented by humanitarian agencies. Refugees may be employed in construction, camp management and maintenance, and provision of essential services (food distribution, health, education, and protection-related functions). Such efforts have been criticized for being short term and for reaching relatively few beneficiaries, often selected on the basis of need and vulnerability, rather than skills backgrounds. Cash-for-work and food-for-work programs tie cash grants or food vouchers to participation in income-generating activities; such programs, which have more typically been used with IDPs and disaster-affected populations,<sup>37</sup> have been expanding in response to the Syria refugee crisis.<sup>38</sup> Cash-for-work programs have, however, been criticized for potentially disrupting local labor markets or encouraging refugees to rely on cash-for-work employment, rather than local opportunities.<sup>39</sup>

---

*Efforts have been criticized for being short term and for reaching relatively few beneficiaries.*

---

**Initiatives to connect refugees with remote or internet-based employment opportunities.** While internet-based work is likely to provide little in the way of substantial or long-term income for refugees, it might be a reasonable interim solution—particularly in urban settings and where refugees are not permitted to work. One form of internet-based employment is data-outsourcing and microwork, where individuals complete small tasks over the internet as part of a larger project. Employers can source labor by uploading tasks onto online market places (such as Amazon Mechanical Turk or TaskRabbit)<sup>40</sup> where workers are paid for each task completed. In order to bring microwork and internet-based jobs to refugees, UNHCR has sought partnerships with companies that are interested in providing employment opportunities to disadvantaged communities through outsourcing (also known as impact-sourcing).<sup>41</sup> The CTA program described in the previous section also seeks to create employment options by providing the technical means through which refugees can access online or remote work. However, little information is available on whether or not refugees are using CTA centers for this purpose.

36 The project is in the districts of West Nile and Kiryandongo, which have a long history as refugee hosting area and in 2012 hosted 15,388 refugees from South Sudan, DR Congo, Kenya, Central African Republic and Rwanda. See Danish Refugee Council, *Livelihood Support Project Funded by UNHCR*.

37 For example, see Oxfam-GB, Horn Relief, and Norwegian Peoples' Aid, *Consortium Cash Transfers in Somalia* (Oxford: Cash Learning Partnership, 2011), [www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/casestudies/consortium-cash-transfers-in-somalia.pdf](http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/casestudies/consortium-cash-transfers-in-somalia.pdf). For a list of resources on CFW see Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), "The Cash Learning Partnership," accessed August 12, 2016, [www.cashlearning.org/](http://www.cashlearning.org/).

38 See, for example, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), "Bolstering Self-Reliance for Refugees and the Displaced in Iraq," accessed August 1, 2016, [www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/ourstories/bolstering-self-reliance-for-refugees-and-the-displaced-in-iraq.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/ourstories/bolstering-self-reliance-for-refugees-and-the-displaced-in-iraq.html); ACTED, "Women Access Income Generating Opportunities in Za'atari Refugee Camp," ACTED, November 26, 2015, [www.acted.org/en/women-access-income-generating-opportunities-za-atari-refugee-camp](http://www.acted.org/en/women-access-income-generating-opportunities-za-atari-refugee-camp); Elisabeth Anderson Rapport, "Cash-for-Work Program to Aid Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Launches," Action Against Hunger, February 13, 2014, [www.actionagainsthunger.org/blog/cash-work-program-aid-syrian-refugees-lebanon-launches](http://www.actionagainsthunger.org/blog/cash-work-program-aid-syrian-refugees-lebanon-launches).

39 Mercy Corps, *Guide to Cash-for-Work Programming* (Portland, OR: Mercy Corps, 2007), [www.cashlearning.org/downloads/mercy-corps-guide-to-ctp.pdf](http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/mercy-corps-guide-to-ctp.pdf).

40 See Amazon, "Amazon Mechanical Turk," accessed January 7, 2016, [www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome](http://www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome); TaskRabbit, "TaskRabbit," accessed August 11, 2016, [www.taskrabbit.com](http://www.taskrabbit.com).

41 See UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods*, 28.



### 3. Integrated and Graduated Programming

The barriers refugees face in obtaining work often go beyond deficits in hard skills and qualifications to include gaps in soft skills, a lack of local networks and contacts, discrimination on the part of employers, and post-traumatic stress and other psychosocial issues.<sup>42</sup> Alone, livelihood programs are not equipped to overcome these barriers. Training programs, for example, do not typically address the psychological or mental health problems that can be widespread in displaced populations, and in many host countries such conditions are highly stigmatized. In northern Uganda, a major refugee-hosting region, a 2009 labor market study reported that one-quarter of producers and traders surveyed in the region said they would not employ someone with mental health problems.<sup>43</sup> Inclusion of psychological or mental health services in humanitarian programming can help to alleviate the effects of mental health conditions that might make obtaining or holding on to employment difficult.

#### **Box 1. Going Beyond Vocational Training in Egypt**

Egypt hosts a large number of refugees from numerous origin countries, including Eritrea, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, and Syria. Most live in the urban center of Cairo. Livelihood interventions in Cairo include vocational training, education grants, and social assistance provided for refugees through United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) implementing partners, including CEOSS, Caritas-Egypt, and Refuge Egypt. These programs seek to enhance the skills of refugees and help them find better sources of income.

In addition, aid agencies have supported programs to develop important related skills, including Arabic language courses (for non-Arabic speaking groups such as Eritreans and Somalis), basic literacy classes, and driving classes—all of which will improve refugees' opportunities to find work. But in a 2012 evaluation, participants in the courses reported that more holistic support is needed. Refugees mentioned a need for more guidance on setting up a business, networking opportunities, and direct job placement services. Moreover, the study found that existing services were not sufficiently coordinated between agencies, possibly leading to service duplication or gaps.

Source: Feinstein International Center, *Refugee Livelihoods in Urban Areas: Identifying Program Opportunities, Case Study Egypt* (Somerville, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, 2012), <http://fic.tufts.edu/publication-item/refugee-livelihoods-in-urban-areas-case-study-egypt/>.

When well designed, livelihood programs are usually part of so-called integrated programming that includes food security or educational components that together aim to build resilience in refugee populations. Cash-based assistance, for example, is at times paired with other programming such as cash grants designed to jump-start entrepreneurship and investment (such as microfinance loans),<sup>44</sup> financial

42 A 2005 meta-analysis of the mental health of displaced people found that post-displacement conditions moderated mental health outcomes. Among the factors affecting worse outcomes observed for refugees were experiencing restricted economic opportunity. See Matthew Porter and Nick Haslam, "Predisplacement and Postdisplacement Factors Associated with Mental Health of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 294, no. 5 (2005): 602–12.

43 International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNDP, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), *Labour Market Analysis: Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader* (Kampala, Uganda: IOM, 2009) in Gareth McKibben, ed., *Bridging the Divide: Connecting Training to Jobs in Post-Conflict Settings* (London: City and Guilds Centre for Skills Development, 2011).

44 UNHCR, however, does not consider microcredit a cash-based intervention per se because of its requirement that beneficiaries repay the loan. See UNHCR, *An Introduction to Cash-Based Interventions*.



management training (as with the International Rescue Committee [IRC] CBI for Syrians in Lebanon),<sup>45</sup> or business skills programs (such as the Women's Income Generating Support Program in Uganda).<sup>46</sup>

In recent years, UNHCR and its partners have moved towards adopting the Graduation Approach to livelihood programming that pairs economic development goals with broader social supports.<sup>47</sup> The Graduation Approach, which was first developed in Bangladesh, aims to transition those in extreme poverty into sustainable livelihoods through targeted, step-by-step (or “graduated”) programmatic interventions. Typical graduation programs begin by providing “safety nets” in the form of food or cash support to address immediate consumption needs that might otherwise interfere with the decision-making, work, and learning capacities of beneficiaries. Once immediate needs have been stabilized, participants are provided with financial literacy training and encouraged to begin saving money. They are also given a “livelihood asset” (such as livestock) and trained in how to use it. Participants are typically not allowed to progress from one phase to the next without having fulfilled certain criteria.<sup>48</sup> Initial evaluations of graduation programs piloted by the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) and the Ford Foundation in five countries suggest that participants saw statistically significant gains in income, food security, and consumption that lasted over time.<sup>49</sup>

Building on the success of the Graduation Approach in extremely poor nondisplaced communities, UNHCR has launched graduation pilots in Costa Rica and Egypt, and recently expanded to Ecuador. The model used by UNHCR is slightly different than the one piloted by the CGAP; the Egypt programs, for example, did not incorporate a savings stage and operates a two track approach that directs participants either into wage employment or self-employment activities.<sup>50</sup> A preliminary evaluation of the Egypt pilot, conducted in 2016, suggests the programs there have so far had mixed results. While participants did report income increases, many still remained in highly precarious situations and few were able to save. Furthermore, while job placement and business startup rates were high, many participants were unable to keep their jobs or sustain their businesses longer than six months.<sup>51</sup>

### III. Evaluating the Pitfalls and Potential of Livelihood Programs

Despite the growing interest in and resources devoted to livelihood programs, as yet there is little concrete evidence that current strategies are successfully meeting their goals of fostering self-reliance and durable solutions. In general, there is a lack of independent evaluations, hard data, and external assessments of most livelihood programs. In particular, there are few impact evaluations that assess the extent to which programs actually improve the livelihood or self-reliance of refugees and minimize negative externalities. In fact, two recent review studies found “a near-complete absence” of livelihood

45 Leah Campbell, *Cross-Sector Cash Assistance*, 12–13.

46 Christopher Blattman, Eric Green, Jeannie Annan, and Julian Jamison, *Building Women's Economic and Social Empowerment through Enterprise: An Experimental Assessment of the Women's Income Generating Support Program in Uganda* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2013), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/17862>.

47 See UNHCR, “Graduation Approach,” accessed August 11, 2016, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/graduation-approach-56e9752a4.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/graduation-approach-56e9752a4.html).

48 Aude de Montesquiou, Tony Sheldon, Frank F. DeGiovanni, and Syed M. Hashemi, *From Extreme Poverty to Sustainable Livelihoods: A Technical Guide to Graduation Approach* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, 2014), [www.cgap.org/sites/default/files/graduation\\_guide\\_final.pdf](http://www.cgap.org/sites/default/files/graduation_guide_final.pdf).

49 Ibid.

50 Beit Al Karma Consulting, *Mid-Term Evaluation of UNHCR Graduation Programme in Egypt* (Giza, Egypt: Beit Al Karma Consulting, 2016), [www.microfinancegateway.org/sites/default/files/publication\\_files/unhcr\\_mid-term\\_evaluation\\_2015\\_beit\\_al\\_karma\\_final\\_report\\_21\\_march\\_2016.pdf](http://www.microfinancegateway.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/unhcr_mid-term_evaluation_2015_beit_al_karma_final_report_21_march_2016.pdf).

51 Ibid.



evaluations, with the few existing evaluations focused on small-scale NGO interventions and largely qualitative in nature (just 20 percent reflected quantitative research).<sup>52</sup>

Instead, livelihoods literature, both in postconflict and refugee settings, tends to be dominated by technical guidance—how to do things right—and description of the technicalities of program design rather than either impact assessment or implementation evaluation.<sup>53</sup> Studies tend to focus on output—i.e., whether an intervention has met its internally defined measures of success, such as hitting a distribution target or completing construction within a timeframe—rather than the impact a program has had on its target population.<sup>54</sup> Even where there is data on program impact and effectiveness, the importance of context in refugee situations raises new concerns about the wisdom of applying what works in one setting to another context where economic and policy structures may make that same approach ineffective.

The difficulty of evaluating livelihood programs can be partly attributed to the broadly defined nature of the goals of such projects—self-sufficiency, durable solutions, improved host-community relations, and protection from additional vulnerabilities. Such aims are difficult to measure because of the complex and not necessarily causal connections between specific activities and changes in individual or group conditions. Even more problematic, livelihood programs are often freighted with additional goals, including promoting stability in postconflict settings and even contributing to peacebuilding outcomes.<sup>55</sup> Arguably, linking livelihood programs to such distant and abstract goals achieves rhetorical power at best.

Absent independent evaluations or more specifically defined goals, it is difficult to identify truly effective livelihood programs. The few studies that do exist, however, suggest that livelihood programs have struggled to accomplish their stated mission in refugee situations. Several factors have contributed to this—some of which are external to the programs and difficult to control, while others are intrinsic to program design and implementation and could conceivably be addressed through programmatic changes.

## A. Political and Economic Constraints

The effectiveness of livelihood and development interventions—and the room humanitarian agencies have to facilitate access to opportunities for refugees—depends deeply on both the national and local political contexts and on economic conditions. Yet these constraints are often insufficiently assessed or taken into account during program design.

### I. Political and Policy Context

Policies that restrict refugee access to legal status, to work, and to mobility are foremost among these problems. While refugees should be accorded access to work under international law (see Box 2), national and local policies to deliver and enforce this right are often lacking.<sup>56</sup> Host countries with policies that require refugees to live in camps (known as encampment policies) are particularly problematic. While camps initially provide refugees access to humanitarian assistance and support,<sup>57</sup>

---

52 Crawford, Cosgrave, Haysom, and Walicki, *Protracted Displacement*; Richard Mallett and Rachel Slater, “Livelihoods, Conflict and Aid Programming: Is the Evidence Base Good Enough?” *Disaster* 40, no. 2 (2016): 226–45.

53 Mallett and Slater, “Livelihoods, Conflict and Aid Programming.”

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 For a detailed exploration of respect for and protection of refugees’ right to work, see Asylum Access, *Global Refugee Work Rights Report* (Oakland, CA: Asylum Access, 2014), [http://asylumaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FINAL\\_Global-Refugee-Work-Rights-Report-2014\\_Interactive.pdf](http://asylumaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FINAL_Global-Refugee-Work-Rights-Report-2014_Interactive.pdf).

57 In countries with encampment policies, governments usually require UNHCR to focus humanitarian assistance only in camps, and the bounded nature of camp settlements usually means that services and security are easier to provide within camps than outside them.





they offer few opportunities for refugees to use their skills and experience, build new human capital, or earn a living. As humanitarian assistance dwindles over time, refugees are compelled to find ways to support themselves and their families outside the camps. Many find work (often illegally) either in the surrounding area or in urban areas in the host country, or they travel farther abroad. For example, in Kenya, UNHCR estimates that over 500,000 refugees live in camps (Dadaab and Kakuma),<sup>58</sup> but refugees move in and out of the camps on a regular basis and large (though uncounted) numbers of refugees live in Nairobi and other urban areas.<sup>59</sup> Where formal encampment policies exist, it can be politically and practically difficult for aid agencies to promote refugee livelihoods for those living outside camp settings.<sup>60</sup>

### **Box 2. Refugee Work Rights under International and National Law**

The right of refugees to work is specifically protected by the 1951 Refugee Convention (Articles 17, 18, and 19). More broadly, the right of individuals to pursue a livelihood is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 23.1) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Article 6).

UNHCR and other rights-based agencies advocate for this right as part of their mandate to protect refugees. Many host governments, however, continue to limit access to employment for refugees. Countries may explicitly deny refugees work permits or simply not have established legislation or procedures to grant them access. For example, in Malaysia, Burmese refugees are treated as unauthorized migrants and are denied access to both legal status and work permits. Other countries, such as Tanzania, allow refugees to work but restrict employment to camps. And even where refugees have the right to work, they are likely to face many of the same difficulties in exercising this right as other migrants, such as wage or skill thresholds, restrictions on work outside shortage occupations, or high fees and administrative obstacles.

Sources: UNHCR, *Promoting Livelihoods and Self-Reliance: Operational Guidance on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2011), [www.unhcr.org/5540a08e9.html](http://www.unhcr.org/5540a08e9.html); Asylum Access, *Global Refugee Work Rights Report* (Oakland, CA: Asylum Access, 2014), [http://asylumaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FINAL\\_Global-Refugee-Work-Rights-Report-2014\\_Interactive.pdf](http://asylumaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FINAL_Global-Refugee-Work-Rights-Report-2014_Interactive.pdf).

Even in host countries without encampment policies, or in countries where refugees are permitted to live outside camps, they are generally denied permission to work legally and must resort to informal labor markets where they are at risk of exploitation and abuse.<sup>61</sup> A 2014 report examined legal rights and access to work in 15 countries (covering more than 30 percent of the global refugee population)<sup>62</sup> and found that seven of these countries had a complete legal ban on refugee employment, while the remaining eight had significant barriers to employment, such as strict encampment policies and exorbitant permit fees. Refugees in these situations have little access to sustainable employment and are dependent on the willingness of local authorities and host population to turn a blind eye to informal work because of the economic benefits of cheap refugee labor.

58 UNHCR, *Kenya Factsheet* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2015), [www.unhcr.org/524d84b99.html](http://www.unhcr.org/524d84b99.html).

59 Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, *Mixed Migration in Kenya: The Scale of Movement and Associated Protection Risks* (Nairobi: Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, 2013), [http://regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/series\\_booklettwo.pdf](http://regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/series_booklettwo.pdf).

60 In Bangladesh, for example, Rohingya refugees from neighboring Myanmar are required to live in camps, and the government has placed restrictions on the activities UNHCR and international NGOs are permitted to conduct with refugees living outside the official camps. See Samuel Cheung, "Migration Control and the Solutions Impasse in South and Southeast Asia: Implications from the Rohingya Experience," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25, no. 1 (2011): 50–70.

61 Elizabeth Umlas, *Cash in Hand: Urban Refugees, the Right to Work and UNHCR's Advocacy Activities* (Geneva: UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, 2011), [www.unhcr.org/4dc7f82c9.html](http://www.unhcr.org/4dc7f82c9.html).

62 Asylum Access, *Global Refugee Work Rights Report*.



Shifts in the political or security situation of the host country can cause authorities to alter course rapidly and crackdown on refugee work. The situation of refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) in Cameroon illustrates this common pattern (see Box 3). Even in countries without encampment policies, governments target refugee businesses for raids or subject refugees without permits to deportation and possible refoulement.<sup>63</sup> For example, South Africa's 2012 Operation Hardstick, which came during a period of mounting xenophobia, ostensibly sought to crack down on businesses operating without trade licenses in northern border provinces. UNHCR and human rights groups, however, have alleged that the operation unfairly targeted businesses owned by refugees and foreigners while allowing local enterprises to continue operating illegally.<sup>64</sup>

### **Box 3. The Link between Security, Encampment, and Access to Work in Cameroon**

Cameroon, which in 2015 hosted more than 300,000 refugees, primarily from the Central African Republic (CAR) and Nigeria, provides a typical example of the tensions encampment policies can create in protracted situations. Refugees from CAR include both recent arrivals—following an upsurge of violence in December 2013—and those in protracted situations who came between 2006 and 2010. (The mix of new arrivals living together with co-nationals who fled earlier is common in protracted situations.) The refugees reside throughout the eastern region both in organized camps and in refugee “sites” for which the government has allocated land. Funding shortfalls and reduced humanitarian assistance mean many refugees have left the camps and sites to find work in local towns and communities. After men from CAR posing as refugees reportedly stole goods and cattle and took hostages, including a Cameroonian mayor, in eastern Cameroon—incidents for which refugees were blamed—the government began cracking down on refugees living on their own or with Cameroonian hosts and returning them to camps.

Sources: Moki Edwin Kindzeka, “Cameroon Arrests CAR Refugees,” Voice of America, August 13, 2015, [www.voanews.com/content/new-arrests-of-car-refugees/2910020.html](http://www.voanews.com/content/new-arrests-of-car-refugees/2910020.html); UNHCR, *UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2015* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2015), [www.unhcr.org/56701b969.html](http://www.unhcr.org/56701b969.html).

The shifting willingness of governments to allow refugees to work, obtain legal status, or live outside camps is a major challenge in protracted refugee situations, making it difficult for humanitarian organizations to plan ahead and sustain livelihood programs. For refugees, the consequences are more serious: crackdowns undermine their willingness to invest time and resources in local integration and can negate their existing investments. In the case of the Danish Refugee Council Farmer Field Schools program—a rare instance in which an evaluation with a clear methodology was made publicly available—the evaluation found that while there was increased self-sufficiency, food security, access to education for children, and income, the effects were larger for nationals who participated than for refugees. This was partly because some refugee beneficiaries were relocated by the government to a camp during the program period, limiting their ability to make the most out of the program.<sup>65</sup>

63 Nonrefoulement is a principle established in international law by the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1981 Convention Against Torture (CAT), and other core international and regional agreements that obligate states to refrain from returning an individual to a country where he or she may be at risk of persecution or inhuman or degrading treatment (known as refoulement). Most experts consider nonrefoulement to be an established principle of international common law, meaning it applies to states regardless of whether they are signatories of the 1951 Refugee Convention or CAT.

64 Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), “South Africa: Police Target Foreign Traders in Limpopo,” IRIN, August 17, 2012, [www.irinnews.org/report/96130/south-africa-police-target-foreign-traders-in-limpopo](http://www.irinnews.org/report/96130/south-africa-police-target-foreign-traders-in-limpopo).

65 Danish Refugee Council, *Livelihood Support Project Funded by UNHCR*.



Moreover, political rhetoric and the extent to which governments condone refugees strongly influence the attitudes of the host community. Negative rhetoric can create problems for refugees and assistance providers by fanning hostility and antagonism among the host population and increasing the likelihood of discrimination and harassment. Politicians have used divisive rhetoric that plays on public doubts about refugees to rally support in South Africa,<sup>66</sup> as well as in Europe and the United States.<sup>67</sup> Elsewhere, host governments, including those in Thailand and Kenya, have sought to prevent refugees from living (illegally) outside camps, frequently citing security concerns.<sup>68</sup>

Without the political will on the part of the authorities to create and implement a supporting policy framework—including legal status and work authorization for refugees living outside of camps—livelihood investments cannot pay off. In Rwanda, for example, a 2012 WFP-UNHCR evaluation found that host country policies that limit refugee ownership of cattle reduce the scope of livelihood programs and opportunities available to the primarily agrarian refugee population.<sup>69</sup>

---

*Without the political will on the part of the authorities to create and implement a supporting policy framework ... livelihood investments cannot pay off.*

---

There is thus a need to pair technical livelihood programming with advocacy efforts to improve the policy and political operating environment. Such advocacy must, however, be undertaken carefully to avoid pushback by host governments and communities that might instead turn policy in a more restrictive direction. Advocacy, programs, and interventions that incentivize specific political reforms by local actors—and include host community households in livelihood programs—have the most potential to promote pro-refugee attitudes. These actors include community leaders, heads of organized groups, politicians, local authorities, and business leaders. Understanding who these actors are, and how they can be influenced, is an important diagnostic that is often missing in pre-program design and could be provided through a stakeholder analysis.

Yemen, which hosted some 170,000 refugees, mostly Somalis, beginning in 2003, offers a useful example. In 2010, UNHCR and its implementing partner, Intersos, set up a pilot project with the Yemeni Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training that granted refugees access to formal vocational training and technical education courses for five years. In return, UNHCR funded the renovation of two vocational

- 
- 66 In South Africa, for example, politicians place blame for the country's economic difficulties and high unemployment on the refugee and migrant population, and particularly migrant entrepreneurs. See Loren B. Landau, "Political Rhetoric and Institutions Fuel Xenophobic Violence in South Africa," *The Washington Post*, May 11, 2015, [www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/05/11/political-rhetoric-and-institutions-fuel-xenophobic-violence-in-south-africa/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/05/11/political-rhetoric-and-institutions-fuel-xenophobic-violence-in-south-africa/).
- 67 Conservative and far-right parties in both Denmark and Poland espoused anti-immigrant and refugee rhetoric in their 2015 general election campaigns—with success. In the United States, Donald Trump has capitalized on fears of terrorism to target the U.S. refugee resettlement program and American Muslim communities to secure the Republican nomination for president. See Melissa Eddy, "Anti-Immigrant Party Gains in Denmark Elections," *The New York Times*, June 18, 2015, [www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/world/anti-immigrant-party-gains-in-denmark-elections.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/world/anti-immigrant-party-gains-in-denmark-elections.html); Alex Duval Smith, "Poland Lurches to Right with Election of Law and Justice Party," *The Guardian*, October 26, 2015, [www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/25/poland-lurches-to-right-with-election-of-law-and-justice-party](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/25/poland-lurches-to-right-with-election-of-law-and-justice-party); Jenna Johnson, "Donald Trump Says He 'Absolutely' Wants a Database of Syrian Refugees," *The Washington Post*, November 21, 2015, [www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/11/21/donald-trump-says-he-absolutely-wants-a-database-of-syrian-refugees/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/11/21/donald-trump-says-he-absolutely-wants-a-database-of-syrian-refugees/).
- 68 On Thailand, see Adam Saltsman, "Beyond the Law: Power, Discretion, and Bureaucracy in the Management of Asylum Space in Thailand," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 27, no. 3 (2014): 457–76; on Kenya, see Elizabeth H. Campbell, "Urban Refugees in Nairobi: Problems of Protection, Mechanisms of Survival, and Possibilities for Integration," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19, no. 3 (2006): 396–413; on South Africa, see Loren Landau, "Protection and Dignity in Johannesburg: Shortcomings of South Africa's Urban Refugee Policy," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19, no. 3 (2006) 308–27.
- 69 WFP and UNHCR, *The Contribution of Food Assistance to Durable Solutions in Protracted Refugee Situations: Its Impact and Role in Rwanda (2007–2011), Vol. I Full Report* (Rome: WFP, 2012), [www.alnap.org/resource/19832](http://www.alnap.org/resource/19832).



training institutes and provided equipment that also benefited Yemeni national students.<sup>70</sup> Although no impact evaluation has yet been made publically available, the project models a general rule that is increasingly common in practice: livelihood programs should be designed with the inclusion of the host population in mind. Doing so enables national governments to mitigate public resentment towards refugees.

## 2. Economic and Market Conditions

The ability of humanitarian agencies to connect refugees with employers or train them for specific jobs will only be successful if relevant opportunities exist in the host economy. Some 90 percent of refugees are hosted in developing countries that face substantial economic challenges. Refugee flows strain already under-resourced local services and economic development efforts.<sup>71</sup> In Pakistan, which has the second largest refugee population globally, there are 322 refugees per U.S. \$1 of GDP; while Ethiopia, host to the fifth largest refugee population, has 469 refugees per each U.S. \$1 of its GDP.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, countries in regions affected by conflict suffer the additional economic strain of regional instability. Syria, for example, was a major economic partner to both Jordan and Lebanon, and the Syrian civil war has had a noticeable effect on economic conditions in both neighboring countries, including on trade balances and unemployment, independent of refugee flows.<sup>73</sup> Pressure from refugee populations has exacerbated these challenges. In Jordan, over 80 percent of Syrian refugees live in urban centers, placing great pressure on the housing, resources, and services they share with their Jordanian hosts.<sup>74</sup> Public authorities lack the resources to provide health and education services, maintain adequate transportation, ensure waste collection and disposal, and deliver core social services. Funds from planned capital expenditures have been diverted towards immediate operating costs. These stresses are likely to have long-term economic development effects.

---

*The ability of humanitarian agencies to connect refugees with employers or train them for specific jobs will only be successful if relevant opportunities exist in the host economy.*

---

Even where economic opportunities exist, livelihood programs are often not designed with the local labor market context and needs in mind. This means that those who complete training or business development programs are often unable to find work or a market for their products.<sup>75</sup> In Uganda, for example, refugees trained in arts and crafts programs have reported difficulty establishing businesses in part because handicraft goods, as “non-essentials,” are not in demand in the local economy.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, a 2016 mid-term evaluation of the UNHCR Cairo Graduation Approach pilot suggested that finding and maintaining appropriate placements for refugee participants in wage employment (as opposed to self-employment)

70 UNHCR, “Technical and Vocational Education Opportunities for Refugees, Yemen” (UNHCR factsheet, n.d.), [www.unhcr.org/4d78a8989.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/4d78a8989.pdf).

71 UNHCR, *Mid-Year Trends* 2015.

72 Ibid.

73 World Bank Group, *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2013), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2013/09/18292074/lebanon-economic-social-impact-assessment-syrian-conflict>; World Bank Group, *Jordan Economic Monitor: A Hiccup Amidst Sustained Resilience and Committed Reforms* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2015), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/958871468185394808/pdf/102258-v2-WP-PUBLIC-Box394828B-JEM-Fall-2015-v2-main-report.pdf>.

74 Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Jordan 2015 Census* (Amman, Jordan: Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics, 2016), [http://census.dos.gov.jo/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/02/Census\\_results\\_2016.pdf](http://census.dos.gov.jo/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/02/Census_results_2016.pdf).

75 Crawford, Cosgrave, Haysom, and Walicki, *Protracted Displacement*.

76 Evan Easton-Calabria, “Refugees Asked to Fish for Themselves’: The Role of Livelihoods Trainings for Kampala’s Urban Refugees” (working paper, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, January 2016), [www.unhcr.org/en-us/research/working/56bd9ed89/refugees-asked-fish-themselves-role-livelihoods-trainings-kampalas-urban.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/research/working/56bd9ed89/refugees-asked-fish-themselves-role-livelihoods-trainings-kampalas-urban.html).



was difficult, in part because of the poor linkages between training programs and job opportunities, as well as legal barriers to employment.<sup>77</sup> Employers may also be reluctant to hire refugees, due to concerns about the relevance or quality of their skills, work experience, or educational backgrounds, or simply because of discrimination. The same evaluation of the Cairo program found that some refugees were reluctant to take up employment opportunities because they feared harassment or discrimination from employers or because the jobs were too far from their place of residence.<sup>78</sup>

### 3. Gaps in Context Assessment and Planning

Despite the significant impact of political, policy, economic, and practical barriers to fostering refugee livelihoods in host countries, implementing actors do not always take these into account when designing programs. This oversight is a main reason livelihood initiatives fail.

---

*Skills development and credit schemes have ... suffered from a lack of contextual relevance or appropriateness.*

---

Guidance documents tend to be prescriptive and based on an assumption that best practices are easily transferable between situations.<sup>79</sup> But the local political complexities of refugee hosting contexts mean that caution is needed when extrapolating from one situation to another, where the economic context, policy structures, and political factors may be vastly different. It is thus crucial for interventions to be tailored to the goals of the specific situation.

Skills development and credit schemes have particularly suffered from a lack of contextual relevance or appropriateness. While skills development courses are often oriented towards formal sector employment, host country limitations on legal status or work rights often prevent refugees from using these skills. Microcredit programs have also come under fire in the past for being implemented by aid agencies with little experience or understanding of financial markets, in some cases creating more problems than they solve.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, an evaluation of the UNHCR Community Technology Access program found that many CTAs were not successful in offering educational opportunities beyond those to build basic IT skills, which were not sufficient to get refugees into work. The evaluation also found that the CTAs were rarely developed in conjunction with a labor market assessment or broader education and skills development strategy.<sup>81</sup>

A lack of contextual awareness can also hinder efforts to use livelihood programming to support repatriation efforts. The few studies that have examined the impact of livelihood strategies on the sustainability of return, for example, suggest that livelihood strategies developed in host countries are not easily transferable to other contexts, although assets acquired in exile may be. Particularly in urban areas, refugee livelihood strategies frequently involve informal labor markets that depend on access to local networks and social capital as well as localized expertise—knowledge and connections that are not transferable.<sup>82</sup> For example, one study of Liberian refugee repatriation from Ghana found that refugees with established livelihoods in Buduburam camp found it difficult to transfer these to

---

77 Beit Al Karma Consulting, *Mid-Term Evaluation of UNHCR Graduation Programme in Egypt*.

78 Ibid.

79 For a full analysis of the gaps in livelihood literature and the problems posed by overly prescriptive analysis, see Mallett and Slater, "Livelihoods, Conflict and Aid Programming."

80 Karen Jacobsen, *Microfinance in Protracted Refugee Situations: Lessons from the Alchemy Project* (Medford, MA: Feinstein International Famine Center, Tufts University, 2004), [https://dl.tufts.edu/file\\_assets/tufts:UA197.008.008.00019](https://dl.tufts.edu/file_assets/tufts:UA197.008.008.00019).

81 Anderson, "Policy Report on UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program."

82 Niels Harild, Asger Christensen, and Roger Zetter. *Sustainable Refugee Return: Triggers, Constraints and Lessons on Addressing the Development Challenges of Forced Displacement* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2015), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542611468188337350/Sustainable-refugee-return-triggers-constraints-and-lessons-on-addressing-the-development-challenges-of-forced-displacement>.





Liberia on their return. The challenge was that while the refugees originated from rural areas, many chose to return to urban settings in their countries of origin, where assets like access to networks and remittances are more important for establishing livelihoods than they had been for the self-reliance strategies they utilized in the asylum country. Returnees were thus unprepared to succeed in an environment so different from either their home communities or their places of exile.<sup>83</sup> Capital or financial assets developed in the country of asylum may, however, be more transferable, and a 2015 review of the link between self-reliant refugees and repatriation did find that returnees with such assets in exile tend to return more quickly and have better reintegration outcomes than those without.<sup>84</sup>

The use of economic assessments in designing programs is becoming more widespread, particularly since the onset of the Syria crisis.<sup>85</sup> A range of tools and guides now exist to promote assessment and data collection efforts in support of more targeted livelihood programming for refugees.<sup>86</sup> Market assessment tools, such as Emergency Market Mapping Assessment (EMMA)<sup>87</sup> are intended to ensure that livelihood programs and interventions are grounded in market realities and value chains, and can identify market niches and service sectors that can potentially support livelihood programs or employment opportunities for refugees.<sup>88</sup>

---

*A range of tools and guides now exist to promote assessment and data collection efforts in support of more targeted livelihood programming for refugees.*

---

While the quality and number of livelihood assessments in the Syrian response has been high, in many other refugee contexts assessments tend to be too narrow. Because of time, funding, and staff capacity constraints, assessments tend to focus on the needs of refugees rather than on their capacities and the local context. Moreover, while the use of technical market assessments has expanded, policy, political, and conflict-related analyses largely remain neglected, despite their potential to anticipate future problems in these areas. In situations where the political climate is not well understood

- 
- 83 Naohiko Omata, “Repatriation is Not for Everyone’: The Life and Livelihoods of Former Refugees in Liberia” (New Issues in Refugee Research paper no. 213, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, June 2011), [www.unhcr.org/4e0dc4709.html](http://www.unhcr.org/4e0dc4709.html).
- 84 While poverty constrains the ability to return, in some cases poverty may also be a driver of return, as with the spontaneous return of Iraqis from Syria between 2007 and 2010. See Harild, Christensen, and Zetter, *Sustainable Refugee Return*.
- 85 The assessments and reports conducted in neighboring countries for the Syrian crisis are gathered on the UNHCR “Inter-Agency Information Sharing Portal” as part of the Syria Regional Refugee Response. In Lebanon and Jordan alone there were more than 80 assessments conducted between 2011 and 2013. See Syria Regional Refugee Response, “Inter-Agency Information Sharing Portal,” accessed January 7, 2016, [https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents\\_search.php?Page=1&Country=122&Region=&Settlement=0&Category=4](https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents_search.php?Page=1&Country=122&Region=&Settlement=0&Category=4).
- 86 For example, see Women’s Refugee Commission, *Building Livelihoods: A Field Manual for Practitioners in Humanitarian Settings* (New York: Women’s Refugee Commission, 2009), [www.womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/document/281-building-livelihoods-a-field-manual-for-practitioners-in-humanitarian-settings](http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/document/281-building-livelihoods-a-field-manual-for-practitioners-in-humanitarian-settings); Timothy H. Nourse, *Microfinance for Refugees: Emerging Principles for Effective Implementation* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2003), [www.unhcr.org/3fc47f78d.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/3fc47f78d.pdf); Michelle Azorbo, “Microfinance and Refugees: Lessons Learned from UNHCR’s Experience” (New Issues in Refugee Research paper no. 199, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, January 2011), [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/B7A06E825A37D3F88525781D0073FA22-Full\\_Report.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/B7A06E825A37D3F88525781D0073FA22-Full_Report.pdf).
- 87 The Emergency Market Mapping Assessment (EMMA) Toolkit is a widely-used guidance manual for relief agencies and humanitarian staff who need to understand market systems in disaster zones and sudden-onset emergencies. It aims to improve emergency response by encouraging relief agencies to better understand, support, and make use of existing local market systems. For further information, see EMMA Toolkit, “About Emma,” accessed September 6, 2016, [www.emma-toolkit.org/about-emma](http://www.emma-toolkit.org/about-emma).
- 88 Timothy Nourse et al., *Market Development in Crisis Affected Environments: Emerging Lessons for Achieving Pro-Poor Economic Reconstruction* (Washington, DC: SEEP Network, 2007), [www.seepnetwork.org/market-development-in-crisis-affected-environments--emerging-lessons-for-achieving-pro-poor-economic-reconstruction-resources-233.php](http://www.seepnetwork.org/market-development-in-crisis-affected-environments--emerging-lessons-for-achieving-pro-poor-economic-reconstruction-resources-233.php).



(or is changing rapidly), efforts to use livelihood programming to promote integration will fail, as illustrated by the case of refugees in Zambia in 1994.<sup>89</sup> At the time, UNHCR used various kinds of livelihood programming—including education sponsorship, job placement, and income-generating opportunities—to encourage refugee integration into Zambian society. However, the government became increasingly concerned about the impact of refugees on urban social services, and tensions grew between the local community and refugees, especially those from non-neighboring countries. In 1995, the Zambian government moved all urban refugees to a rural settlement in Meheba, putting an end to urban livelihood programming.<sup>90</sup> A detailed assessment of the local political situation may have allowed UNHCR to adapt its programming to mitigate or avoid some of these tensions. By contrast, a recent project with Iraqi women in Jordan has been viewed as a success in part because the program focuses on helping participants develop home-based businesses, rather than entering wage employment, due to legal limitations on participants' right to work as well as cultural considerations.<sup>91</sup>

---

*In situations where the political climate is not well understood (or is changing rapidly), efforts to use livelihood programming to promote integration will fail.*

---

Good sources of contextual information can come from UN agencies that are not associated with refugees. For example, the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) has extensive data and conceptual tools from their work in conflict-affected urban settings. This could be leveraged for the benefit of UNHCR; so far, however, there has been relatively little joint work between the two UN agencies. Another diagnostic tool is a conflict analysis, which can identify existing and potential sources of stress and tension (including ethnic or religious differences, presence of armed groups, and land contestation) in the hosting area. These tensions should be flagged, and programs could then be designed to ameliorate or at least not aggravate these tensions.

Once again, some progress in this regard is evident in the context of the Syria response. IRC, for example, has refined its cash assistance program in Lebanon since launching it in 2012. The update takes into account EMMA market mapping, careful analysis of the political and economic context in Lebanon, and dialog with the Lebanese government. The government has, for example, expressed concerns regarding the possibility that cash assistance will create unsustainable dependency. Accordingly, the IRC program is small in scale and targets only the most vulnerable and those newly arrived. The program also pairs cash assistance with financial management and skills training activities, with the goal of eventually moving refugees off of cash assistance. IRC also strives to ensure that Lebanese nationals represent half of the beneficiaries of all livelihood promotion activities in order to mitigate possible tensions between refugees and host communities.<sup>92</sup>

## **B. Refugee Motivations and Experience**

In addition to host country policies and economic conditions, successful livelihood programs depend on the intentions and motivations of refugees, including their future plans. In many host countries, a proportion of refugees prefer to remain “under the radar” rather than formally register and access the often limited support and services available. In Malaysia, for example, Rohingya refugees have

---

89 Rebecca Frischkorn, “Political Economy of Control: Urban Refugees and the Regulation of Space in Lusaka, Zambia,” *Economic Anthropology* 2, no. 1 (2015): 205–23.

90 Ibid.

91 Crawford, Cosgrave, Haysom, and Walicki, *Protracted Displacement*.

92 See Francesca Battistin, “IRC Cash and Livelihoods Support Programme in Lebanon,” ENN Field Exchange, December 17, 2015, [www.ennonline.net/fex/48/irclebanon](http://www.ennonline.net/fex/48/irclebanon).



long preferred to make their own way in the informal labor market, rather than declare themselves to UNHCR and subject themselves to the limitations on movement and work associated with refugee status.<sup>93</sup> And in Jordan, the government estimates there are as many as 1.3 million Syrians,<sup>94</sup> of whom less than half (655,000 as of June 2016) are registered with UNHCR.<sup>95</sup> Of those who are unregistered, some arrived prior to the onset of the Syrian civil war on more favorable visa terms, and others seek to stay under the official radar due to difficulties registering with the authorities (for example, because they had left a refugee camp without proper authorization).<sup>96</sup>

---

*The impact of livelihoods on refugee willingness or ability to repatriate ... is also poorly understood.*

---

Broadly, livelihood initiatives are based on the assumption that refugees want to pursue livelihoods where they are, and that they will make the effort to do so if given the opportunity. Yet, refugees do not always intend to remain in place. Even if they have been stuck in a displacement situation for years, refugees may await opportunities to move on, sometimes back to their countries or origin, but more often to more promising urban areas or third countries. Contextual changes create new push or pull factors (such as the surge in refugee and migrant flows to Europe during 2015 as Syrians and others sought to take advantage of a perceived opening in Europe). Elsewhere, refugees have used a first-asylum country as a jumping off point to a more favorable destination, such as urban areas or more distant destinations where there is work (such as South Africa, Israel, or Europe, in the case of African refugees). Some camps, such as those in northern Ethiopia, are used by refugees (in this case, Eritreans) as transit points or waystations for the onward movement.<sup>97</sup> The possibility of resettlement—even a remote one—can also influence refugees’ decisions, particularly regarding willingness to repatriate, although more research is needed into the specific effects of resettlement prospects on refugee decisions about local integration.<sup>98</sup> In such circumstances, putting livelihood activities in place could be a waste of resources if refugees are not interested in integrating into the host country.

The impact of livelihoods on refugee willingness or ability to repatriate—often cited as a goal of such programs—is also poorly understood. One study of Kurdish IDP repatriation in Turkey found that IDPs who had learned Turkish and achieved economic success in their new communities were less likely to return home.<sup>99</sup> By contrast, a 2015 review study found some evidence to suggest that having a sustainable livelihood in a country of asylum has enabled some refugee populations to engage in staggered return strategies: one or two family members may return first, while others remain in the asylum country to support the returnees. Refugees may thus be more willing to return if they know they will have ongoing support from the asylum country.<sup>100</sup> Again, however, evidence on this point is limited.

---

93 Samuel Cheung, “Migration Control and the Solutions Impasse in South and Southeast Asia.”

94 Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Jordan 2015 Census*.

95 UNHCR, “Registered Syrians in Jordan” (UNHCR factsheet, May 31, 2016), <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=11099>.

96 Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC), “Jordan,” in *A Study on Forced Migration in OIC Member Countries: The Policy Framework Adopted by Host Countries* (unpublished report prepared by MPI on behalf of the COMCEC Coordinating Office for the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group, forthcoming).

97 Christopher Horwood with Kate Hooper, *Protection on the Move: Eritrean Refugee Flows through the Greater Horn of Africa* (Washington, DC: MPI, forthcoming).

98 Bram J. Jansen “Between Vulnerability and Assertiveness: Negotiating Resettlement in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya,” *African Affairs* 107, no. 429 (2008): 569–87. See also Samuel K. M. Agblorti, “Refugee Integration in Ghana: The Host Community’s Perspective” (New Issues in Refugee Research paper no. 203, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, March 2011), [www.unhcr.org/4d6f5f3f9.html](http://www.unhcr.org/4d6f5f3f9.html).

99 Djordje Stefanovic, Neophytos Loizides, and Samantha Parsons, “Home is Where the Heart Is? Forced Migration and Voluntary Return in Turkey’s Kurdish Regions,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 28, no. 2 (2015): 276–96.

100 Harild, Christensen, and Zetter, *Sustainable Refugee Return*.





At the community and household level, failing to account for local practices and refugee knowledge and customs can cause serious problems. Microcredit efforts for refugees in the 1990s are one such example. These programs failed or became unsustainable because agencies did not take into account refugee attitudes and practices regarding loans, debt, and repayment. Agencies did not understand how loans would be used (e.g., for consumption instead of business investment), nor did they anticipate that refugee loan recipients would take out other loans to repay agency loans, thus falling into dangerous indebtedness, or that the lack of consequences for nonrepayment would undermine the program. As a result, refugee microcredit programs have come to be very poorly regarded.<sup>101</sup>

---

*Household needs assessment tools, already widely used, could also identify existing knowledge, experience, and capacities within refugee populations.*

---

A further problem is that many international agencies prefer to target livelihood programming to the groups perceived as the “most vulnerable” in a society. This often includes women or individuals with little prior training or experience, regardless of whether such efforts are likely to have a substantial impact with these groups or whether these individuals are in fact the most vulnerable. Recent research in Uganda, for example, found that several livelihood organizations actively select participants with no previous experience, even though these individuals may be a long way from entering the labor market. Moreover, many livelihood activities were targeted specifically to women, leading male refugees to complain about the lack of opportunities available to them.<sup>102</sup> Recently, IRC chose to adapt its cash assistance program for Syrians in Lebanon for similar reasons. While the program had initially targeted female-headed households, IRC broadened the program to include male-headed households after a 2014 study found that gender was not correlated with financial vulnerability for Syrians in Lebanon.<sup>103</sup> Such examples demonstrate the value of beginning program design with an in-depth assessment of the actual vulnerabilities—and potential—of the population in question, rather than making assumptions regarding these needs.

Incorporating the voices of refugees themselves into program design can be an effective means to mitigate this risk. They are likely to have the best insights into their own needs and capacities, as well as the kinds of livelihood activities that are already in place or have been tried before. Knowing what has or has not worked in the past can illuminate contextual problems and improve future program design. Household needs assessment tools, already widely used, could also identify existing knowledge, experience, and capacities within refugee populations.

Working directly with refugees can be challenging, however, in situations where political tensions within refugee communities create contention over who represents the refugees and who has the ear of the aid agencies. The national staff of aid agencies, who are familiar with the context, can be equally informative in these situations, and are a necessary complement to the voice of refugees.

---

101 See Nourse, *Microfinance for Refugees*; Jacobsen, *Microcredit and Other Loan Programs in Protracted Refugee Situations*; and Azorbo, *Microfinance and Refugees*

102 Easton-Calabria, “Refugees Asked to Fish for Themselves.”

103 Battistin, “IRC Cash and Livelihoods Support Programme in Lebanon.”



### C. *Insufficient and Unpredictable Funding*

Both emergency and long-term humanitarian response efforts are highly reliant on the availability of external funding, and therefore, on donor countries—both in terms of geography and programmatic priorities. Livelihood projects have so far received little support relative to more immediate needs. In the Syria response, for example, livelihood development has consistently been the most underfunded priority area of joint UN funding appeals, and received just 6 percent of requested funds for 2015 by mid-year.<sup>104</sup> In part, this results from limitations in funding availability: when few resources are available, the most basic and pressing needs will be prioritized over longer-term strategy development. But legal restrictions on donor mandates at the national level may also play a role; in 2012, a UNHCR-WFP study suggested that restrictions on the ability of the U.S. State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration to use funds for development projects in refugee settings had, at that time, limited the support the State Department could offer to some livelihood and longer-term initiatives.<sup>105</sup> Much of the funding available for refugee situations is short term; in Lebanon, for example, NGO partners have complained that initial funding in the wake of the Syria crisis was made available through grants that were just three to six months long, preventing them from engaging in projects with longer-term time scales or goals.<sup>106</sup>

---

*Livelihood projects have so far received little support relative to more immediate needs.*

---

Donors are subject to shifting political winds and resource demands, with implications for programming. Donor priorities and commitments change, often rapidly, and funding for refugee livelihoods may be reallocated in response to new emergencies. One example comes from Cameroon, where funding priorities aimed at promoting host-refugee engagement and integration activities had to shift following new refugee influxes from Nigeria and the Central African Republic in 2014 and 2015.<sup>107</sup> The most obvious example of how donor attention shifts is the Syrian crisis, which now occupies most of the thinking and funding of donors. As the European Union faced a migration and refugee crisis in the summer of 2015, attention turned to how to slow the flow of Syrian refugees across the Mediterranean; the result was renewed interest in livelihood schemes and notions such as the creation of “special economic zones” for Syrians in host countries like Jordan and Lebanon that would create jobs for refugees and host community members alike.<sup>108</sup> Progress has been made on this front in Jordan in particular. In February 2016, the Jordanian government signed an agreement, known as the Jordan Compact, with major international financial institutions and donors that granted the country additional development aid and interest free loans in exchange for facilitating legal access to work for Syrians. In addition, the European Union agreed to ease import restrictions on Jordanian goods produced in special economic zones that require at least 15 percent of employees to be

---

104 Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), *3RP Regional Progress Report* (N.p.: 3RP, 2015), [www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/3RP-Progress-Report.pdf](http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/3RP-Progress-Report.pdf).

105 WFP, *Summary Report of the Joint UNHCR/WFP Impact Evaluation on the Contribution of Food Assistance to Durable Solutions in Protracted Refugee Situations—Ethiopia* (Rome: WFP, 2012), <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/eb/wfpdoc061698.pdf>.

106 Mercy Corps, *Cracking the Code: Enhancing Emergency Response & Resilience in Complex Crises* (Washington, DC: Mercy Corps, 2015), [www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/cracking-code-enhancing-emergency-response-resilience-complex-crises](http://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/cracking-code-enhancing-emergency-response-resilience-complex-crises).

107 UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2015 Update: Cameroon* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2015), [www.unhcr.org/5461e5fce.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/5461e5fce.pdf).

108 Markus Brunnermeier, “How Can We Help Refugees to Support Themselves?” World Economic Forum, December 8, 2015, <https://agenda.weforum.org/2015/12/how-can-we-help-refugees-to-support-themselves/>. For a summary of the op-eds on the idea of special economic zones, see The Mitrailleur, “Refugee Sezs Op Ed Round Up,” The Mitrailleur, December 11, 2015, <http://mitrailleur.net/2015/12/11/refugee-sezs-op-ed-round-up/>.



Syrian.<sup>109</sup> By June 2016, approximately 11,500 Syrians had received work permits,<sup>110</sup> although the long term effects of the Jordan Compact on Syrians in the country remains to be seen.

Domestic constraints can also have a substantial impact on both the availability of funding and the political capacity of donors to spend it. As the number of asylum seekers arriving in Europe spiked in the fall of 2015, several European countries indicated their intention of drawing on their overseas assistance funds to supplement support for their domestic asylum and reception services. Norway and Sweden, for example, announced at the end of 2015 that they may divert up to 20 and 60 percent, respectively, of their 2016 overseas development aid budgets for this purpose.<sup>111</sup>

Variable funding levels and the relatively short-term nature of many humanitarian funding commitments can make it very difficult for project implementers to plan or to scale up effective projects. A recent meta-study also suggested that the short-term nature of many projects can inhibit implementer efforts to develop networks with employers, local government, and other service providers in the region that are key to facilitating needed access to jobs, capital, and markets.<sup>112</sup>

Ideally, a comprehensive analysis of host country political context would account for donor political dynamics and would be conducted prior to program design and at intervals throughout its lifecycle to take into account potential shifts in donor funding. Such an analysis could be built into the program design and budget, and should be conducted by an external or independent entity.

#### **D. Lack of Experience and Skills among Implementing Partners**

Livelihood programming for refugees is usually developed and implemented by the same humanitarian agencies that traditionally provide basic-needs services in refugee situations. Evaluations and meta-studies have raised questions about whether these agencies have the requisite knowledge or experience to design and implement longer-term interventions effectively.<sup>113</sup> Livelihood projects are quite different from traditional aid and assistance work, and require knowledge of and ability to assess local contexts—including labor market conditions and political dynamics—as well as a familiarity with the technical aspects of livelihood program design. Given the newness of refugee livelihoods as a programmatic area, the field broadly suffers from a shortage of staff with the requisite knowledge to effectively design and implement interventions.<sup>114</sup> Having highly trained and experienced staff is key to program effectiveness; interventions that have shown success tend to involve intense personal coaching of beneficiaries as well as high-quality context mapping.<sup>115</sup>

Moreover, implementing actors must be able to work with local partners, such as the business community or local service providers, and be able to adapt to changes in the local context. But UNHCR and its implementing partners in the humanitarian world often lack the “negotiating culture” that is

109 Government of Jordan, “The Jordan Compact: A New Holistic Approach between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the International Community to Deal with the Syrian Refugee Crisis” (news release, February 7, 2016), <http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-compact-new-holistic-approach-between-hashemite-kingdom-jordan-and>; European Commission, “EU-Jordan: Towards a Stronger Partnership” (news release, July 20, 2016), [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-2570\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2570_en.htm).

110 Laila Azzeh, “11,500 Syrians Issued Work Permits,” *The Jordan Times*, June 18, 2016, [www.jordantimes.com/news/local/11500-syrians-issued-work-permits-%E2%80%94-ministry](http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/11500-syrians-issued-work-permits-%E2%80%94-ministry).

111 Kristy Siegfried, “How the Refugee Crisis is Hurting Foreign Aid,” IRIN, November 18, 2015, [www.irinnews.org/printreport.aspx?reportid=102225](http://www.irinnews.org/printreport.aspx?reportid=102225).

112 Crawford, Cosgrave, Haysom, and Walicki, *Protracted Displacement*.

113 U.S. Department of State, *Evaluating the Effectiveness of DOS/PRM Livelihoods Program in Ethiopia and Burundi: Synthesis Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2015), [www.state.gov/documents/organization/252134.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252134.pdf).

114 Ibid.

115 A successful project in Jordan for Iraqi refugees, for example, relied on an extensive network of local community-based organizations to deliver training, individual interviews, and mentoring. See Crawford, Cosgrave, Haysom, and Walicki, *Protracted Displacement*.



usually present between development agencies and their target populations.<sup>116</sup> While development actors are dependent on the trust and cooperation of their target populations to achieve their goals, UNHCR receives its mandate directly from the host-country government and the international community, and is thus not used to taking on the consultative and collaborative role necessary in development contexts.

---

*Implementing actors must be able to work with local partners ...  
and be able to adapt to changes in the local context.*

---

It is possible that development actors—with their more established knowledge base in the area of livelihood development—may be better placed to implement or contribute to livelihood initiatives. In the last few years, two of the most significant development actors, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), have begun to engage directly with global forced migration, recognizing that displacement has significant financial and developmental costs. It is promising but perhaps too early to tell whether these initiatives,<sup>117</sup> supported by the huge sums being invested (or at least promised) by development actors, will have any direct impact on the plight of refugees and their host communities.

Private sector actors should also be considered key partners. The 2014 UNHCR livelihood strategy<sup>118</sup> included engagement with private sector employment agencies as a priority, for example by developing job placement services to connect employers and refugees or by creating a database of refugee employment profiles to share with potential employers. UNHCR further aims to develop agreements with local businesses and trade associations to offer on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and internship placements to refugees. These partnerships are, however, relatively recent initiatives and have yet to be fully implemented (or evaluated). Most employment-based efforts are still in the pilot stage, or have been attempted in one-off arrangements as part of corporate social responsibility initiatives. For example, Microsoft and PricewaterhouseCoopers were involved in the pilot Community Technology Access program, described in previous sections, in Rwanda and Bangladesh.

These initial efforts on the part of UNHCR have been echoed by calls from the World Bank for private-sector-driven economic opportunities that support refugees and host populations and promote stability in the long term. The International Finance Corporation, a development finance institution and member of the World Bank Group, has also sought to encourage investors to supply services and financial capital in order to avoid straining resources in host communities. Such services include providing energy (e.g., a solar power project in Jordan), information and communications technology, and financing for small entrepreneurs.<sup>119</sup>

Diaspora populations offer yet another means of engaging with refugee communities. Diasporas are one of the main sources of support for refugees in protracted situations, providing both direct support in the form of remittances—an important supplement to humanitarian aid—and other sources of social capital (e.g., information and network connections). There is extensive scholarship and a broad understanding of how diasporas support and promote development in their countries of origin.<sup>120</sup> Less

---

116 For a more full discussion of this point, see Oliver Bakewell, “Community Services in Refugee Aid Programs: The Challenges of Expectations, Principles, and Practice,” *Praxis* 18 (2003): 5–18, <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/~media/Fletcher/Microsites/praxis/xviii/Bakewell.pdf>.

117 World Bank Group, “A Response to Global Forced Displacement” (working paper, November 20, 2015), 28, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/504411467993212543/pdf/101151-BR-SecM2015-0335-PUBLIC.pdf>.

118 UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods*, 30.

119 World Bank Group, “A Response to Global Forced Displacement,” 10–11.

120 For a review, see Nicholas Van Hear, Frank Pieke, and Steve Vertovec, *The Contribution of UK-Based Diasporas to Development and Poverty Reduction* (Oxford: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford, University of Oxford, 2004), [www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2004/er-2004-diasporas\\_uk\\_poverty\\_reduction\\_dfid/](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2004/er-2004-diasporas_uk_poverty_reduction_dfid/).



has been written about the interactions between diaspora groups and refugees from a shared country or region of origin, but recent scholarship suggests that diasporas operate outside the humanitarian mainstream and have not been well integrated into partnerships with aid agencies.<sup>121</sup> However, aid agencies do recognize the importance of working with diasporas, and have tried to leverage their support to improve humanitarian response capacity. For example, the Danish Refugee Council Diaspora Program, funded by the Danish government, is a three year initiative focused on strengthening the role of the Somali and Afghani diasporas as development agents (nationalities chosen because of their large diaspora communities in Denmark). Somali and Afghan diaspora organizations in Denmark can apply for funding to implement relief, rehabilitation, and development projects in Somalia and Afghanistan.<sup>122</sup> An initial evaluation of the project suggested that diaspora-led projects have been particularly successful when they have a high degree of local ownership and where they innovate on rather than duplicate existing humanitarian and development efforts.<sup>123</sup>

As the range of engaged organizations expands, there are concerns about whether this large cast of actors is working together in a coordinated way and learning from each other. In the countries neighboring Syria, for example, livelihood programs have been implemented by several large Western agencies such as the Danish Refugee Council, IRC, Norwegian Refugee Council, and Oxfam. A lack of coordination between projects and services can mean refugees don't benefit from a "continuum of services" akin to workforce development programs in developed countries (e.g., vocational training programs that include referral to needed language classes or credential recognition services and financing for starting a business).<sup>124</sup> UN agencies have a long history of working poorly together, if at all,<sup>125</sup> and UNHCR has worked only infrequently with development actors, although some progress has been made in this regard in the context of Syria.

---

*As the range of engaged organizations expands, there are concerns about whether this large cast of actors is working together in a coordinated way and learning from each other.*

---

### **E. Inadequate Incorporation of Host-Community Actors in Programming**

Efforts to develop opportunities for refugees in first-asylum countries have tended to focus on "micro-interventions" that serve small numbers of people over a wide geographic area.<sup>126</sup> Programs are often delivered by international assistance organizations, in some cases creating service provision infrastructure that runs parallel to local services. But projects to build host country infrastructure or management and governance capacity—through which livelihood projects could be provided—have a greater reach, a longer-term term impact, and the potential to more easily serve the needs of host

121 Zeynep Sezgin and Dennis Dijkzeul, eds., *The New Humanitarians in International Practice: Emerging Actors and Contested Principles* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

122 Danish Refugee Council, "Diaspora Programme—About the Programme," accessed August 1, 2016, <https://drc.dk/relief-work/diaspora-programme/about-the-programme>.

123 Valeria Saggiomo and Anna Ferro, *Mid-Term Evaluation, Diaspora Program: Diaspora Driven Relief, Rehabilitation and Development* (Copenhagen: Danish Refugee Council, 2014), [https://drc.dk/media/1914344/drc\\_dp\\_midterm\\_evaluation\\_full\\_report.pdf](https://drc.dk/media/1914344/drc_dp_midterm_evaluation_full_report.pdf).

124 WFP and UNHCR, *Synthesis Report of the Joint WFP and UNHCR Impact Evaluations on the Contribution of Food Assistance to Durable Solutions in Protracted Refugee Situations* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2013), [www.unhcr.org/51b827cb9.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/51b827cb9.pdf).

125 For example, see Naim Kapucu, "Collaborative Governance in International Disasters: Nargis Cyclone in Myanmar and Sichuan Earthquake in China Cases," *International Journal of Emergency Management* 8, no. 1 (2011): 1–25.

126 European Commission, "Non-paper Prepared for Expert Consultations on Forced Displacement and Development" (discussion paper, November 2015), [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/non-paper\\_eurolook\\_version\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/non-paper_eurolook_version_for_web.pdf).





community members. Similarly, local NGOs have often complained that their capacity and expertise is underutilized and underdeveloped due to a preference on the part of donors to work through INGOs.<sup>127</sup>

The role of local authorities is well explored in the scholarship concerning developed countries, but much less so in countries of first asylum. Both UNHCR and development actors like the World Bank have stated their intention to partner with host-country governments and local and national institutions to deliver services for refugees, with the aim of also benefiting host communities. Such partners could include both public and private service providers, including those that provide social protections, microfinance and banking opportunities, agricultural extension services, business development and business incubation, education and training, job placements, legal aid, and communications systems. Another set of important actors is municipal and local authorities, including the police and local security forces, who are the main interlocutors between the host government and refugees.

---

*Cooperation with local private actors (rather than large international corporations) could ... yield new and productive ways of supporting refugees.*

---

It is important to recognize, however, that working through host country institutions is not always possible. Lack of government bureaucratic capacity, policy frameworks that restrict opportunities, insufficient political commitment, a lack of accountability, and wide-spread corruption can create massive obstacles. One example is the difficulties the international community has faced in implementing the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), a framework designed to facilitate the return of refugees to Afghanistan.<sup>128</sup> A recent audit report by the U.S. government found that despite international assistance and substantial donor funding, the Afghan government has failed to implement the SSAR, largely because the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MORR) has limited capacity to fulfill its obligations and to work with other ministries, and is beset by corruption. For example, the report states that the MORR has been unable to effectively distribute land to Afghan returnees under the Land Allocation Scheme, as called for in the SSAR, as well as by presidential decree and Afghan law.<sup>129</sup> Such mismatches between program mandate and partner capacity could be mitigated by robust pre-program design assessments of local governance capacity.

Cooperation with local private actors (rather than large international corporations) could also yield new and productive ways of supporting refugees, and such actors should be identified when conducting contextual analysis, especially in urban areas. They include financial service providers (such as local banks, but also microfinance providers and even moneylenders), language schools (which can provide language training for refugees), health and child care providers, and small business owners who could be both employers and mentors for refugee entrepreneurs.<sup>130</sup> Much of the recent

---

127 In Lebanon, for example, a recent report by Mercy Corps found that neither Lebanese civil society nor local institutions had been sufficiently engaged by the international community in the Syrian refugee response. In some cases, practical barriers hindered their participation; for example, meetings were often held in English, a language in which not all local actors had working proficiency. See Mercy Corps, *Cracking the Code*.

128 Begun in 2011, the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) is a regional multi-year initiative, involving the governments of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan along with more than 50 humanitarian and development partners. Its goal is facilitating voluntary return and sustainable reintegration, while at the same time providing assistance to host countries. See UNHCR, "Afghan Solutions Strategy," accessed January 7, 2016, [www.unhcr.org/pages/4f9016576.html](http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4f9016576.html).

129 Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), *Afghan Refugees and Returnees: Corruption and Lack of Afghan Ministerial Capacity Have Prevented Implementation of a Long-term Refugee Strategy* (Arlington, VA: SIGAR, 2015), [www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/SIGAR-15-83-AR.pdf](http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/SIGAR-15-83-AR.pdf).

130 Gabrielle Smith and Lili Mohiddin, "A Review of Evidence of Humanitarian Cash Transfer Programming in Urban Areas" (International Institute for Environment and Development working paper, December 2015), <http://pubs.iied.org/10759IIED>.



innovative INGO programming in urban areas has emerged from the Syrian refugee crisis, which is pushing programming in new directions (though these have yet to be evaluated). For example, the Norwegian Refugee Council has used cash for rent in Lebanon and Jordan and has worked with landlords to improve housing stock by signing fixed 12-month rental agreements.<sup>131</sup>

Including host populations in programming and needs assessments is equally important. A good example is the joint emergency livelihood assessment conducted by IRC and Save the Children in Lebanon in 2012 that included an assessment of the needs of both Syrian and Lebanese households.<sup>132</sup> The recommendations for action outlined in the report were shared by both the IRC and Save the Children, and were intended to serve as the basis for livelihood programming by both agencies.

## IV. Conclusions

The political, financial, and logistical challenges of supporting 20 million refugees worldwide—and counting—has driven donor-country and international-agency policymakers to give more consideration to promoting the self-sufficiency of refugee populations. Most humanitarian organizations, and increasingly development agencies such as the World Bank, agree on the need to shift from an aid-driven, refugee-targeted response to an inclusive, self-reliance model that is enhanced by sustainable livelihood programming and retains the elements of social protection.

To date, these efforts have had limited success. Most are relatively small in scale and draw on the established practices of development actors that aim to build the human capital of participants, connect them with employers, or support self-employment efforts. But the policy and political context of displacement situations differs considerably from the settings in which development interventions usually take place. Programs that do not take into account practical or legal restrictions on refugees' rights to work or own certain assets will fail, as is too often the case. Moreover, many such efforts do not fully assess labor market and economic conditions when determining what skills and activities to prioritize for beneficiaries. Few programs have been subjected to thorough and independent evaluations, and as a result, policymakers and program designers have little data available to them regarding what works and what does not when seeking to strengthen refugee livelihoods.

While some program constraints are exogenous, and thus difficult to overcome, others can be relatively easily remedied at the programmatic level. The following steps can improve design and implementation of livelihood initiatives:

- **Include localized contextual awareness as a key element of program design.** Livelihood programs are often designed in headquarters and exported to the field without adequate adaptation to local economic and market conditions. When this occurs with a coterminous lack of staff expertise at the implementation level, the program is bound to fail. In addition, political and conflict factors that may present barriers should be integrated into program design, allowing for flexibility and the possibility of a change of course. Local information about these factors can be obtained from national staff and key informants.

131 Ofelia García, *Evaluation of the Norwegian Refugee Council's Lebanon Host Community Shelter Programmes: Increasing the Availability of Host Community Housing Stock and Improving Living Conditions for the Provision of Refugee Shelter, Period: January 2013-December 2014* (Oslo: Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015), [www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/evaluations/lebanon---shelter-evaluation---2014.pdf](http://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/evaluations/lebanon---shelter-evaluation---2014.pdf).

132 Save the Children and IRC, *Livelihoods Assessment: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, Bekaa Valley and North Governorates* (London and New York: Save the Children and IRC, 2012), <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=885>.



- ***Both the design and implementation of livelihood programs should be based on the capacity, assets, knowledge, and motivations of the refugee community.*** Program designers should consult with refugees themselves regarding their needs, aspirations, and skills. Refugees can serve as informants regarding what has succeeded or failed in the past. Surveying refugee skills and backgrounds as a part of broader needs assessments will also be crucial to the design of successful programs.
- ***Where possible, work in partnership with host institutions and local governments to design and deliver programs.*** Given that most refugee crises will become protracted, livelihood programs should be built to last. By working through host country civil society or local authority actors, programs can strengthen the capacity of service provision infrastructure, ensuring these supports are available after donor interests change. Providing livelihood support in cooperation with local organizations and service providers will help ensure the inclusion of host communities so that they benefit from these interventions. Doing so can build connections between refugees and local populations by providing the chance to develop local networks of employment and market opportunities.

At a strategic level, policymakers in donor countries and international agencies should consider the following measures to improve the effectiveness of livelihood and development strategies in refugee situations:

- ***Provide more long-term and predictable funding. Many livelihood interventions aimed at refugees are still supported by funders and agencies used to working in humanitarian and relief contexts.*** Funding thus tends to be short-term and insufficient to effect real change. There is a need for humanitarian funding to commit to longer timeframes and to providing support to host communities, and for development agencies to support projects that also benefit refugees. Development and humanitarian agencies must improve the coordination of their interventions in conflict- and displacement-affected settings to maximize the benefits of funding.
- ***More independent impact evaluations are needed.*** The evidence base is weak in terms of how livelihood programs impact the wellbeing, self-reliance, and durable solutions of refugees. Even principles currently considered best practices are not well established and have not been thoroughly evaluated in terms of whether and how they influence impact. Practices such as targeting vulnerable groups are not well conceptualized, and there is much debate and discussion over how (or even whether) such targeting should be used.<sup>133</sup> Absent more substantial evidence and studies that examine whether specific practices lead to desired outcomes and stated goals, it is impossible to determine whether current refugee livelihood programming practices are having a positive and especially long-term impact.

These programming improvements will require a rethink at headquarters and a reassignment of program budgets. They will require the inclusion of better assessments done before the program and the implementation of baseline studies to help track progress, impact, and outcomes. The humanitarian community will also need to rethink long-held assumptions regarding where refugee support occurs (it need not necessarily be in camps), whether refugees can be targeted and isolated from their nonrefugee host-community neighbors (refugee support must instead include both populations), and whether humanitarian assistance and funding can be separated from development funding (it cannot).

---

<sup>133</sup> For a critique of targeting, see Paula Armstrong and Karen Jacobsen, *Addressing Vulnerability? Cash Transfer Programming and Protection Outcomes for Out-of-Camp Syrian Refugees: An Analysis of the Danish Refugee Council's E-Card Programming in Southern Turkey* (Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, 2015), <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Jacobsen-Armstrong-Addressing-Vulnerability-Cash-Transfer...Syrian-Refugees-2015.pdf>.





It is inevitable that most refugees around the world will continue to reside in countries of first asylum, as they do now and have for the past thirty years. Even if Europe, the United States, and other resettlement countries massively scaled up their resettlement efforts, the places available would never be sufficient to meet the needs of all refugees—and all would not necessarily want to participate. With return also a distant possibility for many, the focus of solutions must be on countries of first asylum. Given the resistance in many countries to full integration of refugee populations, there is a need for humanitarian actors and governments to think instead about transitional solutions that provide refugees with a dignified and rights-based way forward in countries of first asylum, even if these do not lead to naturalization or permanent residency in the short term. Such solutions will need to include incentives for host-country governments and populations to make accepting refugees appealing, to ensure self-reliance among the refugees, and to promote the development of host countries rather than letting them sink under the weight of their protection responsibilities.

For more on MPI's Transatlantic Council on Migration, visit:  
[www.migrationpolicy.org/transatlantic](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/transatlantic)



## Works Cited

- ACTED. 2015. Women Access Income Generating Opportunities in Za'atari Refugee Camp. ACTED, November 26, 2015. [www.acted.org/en/women-access-income-generating-opportunities-za-atari-refugee-camp](http://www.acted.org/en/women-access-income-generating-opportunities-za-atari-refugee-camp).
- Agblorti, Samuel K. M. 2011. Refugee Integration in Ghana: The Host Community's Perspective. New Issues in Refugee Research paper no. 203, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, March 2011. [www.unhcr.org/4d6f5f3f9.html](http://www.unhcr.org/4d6f5f3f9.html).
- Aleinikoff, T. Alexander. 2015. *From Dependence to Self-Reliance. Changing the Paradigm in Protracted Refugee Situations*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute. [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/dependence-self-reliance-changing-paradigm-protracted-refugee-situations](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/dependence-self-reliance-changing-paradigm-protracted-refugee-situations).
- Amazon. N.d. Amazon Mechanical Turk. Accessed January 7, 2016. [www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome](http://www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome).
- Anderson, Jessica. 2013. Policy Report on UNHCR's Community Technology Access Program: Best Practices and Lessons Learned. *Refuge* 29 (1): 21–29. <http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/37503/34040>.
- Anderson Rapport, Elisabeth. 2014. Cash-for-Work Program to Aid Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Launches. Action Against Hunger, February 13, 2014. [www.actionagainsthunger.org/blog/cash-work-program-aid-syrian-refugees-lebanon-launches](http://www.actionagainsthunger.org/blog/cash-work-program-aid-syrian-refugees-lebanon-launches).
- Armstrong, Paula, and Karen Jacobsen. 2015. *Addressing Vulnerability? Cash Transfer Programming and Protection Outcomes for Out-of-Camp Syrian Refugees. An Analysis of the Danish Refugee Council's E-Card Programming in Southern Turkey*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University. <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Jacobsen-Armstrong-Addressing-Vulnerability-Cash-Transfer...Syrian-Refugees-2015.pdf>.
- Asylum Access. 2014. *Global Refugee Work Rights Report*. Oakland, CA: Asylum Access. [http://asylumaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FINAL\\_Global-Refugee-Work-Rights-Report-2014\\_Interactive.pdf](http://asylumaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FINAL_Global-Refugee-Work-Rights-Report-2014_Interactive.pdf).
- Azorbo, Michelle. 2011. Microfinance and Refugees: Lessons Learned from UNHCR's Experience. New Issues in Refugee Research paper no. 199, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, January 2011. [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/B7A06E825A37D3F88525781D-0073FA22-Full\\_Report.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/B7A06E825A37D3F88525781D-0073FA22-Full_Report.pdf).
- Azzeh, Laila. 2016. 11,500 Syrians Issued Work Permits. *The Jordan Times*, June 18, 2016. [www.jordantimes.com/news/local/11500-syrians-issued-work-permits-%E2%80%94-ministry](http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/11500-syrians-issued-work-permits-%E2%80%94-ministry).
- Bakewell, Oliver. 2003. Community Services in Refugee Aid Programs: The Challenges of Expectations, Principles, and Practice. *Praxis* 18: 5–18. <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/~media/Fletcher/Microsites/praxis/xviii/Bakewell.pdf>.
- Battistin, Francesca. 2015. IRC Cash and Livelihoods Support Programme in Lebanon. ENN Field Exchange, December 17, 2015. [www.ennonline.net/fex/48/irclebanon](http://www.ennonline.net/fex/48/irclebanon).
- Beit Al Karma Consulting. 2016. *Mid-Term Evaluation of UNHCR Graduation Programme in Egypt*. Giza, Egypt: Beit Al Karma Consulting. [www.microfinancegateway.org/sites/default/files/publication\\_files/unhcr\\_mid-term\\_evaluation\\_2015\\_beit\\_al\\_karma\\_final\\_report\\_21\\_march\\_2016.pdf](http://www.microfinancegateway.org/sites/default/files/publication_files/unhcr_mid-term_evaluation_2015_beit_al_karma_final_report_21_march_2016.pdf).



- Berg, Michelle and Louisa Seferis. 2015. *Protection Outcomes in Cash Based Interventions: A Literature Review*. Oxford: Cash Learning Partnership. [www.cashlearning.org/downloads/erc-protection-and-cash-literature-review-jan2015.pdf](http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/erc-protection-and-cash-literature-review-jan2015.pdf).
- Blattman, Christopher, Eric Green, Jeannie Annan, and Julian Jamison. 2013. *Building Women's Economic and Social Empowerment through Enterprise: An Experimental Assessment of the Women's Income Generating Support Program in Uganda*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/17862>.
- Brunnermeier, Markus. 2015. How Can We Help Refugees to Support Themselves? World Economic Forum, December 8, 2015. <https://agenda.weforum.org/2015/12/how-can-we-help-refugees-to-support-themselves/>.
- Campbell, Elizabeth H. 2006. Urban Refugees in Nairobi: Problems of Protection, Mechanisms of Survival, and Possibilities for Integration. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19 (3): 396-413.
- Campbell, Leah. 2014. *Cross-Sector Cash Assistance for Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Lebanon: An IRC Programme*. Oxford: Cash Learning Partnership. [www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-case-study-lebanon-web.pdf](http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-case-study-lebanon-web.pdf).
- Cash Learning Partnership. N.d. The Cash Learning Partnership. Accessed August 12, 2016. [www.cashlearning.org/](http://www.cashlearning.org/).
- Cheung, Samuel. 2011. Migration Control and the Solutions Impasse in South and Southeast Asia: Implications from the Rohingya Experience. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25 (1): 50-70.
- Crawford, Nicholas, John Cosgrave, Simone Haysom, and Nadine Walicki. 2015. *Protracted Displacement: Uncertain Paths to Self-Reliance in Exile*. London: Overseas Development Institute. [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9851.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9851.pdf).
- Danish Refugee Council. 2012. *Livelihood Support Project Funded by UNHCR: Impact Assessment Report Uganda—West Nile Region 2012*. Copenhagen: Danish Refugee Council. [www.drc.dk/media/1311867/final-unhcr-livelihood-impact-assessment-report.pdf](http://www.drc.dk/media/1311867/final-unhcr-livelihood-impact-assessment-report.pdf).
- . N.d. Diaspora Programme—About the Programme. Accessed August 1, 2016. <https://drc.dk/re-lief-work/diaspora-programme/about-the-programme>.
- de Montesquiou, Aude, Tony Sheldon, Frank F. DeGiovanni, and Syed M. Hashemi. 2014. *From Extreme Poverty to Sustainable Livelihoods: A Technical Guide to Graduation Approach*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group, Consultative Group to Assist the Poor. [www.cgap.org/sites/default/files/graduation\\_guide\\_final.pdf](http://www.cgap.org/sites/default/files/graduation_guide_final.pdf).
- Easton-Calabria, Evan. 2016. "Refugees Asked to Fish for Themselves": The Role of Livelihoods Trainings for Kampala's Urban Refugees. Working paper, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, January 2016. [www.unhcr.org/en-us/research/working/56bd9ed89/refugees-asked-fish-themselves-role-livelihoods-trainings-kampalas-urban.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/research/working/56bd9ed89/refugees-asked-fish-themselves-role-livelihoods-trainings-kampalas-urban.html).
- Easton-Calabria, Evan, and Naohiko Omata. 2016. Micro-Finance in Refugee Contexts: Current Scholarship and Research Gaps. Refugee Studies Centre working paper 116, Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford, June 2016. [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/micro-finance-in-refugee-contexts-current-scholarship-and-research-gaps](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/micro-finance-in-refugee-contexts-current-scholarship-and-research-gaps).
- Eddy, Melissa. 2015. Anti-Immigrant Party Gains in Denmark Elections. *The New York Times*, June 18, 2015. [www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/world/anti-immigrant-party-gains-in-denmark-elections.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/19/world/anti-immigrant-party-gains-in-denmark-elections.html).



- Emergency Market Mapping Assessment (EMMA) Toolkit. N.d. About Emma. Accessed September 6, 2016. [www.emma-toolkit.org/about-emma](http://www.emma-toolkit.org/about-emma).
- European Commission. 2015. Non-Paper for Expert Consultations on Forced Displacement and Development. Discussion paper, November 2015. [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/non-paper\\_euro-look\\_version\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/non-paper_euro-look_version_for_web.pdf).
- . 2016. EU-Jordan: Towards a Stronger Partnership. News release, July 20, 2016. [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-2570\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2570_en.htm).
- Feinstein International Center. 2012. *Refugee Livelihoods in Urban Areas: Case Study Egypt*. Somerville, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University. <http://fic.tufts.edu/publication-item/refugee-livelihoods-in-urban-areas-case-study-egypt/>.
- Frischkorn, Rebecca. 2015. Political Economy of Control: Urban Refugees and the Regulation of Space in Lusaka, Zambia. *Economic Anthropology* 2 (1): 205–23.
- García, Ofelia. 2015. *Evaluation of the Norwegian Refugee Council's Lebanon Host Community Shelter Program: Increasing the Availability of Host Community Housing Stock and Improving Living Conditions for the Provision of Refugee Shelter, Period: January 2013-December 2014*. Oslo: Norwegian Refugee Council. [www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/evaluations/lebanon---shelter-evaluation---2014.pdf](http://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/evaluations/lebanon---shelter-evaluation---2014.pdf).
- Gioffi Caverzasio, Sylvie. 2001. *Strengthening Protection in War: A Search for Professional Standards*. Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross. [www.icrc.org/en/publication/0783-strengthening-protection-war-search-professional-standards](http://www.icrc.org/en/publication/0783-strengthening-protection-war-search-professional-standards).
- Government of Jordan. 2016. The Jordan Compact: A New Holistic Approach between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the International Community to Deal with the Syrian Refugee Crisis. News release, February 7, 2016. <http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/jordan-compact-new-holistic-approach-between-hashemite-kingdom-jordan-and>.
- Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics. 2016. *Jordan 2015 Census*. Amman, Jordan: Government of Jordan, Department of Statistics. [http://census.dos.gov.jo/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/02/Census\\_results\\_2016.pdf](http://census.dos.gov.jo/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/02/Census_results_2016.pdf).
- Harild, Niels, Asger Christensen, and Roger Zetter. 2015. *Sustainable Refugee Return: Triggers, Constraints and Lessons on Addressing the Development Challenges of Forced Displacement*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/542611468188337350/Sustainable-refugee-return-triggers-constraints-and-lessons-on-addressing-the-development-challenges-of-forced-displacement>.
- Horwood, Christopher with Kate Hooper. Forthcoming. *Protection on the Move: Eritrean Refugee Flows through the Greater Horn of Africa*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN). 2012. South Africa: Police Target Foreign Traders in Limpopo. IRIN, August 17, 2012. [www.irinnews.org/report/96130/south-africa-police-target-foreign-traders-in-limpopo](http://www.irinnews.org/report/96130/south-africa-police-target-foreign-traders-in-limpopo).
- International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Program, and U.S. Agency for International Development. 2009. Labour Market Analysis: Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader. Kampala, Uganda: IOM. In Gareth McKibben, ed., *Bridging the Divide: Connecting Training to Jobs in Post-Conflict Settings*. London: City and Guilds Centre for Skills Development, 2011.



- Jacobsen, Karen. 2004. *Microfinance in Protracted Refugee Situations: Lessons from the Alchemy Project*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Famine Center, Tufts University. [https://dl.tufts.edu/file\\_assets/tufts:UA197.008.008.00019](https://dl.tufts.edu/file_assets/tufts:UA197.008.008.00019).
- Jansen, Bram J. 2008. Between Vulnerability and Assertiveness: Negotiating Resettlement in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. *African Affairs* 107 (429): 569–87.
- Johnson, Jenna. 2015. Donald Trump Says He “Absolutely” Wants a Database of Syrian Refugees. *The Washington Post*, November 21, 2015. [www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/11/21/donald-trump-says-he-absolutely-wants-a-database-of-syrian-refugees/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/11/21/donald-trump-says-he-absolutely-wants-a-database-of-syrian-refugees/).
- Kapucu, Naim. 2011. Collaborative Governance in International Disasters: Nargis Cyclone in Myanmar and Sichuan Earthquake in China Cases. *International Journal of Emergency Management* 8 (1): 1–25.
- Kindzeka, Moki Edwin. 2015. Cameroon Arrests CAR Refugees. Voice of America, August 13, 2015. [www.voanews.com/content/new-arrests-of-car-refugees/2910020.html](http://www.voanews.com/content/new-arrests-of-car-refugees/2910020.html).
- Landau, Loren B. 2006. Protection and Dignity in Johannesburg: Shortcomings of South Africa’s Urban Refugee Policy. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19 (3): 308–27.
- . 2015. Political Rhetoric and Institutions Fuel Xenophobic Violence in South Africa. *The Washington Post*, May 11, 2015. [www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/05/11/political-rhetoric-and-institutions-fuel-xenophobic-violence-in-south-africa/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/05/11/political-rhetoric-and-institutions-fuel-xenophobic-violence-in-south-africa/).
- Mallett, Richard and Rachel Slater. 2016. Livelihoods, Conflict and Aid Programming: Is the Evidence Base Good Enough? *Disasters* 40 (2): 226–45.
- McHugh, Margie and A.E. Challinor. 2011. *Improving Immigrants’ Employment Prospects through Work-Focused Language Instruction*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute. [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/improving-immigrants-employment-prospects-through-work-focused-language-instruction](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/improving-immigrants-employment-prospects-through-work-focused-language-instruction).
- Mercy Corps. 2007. *Guide to Cash-for-Work Programming*. Portland, OR: Mercy Corps. [www.cashlearning.org/downloads/mercy-corps-guide-to-ctp.pdf](http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/mercy-corps-guide-to-ctp.pdf).
- . 2015. *Cracking the Code: Enhancing Emergency Response & Resilience in Complex Crises*. Washington, DC: Mercy Corps. [www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/cracking-code-enhancing-emergency-response-resilience-complex-crises](http://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/cracking-code-enhancing-emergency-response-resilience-complex-crises).
- Mercy Corps Jordan. 2013. *Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions in Mafrqa and Ramtha, Jordan*. Amman, Jordan: Mercy Corps. <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=2962>.
- Mitrailleuse, The. 2015. Refugee Sezs Op Ed Round Up. The Mitrailleuse, December 11, 2015. <http://mitrailleuse.net/2015/12/11/refugee-sezs-op-ed-round-up/>.
- Netherlands Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. 2015. The Netherlands Engaged with Eritrean Refugees in Shire (Northern Ethiopia). News release, October 12, 2015. <http://ethiopia.nlembassy.org/news/2015/10/the-netherlands-engaged-with-eritrean-refugees-in-shire-northern-ethiopia.html>.
- Newland, Kathleen. 2015. *Rethinking Global Protection: New Channels, New Tools*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute. [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/rethinking-global-protection-new-channels-new-tools](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/rethinking-global-protection-new-channels-new-tools).
- Nourse, Timothy H. 2003. *Microfinance for Refugees: Emerging Principles for Effective Implementation*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/3fc47f78d.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/3fc47f78d.pdf).



- Nourse, Timothy H., Tracy Gerstle, Alex Snelgrove, David Rinck, and Mary McVay. 2007. *Market Development in Crisis Affected Environments: Emerging Lessons for Achieving Pro-Poor Economic Reconstruction*. Washington, DC: SEEP Network. [www.seepnetwork.org/market-development-in-crisis-affected-environments--emerging-lessons-for-achieving-pro-poor-economic-reconstruction-resources-233.php](http://www.seepnetwork.org/market-development-in-crisis-affected-environments--emerging-lessons-for-achieving-pro-poor-economic-reconstruction-resources-233.php).
- Omata, Naohiko. 2011. "Repatriation Is Not for Everyone": The Life and Livelihoods of Former Refugees in Liberia. *New Issues in Refugee Research* paper no. 213, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, June 2011. [www.unhcr.org/4e0dc4709.html](http://www.unhcr.org/4e0dc4709.html).
- Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC). Forthcoming. Jordan. In *A Study on Forced Migration in OIC Member Countries: The Policy Framework Adopted by Host Countries*. Unpublished report prepared by the Migration Policy Institute on behalf of the COMCEC Coordinating Office for the 8th meeting of the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group.
- Oxfam. 2012. *The Human Costs of the Funding Shortfalls for the Dadaab Refugee Camps*. Oxford: Oxfam. [www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/the-human-costs-of-the-funding-shortfalls-for-the-dadaab-refugee-camps.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/the-human-costs-of-the-funding-shortfalls-for-the-dadaab-refugee-camps.pdf).
- Oxfam-GB, Horn Relief, and Norwegian Peoples' Aid. 2011. *A Case Study of the Consortium Transfer Programme in Somalia*. Oxford: Cash Learning Partnership. [www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/case-studies/consortium-cash-transfers-in-somalia.pdf](http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/case-studies/consortium-cash-transfers-in-somalia.pdf).
- Pietzch, Silke. 2009. *Making Cash Work: A Case Study from Kenya*. Humanitarian Practice Network, July 2009. <http://odihpn.org/magazine/making-cash-work-a-case-study-from-kenya/>.
- Porter, Matthew and Nick Haslam. 2005. Predisplacement and Postdisplacement Factors Associated With Mental Health of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 294 (5): 602-12.
- Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat. 2013. *Mixed Migration in Kenya: The Scale of Movement and Associated Protection Risks*. Nairobi: Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat. [http://regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/series\\_booklettwo.pdf](http://regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/series_booklettwo.pdf).
- Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). 2015. *3RP Regional Progress Report*. N.p.: 3RP. [www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/3RP-Progress-Report.pdf](http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/3RP-Progress-Report.pdf).
- Saggiomo, Valeria and Anna Ferro. 2014. *Mid-Term Evaluation, Diaspora Program: Diaspora Driven Relief, Rehabilitation and Development*. Copenhagen: Danish Refugee Council. [https://drc.dk/media/1914344/drc\\_dp\\_midterm\\_evaluation\\_full\\_report.pdf](https://drc.dk/media/1914344/drc_dp_midterm_evaluation_full_report.pdf).
- Saltsman, Adam. 2014. Beyond the Law: Power, Discretion, and Bureaucracy in the Management of Asylum Space in Thailand. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 27 (3): 457-76.
- Save the Children and International Rescue Committee. 2012. *Livelihoods Assessment: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, Bekaa Valley and North Governorates*. London and New York: Save the Children and IRC. <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=885>.
- Sezgin, Zeynep and Dennis Dijkzeul. 2015. *The New Humanitarians in International Practice: Emerging Actors and Contested Principles*. New York: Routledge.
- Siegfried, Kristy. 2015. How the Refugee Crisis is Hurting Foreign Aid. IRIN, November 18, 2015. [www.irin-news.org/printreport.aspx?reportid=102225](http://www.irin-news.org/printreport.aspx?reportid=102225).





- Smith, Alex Duval. 2015. Poland Lurches to Right with Election of Law and Justice Party. *The Guardian*, October 26, 2015. [www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/25/poland-lurches-to-right-with-election-of-law-and-justice-party](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/25/poland-lurches-to-right-with-election-of-law-and-justice-party).
- Smith, Gabrielle and Lili Mohiddin. 2015. A Review of Evidence of Humanitarian Cash Transfer Programming in Urban Areas. International Institute for Environment and Development working paper, December 2015. <http://pubs.iied.org/10759IIED>.
- Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). 2015. *Afghan Refugees and Returnees: Corruption and Lack of Afghan Ministerial Capacity Have Prevented Implementation of a Long-term Refugee Strategy*. Arlington, VA: SIGAR. [www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/SIGAR-15-83-AR.pdf](http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/audits/SIGAR-15-83-AR.pdf).
- Stefanovic, Djordje, Neophytos Loizides, and Samantha Parsons. 2015. Home is Where the Heart Is? Forced Migration and Voluntary Return in Turkey's Kurdish Regions. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 28 (2): 276–96.
- Syria Regional Refugee Response. N.d. Inter-Agency Information Sharing Portal. Accessed January 7, 2016. [https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents\\_search.php?Page=1&Country=122&Region=&Settlement=0&Category=4](https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents_search.php?Page=1&Country=122&Region=&Settlement=0&Category=4).
- TaskRabbit. N.d. TaskRabbit. Accessed August 11, 2016. [www.taskrabbit.com](http://www.taskrabbit.com).
- Umlas, Elizabeth. 2011. *Cash in Hand: Urban Refugees, the Right to Work and UNHCR's Advocacy Activities*. Geneva: UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service. [www.unhcr.org/4dc7f82c9.html](http://www.unhcr.org/4dc7f82c9.html).
- United Nations Development Program. N.d. Bolstering Self-Reliance for Refugees and the Displaced in Iraq. Accessed August 1, 2016. [www.unpd.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/ourstories/bolstering-self-reliance-for-refugees-and-the-displaced-in-iraq.html](http://www.unpd.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/ourstories/bolstering-self-reliance-for-refugees-and-the-displaced-in-iraq.html).
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2011. *Promoting Livelihoods and Self-Reliance: Operational Guidance on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/5540a08e9.html](http://www.unhcr.org/5540a08e9.html).
- . 2012. *An Introduction to Cash-Based Interventions in UNHCR Operations*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/515a959e9.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/515a959e9.pdf).
- . 2012. *Livelihoods Programming in UNHCR: Operational Guidelines*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/4fbdf17c9.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/4fbdf17c9.pdf).
- . 2014. *Global Strategy for Livelihoods*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/530f107b6.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/530f107b6.pdf).
- . 2015. *Kenya Factsheet*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/524d84b99.html](http://www.unhcr.org/524d84b99.html).
- . 2015. *UNHCR Global Appeal 2015 Update: Cameroon*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/5461e5fce.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/5461e5fce.pdf).
- . 2015. *UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2015*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/56701b969.html](http://www.unhcr.org/56701b969.html).
- . 2015. *UNHCR Refugee Resettlement: Trends 2015*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/559ce97f9.html](http://www.unhcr.org/559ce97f9.html).
- . 2015. *World at War: UNHCR Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2014*. Geneva: UNHCR. <http://unhcr.org/556725e69.html>.
- . 2016. *Connecting Refugees: How Internet and Mobile Connectivity Can Improve Refugee Well-Being and Transform Humanitarian Action*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/5770d43c4.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/5770d43c4.pdf).



- . 2016. *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/576408cd7](http://www.unhcr.org/576408cd7).
- . 2016. Registered Syrians in Jordan. UNHCR factsheet, May 31, 2016. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=11099>.
- . N.d. Afghan Solutions Strategy. Accessed January 7, 2016. [www.unhcr.org/pages/4f9016576.html](http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4f9016576.html).
- . N.d. Community Technology Access. Accessed January 7, 2016.
- . N.d. Graduation Approach. Accessed August 11, 2016. [www.unhcr.org/en-us/graduation-approach-56e9752a4.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/graduation-approach-56e9752a4.html).
- . N.d. Technical and Vocational Education Opportunities for Refugees, Yemen. UNHCR factsheet. [www.unhcr.org/4d78a8989.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/4d78a8989.pdf).
- UNHCR-Exchange. N.d. About Us. Accessed August 11, 2016. <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/fuse-public-assets/Public+assets/UNHCR/about2.html>.
- UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. 2015. *Innovation: Cash-Based Interventions*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/5596441c9.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/5596441c9.pdf).
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). 2014. *Informing Targeted Host Community Programming in Lebanon: Preliminary Analysis for Sector Planning*. Geneva: UNOCHA. [www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach\\_lbn\\_report\\_hostcommunityvulnerabilityassessmentpreliminaryanalysis\\_oct2014\\_0.pdf](http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_lbn_report_hostcommunityvulnerabilityassessmentpreliminaryanalysis_oct2014_0.pdf).
- U.S. Department of State. 2015. *Evaluating the Effectiveness of DOS/PRM Livelihoods Program in Ethiopia and Burundi: Synthesis Report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State. [www.state.gov/documents/organization/252134.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252134.pdf).
- U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2015. *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2016*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. [www.state.gov/documents/organization/247982.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/247982.pdf).
- Van Hear, Nicholas, Frank Pieke, and Steve Vertovec. 2004. *The Contribution of UK-Based Diasporas to Development and Poverty Reduction*. Oxford: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford. [www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2004/er-2004-diasporas\\_uk\\_poverty\\_reduction\\_dfid/](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2004/er-2004-diasporas_uk_poverty_reduction_dfid/).
- Veide, Leine. 2010. UNHCR Computer Centres Offer Education, Jobs and a Future in Georgia. UNHCR news release, October 1, 2010. [www.unhcr.org/4ca5f3806.html](http://www.unhcr.org/4ca5f3806.html).
- Women's Refugee Commission. 2009. *Building Livelihoods: A Field Manual for Practitioners in Humanitarian Settings*. New York: Women's Refugee Commission. [www.womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/document/281-building-livelihoods-a-field-manual-for-practitioners-in-humanitarian-settings](http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/document/281-building-livelihoods-a-field-manual-for-practitioners-in-humanitarian-settings).
- World Bank Group. 2013. *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2013/09/18292074/lebanon-economic-social-impact-assessment-syrian-conflict>.
- . 2015. A Response to Forced Displacement. Working paper, November 20, 2015. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/504411467993212543/pdf/101151-BR-SecM2015-0335-PUBLIC.pdf>.

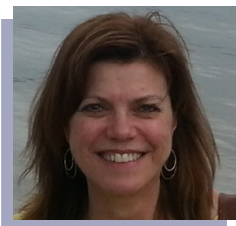




- . 2015. *Jordan Economic Monitor: A Hiccup Amidst Sustained Resilience and Committed Reforms*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/958871468185394808/pdf/102258-v2-WP-PUBLIC-Box394828B-JEM-Fall-2015-v2-main-report.pdf>.
- World Food Program (WFP). 2009. *Strategic Evaluation of the Effectiveness of WFP Livelihood Recovery Interventions*. Rome: WFP. <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/reports/wfp225425.pdf>.
- . 2012. *Summary Report of the Joint UNHCR/WFP Impact Evaluation on the Contribution of Food Assistance to Durable Solutions in Protracted Refugee Situations—Ethiopia*. Rome: WFP. <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/eb/wfpdoc061698.pdf>.
- World Food Program and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2012. *The Contribution of Food Assistance to Durable Solutions in Protracted Refugee Situations: Its Impact and Role in Rwanda (2007–2011), Vol. I Full Report*. Rome: WFP. [www.alnap.org/resource/19832](http://www.alnap.org/resource/19832).
- . 2013. *Synthesis Report of the Joint WFP and UNHCR Impact Evaluations on the Contribution of Food Assistance to Durable Solutions in Protracted Refugee Situations*. Geneva: UNHCR. [www.unhcr.org/51b-827cb9.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/51b-827cb9.pdf).
- Zetter, Roger. 2014. *Reframing Displacement Crises as Development Opportunities*. Paper presented at the Global Initiative on Solutions, Copenhagen Roundtable, April 2-3, 2014. [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/publications/other/pn-reframing-displacement-crises-2014.pdf](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/publications/other/pn-reframing-displacement-crises-2014.pdf).



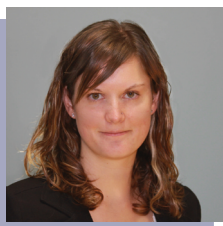
## About the Authors



**Karen Jacobsen** is the Henry J. Leir Professor of Global Migration at the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, Tufts University. She is also a Research Director at the university's Feinsein International Center, where she leads the Refugees and Forced Migration Program. In 2013-2014, she was on leave from Tufts, leading the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) in Geneva.

Jacobsen's current research focuses on urban displacement, and on livelihoods and resilience in disaster- and conflict-affected areas. She works closely with UN agencies and NGOs to conduct surveys and profiling exercises of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and migrants in urban settings.

She has numerous publications, including two books: *A View from Below: Conducting Research in Conflict Zones* (with Mazurana and Gale) and *The Economic Life of Refugees* (2005), which is widely used in courses on forced migration. She holds a BA from University of Witwatersrand (Johannesburg, South Africa) and a PhD in Political Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



**Susan Fratzke** is a Policy Analyst and Program Coordinator with the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) International Program, where she primarily works with the Transatlantic Council on Migration. Her research areas include forced migration and European Union asylum policy, as well as vocational training and labor market integration.

Before joining MPI, Ms. Fratzke worked for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. Prior to that, she worked with an adult literacy program serving immigrant and refugee students in Minnesota.

Ms. Fratzke holds an MA in German and European studies, with a concentration in European migration policy, from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, where she also received a certificate in refugees and humanitarian emergencies from the Institute for the Study of International Migration. She was awarded the Center for German and European Studies 2012 Jill A. Hopper Award of Excellence for her master's thesis on civic participation strategies of Kurdish refugees in Germany. Ms. Fratzke also holds a BA in political science (with honors) from Iowa State University.



The Migration Policy Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide. MPI provides analysis, development, and evaluation of migration and refugee policies at the local, national, and international levels. It aims to meet the rising demand for pragmatic and thoughtful responses to the challenges and opportunities that large-scale migration, whether voluntary or forced, presents to communities and institutions in an increasingly integrated world.

[www.migrationpolicy.org](http://www.migrationpolicy.org)

1400 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20036

Tel: 001 202-266-1940  
Fax: 001 202-266-1900

