

Social Protection – An operational tool for the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus: Displacement contexts and beyond

COVID-19's socio-economic impact on migrants and displaced populations – Perspectives from the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) Webinar
Wednesday, 10 November 2021

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Context

- **Focus – linkages between (including transition from) humanitarian aid and sustainable SP**
 - For displaced persons (cross-border and IDPs) and communities affected by displacement
 - Affected persons often are/become reliant on informal economic activity
 - Application beyond displacement contexts?
- **Multitude shortcomings are currently evident in responding to the SP vulnerability of displaced persons – including:**
 - Inadequate conceptual and policy approaches in relation to both displacement and SP responses
 - Deficient governmental and protective interventions; and
 - A weak normative framework
- **With an emphasis mostly on humanitarian assistance, durable solutions for displaced persons (IDPs and refugees respectively) often focus on repatriation/resettlement and repatriation respectively**
 - Often-protracted stay in displacement camps or (urbanised) locations requires a dynamic approach recognising change in livelihood patterns

Context

Limited COVID-19 support for Migrants (some examples)

- In South Africa, provisions were made for:
 - permanent residents, refugees, asylum seekers and special permit holders to receive the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant
 - migrant workers (who were contributing while employed) to receive the unemployment insurance fund
- Lesotho: special food package support to Basotho stranded in South Africa
- MENA – humanitarian agencies’ response: “Despite the significant operational impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian organisations have endeavoured to continue providing lifesaving assistance through adapting their delivery mechanisms ... However, it is unlikely that these modifications in programming will completely offset the reallocation of funds away from key humanitarian projects towards dealing with the pandemic.” (IOM *Assessing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on migrants and displaced populations in the MENA region* (2021))

From durable solutions to developmental solutions

- **The need for an evolution in the durable solution debate**
 - Integrating displacement solutions in the context of "spatial planning" and "human settlement"
 - Requiring a displaced persons/societies-centred and whole-of-government approach, embedded in –
 - ❖ National ownership: accountable and responsible governments
 - ❖ A developmental approach: a focus on prevention and on a long-term view, on socio-economic integration and governance; on inclusion in national and local development planning; and adjusted operational approaches
 - ❖ Diverse dimensions need to be factored in when designing appropriate policy and other responses – including but not limited to the (SP) vulnerabilities experienced by affected persons and communities and the impact of displacement on host communities
 - See now the Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (*Shining a Light on Internal Displacement: A vision for the Future*), released on 29 September 2021

Social protection dimensions

- **The need to rethink SP conceptual, “operational” and normative approaches**
 - (1) Including displacement dimensions (e.g., climate/environmental change) into the SP conceptual fold
 - (2) Designing SP responses that specifically address displacement contexts – preventive, integrative, compensatory and transformative interventions needed
 - (3) Expanding a largely deficient SP normative framework
- See now also the policy paper: *Social Protection: An operational tool for the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus* (IOM) (2021), reflecting the inputs of several UN agencies

Selected labour market-linked SP responses

- Addressing displaced persons' restricted access to, and ability to engage in, labour markets – impacting on the ability of displaced persons to participate in (in particular contributory) SP regimes
- Designing and operationalising interventions to extend SP to displaced persons in the informal economy
- Investment in and incorporation of vulnerable displaced persons in integrated, national public safety net (PSN) responses (i.e., national-scale public works arrangements (PWPs))
 - To reduce large-scale exclusive reliance on a raft of non-contributory SP interventions
 - Could provide a pathway to vulnerable displaced persons to formally enter the labour market and hence participate in (especially contributory) SP schemes – in particular, consider the involvement of PWP participants directly in national, contributory SP programme interventions

PSN approaches: Ethiopia

- “In Ethiopia, the Productive Safety Net Programme began in 2005 with the goal of moving from humanitarian support to prevent famine, to a sustainable safety net that would offer protection against malnutrition while pulling households and communities out of poverty traps. The programme has been supported by humanitarian donors (led by WFP, UNDP, and USAID) who moved from annual to multi-year pledges, development donors (led by the World Bank and the EU), and the Ethiopian government. The programme employs between five and 15 million people annually, depending on the weather, and it also includes a cash window for households where members cannot work. The expectation that income can be earned during downturns has allowed households to accumulate assets. The investments have largely focused on rehabilitating environmentally degraded regions, improving agricultural productivity such as terracing and re-forestation, and re-greening large expanses of degraded landscapes.”

PSN approaches: India

- “In India, in February 2006, the Union government launched the *National Rural Employment Guarantee Act* (later renamed the *Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)*). It was extended to all districts in 2008 and is the largest and most ambitious social security and public works programme in the world. Approximately one-fourth of all rural households in India participate in it annually. It aims to enhance livelihood and security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Workers covered by *MGNREGA* have the following rights: employment on demand (in the form of an application to the local government office); minimum wage; payment within 15 days; basic worksite facilities; and social audit accountability and grievances mechanisms. In the fiscal year year 2019-2020, over 52 million households and nearly 75 million individuals worked under this programme (see: https://nregarep2.nic.in/netnrega/dynamic2/dynamicreport_new4.aspx). It should be noted that UNDP was a key partner, providing technical and capacity support in the design and delivery of the programme.”

Humanitarian assistance and social protection

	Humanitarian assistance	Social protection
Objective	To address (un)anticipated crises	To address social risk, including poverty and joblessness
Instruments	Cash and food transfers, cash and/food for work, and labour market interventions	
	Emergency aid	Contributory social security
Targets	Everyone affected by hazards	The poor, the insured, and people exposed to social risk
Duration	Short-term, in a protracted context.	Long-term, on-going support (i.e. administered by permanent institutions)
Financing	International assistance through the state and non-state actors	
	Good Samaritans and state reserves	Tax-financed, contributory from state, employers and employees
Transfers	Discretionary and <i>ad hoc</i>	Entitlement – non-contributory & premium-based
Executing agencies	Charities, non-governmental organisations and UN emergency agencies, and state emergency services	Ministries of Labour and Social Welfare and social security agencies

Convergences

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Challenges

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Case studies of migrant contributions to the fiscus



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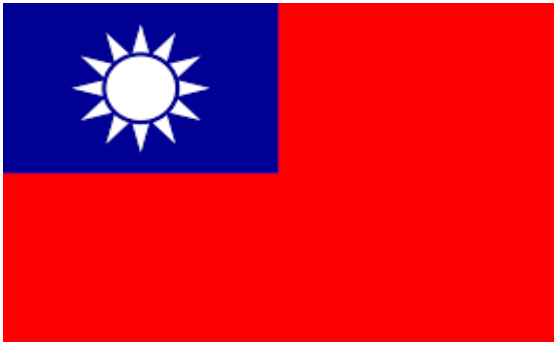
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In Taiwan, migrant domestic workers contributed an average of more than 16 million United States dollars into the healthcare system in years leading to 2010 (O’Neill 2011).

Conclusions

- Transition to/linkages between CBI and sustainable SP for displaced persons are underpinned by an appreciation that we need to move beyond humanitarian assistance towards a developmental approach
- There is a need to rethink SP conceptual, “operational” and normative approaches, with a aim to address social, economic and environmental risks from a developmental perspective
- Careful consideration should be given to labour market-linked SP responses aimed at supporting sustainable livelihoods *and* at enhancing access to contributory and non-contributory SP, e.g., via –
 - Improved access to the labour market for affected persons,
 - SP regimes tailored to those engaged in the informal economy, and
 - Integration into national public safety net (PSN) responses
- Displaced persons (including migrants) do contribute to economies, and this should translate into SP access
- There are important convergences/links, which (should) help to inform common approaches including displaced and non-displaced persons
- Applying these dimensions beyond the displacement context requires careful consideration

