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DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT FROM SYRIA IN LEBANON, JORDAN AND IRAQ

SUMMARY REPORT of

A literature review of the evidence relating to onward migration, social cohesion and refugees' participation in local communities and economies

Authored by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Aydan Greatrick and Estella Carpi, with Amal Shaiah Istanbouli

UCL Migration Research Unit

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An evening stroll in Baddawi camp, Lebanon.
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Front cover photo:
Early morning in Baddawi refugee camp, which is now also home to refugees from Syria.
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INTRODUCTION

Humanitarian and development assistance and targeted programming have sought to address refugees' exclusion from employment, education or the social life of communities. However, refugees from Syria and their families continue to face severe restrictions on their ability to build and maintain dignified and meaningful lives, leading many to believe they have no future in host countries like Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. High aspirations for onward migration reflect refugees' frustrations with the situations they are in, and the fear and insecurity they face due to discrimination, social exclusion, and precariousness. However, despite many refugees' aspirations to leave, very few have the capacity or capabilities to undertake onward migration, and they face multiple barriers to their mobility that means they become 'stuck' in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. Understanding that the majority of refugees remain in neighbouring countries is important for policy to address needs and uphold rights.

Access to *de jure* rights, such as residency and employment rights, and a supportive protection environment are key for refugees to be able to safely participate in local community life. In turn, refugee-host interactions are framed by host community members' perceptions of and attitudes towards refugees from Syria. Since social tensions and animosity towards refugees are common but are not inevitable, policies and programmes have sought to enhance social cohesion in different ways. Noting that social cohesion is a concept that is inconsistently defined across academic and policy literature, priorities in this area have included strengthening service provision on a municipal level for all residents (irrespective of their nationality and legal status); and creating shared spaces for social interactions, as the literature demonstrates the importance of enhancing the frequency, nature and quality of refugees' interactions with different members of host communities.

However, legal barriers and political and media discourses that scapegoat refugees, mean that refugees continue to be excluded, and often subjected to discrimination and different forms of violence on the basis of their nationality, gender, and/or religion. This also emerges as a result of policies that exclude refugees based on their nationality. Focusing on *Syrian refugees* may exclude refugees *from* Syria (including Iraqis, Kurds and Palestinians). Different groups of refugee women, men, girls and boys are affected in particular ways by restrictions on their mobility, harassment, and a lack of protection by virtue of their precarious legal status. The absence of secure legal protections across all three countries limits refugees' abilities to safely participate in local communities and in local economies, reinforcing a sense of insecurity and precarity.

Addressing this through upholding legal protections can support refugees to build a safe and secure future for themselves in host countries. Refugees' ability to participate in the economies of host countries leads to better outcomes, especially when they can access dignified and secure work. Nevertheless, substantial barriers remain to refugees' economic participation, informed by hostile policy responses and a lack of pathways to decent employment rights. These barriers have also been exacerbated by economic crises and the Covid-19 pandemic, and assumptions in political, media and policy contexts that refugees have a negative impact on receiving economies and produce social tensions. By contrast, evidence presents a more nuanced picture relating to the economic impacts of refugees' arrival (rates of unemployment, economic downturns, etc.). This evidence notes that economic impacts of refugees' arrival result from complex interrelated factors and the way actors have responded to the refugees presence, rather than the direct result of the refugee presence per se.

This study was commissioned and funded by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands or the reviewers of the report.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

ABOUT THE SUMMARY REPORT

This Summary Report synthesises findings from a longer report based on a desk-based literature review of over 260 sources published between 2016-2021. Literature focused on Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, and only to a limited extent on other countries including Turkey. This Summary Report synthesises knowledge on factors that are important for refugees' decisions to either stay or migrate onwards to third countries; on social cohesion and refugees' participation in host communities; and on refugees' contribution to local economies. The literature review was commissioned by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands as a sub-study to the IOB evaluation of Development Approaches to Forced Displacement (DAFD) in the Syria Region. This state-of-the-art literature review will inform the assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of DAFD interventions funded by the Netherlands in the period 2015-2021.

The review set out to systematically identify relevant literature in order to address nine core questions. These questions each correspond to a thematic area, as reflected in the three 'Parts' of this Summary Report and the Full Report:

TABLE 1: Thematic areas and questions addressed

Theme	Key questions addressed by the literature review
PART I: Onward migration decisions	**1. Which factors influence Syrian refugees' decisions to either stay in Iraq, Jordan or Lebanon or to move onwards to Europe, and how and why has this changed over time?** **2. What is the relevance of access to education, employment and/or refugees' safety/protection, compared to other factors, for the decision to either stay or move onwards?** **3. How do gender, family composition, age, socio-economic status, culture and religion influence the relevance of factors identified under Q2?** **4. What is known about the (intended or unintended) effects of foreign assistance on refugees' decisions to either stay or move onwards?**
PART II: Social cohesion	**5. Which factors explain the success or failure for the participation of Syrian refugees in local communities in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon?** **6. What is known about the effects of the influx of substantial numbers of refugees on social cohesion, and how social cohesion can be enhanced?** **7. Which factors apply differently to boys/girls and men/women?**
PART III: Refugees' economic contribution	**8. Which factors explain the success or failure of economic participation by refugees in local communities (be it as entrepreneur or employee)?** **9. What is known about the effects of the presence of substantial numbers of Syrian refugees on national/municipal/city/town economies, in terms of (amongst others) economic growth and employment?**

For more details on the methodology used, the reader is referred to the full report of the literature review.

Both the literature review and this Summary Report are authored by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Aydan Greatrick and Estella Carpi, with Amal Shaiah Istanbouli.

An alleyway in the Turkish town of Ayvalik, overlooking the Aegean Sea.
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PART 1: REFUGEES' ONWARD MIGRATION DECISIONS

QUESTION 1: **Which factors influence Syrian refugees' decisions to either stay in Iraq, Jordan, or Lebanon or to move onwards to Europe, and how and why has this changed over time?**

SUMMARY

Factors influencing refugees' decisions to stay include pathways to rights and protections, access to services and the viability of return. Refugees have to believe that they can build a secure and dignified future for themselves and their families in the host country in order to want to stay. Factors shaping decisions to leave include a lack of access to rights and protection, insecure livelihoods, low markers of social cohesion, and perceptions that European countries offer better long-term reception, rights, and opportunities. However, whilst aspirations for onward migration remain high, onward migration is often impossible for refugees, who must 'make do' with staying in situations of "protracted temporariness" (Kvittingen et al., 2018). Uncertainty about the future, accentuated by policy changes on national and international levels, means that making concrete plans is often difficult regardless of whether refugees aspire to leave or stay.

The relative significance of different factors is difficult to predict, will change over time, and will be determined by refugees' perceptions of their current and future situation. Where the political or economic situation in the host country appears to be either improving or deteriorating, aspirations to stay appear to respectively increase or decrease. Individual and familial circumstances will likewise change as refugees acquire greater levels of social or economic resources – or find themselves increasingly isolated or affected by precarious situations and poverty. This will inform the extent to which they are able to develop and implement plans to migrate onward. In most instances, onward migration remains impossible, despite high aspirations (wishes, ideas and hopes) to leave.

The key factors influencing decisions to stay include:

- The viability of safe return in the short- to mid-term, especially for those with family or property in Syria (noting that return remains unviable and unsafe for the vast majority of refugees from Syria).
- The presence of strong and supportive social ties in host countries.
- A sense that the situation in the host country will improve for them and their families.
- The impossibility of onward migration for some refugees means many will decide to stay, although this is often an involuntary decision made due to a lack of other viable options.

The key factors influencing decisions to leave include:

- Lack of access to rights and protection (including residency, work permits and access to services), educational and employment opportunities.
- Insecure livelihoods (in all three countries) and the high cost of living (in Lebanon and Jordan).
- Barriers to integration (in terms of rights, access to services, economic stability) that make it difficult for refugees to plan a future in host countries.
- The presence of family members and transnational ties in other countries.
- Political and economic insecurity in host countries.
- Perceptions of Europe as more welcoming, offering better reception to refugees and pathways to rights, residency, and employment in the mid- to long-term.
- Family separation, especially when separation leads to increased vulnerabilities, social exclusion, and protection risks.
- Perceptions that migration would be successful, often based on selected and trusted information sources, including social networks.
- Uncertainty about the future and a lack of safety or protection, particularly for refugees facing diverse forms of discrimination and persecution.

ASPIRATIONS AND CAPABILITIES:

Decisions to leave are informed by refugees' aspirations *and* capabilities. Refugees' aspirations for onward migration can be wide-ranging, from a wish to an idea to an intention or concrete plan (Carling, 2019; Crawley *et al.* 2016). Developing a concrete plan strongly determines whether refugees will migrate onward or stay. However, refugees' capabilities to develop and implement a concrete plan will vary significantly over time and in relation to changing personal, political, economic, and social circumstances. The actual capacity of, and capabilities available to, refugees (economic resources, language skills, social networks, information) determines the means of mobility. Capabilities affect patterns of migration; access to resources governs who can migrate, and to which location(s). Given this, refugees' migration decisions are not made through a "cost–benefit analysis" (Achili, 2016: 7) of different factors; the relevance of factors will always be contingent on the capabilities and capacities of refugees, which will change over time.

Factors shaping refugees' capabilities to undertake onward migration include:

- Having the economic means and sufficient resources to facilitate onward migration.
- Access to trusted information about routes and destinations.
- Access to safe and secure onward migration routes.
- Access to social ties and networks, including family members living in European countries.
- Access to documents and visas that may help facilitate onward migration.
- Availability of assisted mobility pathways (family reunification, resettlement, scholarships).

INFORMATION, SOCIAL NETWORKS AND MIGRANT INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS:

Information and social networks play a vital role in shaping refugees' decisions to stay or move onward. They also inform the conditions and capabilities that make such decisions viable. Access to information from social networks, including via smart phones, provides refugees with a better ability to organise and plan their journey in advance, helping to facilitate onward migration (Alencar *et al.*, 2019; Dekker *et al.,* 2018). Likewise, having access to social ties better supports refugees navigate life in host countries (Ghandour-Demiri, 2020; Miettunen and Shunnaq, 2018). By contrast, being separated from such ties, including through family separation, plays an important role in shaping aspirations for onward migration (Durable Solutions Platform, 2019; Achilli, 2016).

European governments have sought to influence refugees' migration decisions through migrant information campaigns designed to encourage refugees to stay in host countries (Brekke and Thorbjørnsrud, 2018; Mandić and Simpson, 2017). However, there is little evidence to suggest that these are effective at reducing refugees' aspirations for onward migration (Brekke and Thorbjørnsrud, 2018; Mandić and Simpson, 2017; Fiedler, 2020; Pagogn and Sakdapolrak, 2021). An IOM review of 60 evaluations of migrant information campaigns funded by European governments found that the success of such campaigns at reducing aspirations for onward migration is limited (Tjaden *et al.,* 2018).

Such "broadcast" information (including media, state-level policy announcements, migrant information campaigns and other 'macro' messaging) is less trusted by refugees, and is therefore less influential in shaping decisions, than the "narrowcast" information shared between personal networks (Fiedler, 2019; Tjaden *et al.,* 2018). European funded migrant information campaigns can also have unintended consequences, leading refugees to mistrust information provided by European states more broadly (Carlson *et al.,* 2018; Mandić and Simpson, 2017). Despite a policy assumption that such information will deter onward migration (Musarò, 2019), evidence suggests that refugees are more likely to trust other forms of information shared within their networks when making migration decisions (Mandić and Simpson, 2017).

Key policy-relevant findings relating to information and social networks include the following:

- There is no strong evidence that government-led migration-information campaigns deter onward migration or reduce onward migration aspirations.
- Information campaigns that aim to deter onward migration may have unintended consequences, leading refugees to mistrust information provided by European states.
- Trusted social networks play a vital role in shaping refugees' aspirations and decisions.

CHANGES OVER TIME:

In summary, changes over time inform people's decisions in the following ways:

- Aspirations to stay change over time, especially when access to legal status or the right to work has increased, or where policies or socio-economic contexts in host and third countries have changed.
- Aspirations to migrate onward may increase over time, especially when refugees are unable to sustain livelihoods or secure rights and status for years on end.
- Capabilities to migrate onward may increase or decrease over time depending on social or cultural factors or the prevailing economic or political context in different countries.
- The relative significance of different factors influencing refugees' decisions in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq is difficult to predict, will change over time, and will be determined by refugees' perceptions of their current and future situation.

The significance of different factors to refugees' decision making varies, depending on changing individual and/or familial circumstances and the changing socio-economic and political landscape in host countries. The deteriorating economic and political situation in Lebanon may be contributing to increasing aspirations to migrate onward (Hager, 2021). These aspirations are informed by decreasing levels of life satisfaction among refugees (Müller-Funk and Fransen, 2020) and a sense that the overarching policy context in Lebanon prevents refugees from building a viable future in the long-term (IRC, 2020; Sanyal, 2018).

By contrast, in Jordan, increased pathways to residency and work permits following the introduction of the Jordan Compact may have contributed to a better sense of future for some refugees (Gordon, 2019), leading to increased aspirations to stay (Kvittingen *et al.,* 2018). However, evidence here

here is inconsistent, suggesting that whilst aspirations to stay in Jordan may have increased for some, many do not 'benefit' from such interventions because of nationality-based exclusions (as is the case of Iraqi refugees from Syria), or because the opportunities available are inadequate and difficult to access (see Questions 8 and 9). As such, different forms of assistance may both increase aspirations to stay for some refugees, whilst increasing onward migration aspirations for those who are unintentionally excluded from different forms of foreign assistance (see Question 4).

Aspirations to migrate onward appear to increase over time, especially when refugees are unable to sustain livelihoods or secure rights and status for years on end (see also Carling, 2018). Moreover, capabilities to migrate onward may increase or decrease over time depending on a diverse set of social, cultural and economic factors or the prevailing economic or political context in different countries.

It can also be inferred from the available evidence that when refugees have access to strong social ties – a marker of 'social cohesion' (noting that 'social cohesion' is difficult to define - see Question 6), refugees' aspirations to stay may also increase. However, further research is needed to demonstrate a clear link here.

Local-level dynamics can also play an important role. For example, in Iraq, 50% of refugee households in Erbil city wished to go to a third country, in comparison to 15% in Dahuk (Kurdistan Region of Iraq), indicating that where refugees felt a stronger sense of integration or welcome, aspirations to stay would increase (Durable Solutions Platform, 2019: 43). Nevertheless, gaps in the literature, and a vagueness in existing definitions of social cohesion, means it is difficult to consistently link increased social cohesion with refugees' migration decision making.

QUESTION 2: **What is the relevance of access to education, employment and/or refugees' safety/protection, compared to other factors, for the decision to either stay or move onwards?**

SUMMARY

Education, employment, and protection are all relevant factors in shaping refugees' onward migration decisions. Where decent education, secure and dignified employment, and pathways to rights, safety and residency exist, refugees will be more likely to see a future for themselves and their families in host countries. Where obstacles remain to access educational opportunities, secure employment, or safety, aspirations to migrate onward may increase.

However, there is an absence of detailed macro-level analyses from which more concrete conclusions can be drawn regarding the relevance of any one factor over another. It can be inferred from the existing evidence that pathways to rights and residency strongly inform refugees aspirations, which in turn informs perceptions of different factors, including education, employment, access to services, the possibility of return and/or a sense that the situation in the host country will improve (as discussed in response to Question 1). Rights and residency form the bedrock around which refugees believe that sustainable and secure futures can be built. Where education or employment are seen to lead to this, then the relevance of these factors in shaping decisions to stay appears to increase.

Education is evidenced to inform refugees migration decisions in the following ways:

- Prior levels of educational attainment inform the relevance of education as a factor in migration decision making. Education acts as a key form of social capital that refugees can use to navigate and facilitate onward migration.
- Increased access to high-quality education in host countries can encourage refugees to stay. This is especially well-evidenced among families with school-aged children or individuals seeking higher education opportunities. Across entire refugee populations however, this picture is mixed.
- Exclusion from education provision (arising from structural barriers including poverty and stigma) prevent refugees from perceiving a future for their families, increasing aspirations to leave.
- Educational opportunities in host countries can contribute to decisions to stay when such qualifications are seen to lead to meaningful employment and a secure legal status.
- Access to higher education in other countries strongly shapes onward migration aspirations for some refugees, whilst improved access to higher education inside host countries through scholarships may increase aspirations to stay during studies.
- Whilst many refugees may be motivated to take up higher education scholarships in Europe, these scholarships are seen as an 'elite' pathway making them a non-viable mobility pathway for the vast majority of refugees.
- Refugees' educational aspirations are also informed by the relative safety of pursuing education in different contexts. Levels and feelings of safety inform how refugees perceive different educational opportunities.

Employment is evidenced to inform refugees' migration decisions in the following ways:

- Refugees' existing skills and prior employment histories play an important role in facilitating onward migration because they are seen to increase refugees' migration capabilities and long-term prospects in Europe.
- Where employment opportunities in host countries are both dignified, legal and seen to lead to rights and residency (including through work permits), refugees' aspirations to stay may increase.
- Decisions to stay will also be shaped by an assessment of work opportunities for wider social groups, such as families, both in the present and in the future (i.e., prospective job opportunities for refugee children currently in school or training).
- A lack of employment opportunities contributes to refugees' onward migration aspirations, especially when refugees feel unable to provide for their families in the long-term.
- Conversely, income and savings form part of refugees' long-term strategies to facilitate onward migration, although there is little evidence demonstrating that increased income increases or decreases aspirations to migrate.
- This picture is further complicated by evidence linking income and economic participation with the ability to build more secure lives for families, which may also contribute to decisions to stay. As such, income plays a different role in the strategies and priorities of different refugees.
- The prospect of employment in Europe increases aspirations to migrate onward because it is seen as an important route to legal status and residency, in contrast to experiences in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, where employment may be precarious, with no clear route to legal residency for many.

Safety and protection are evidenced to inform refugees' migration decisions in the following ways:

- Gaps in protection strongly inform onward migration aspirations. A lack of protection undermines the safety and dignity of refugees, and their access to services, all of which contribute to onward migration aspirations.
- Protection gaps may also make it more difficult for people to move or find protection solutions through onward migration. Whilst refugees may aspire to migrate onwards to escape situations of insecurity and persecution, access to formal migration remains limited.

- Social ties, both in host countries and in Europe, play an important role in shaping migration decisions because of the protection that such ties can afford. Being supported by social, familial and tribal networks and having access to such ties informs decisions to stay and to leave.

HOW DO DIFFERENT FACTORS COMPARE?

Evidence demonstrates that onward migration decisions will be informed by overlapping factors and individual perceptions of different situations over time, making the salience of any one factor over another unpredictable (Castelli, 2018). However, evidence demonstrates that several factors shape refugees' aspirations to stay or move onward, including safety/protection, education, and employment (Crawley *et al.,* 2016). Evidence notes that these factors will be more salient for some refugees and will also overlap.

Education shapes the aspirations of families with school-aged children (WFP, 2017; Collett *et al.,* 2016). Families make assessments about the quality and availability of different educational opportunities and how these will contribute to their children's future: according to the WFP, refugees would go anywhere "as long as we can send our children to school, and there is a future" (*ibid.:* 40). Education is also an important factor for refugees pursuing higher educational opportunities. When refugees can access higher educational opportunities (and sustainable funding support) in host countries, they may be more likely to aspire to stay (El-Ghali *et al.,* 2017). Moreover, when educational opportunities in host countries are seen to lead to employment opportunities (through skills and training), then aspirations to stay may increase (WFP, 2017). The extent to which different employment opportunities contribute to sustainable livelihood strategies plays an important role in shaping refugees' decision making (Yassen, 2019; Kvittingen *et al.,* 2018), especially in the short-term. However, finding a job will not necessarily increase refugees' aspirations to stay, especially if the job is low-paid, insecure, and offers no pathway to rights or residency. By contrast, employment in Europe is perceived as better than employment in host countries because it appears to offer pathways to legal residency (Hager, 2021). Where opportunities for employment offer pathways to legal residency, refugees' aspirations to stay appear to increase, as is the case for the proportionally small number of Syrian refugees who have benefitted from the Jordan Compact (see Kvittingen *et al.,* 2018). On the other hand, the Compact has largely failed to deliver secure and dignified work for most refugees (Lenner and Turner, 2019; Hartnett, 2018; Gordon, 2019) limiting its effectiveness in promoting sustainable livelihoods in Jordan. Overall, evidence suggests that employment opportunities are assessed in relation to legal status and pathways to residency: work that leads to residency will be more influential in shaping decisions to leave or stay than the availability of employment opportunities alone (also see Questions 8 and 9).

Protection cuts across many of the factors that shape refugees' onward migration aspirations; whilst the provision of educational opportunities and access to employment inform refugees' decisions to stay or leave, the relevance of these factors will also be determined by refugees' assessments of their long-term security in different countries (Alrababa'h *et al.,* 2021; Kvittingen *et al.,* 2018). A lack of safety and experiences of social exclusion, stigma and discrimination means work opportunities can be risky for refugees (Dankwah and Valenta, 2017; Kvittingen *et al.,* 2018). Refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq are often exposed to harassment and scrutiny by state officials, undermining their ability to build livelihood strategies (Carlson et al. 2018: 673). In educational settings, refugee children may face social stigma and exclusions because of their nationality (Haider, 2016). As such, whilst opportunities in education and employment may encourage refugees to stay, the extent to which these opportunities are safe, secure, and inclusive will strongly influence the relevance of these factors.

QUESTION 3: **How do gender, family composition, age, socio-economic status, culture and religion influence the relevance of education, employment and/or refugees' safety/protection for the decision to stay or move onwards?**

SUMMARY

Gender, family composition, age, socio-economic status, culture, and religion variously influence the relevance of education, employment and/or refugees' safety/protection for the decision to stay or move onwards. Nevertheless, the available evidence presents a highly granular picture that captures how overlapping identities and contexts interact to inform decision making in highly subjective and non-uniform ways. Whilst some trends can be identified, the influence of refugees' social backgrounds and characteristics on the relevance of different factors can be unpredictable.

Protection needs are a significant factor for refugees who experience cumulative discrimination and/or persecution in host countries because of their identity, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality (Carlson et al., 2018; Alrababa'h et al., 2021; Kvittingen et al., 2018; Collett et al., 2016) – also see the response to Question 7). Education is a more influential factor for families with children, or for refugees from certain socio-economic backgrounds hoping to pursue higher education in Europe (WFP, 2017; Collett et al., 2016; El-Ghali et al., 2017). Socio-economic factors also shape the relevance of employment for refugees' decision making, with evidence suggesting that lower-skilled refugees may be more inclined to stay because of a perception that they will struggle to fit into the demands of the European labour market (Hager, 2021). The strength and proximity of refugees' social networks influences the extent to which refugees can sustain livelihoods in a host country's informal market. Social ties (measured in terms of family composition, socio-economic status, cultural and religious ties) therefore inform the relevance of employment and protection as they shape refugees' access to livelihoods in host countries.

INTERSECTIONALITY:

Refugees from Syria are heterogenous and experience displacement differently according to their diverse identities and positions within host contexts, noting that different groups of refugees from Syria (based on nationality, gender, age, ethnicity, religion and so on) will also be impacted differently by diverse policies or interventions (Sabates-Wheeler, 2019). Refugees' socio-economic background intersects with gender, age, and other factors in influencing the relevance of education, employment and safety/protection to refugees' decision making. Similarly, the relevance of factors can be seen to intersect; for instance, families will differently weigh up the provision of education against a set of other factors and priorities, including the prospect of long-term employment for their children or the overarching protection environment (Haider, 2016). Attention to diverse, intersecting identity markers and social factors is important in determining how aspirations and capabilities to migrate onward will vary for different groups of refugees and different individuals.

INFLUENCE ON THE RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PROTECTION:

When a refugee's background or identity is stigmatised in the host country, it is likely that they will aspire to leave in search of safety (Myrttinen *et al.,* 2017; Achilli *et al.,* 2017). Families that have become separated will struggle to build a future, making reunification a priority, including through onward migration (Collett *et al.,* 2016; McNatt and UNHCR, 2018: 5). School-aged children who face bullying in schools will believe that they have no future in the host country (Kivelä and Tajima-Simpson, 2021), leading families to aspire to onward migration to secure safe opportunities (Haider, 2016). Socio-economic status informs refugees' aspirations for onward migration, especially if they feel they have the appropriate skills to secure employment in Europe, or to build a decent life in the host country (Hager, 2021).

By contrast, where social ties and support networks are stronger, refugees may be more likely to aspire to stay in host countries. Strong social ties contribute to support networks and adaptive mechanisms that make it easier to navigate the demands of adapting to a new country (Miettunen and Shunnaq, 2018). Shared religious or cultural identities, including with members of local hosting communities, can foster feelings of solidarity and provide opportunities to secure employment, education or safety which may not otherwise be available from the state or in other localities (IOM, 2016; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020). Likewise, social ties and networks (reflecting, for example, shared gender identities, family dynamics, age, socio-economic status, culture, and religion) can also be an important source of capital in facilitating onward migration, including through sharing information (Alencar et al. 2019; Dekker *et al.,* 2018; Fiedler, 2019; Borkert *et al.,* 2018; Vernon *et al.,* 2016) and pooling resources (Haider, 2016).

Refugees' social backgrounds or characteristics can also influence the relevance of certain factors based on social norms and taboos. Gendered norms appear to discourage many women and girls from pursuing educational migration to Europe, for example. However, women are more likely than men to seek educational opportunities in other countries in the region where shared-cultural institutions exist. Similarly, older boys may be encouraged to seek out employment opportunities in the host country to support family livelihoods in the short-term, meaning that age and gender can influence employment as a factor in decisions to stay, particularly for larger and low-income refugee families (El-Ghali *et al.*, 2019). Refugees' social characteristics and backgrounds can also limit refugees from pursuing onward migration in search of safety. For example, despite facing harassment and generalised forms of gender and sex-based violence, refugee women and girls may still choose to stay because of a perception that the journey will further expose them to gender-based harms (Aksoy and Poutvaara, 2019).

Refugees' social backgrounds and identities influence education in the following ways:

- Whilst education is valued across all socio-economic groups (WFP, 2017), those with greater economic and social resources may be more likely to want to access education long-term, informing the relevance of this factor in decision making (El-Ghali *et al.,* 2019).
- Younger and adolescent refugees are likely to prioritise educational opportunities when making onward migration decisions (Haider, 2016). By contrast, older refugees are less likely to prioritise education as a factor in assessing their own circumstances but will consider the educational needs of younger family members (Dankwah and Valenta, 2018).
- Access to education is not uniform, with different families facing different barriers linked to their socio-economic status, culture, language, and prior educational attainment. Access to education will not lead to uniform aspirations to stay.
- Whilst women, girls, men, and boys similarly aspire to seek educational opportunities in other countries, choices of destination are often gendered. Women are more likely than men to seek educational opportunities in other countries in the region, where shared-cultural institutions exist.

- Older boys may be less likely to prioritise education in favour of employment opportunities that allow them to support family livelihoods.

Refugees' social backgrounds and identities influence protection in the following ways:

- Separated families face several protection challenges (Collett *et al.,* 2016), and are highly likely to seek pathways to reunification and safety, including through informal migration and/or international resettlement.
- Protection needs that arise relating to gendered forms of persecution strongly influence onward migration aspirations, whilst simultaneously reducing capabilities to migrate onward because of heightened risks of targeted violence and gendered discrimination.
- Protection and safety will be prioritised by refugees facing diverse forms of sexuality and gender-based persecution, including LGBTQ+ refugees (Myrttinen *et al.,* 2016) and survivors of SGBV, and those exposed to political and religion-based persecution in host countries.
- Female refugees face "higher gender-specific risks when traveling alone" (Aksoy and Poutvaara, 2019: 12) which reduces the "share of female migrants" taking up onward migration opportunities.
- Younger refugees also face heightened protection risks linked to their gender, leading to higher aspirations to migrate onward, especially those facing age-related and gender-based forms of harassment. Younger men consider onward migration because of the harassment, violence, and potential detention and refoulement they face by officials. Girl survivors of GBV also reported considering onward migration because of age- and gender-specific protection issues (NRC, 2016).

Refugees' social backgrounds and identities influence employment in the following ways:

- Gender plays a role in shaping the relative significance of employment in determining refugees' aspirations for onward migration, though this is likely less significant a factor that might be assumed.
- Age informs the relevance of employment as a factor, with younger refugees assessing their options in line with future aspirations (Kivelä and Tajima-Simpson, 2021). Older refugees may consider employment opportunities against their existing skills, qualifications, and experiences, and make decisions to stay or leave based on an assessment of their suitability to different labour markets (Maleku *et al.,* 2021; Achili *et al.,* 2016).
- Growing up in contexts of protracted temporariness impacts younger refugees' decision making. Often, decisions around employment and education become postponed indefinitely. This is especially the case for younger refugees who are stateless, such as Palestinian youth.
- Family composition influences the relevance of employment, especially for larger families facing acute poverty or struggling to build sustainable livelihoods (Collett *et al.,* 2016; WFP, 2017).

FAMILY SEPARATION:

Family separation increases refugees' vulnerabilities to social exclusion and protection risks and limits their livelihood strategies Family separation both strongly influences the relevance of education, employment, and safety/protection as a factor in refugees' decisions, but also significantly limits refugees' capabilities to facilitate onward migration. European governments have sought to limit pathways to family reunification to deter larger families from seeking to be reunited with relatives who have been granted international protection. Evidence presents a troubling picture, where "the current political climate has decreased states' willingness to resettle or reunify separated refugee families" (McNatt and UNHCR, 2018: 5), whilst also noting that "this has not deterred new arrivals" (Collett *et al.,* 2016: 15).

This is further complicated by the challenges of reuniting non-traditional family units, particularly for LGBT refugees and those in polygamous families or with other familial arrangements. Evidence recommends that family reunification should be more sensitive to the different meanings that

refugees might give to family, so that additional pathways to protection and onward migration are available to those at risk (Ritholtz and Buxton, 2021; Welfens and Bonjour, 2021).

Refugees will seek to address protection issues through family unification (a point well recognised under international human rights principles of family reunification), something that the literature notes should be better facilitated by third countries to ensure that refugee families can secure dignity and protection.

A key recommendation arising from the evidence is as follows:

- European governments should seek to uphold family reunification as "a simple way of offering greater protection to refugee groups in moments of crisis" (McNatt and UNHCR, 2018: 5).
- Family reunification should be more sensitive to the different meanings that refugees might give to family, so that additional pathways to protection and onward migration are available to those at risk (Welfens and Bonjour, 2021).

QUESTION 4: What is known about the (intended or unintended) effects of foreign assistance on refugees' decisions to either stay or move onwards?

SUMMARY

Aspirations for onward migration remain high despite the significant contributions of foreign assistance directed at improving conditions for refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. Despite the widespread belief that effective foreign assistance can contain refugees' movements (Duffield, 2010), there is no sound evidence that it can reduce refugees' migration to third countries in the short term (Dreher et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, several indirect consequences of foreign assistance can be inferred from the available evidence. Foreign assistance that promotes equitable access to protection, with a coordinated focus on educational provision and secure, legal, and sustainable livelihoods, emerges in the literature as being helpful in supporting refugees to build more secure lives in host countries.

By contrast, foreign assistance that unintentionally excludes different groups of refugees may contribute to onward migration aspirations, particularly if it prioritises certain nationalities over others.

Effective foreign assistance plays a vital role in supporting livelihoods and addressing protection gaps in host countries, irrespective of whether it does or does not influence people's onward migration decisions. Foreign assistance should seek to uphold international legal and humanitarian principles to ensure that people who continue to face discrimination and persecution in host countries – many of whom lack the capabilities to undertake onward migration directly – can access and secure protection through resettlement, family reunification and humanitarian corridors.

Overall, evidence on the effects of foreign assistance on refugees' decisions to either stay or move onward is limited. Nevertheless, some key points can be identified – especially relating to the possible indirect consequences of foreign assistance on decision making.

Overall, evidence on the effects of foreign assistance on refugees' decisions to either stay or move onward is limited. Nevertheless, some key points can be identified – especially relating to the possible indirect consequences of foreign assistance on decision making.

The indirect influence of foreign assistance on refugees' decisions to stay:

- Foreign assistance that aims to enhance 'social cohesion' and/or reduce or mitigate 'social tensions' (see Questions 5-7) between different groups of refugees and host communities may play a role in improving the nature of social relations, increasing refugees' aspirations to stay.
- Creating inclusive and sustainable social protection systems will encourage and optimise the integration, security, and wellbeing of displaced populations in host countries (UNDG, 2016).
- Policies and programmes that directly address the absence of sustainable livelihood strategies, including cash-based assistance, may reduce onward migration aspirations by promoting

The indirect influence of foreign assistance on refugees' decisions to leave:

- Foreign assistance that aims to enhance 'social cohesion' and/or reduce or mitigate 'social tensions' (see Questions 5-7) between different groups of refugees and host communities may play a role in improving the nature of social relations, increasing refugees' aspirations to stay.
- Creating inclusive and sustainable social protection systems will encourage and optimise the integration, security, and wellbeing of displaced populations in host countries (UNDG, 2016).
- Policies and programmes that directly address the absence of sustainable livelihood strategies, including cash-based assistance, may reduce onward migration aspirations by promoting refugees' economic security in host countries (Carlson *et al.,* 2018).
- Refugees that are excluded from foreign assistance (including because of their nationality) may be more inclined to pursue onward migration. A nationality-based focus on Syrians in programmes and policies, rather than on 'refugees from Syria' (including Palestinians, Iraqis, and Kurds from Syria) leads to hierarchies and tensions between members of different refugee communities that can be avoided through area-based approaches which may also foster greater levels of cohesion (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020a, 2020b; Carpi 2020).
- Shortfalls in aid may increase refugees' aspirations for onward migration, particularly when livelihood strategies become dependent on foreign assistance, including Cash-Based Initiatives (Haider, 2016; Fallah *et al.,* 2021; see Question 8).

Ayvalik (Turkey) in the evening, overlooking the Greek island of Lesbos.
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PART 2:
REFUGEES' PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND DYNAMICS RELATED TO SOCIAL COHESION

QUESTION 5: **Which factors explain the success or failure for the participation of Syrian refugees in local communities in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon?**

SUMMARY

Factors which enable or restrict safe forms of social interaction and participation in local communities include national and municipal policies, discourses and actions; residing within spaces which may facilitate or prevent people's freedom of movement and social interaction; the nature of local-level dynamics; and inter-personal and inter-communal relationships in local communities. In the same host state, different municipalities, towns, cities and camps provide different opportunities or barriers for refugees to participate safely. The relative significance of different factors on national, municipal and local levels varies according to the context and the particular characteristics of the members of refugee and local host communities.

Local participation takes place within and across diverse communities and neighbourhoods which each have their own complex historical, political and socio-economic dynamics. The nature of social interactions and the capacity for refugees to participate in local communities varies according to settlement policies and types, including across closed or open camps, or in the context of cohabitation in towns, cities and rural areas.

Refugees' participation in local communities is enabled by access to de jure rights and a supportive protection environment. Municipal authorities may be supportive and provide de facto rights and de facto protection, in addition to access to services and support for wellbeing; at the same time, municipal authorities can directly and indirectly undermine refugee's rights and wellbeing, contributing to situations of precariousness and a sense of uncertainty about the future.

Legal, social and economic factors related to refugees' successful integration:

- Access to legal rights: positive de jure and de facto rights and regulatory frameworks.
- A welcoming political and media discourse, policy and practice.
- Access to the labour market, safe and dignified forms of employment, fair income.
- Inclusive settlement policies, safe and dignified housing, and safe spaces for interaction.

- Access to education.
- Access to services supporting health and wellbeing.
- Positive markers of 'Social Cohesion' (including):
    - Positive nature and degree of social interactions between refugees and hosts;
    - Positive host perceptions of refugees and the presumed 'impacts' of refugees;
    - Positive refugee perceptions of hosts;
    - Positive host and refugee perceptions of diverse institutions;
    - Positive perceptions of belonging to and being safe in host community and country;
    - Safety and stability.
- Experiences and outcomes related to integration and participation will vary depending on refugees' intersecting identity markers (real and imputed) and demographic identifiers.

(Summarised from Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2016).

DEFINING SUCCESS AND FAILURE:

Measuring the success and failure of refugees' participation and integration is highly complex, not only due to limitations of data, and different levels of analysis (individual, household, community), but also because of the difference between goals, experiences and outcomes. In some instances, participating in local communities (the goal) may lead to discrimination and a lack of safety (experiences) resulting in different outcomes for different refugees. For example, whilst many refugees from Syria in Lebanon and Jordan aspire for not only a higher standard of living, employment, housing and education, but also higher degrees of community participation (i.e. see Sullivan and Simpson, 2017:6, discussed in Te Lintelo *et al.,* 52), it does not necessarily follow that this will mean that refugees will want to have frequent interactions with members of local communities (i.e. see Samuels *et al.,* 2020: 12, drawing on Empatika and UNDP 2019). As such, what is important is to identify what conditions facilitate people's ability to engage in safe modes of integration and participation, echoing the World Refugee Council's focus on the need for gender- and age-sensitive approaches to promote "safe integration" (WRC, 2009, 2015).

STRUCTURAL FACTORS:

National, municipal and local level actors and contexts are influenced by a range of structural factors. These include the history of relations with the country of origin, and geographical and socio-economic factors. Pre-existing levels of poverty, resource availability/scarcity and the degree of municipal capacity to deliver basic services all frame people's experiences of arriving in and living with members of local communities.

ACCESS TO *DE JURE* AND *DE FACTO* RIGHTS:

Access to *de jure* rights, such as residency and employment rights, are key for refugees to feel safe and able to participate in local community life. Access to these rights inform refugees' aspirations and are fundamental for building viable, secure futures in host countries (also see Questions 1-3). In Lebanon and Jordan, refugees who do not hold official documentation – in particular refugee men – fear detention and deportation at checkpoints; this may limit their movements in the public sphere, with negative effects on their well-being and that of their families (Samuels *et al.,* 2020: 14; also see Khattab and Myrttinen, 2017; Promundo, 2017; JIF, 2018; also see responses to Questions 6 and 7). Access to rights reduces refugees' vulnerability to exploitation and violence and helps enhance markers related to participation and social cohesion (Guay, 2015:27; Haddad *et al.,* 2018: 38; Al-Masri and Abla, for UNDP, 2017:12). *De jure* rights are essential but insufficient if these rights are not enacted or accessible in practice on the municipal or local level. Where refugees are unable to access *de jure* rights, municipalities may provide access to essential

de facto rights and services, in addition to promoting and providing facilities for refugee-host interactions (i.e. see te Lintelo *et al.,* 2018: 33-34).

THE ROLE OF MUNICIPALITIES:

Supportive municipalities – which help refugees access their rights and access services – are linked with enhanced markers of social cohesion, such as an increase in the degree, nature and quality of refugee-host social interactions and refugees' social participation with local communities (i.e. te Lintelo *et al.,* 2018: 33-34; also see Question 6). Refugees' participation is enhanced when municipal authorities provide access to high-quality integrated services for all residents in their municipality irrespective of their legal status, and when they provide refugees with protection from discrimination and scapegoating both by the media and by other residents in the municipality. The ability for refugees to participate safely is undermined when municipalities are unable or unwilling to uphold refugee rights or provide access to services; or when they introduce and implement discriminatory measures (such as curfews and targeting Syrian workers) or scape-goat refugees (te Lintelo *et al.,* 2018; Haddad *et al.,* 2018). Strengthening municipal actors' capacities to support refugees, including "urban planning, public spaces, housing, education, culture, access to employment, etc" (OECD, 2020: 11) is therefore essential in efforts to promote refugees' safe and sustainable participation in communities.

Recommendations arising in the literature:

- Supporting host states in developing national legislative frameworks and policies that prioritise and uphold refugees' rights writ large.
- Provide high-quality integrated service provision for all residents.
- "Equip civil servants (including law enforcement personnel, teachers and health care providers) to ensure migrants' adequate access to services for instance by providing intercultural awareness, anti-discrimination and human rights protection training" (OECD, 2020: 13).

SPACES OF SETTLEMENT:

Different settlement types (such as urban, rural, camp-based) enable or prevent different degrees of cohabitation, interaction and participation (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh *et al.*, 2011; De Berry and Robert, 2018). Urban or rural settlement, which provides opportunities for refugees to regularly interact with members of local communities and access to adequate housing can positively impact refugees' wellbeing, sense of belonging and participation in local communities (UNDP and Empatika, 2019: vii; Jones *et al.,* 2019: 29; Haddad *et al.,* 2018: 8). Informal tented settlements (ITS), closed or isolated refugee camps, policies which restrict refugees' freedom of movement (i.e. from camps to host communities), roadblocks, checkpoints and curfews, all prevent opportunities for refugees to participate (JIF, 2018; Simpson, 2018: 38).

REFUGEE-HOST RELATIONS:

Host community members' perceptions of and attitudes towards refugees from Syria play a key role in framing refugee-host interactions and the ability for refugees to safely participate in local community life. Socio-economic factors and demographic characteristics influence the nature of refugee-host relations, for instance depending on similarities and differences in religious, cultural and social norms between refugee and host communities; and the particular identities and characteristics of different groups of refugees and different groups of hosts. Refugee-host relations are primarily framed by historical relationships and context-specific structural factors - including long-standing social, political and economic inequalities –, political rhetoric and media representations (also see Questions 6 and 7).

CONTEXT MATTERS:

The implementation of national-level policies often varies greatly across municipalities. In Lebanon, the importance of national-level policies and frameworks varies significantly across the country, as some municipalities have only limited affiliations with the state (te Lintelo *et al.,* 2018). In Lebanon, as in some areas of Jordan and Iraq, parallel institutions have emerged to fill gaps left by the state and municipalities (*ibid.*). In such areas, local level, *de facto*, rather than *de jure* integration may be more likely and realistic.

When new national-level policies are introduced, these may provide enhanced access to rights for certain groups of refugees but may unintentionally exclude others. For instance, the Jordan Compact has formally increased Syrian refugees' access to work permits, and yet only a small number of Syrian refugees have been able to access safe and dignified forms of work, and non-Syrian refugees have continued to be excluded from accessing such rights (see responses to Questions 2, 4 and 9).

Within the same country, refugees living in different regions, cities, towns and camps will perceive their ability to participate in local communities differently. Evidence from Iraq suggests that Syrian refugees living in Dahuk city, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, felt more welcomed and able to participate safely in local community life than those living in Erbil city (IOM, 2016). This informs onward migration aspirations too, suggesting that when refugees feel less able to participate in local communities, they may be more inclined to make plans to leave the country (see Question 2).

Urban contexts mean people have more opportunities to interact more frequently. However, such proximity is experienced differently depending on the context, either producing opportunities for greater participation, or greater exclusion. Urban refugees in Iraq often appear to have worse living conditions than camp dwellers; this leads many refugees to seek to enter camps and, therefore, live separately from local communities. With regards to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq – where a large proportion of Syrian refugees live in Iraq - the difficult educational, health, and residency conditions of Syrian refugees are identified as hampering their local integration (Yassen, 2019).

CHANGES OVER TIME:

The deterioration of the security, financial and political situations of Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq have limited refugees' abilities to safely participate in local communities. Some of these changes have affected the majority of a given host country's residents (such as Lebanon's economic crisis), while others have affected particular cities, municipalities and governorates (such as the Beirut port explosion; localized terrorist attacks and military incursions, and the occupation of cities such as Mosul by ISIS). Covid-19 and state-wide policies have affected all residents of these countries, reducing the potential for social interaction and local level participation as a whole. At the same time, in their responses to Covid-19, certain municipalities have targeted refugees from Syria in ways that have restricted their freedom of movement and their ability to safely participate in local communities (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020a).

QUESTION 6: **What is known about the effects of the arrival and presence of substantial numbers of refugees on social cohesion, and how social cohesion can be enhanced?**

SUMMARY

It is often assumed that the arrival of large numbers of refugees has a direct and linear effect on conditions and dynamics in the host country and/or community. Refugees' arrival and presence may influence a host state's demography, and it may coincide with real and perceived changes in social dynamics and relations. However, the evidence notes that 'the arrival and presence of refugees' is not a causal factor influencing social cohesion (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2011; Zetter, 2017; Finn, 2017: 23). The literature recommends the development of more nuanced and contextually specific approaches to understanding the relationship between social cohesion and displacement. This is important because social cohesion is often poorly defined, and there is an absence of appropriate methodologies, indicators and evaluations of programmes and policies relating to 'social cohesion'.

The literature notes the importance of combining a range of initiatives, policies and programmes which, individually, may be necessary but insufficient. These interventions include the development of high-quality integrated service provision for refugees and hosts; initiatives to support and maintain positive interpersonal interactions – recognising the significance of host perceptions on issues including opportunities, services and jobs -; in conjunction with awareness-raising and media campaigns which combat xenophobia and discrimination against refugees. These should be long-term commitments rather than isolated, short-term projects and programmes (de Berry and Roberts, 2018: 28).

SOCIAL COHESION AND REFUGEES:

An increasing number of programmes and policies aim to enhance social cohesion by increasing both refugees' and hosts' access to goods, services and livelihood opportunities; strengthening protection environments; and promoting reconciliation, conflict prevention and/or conflict mitigation. Such measures are designed to address the tensions that are assumed to arise in response to the arrival of substantial numbers of refugees. However, the evidence finds that such tensions are not inevitable. Nonetheless, the *assumption* is perpetuated in part because indicators and evaluations of programmes and policies relating to 'social cohesion' may take the reasons for refugee-host community tensions for granted (Finn, 2017:22). By failing to recognise or "analyse positive factors" (IDS, 2018), the a *priori* negative framing of the relationship between social cohesion and displacement becomes self-perpetuating (Finn, 2017:22).

Refugee-host relations are primarily framed by historical relationships and context-specific structural factors – including long-standing structural inequalities and the actions and impacts of policies, the media and governmental institutions (O'Driscoll, 2018a and b; Haddad *et al.,* 2018: 15, 25; UNDP and Empatika, 2019: vii; Guay, 2015: 6; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020a, 2020b).

Key factors influencing social tensions (Guay, 2015:15; also see Samuels *et al.,* 2020):

1. "Structural vulnerabilities that pre-date the Syrian crisis, such as high levels of poverty, resource scarcity, lack of effective governing institutions (or support for institutions).

2. Differences in religious, cultural and social norms between refugee and host communities (including perceptions linked to gender) and lack of social networks.
3. Access, affordability and quality of housing.
4. Economic competition over jobs and livelihood opportunities.
5. Access to and quality of basic education (concerns of overcrowded classrooms and lack of quality or access) and basic public services (water and electricity, solid waste collection, healthcare).
6. The role of international aid (in terms of perceptions of fairness of distribution, availability and perceptions of inequity, unfairness and even corruption).
7. The role of social, local and international media and the framing of issues."

ENHANCING SOCIAL COHESION:

There is a need to recognise the intersecting role of various factors, and to consider these in the development and evaluation of different programmes, including:

Integrated municipal- and area-based responses: Strengthening municipal actors' capacities to provide key services to all residents, irrespective of their nationality or status, is key: greater municipal capacity is linked with reduced refugee-host tensions, and enhanced markers of social cohesion. However, whilst "programming with municipalities is important, […] it should not be the prime vehicle to promote social cohesion' (Mercy Corps, 2015: 4). Delivering integrated services that help enhance social cohesion may be difficult due to pre-existing structural factors and operational challenges. Greater access to integrated services and programmes will not necessarily lead to the same perceptions (or change in perceptions) across members of both refugee and host communities. Various interventions aiming to enhance social cohesion, including multi-purpose cash-based assistance in Lebanon and Jordan (Samuels *et al.,* 2020: 5-6; see Questions 8-9), have ambiguous and unpredictable impacts.

Increasing the frequency, nature and quality of social interactions: Evidence suggests that markers of social cohesion are more likely to be improved through policies and programmes which enhance the *frequency, nature and quality of social interactions* between refugees and hosts, than through improving service delivery or municipal capacity alone (Mourad and Piron, 2016: 3; Mercy Corps, 2015). Personal interactions may be related to hosts holding more positive perspectives of refugees, and yet personal interactions alone are not necessarily correlated to more positive perceptions (Pavanello *et al.,* 2019). Longitudinal surveys in Lebanon find that "perceptions of refugee population pressures were more significantly dependent upon historic and structural factors and not only dependent upon personal experience or direct interactions with refugees" (ARK and UNDP 2018: ii). This means that policies and programmes aiming to enhance social interactions should be attentive to context-specific structural factors.

Perceptions and realities: Social relations are consistently "aggravated by perceived and/or real disparities in access to opportunities and by heightened competition over that access" (Berry and Roberts, 2018: 12). Noting the importance of putting such tensions in context, an ODI study confirms that tensions towards refugees from Syria may be derived from the host community's "perceptions of differential treatment between the two groups" which are exacerbated *"in a context with high inequality and poverty, a stagnant labour market and weak social service provision"* (2020: 5, emphasis added). The literature consistently notes the discrepancy between perceptions and assumptions on the one hand, and the complex realities of socio-economic and political contexts and dynamics on the other. The evidence demonstrates that refugees are often blamed by different stakeholders – including politicians and the media – for undermining citizens' access to different services and resources, even when pressures on such services pre-date displacement.

Shared spaces: The literature recommends that social-cohesion-sensitive policies and activities should be developed and implemented in relation to housing, and spaces of regular interaction

– including schools. For example, Syrian and Lebanese children in mixed first shift classes "had more positive perceptions of each other and stronger relationships with each other, than did Lebanese and Syrian students attending temporally separate schools (Abla & Al-Masri, 2015)" (Dryden Peterson *et al.,* 2018:35). Segregated education has negative impacts on social cohesion (Salem and Morrice, 2019; ODI, 2020: see also Questions 2 and 7).

Integrated education: Education is recognised as a key means to promote social cohesion (i.e. see UNESCO's Guidelines on Intercultural Education; Salem and Morice, 2019: 10; Guay, 2015). However, existing inequalities inform access to education, from the availability and cost of transportation to social stigma in the classroom and in education policy (Guay, 2015: 27-28). These inequalities can be exacerbated when education is split between refugees and hosts (Salem and Morrice, 2019; ODI, 2020). However, there are also challenges in integrated education, especially when refugee children face stigma and bullying for having lower levels of literacy and numeracy than their peers (Crul *et al.,* 2019). Integrated classrooms can also generate stigma because of an escalation of differences and tensions between pupils (3RP, 2021). Evidence highlights that these challenges are particularly acute for disabled Syrian children (*ibid.*).

The media: The assumption that refugees negatively affect local economies and communities forms part of powerful narratives reproduced and circulated by politicians and the media (O'Driscoll, 2018a and b; Haddad *et al.,* 2018: 15, 25; UNDP and Empatika, 2019: vii). Recognising that these are empirically unfounded assumptions points to the importance of designing and developing policies and programmes which combat discrimination and xenophobia. Social, local and international media can exacerbate tensions, especially if reporting blames or targets refugees (paraphrasing Guay, 2015: 6:) but the media also has the potential to reduce tensions through nuanced, constructive and rights-based reporting (Guay, 2015: 20-21; OECD, 2020; O'Driscoll, 2018a; Padir, 2020: 104).

Tensions over employment: Tensions over employment are identified widely as being the most significant 'triggers' of social conflict between hosts and refugees. However, this is based on empirically unfounded perceptions and representations that refugees negatively impact local economies and lead to higher rates of unemployment. Instead, the evidence stresses that "there is no obvious correlation between unemployment rates of nationals and areas of large influx of refugees" (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016: 5), and the broader literature highlights the significance of the local, national and international context and policies (see Questions 8-9).

Economic interactions become sources of tension because they are more prone to power dynamics and exploitation affecting both refugees and hosts (Mercy Corps, 2015). While Lebanese host members may perceive Syrians as stealing jobs and driving down wages, "Syrians complained about exploitation and poor working conditions, and occasionally not being paid for their work" (Haddad *et al.,* 2018: 10). Programmes – including those linked to cash assistance – have sought ways to decrease refugees' exposure to exploitative work conditions, whilst also being attentive to host perceptions.

CHANGES OVER TIME:

By 2019, tensions over employment in Lebanon had "declined somewhat […] possibly because, over time, sector employment between Lebanese and Syrians has become increasingly differentiated, with Syrian employment most heavily concentrated in the sectors of construction, agriculture and manufacturing – sectors in which Lebanese are less likely to seek employment (ARK, 2019)" (Samuels *et al.,* 2020: 20). Nevertheless, as is the case in Jordan following the introduction of the Jordan Compact, the extent to which this differentiation in employment may contribute to meaningful inclusion, upholding refugees' rights, and/or a sense of future remains unclear given the available evidence (Lenner and Turner, 2019; Gordon, 2019: see Question 2).

Refugee-led mutual aid support systems have also been put under pressure over time and in response to various crises, including the Covid-19 pandemic and Lebanon's economic crisis (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020a). The (unintentional) exclusion of refugee-led mutual-aid systems from humanitarian assistance and programming may have also contributed to tensions between different refugee groups (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020b; noting the indirect consequences of foreign assistance discussed in Question 4).

Recommendations arising in the literature:

- Develop integrated area-based responses that redress pre-existing structural inequalities, such as policies and programmes to address poverty and resource scarcity amongst all residents of a given neighbourhood, town or city (refugees and hosts alike);
- Strengthen national- and municipal-level capacity, including for the delivery of public goods and services to all residents, including educational services;
- Enhance access, affordability and quality of housing for all residents;
- Increase the quality of interactions, perceptions and attitudes between refugees and hosts;
- Address the reality and/or hosts' perceptions that competition over jobs has increased following the arrival of refugees;
- Enhance livelihoods opportunities for all residents (refugees and hosts alike);
- Mitigate against host members' perceptions that resources and support are being unfairly and unequally distributed by municipal, national and international actors;
- Support local systems to resolve disputes and reduce tensions;
- Work with the media to challenge xenophobic rhetoric that blames and scapegoats refugees.

(Summarised from Guay 2015 and Berry and Roberts 2018: 18).

QUESTION 7: **Which factors apply differently to boys/girls and men/women?**

SUMMARY

Refugees' experiences and outcomes relating to participation and 'social cohesion' vary significantly because of intersecting identity markers and demographic characteristics, including gender, age, nationality, religion, ethnicity, dis/ability status, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Particular groups at heightened risk of social exclusion and discrimination include: single men; gay, bisexual and transgender refugees; and male survivors of SGBV. Men are often excluded from or opt-out of diverse programmes and services for a range of reasons, with detrimental effects on their well-being and ability to participate in many aspects of local community life.

Women and girl refugees face diverse kinds of sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV), which limit their abilities to safely participate in local communities. Particular groups of women facing specific risks of violence and social isolation include female-headed households; unmarried and/or recently widowed women; women with disabilities, and lesbian, transgender and bisexual refugees.

Children and adolescents are subjected to different forms of exclusion and violence. Male children and youth are frequently targeted by hosts due to host-refugee tensions, and children and adolescents often face different types of harassment, bullying and exclusion in neighbourhoods and schools. Adolescent ITS-dwellers; adolescent girls; married girls; adolescents with disabilities; and Palestinian children and adolescents from Syria are all at particular risk of different forms of

social isolation and exclusion from policies and programmes.

As is increasingly recognised by policy-makers and policy-relevant research and evaluation (i.e. Mercy Corps, 2015; Presler-Marshall et al., 2019; Samuels et al., 2020), identity markers do not exist in isolation, but rather intersect in different ways, and adopting an intersectionalist approach has significant policy implications. This is especially the case as intersecting identity markers have tangible impacts on people's specific needs, rights, experiences, and outcomes.

Instead of an essentialist, category-based approach to vulnerability, a situational approach to vulnerability is well-suited to recognising the ways that intersecting power structures create particular risks and protection needs amongst different groups of refugees. These, in turn, have related impacts on social isolation, social interactions and participation, and other markers of social cohesion. Identifying the particular risks faced by particular social groups must take place in conjunction with attention to the impacts of diverse structural factors, including a lack of de jure and de facto rights and structures of inequality.

FACTORS APPLYING TO REFUGEE MEN:

Refugee men face a wide range of gender-specific risks, including the risk of arrest, detention, and deportation if they do not hold residency status, with the concomitant restrictions on their mobility also limiting their abilities to interact with hosts and participate in local communities. Male vulnerability, including to sexual and gender-based violence, also goes unreported, with only limited services addressing men's protection needs and rights.

Male-headed refugee households do not *necessarily* fare better than female-headed households (Armstrong and Jacobsen, 2015: 7; Holloway *et al.,* 2019: 10, drawing on Hammer *et al.,* 2018). However, "most initiatives have engaged with women and youth only" (Salem and Morrice, 2019: 31), meaning men are often excluded from programmes (*ibid.*: 23). This should be addressed to prevent longer-term exclusions and to promote a more comprehensive approach to social cohesion (*ibid.*: 31).

Particular groups of refugee men are identified as being at particular risk of violence and social exclusion, reflecting how gender intersects with other identities and demographic characteristics. These include:

- Single men.
- GBT (gay, bisexual and trans) refugees.
- Male survivors of sexual violence.

Each of these groups face specific risks, expanded on in more detail in the Full Report.

FACTORS APPLYING TO REFUGEE WOMEN:

As men's mobility is often limited due to a fear of detention and deportation, refugee women may be more likely to work to support their families; this may, in turn, increase their exposure to harassment and violence (Haddad et al., 2018; Samuels *et al.*, 2020; also see Question 8). Experiences and fears of diverse forms of violence limit women's freedom of movement, and, concomitantly, their social interactions, participation in the community, and diverse markers and processes associated with social cohesion. A range of programmes have been developed to support women's protection needs, with varying degrees of success. These include mixed outcomes of cash transfer programmes which seek to mitigate GBV; and attempts to promote

women's employment, which may lead to insecurities and 'double and triple burdens' rather than a sense of 'empowerment'.

Particular groups of women are identified as being at particular risk to violence, exploitation and social exclusion by "the hosting community's landlords, employers, and the police (Harvey *et al.* 2013)" in addition to other residents (cited in te Lintelo *et al.,* 2018: 71; also see Rohwerder, 2017: 6; Khattab and Mytttinen 2017). These include:

- Women in female-headed households.
- Unmarried and/or recently widowed women.
- Women with disabilities.
- LBT women.

Each of these groups face specific risks, expanded on in more detail in the full report.

FACTORS APPLYING TO REFUGEE CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS:

Evidence notes that refugee boys face a heightened risk of gender-based and age-based exploitation in the labour market, while the gendered nature of economic opportunities mean that girls are more at risk of child marriages (te Lintelo *et al.,* 2018: 82). The exact nature of these experiences will be strongly informed by age. The literature consistently distinguishes between children and adolescents, noting that adolescents will face different risks and exclusions to those of refugee children. Adolescent boys are at particular risk of violence and discrimination by members of local communities (Presler-Marshall *et al.,* 2019) and are more regularly subjected to harassment. Adolescents may also be more likely to be excluded from different educational initiatives directed at children, exacerbating feelings of exclusion (Hagen-Zanker *et al.,* 2017). Adolescent girls, especially refugees, also face widespread sexual abuse (Presler-Marshall *et al.,* 2019).

Married girls suffer from high degrees of social isolation and are also frequently excluded from support and programmes for girls because their marriage status is perceived as threatening the 'purity' of unmarried girls (on Jordan, see Presler-Marshall *et al.,* 2019; Jones *et al.,* 2019:4). Adolescent mothers also face exclusions from centers offering classes for mothers, highlighting how programmes that promote social cohesion through work with mothers and their children may lead to the formal and informal exclusion of adolescents.

Particular groups of refugee children identified as being at particular risk to violence and social exclusion include the following (see Jones *et al.,* 2019: 4):

- Adolescents and young people.
- Adolescent ITS-dwellers.
- Adolescent girls.
- Married girls.
- Adolescent and young mothers.
- Adolescents with disabilities.
- Palestinian children and adolescents.

Each of these groups face specific risks, expanded on in more detail in the Full Report.

PROGRAMMING FOR ADOLESCENTS SPECIFIC GENDER- AND AGE-RELATED NEEDS:

Evidence points to the need for policy-makers and programmes to address the particular needs and priorities of different groups of young people (Presler-Marshall 2019: 2). For example, while food vouchers and cash transfers are improving food security, they are not sufficiently age- and gender-tailored to meet adolescents' broader needs (Jones *et al.,* 2019:5). Likewise, refugee youths' experiences of participating in specific programmes, and the outcomes of programmes, will vary depending on gender, nationality, and age (Gercama *et al.,* 2018). Robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) programmes therefore need to be more mindful of disaggregated data collection to properly assess the impacts of programmes on diverse refugee youth and adolescents.

CHALLENGES OF ACCOUNTING FOR DIFFERENT FACTORS:

The available evidence does not consistently disaggregate by gender or age, making it difficult to determine the extent to which different factors apply to refugees' experiences of social cohesion because of their gender and age. It is important that future research addresses this gap with a closer analysis of gender and age, and how this shapes people's experiences of social inclusion and/or exclusion.

Whilst some general points can be identified, gender must be viewed in relation to other factors. Gender will not *necessarily* shape refugees' experiences in uniform or easily predictable ways and will instead *intersect* with other identity markers, characteristics, and demographic factors to inform refugees' *particular* experiences of inclusion and/or exclusion (also see the answer to Question 3). Accounting for this will help prevent policy interventions from 'essentialising' or assuming how gender shapes refugees' experiences in a general sense, leading to more effective, sensitive and contextualized responses.

Whilst several factors apply differently to refugee men, women, boys and girls because of their gender, the particular nature of exclusion and inclusion varies significantly between different groups of refugee men, women, boys and girls because of their age, nationality, ethnicity, religion, cultural background or sexuality. Future research, policy and practice should be sensitive to the ways that intersecting identity markers and demographic characteristics lead to particular forms of exclusion and inclusion.

OTHER RELEVANT IDENTITY MARKERS: RELIGION, ETHNICITY, NATIONALITY AND CLASS:

Religious identity, belief and practice are important for refugees throughout different stages of displacement, and yet this significance is often under-reported and under-analysed (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011, 2016a; Eghdamian, 2017; de Lintelo *et al.,* 2018: 35; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh *et al.,* 2020). Religion can influence the nature and quality of social interactions between refugees and hosts, with religious holidays also appearing to increase social interactions between refugees and hosts (Mercy Corps, 2015). Evidence points to the importance of further research and evaluation considering the roles that religious beliefs and identities – both self-ascribed and imputed – and practices have in relation to different peoples' experiences and outcomes in displacement situations.

Further evidence is required relating to factors influencing the participation and social cohesion of refugees from Syria who belong to minoritized ethnic groups – such as Kurdish, Yezidi and Dom refugees. However, there is strong evidence in all countries that a shared ethnicity can inform feelings of kinship and social ties – nonetheless, such ties are not necessarily an indicator of integration. Indeed, real and imputed ethnic differences can motivate hostility and forms of discrimination, which in turn become a barrier to meaningful integration and belonging (Durable Solutions Platform, 2019: 51).

A shared nationality can be a significant factor in providing support between different generations of refugees (UNDP aJ1 nd Empatika 2019: vii). Refugees often integrate into communities formed by 'established', 'long-term,' or 'former' refugees of similar or different nationality/ethnic groups (i.e. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2015a, 2015b, 2020b). Nevertheless, nationality-based differences can also lead to tensions, especially when aid systems and access to durable solutions are distributed on the basis of refugees' nationalities (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020a, 2020b; Carpi, 2020). This can generate exclusions, for example, of Iraqis in Jordan (Kvittingen *et al.,* 2018).

Socio-economic class intersects with other identity markers and backgrounds in significant, if different ways, including in relation to refugee experiences and host perceptions of refugees (Haddad *et al.,* 2018).

TOWARD A SITUATIONAL APPROACH:

Literature notes that effective policy interventions should be based on a 'situational approach' to vulnerability. In contrast to an 'essentialist approach' (ie. focusing on a single, fixed category such as 'refugee women'), a 'situational' approach accounts for the particular factors that lead to specific people being able or unable to safely participate in particular situations (i.e. a disabled adolescent from a minoritized ethnic group may be vulnerable to particular forms of exploitation and discrimination in a particular setting, such as a school, whilst being safe and well supported at home). A *situational* approach is well-suited to recognizing the protection needs of different groups of refugees and the particular risks they face. It takes into account not only how gender and age may shape refugees' experiences, but how this is informed by context, and other intersecting identity markers such as religion, ethnicity and identity. These all have related impacts on social isolation, interactions and participation, and other markers of social cohesion.

CHANGES OVER TIME:

Young people's needs and priorities for the future change as they grow older and in response to changes on local, national and international levels. Covid-19 appears to be having a particular impact on refugee girls and boys, with implications on their participation and experiences of social cohesion.

Whilst evidence on the effects of Covid-19 and various policy responses to the pandemic remain incomplete, recent studies confirm that girls' sense of connection and belonging to "host communities in Palestinian and Syrian refugee camps in Jordan" has been negatively affected by the Covid -19 pandemic (see Baird *et al., 2*020). By contrast, Syrian refugee boys in Jordan have often been able to continue socialising and interacting with different members of refugee and host communities (Małachowska *et al.,* 2020). These examples demonstrate both the different experiences and outcomes of girl-children and boy-children, and the importance of acknowledging changes in horizontal vectors such as the nature of refugee-refugee relations as well as refugee-citizen relations.

Experiences on the basis of gender, age and nationality also vary depending on the settlement context. In contrast with the camp-based experiences in Jordan referred to above, in the context of Covid-19 in Lebanon, Syrian boys living in collective shelters in host communities lost their source

of income, became isolated in their homes, and feared being targeted by authorities (paraphrasing Youssef *et al.,* 2020: 3). The consequences of the pandemic, and policy responses to Covid-19, highlight how opportunities for, and the quality of, social interactions appear to decrease, making it more difficult for refugees, and especially refugee youth, to make plans for the future.

Early morning in Baddawi refugee camp, which is now also home to refugees from Syria.
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Al-Bazerkan Market in Old Tripoli, Lebanon.
© Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh.

PART 3:
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REFUGEES AND LOCAL ECONOMIES

QUESTION 8: **Which factors explain the success or failure of economic participation by refugees in local communities (be it as entrepreneur or employee)?**

SUMMARY

Refugees' abilities to participate locally, and their experiences and outcomes of such participation, vary according to their own identities and backgrounds, in addition to the national and local context in question. As discussed in detail in the full report, when defining success and failure in relation to refugees' participation in local communities, policymakers should consider: 1) the broader human rights framework, including the importance of eliminating people's reliance on negative coping mechanisms when they join the local market; and 2) the design and coordination of programmes (e.g., the degree and impact of standardisation, compartmentalisation, or local contextualisation), and what the assessment model is.

Key factors of success can be summarised as follows: Cash-based initiatives (CBIs) which economically support refugees' livelihoods and reduce or end negative coping mechanisms. However, most CBIs happen on a temporary or short-term basis and may cause dependency if not integrated with further livelihood measures. Refugee entrepreneurship is identified as being the greatest achievement for refugee self-reliance policy and practice, but needs to be supported by legal and financial frameworks which empower refugees in the host countries. Investing in refugee education can strengthen skilled labour and help to uphold refugees' labour rights. Overall, the literature highlights the importance of ad hoc programmes, intersectoral policies, and cooperation between public, private, and civil society institutions to improve economic, social, and environmental policies (Sumpf et al., 2016).

Key factors of failure include the compartmentalisation of programmes which are unable to build linkages between refugees, their livelihood strategies, security, and the job market. Although alleviated by some programmes (e.g., CBIs), the lack of labour rights is still tangible in the three countries and impinges on the economic potential of refugees' participation and overall sustainable growth. A lack of response to and/or the flawed implementation of policy changes stifle the process of meeting refugees' needs and rights and generate negative side effects on non-Syrian refugee/migrant labour (e.g., the Jordan Compact).

KEY FACTORS OF SUCCESS:

Cash-Based Initiatives: Through CBIs, people can better cope with financial expenses and navigate employment opportunities with less pressure to generate income (Bassam *et al.,* 2017). They can avoid negative coping strategies such as child labour (Hagen-Zanker et al, 2017: 27) and focus on aspects of everyday life leading to better social outcomes (*ibid.*). CBIs are considered an effective way of fostering refugees' economic participation in Jordan (Hagen-Zanker *et al.,* 2017; Idris, 2018). In Lebanon, CBIs have been found to be effective, especially in the long-term (Salti *et al.,* 2022), generating economic sustainability and reducing negative coping strategies (Bastagli *et al.,* 2020: 5). In Iraq, despite high levels of indebtedness among refugees (3RP, 2021), CBIs have enabled refugees to alleviate financial pressure, end negative coping mechanisms, and access social protection and food security (World Vision, 2018; 3RP, 2021: 36).

However, prioritising CBIs as a means of supporting refugees may create significant dependency amongst refugees on external aid and undermine sustainable livelihoods, especially when there are aid budget shortfalls (see Question 4). In general, cash transfers do not appear to improve employment or livelihoods opportunities for adults "because they cannot overcome the barriers to work faced by refugees, such as legal constraints and socio-cultural norms for women" (Idris, 2018: 3). A further factor limiting the potential impact of CBIs on refugees' livelihoods is the frequent misperception among refugees that they could lose their cash transfers if they find work (*ibid.*). In this sense, cash programmes and economic participation are mistakenly seen by refugees as mutually exclusive options, which points to the need for information campaigns highlighting that refugees do not need to remain unemployed to be able to access CBIs.

Refugee Entrepreneurship: Refugee entrepreneurship is the most important factor for refugees' economic participation and sustainability in Jordan and Lebanon, despite the social, cultural, legal, and economic barriers faced by refugees (Refai *et al.,* 2018). Refugee entrepreneurship can bring economic opportunities, positively contribute to development, as well as stimulate trade and investment (Bayram, 2019; Zighan, 2020), representing the greatest achievement for programming based on refugee self-reliance. In the Jordanian context, it has been found to be increasingly widespread in the Zaatari camp and among women who start home-based enterprises (Abdel Jabbar and Zaza, 2016). In the case of Lebanon, a range of factors hamper Syrian refugee entrepreneurship, including financial, administrative and policy issues (Harb *et al.,* 2019): in order for refugees to find employment, governmental policies need to change favourably towards Syrian refugees (Alexandre *et al.*, 2019). In Iraq, refugee entrepreneurship is a key aim of the humanitarian system to achieve refugee resilience and sustainability and boost the local economy (3RP, 2020).

Investing in refugee education: Access to opportunities for education and training at all levels and throughout their lives – at work, in formal education, and in the local community – are important to refugees (see Question 3) and serve as key factors in enhancing their long-term economic participation (Singh with Hegazi and Chehab, 2018). Education is highlighted as an important factor for future skilled labour and smoother experiences and outcomes of integration (Ruisi and Shteiwi, 2016).

KEY FACTORS OF FAILURE:

Compartmentalised/Standardised Programmes: In Lebanon, coordinating intersectoral policies has been found to be an important factor for success, addressing a lack of coordination more broadly. However, intersectoral analysis notes that the lack of protection and labour rights on a national level is a key factor linked to the failure of refugees' economic participation. For instance, if labour rights were addressed (Turkmani and Hamade, 2020), coordinated and systemic efforts to foster the rural sector would be more likely to contribute to Lebanon's economic growth and enhance the wellbeing of both Lebanese nationals and refugees from Syria (Kumar *et al.,* 2018).

In the Iraqi context, there is similar evidence that the lack of livelihood programmes specifically tailored to refugees and their place of settlement means that concrete linkages with existing job opportunities do not exist; the absence of such programmes is therefore perceived to be linked to failures. Ad hoc livelihood interventions supporting Syrian refugees in Iraq have reportedly been successful when focused on sustainability and resilience building; however, they are reported to be small in number (3RP, 2019).

The literature also recommends that assessment models need to be designed across sectors. Indeed, many programmes which aim to enhance economic participation do not lead to secure and sustainable livelihoods, e.g. livelihood programmes rarely lead to long-term job opportunities (Mansour and Dib Haj, 2018). Nonetheless, they may lead to positive social outcomes, such as a general sense of safety in the neighbourhood (Hagen-Zenker et al., 2017) and an increase in the frequency and nature of social interactions (*Carpi et al.*, 2020).

Lack of labour rights: An absence of labour rights characterizes refugees' economic participation across the three countries, and significantly limits the potential benefits of the abovementioned factors of success. In Jordan, although Syrian refugees' work has been found to contribute to the host country's economic growth, the Jordan Compact has been widely critiqued by scholars for the reason that this work is unsafe and undignified, and therefore should not be defined as a 'success' (Lenner and Turner, 2019). In Lebanon, support for the agricultural sector can also make refugees from Syria more vulnerable to chronic exploitation (Turkmani and Hamade, 2020). Refugee women labourers are paid less than refugee and local men, and are also more likely to work without papers than men in the Lebanese context. However, they are not necessarily more vulnerable as workers per se, because they are less likely to be subjected to detention than men if they are undocumented (Srour and Chaaban, 2017; also see Question 7). In Iraq, it has been found that urban refugee women find it easier to access jobs, but this does not guarantee safety, human dignity, and labour rights (Kaya and Luchtenberg, 2018).

Unresponsiveness to/flawed implementation of policy changes: Economic participation can only happen if policies do not restrict the sectors in which refugees can work and if policy changes which aim to support refugees' lives and livelihoods are implemented consistently. In Jordan, for example, policy changes which would have led to stronger interrelations between policies and practices have not been implemented. As such there has been no expansion in the sectors where Syrian refugees can apply for work permits – agriculture, construction, food and beverage services, manufacturing, and wholesale and retail trade (Jordan's Syrian Refugee Unit-Ministry of Labour, 2021). The number of Syrian refugee-owned businesses which became formalised also did not increase significantly (IRC, 2020). The flawed implementation of the Jordan Compact is a clear factor of failure (see Question 9). Although it has led to increased levels of Syrian refugee labour participation, this has had a negative impact on the rate and conditions of employment of other non-Syrian refugee groups (Hartnett, 2018; al-Masri, 2021).

CHANGES OVER TIME:

Overall, geopolitical shifts (e.g., the expansion of ISIS in 2014) and the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to the exacerbation of hardships in the region, which are the historical result of prolonged conflict and displacement, constrained economies, a lack of rights-based policies, and the destruction of local infrastructure (e.g., the explosion at the Beirut port in August 2020 and the ongoing economic crisis in Lebanon). Restrictions on movement, combined with the temporary closure of businesses, have had a negative effect on the sustainability of people's lives and livelihoods in Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. This has led to an increased need for cash assistance and livelihoods programmes, especially in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (3RP, 2020). Likewise, in Lebanon, lockdowns and the severe economic crisis, aggravated by the pandemic, contributed to the expansion of negative coping mechanisms, such as higher rates of child labour (Abdo and Jamil, 2020), despite the previous efforts of humanitarian programmes in this respect (Bureau of International Labour Affairs, 2020).

In Iraq, following the introduction of work permits in 2012, refugees (especially Syrian Kurds) have become more integrated into the formal job market, especially in the private sector (Durable Solutions Platform, 2020). While the introduction of major policy changes such as the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) aimed to increase formal work permits at a regional level, it has not led to more sustainable, rights-based forms of economic participation.

QUESTION 9: **What is known about the effects of the presence of substantial numbers of Syrian refugees on national/municipal/city/town economies, in terms of (amongst others) economic growth and employment?**

SUMMARY

A key assumption guiding policy is that the presence of refugees from Syria has a significant effect on diverse aspects of economic and social development in the receiving countries, and that the presence of Syrian refugees leads to competition over jobs with local residents. However, the literature does not find evidence of a direct relationship between economic crisis and the presence of refugees from Syria. Instead, the literature shows that the most significant economic impacts arise from laws, policies, and actions implemented by governments and international actors. Namely, they arise from the way actors have responded to the presence of refugees rather than from the refugee presence per se.

The economic impact of refugees' presence is difficult to disentangle from the impact of various policy responses to refugees and other interrelated factors. For example, Lebanon's pre-existing economic troubles inform the fiscal context in which displacement is experienced and responded to. The effects of the Syrian refugee presence on the Iraqi economy are predominantly identified in the literature in terms of 'the impact of the Syrian conflict,' rather than the impact of refugees. It is particularly difficult to assess the effects of the presence of refugees from Syria on the Iraqi economy due to prolonged multiple displacements and the large number of IDPs in Iraq. The Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns are reported to have impacted the Lebanese, Jordanian, and Iraqi labour markets more negatively than the presence of refugees, as it caused a major loss of job opportunities, while informal workers did not even have access to social benefits (3RP, 2021).

KEY INDIRECT EFFECTS OF THE REFUGEE PRESENCE ON HOST ECONOMIES:

- Jordan and Lebanon have seen benefits of the international humanitarian presence – even though temporary and relatively low-impact – and the economic gains it brought into these host economies: these include the urban and economic benefits of the international humanitarian presence; a temporarily positive effect on the real estate sector; and the indirect benefit of the refugee presence on municipal service delivery. Benefits of the international presence are not documented in Iraq.
- Greater legitimacy and accountability of municipalities and governorates can be observed in the years following the arrival of refugees from Syria in Jordan and Lebanon, despite the scarcity of economic data on a multi-scalar level. There is no evidence of such increased legitimacy/ accountability in the case of Iraq.
- Economic changes such as higher rates of local unemployment, overall economic downturns,

the growth of the informal sector, and infrastructural degradation are evident over time. However, there is no clear, evidenced link between such changes and the presence of refugees *per se*. The prolonged nature of internal conflicts and infrastructural crises that pre-date the arrival of substantial numbers of refugees (in Iraq and Lebanon, in particular), and changes in public order (e.g., Covid-19 pandemic) coincide. The overlap of different factors makes it difficult to present any definitive causal link between the refugee presence and economic downturn.

- Increased total public expenditures (e.g., on healthcare and water) across the three countries are linked in the literature to overall degraded infrastructure; most of the literature reviewed does not show a clear link between collapsing infrastructure (e.g., water and solid waste systems) and the presence of refugees.
- Major policies (e.g., the Jordan Compact) caused negative side effects, such as higher unemployment rates and the economic exploitation of non-Syrian migrant/refugee workforce.

POSITIVE CHANGES:

Urban and economic benefits of the international humanitarian presence: Countries like Jordan and Lebanon have benefited from increased consumer demand due to the refugee population, increased international presence of aid agencies, and foreign investment in the case of Jordan (Idris, 2016). The humanitarian presence has similarly brought money in and created jobs for educated Jordanians and Lebanese. Consumer demand has increased, benefitting local suppliers, and house rents have increased bringing more income for landlords. However, the soaring of housing rental and real estate prices due to demographic growth has also posed a fundamental challenge to local residents. Moreover, urban benefits of the international humanitarian presence have been reported at the neighbourhood level, leading to local gentrification (Thomas and Vogel, 2018). Similarly, evidence suggests these benefits arising from the humanitarian presence are likely limited and temporary (David *et al.,* 2019).

Enhanced service delivery and urban benefits at the municipal and governorate level: There has been a positive impact of the presence of refugees from Syria on the municipal level, especially at the level of basic services in both Jordan and Iraq. Since its launch in 2018, the Municipal Services and Social Resilience project by the World Bank (funded by the UKAID, USAID, Canada, and the Netherlands) is said to have improved municipal services by supporting municipalities in delivering services and providing employment opportunities for both Jordanians and Syrians. In Lebanon, as a result of the Syrian refugee presence and increasing resources provided directly to local municipalities, local people started looking to municipalities for service delivery rather than to the central state (Mourad and Piron, 2016).

NEGATIVE CHANGES:

The Jordan Compact: The Jordan Compact aimed to increase foreign investment, formal refugee labour, and local employment. However, access to formal labour remains unlikely for refugees, and the literature consistently documents the continuation of exploitation and undignified work conditions. Despite the formal endorsement of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) in the region, there has been no sustainable process of job creation in the countries receiving refugees from Syria, including because policies for refugees to secure legal residency have either remained unchanged or have not matched the GCR's goals. Importantly, the GCR adopted a nationality-based prioritisation policy which has negatively affected other national groups such as Iraqi refugees and Egyptian migrants. This has led to reduced job opportunities, lower salaries, and increased bureaucracy for non-Syrian labourers.

Degraded infrastructure and increased public expenditures: Total public expenditure in the three countries has increased at the expense of investment spending after the arrival of refugees from Syria (Al Shoubaki and Harris, 2018: 167). Public expenditure mostly supported the healthcare economy, negatively affected due to a shortage of medical staff, a lack of resources to pay salaries

to a larger number of professionals, and long waiting lists in Jordan (Alsoudi, 2020: 16) and Iraq (Dewachi, 2017). The public distribution system, agricultural budget support to farmers, and food assistance to refugees and IDPs continue to dominate government expenditures (World Bank, 2015).

In Lebanon, water and solid waste services are emblematic in showing how degraded infrastructure requires increased public expenditure. Water is said to have become more expensive as a result of different crises, such as the presence of significant numbers of refugees over more than a decade, the Covid-19 pandemic and the Beirut port blast in August 2020 (World Bank, 2021; Hussein *et al.,* 2020). In this respect, the grey literature points to a more direct link between collapsing infrastructure and the presence of refugees. More specifically, a 2019 UNDP report mentions a yearly increase of 8-14% of wastewater in Lebanon due to the arrival of refugees from Syria and a 15% increase in solid waste (UNDP, 2019: 13). In Iraq, the arrival of refugees from Syria put further pressure on the local waste management system in the Dohuk governorate (European Union and UNDP, 2017); the increased local population is said to have produced more than 1,690 tons of solid waste per day, an increase of 26% on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's daily per capita generated solid waste in 2014 (World Bank, 2015).

Higher local unemployment rates: The literature demonstrates that Syrian refugees, by constituting a cheap workforce, do not cause – or increase – local unemployment (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016). In Jordan, it is widely assumed that refugees from Syria impact on the formal labour market by competing with the Jordanian labour force, since Syrians generally replace Jordanian workers (Ruisi and Shteiwi, 2016). However, the evidence finds that the conflict between Jordanian and Syrian workers is weak because most Syrians accept jobs that Jordanians normally do not (World Bank, 2019; Alsoudi, 2020: 20). While the literature stresses a decline in Lebanese labour income since the arrival of refugees from Syria due to longstanding economic shortfalls - especially for the lowest segments of the Lebanese workforce (David *et al.,* 2019) - it indicates that limited or no adverse effects are found on high-skilled Lebanese workers (*ibid.*). In Iraq, refugees from Syria have been relatively more active in the informal labour market than their Iraqi peers; however, it is also reported that they are more likely to remain unemployed (World Bank, 2020b: 18), and therefore do not necessarily increase unemployment rates amongst the local workforce.

Growth of the informal sector: The regional economy is characterised by increased levels and forms of informal and exploitative refugee labour conditions. It is estimated that half of the Jordanian labour market is informal in nature (Idris, 2016; Abdo and Jamil, 2020). In Iraq, informality increased especially in the private sector (Durable Solutions Platform, 2020). In Lebanon, informality and related exploitation have further expanded since the onset of the Lebanese economic and political crisis from 2019 (UNDP, 2020: 14).

Real estate sector: There was a gradually regressive positive effect of the refugee presence on rental policies in Lebanon and Jordan, as rental prices soared after arrivals from Syria due to landlords capitalising on demographic growth (Ashkar, 2015; Alsoudi, 2020). Especially in Lebanon, due to the ongoing severe economic crisis, the rental market has negatively been impacted over the last two years (ILO, 2020).

Agricultural workers in the fields near Bursa, Turkey.
© Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Refugees seek safety and to build secure and dignified lives for themselves and their families. Securing rights, legal protections, pathways to residency, access to services, employment and education are all important to individual refugees and their families; they are also important to wider policy and development objectives, including around the promotion of Human Rights, Refugee Rights and Labour Rights. Interventions that offer pathways to residency, protections and rights play a positive and transformative role in the lives of refugees and help to promote more inclusive and sustainable communities. They increase people's abilities to build lives and strong, safe social ties in host countries, and they tackle the structural barriers that lead to exclusion.

As demonstrated throughout this report, underlying assumptions – that refugees will undertake onward migration, that refugees' presence leads to social tensions, and that they have significant negative impacts on host economies – are not consistent with the available evidence. These assumptions, when embedded into policy and different interventions, can be counter-productive to the promotion of rights, protections and social cohesion, as they may imply that refugees are in some way to blame for the challenges that are being addressed. Working with the media and governments to raise awareness of refugees' rights and to challenge xenophobic and discriminatory rhetoric is important to promote rights and social cohesion.

Refugees can and do make significant contributions to local communities and are motivated to build dignified and safe lives for themselves and their children through access to education, employment and protection. However, refugees' aspirations and capabilities are often undermined by structural factors, including poor access to rights and residency and the negative implications of different governmental policies, media narratives and unequal access to foreign assistance. These structural factors are also exacerbated by changing socio-economic and political contexts in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq which may be worsening for both refugees and host communities, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evidence also suggests that long-term, integrated programming offers effective ways of promoting social cohesion and participation. Combining initiatives and policies, rather than developing and implementing isolated short-term projects and programmes, may have more sustainable effects which support people's rights and needs and enable safe forms of de facto integration and local participation.

Likewise, anticipating, accounting for and recognising the diverse motivations, aspirations, experiences and exclusions facing refugees requires a situational approach. Contextual, situational and long-term interventions are effective at recognising and addressing pre-existing structural, social and historical factors that shape refugees' aspirations, refugee-host community perceptions, and economic participation.

The literature reviewed for this report provides concrete recommendations for policy and practice, in addition to pointing to areas for further research. The evidence points to the importance of long-term, integrated programming. Indeed, combining initiatives and policies, rather than developing and implementing isolated and short-term projects and programmes, may have more sustainable effects which support people's rights and needs and enable safe forms of de facto integration and local participation. In turn, studies highlight the need for situational approaches, noting that contextual, and long-term interventions are effective at recognising and addressing pre-existing structural, social and historical factors that shape refugees' aspirations, refugee-host community perceptions, and economic participation.

AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Further research is needed to assess the experiences, outcomes, and modes of participation of refugees in Iraq, as opposed to IDPs who are well represented in the evidence.
- Further research is needed on the impact of the international humanitarian presence in Iraq, which is particularly relevant in the KRI.
- Further research is required in the short-, medium and longer-term to better understand and address the impacts of Lebanon's financial collapse on refugees' lives and livelihoods.
- Further research is needed on the relationship between foreign assistance and onward migration.
- Further research is needed into the conceptualisation, operationalisation, measurement, and promotion of 'social cohesion' in displacement situations. This includes a need for further attention to refugees' perceptions of hosts, and to both refugees' and hosts' perceptions of institutions.
- Further research is required relating to the perceptions of minoritized host members in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq (including Kurdish, Yezidi and Dom) towards different groups of refugees.
- Further research on social cohesion is needed to determine the relative significance of different factors on men, women, boys and girls, according to intersecting identity markers and demographic characteristics such as age, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, education, and place of origin/residence.
- Future research is needed to identify the ways that intersecting identity markers and demographic characteristics lead to and shape people's experiences of diverse forms of social exclusion and inclusion.
- Further research is needed on the relationship between the presence of refugees and changes in socio-economic dynamics at a neighbourhood, municipal, and governorate level in host countries.
- Further research is necessary to account for the short-, medium- and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on different groups of refugees' needs and rights.

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A Syrian man from the city of Daraa gently holds his wife's ring in Jordan. Displaced and separated from his family by the conflict in Syria, he was informed by phone that his wife had died in childbirth. He was unable to bury his wife, and is unable to return to Syria to meet his child. "The ring is a part of me."

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