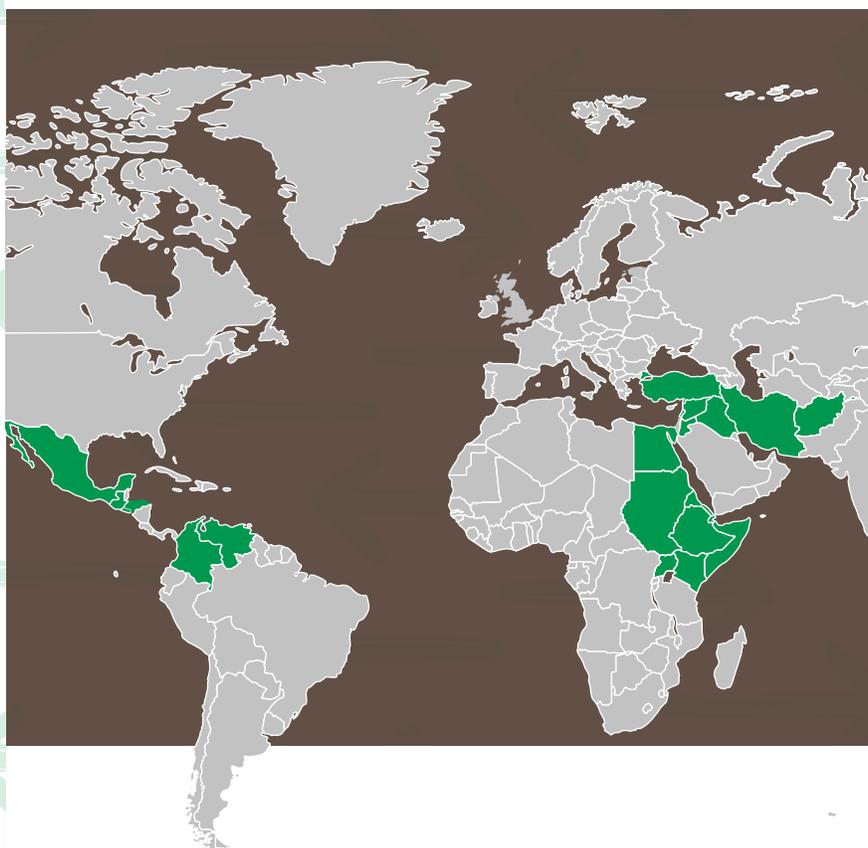


SAYARA  
INTERNATIONAL



## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS:

Current migration crises and the  
implications for Colombian response

← March, 2021 →

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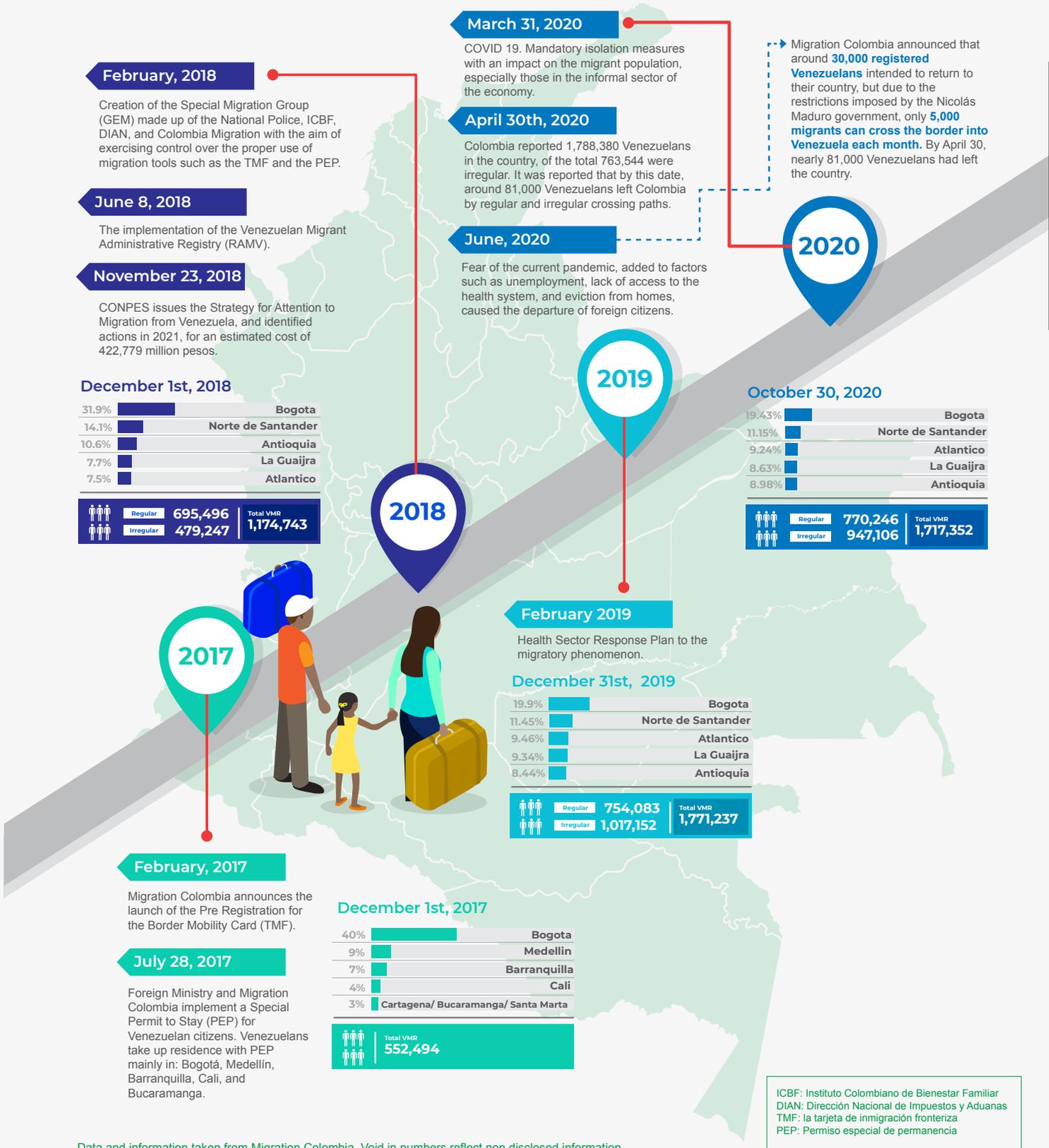
# INTRODUCTION

Recent migration from Venezuela has represented a major challenge for Latin America and the Caribbean. According to official figures released by the Refugee and Migration Response Plan (RMRP), 5.2 million Venezuelan migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were reported by host governments as of November 5, 2020. Over the past two years, there has been mass movement to neighboring countries of Venezuelans in vulnerable conditions and in need of urgent care, adding to the complexity of meeting migrants' needs.

To support the Colombian government and the migrant and refugee community, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) commissioned a research study from Sayara International. This study sheds light on the needs of migrants, refugees, returnees, and receiving communities in Colombia, while also exploring the institutional and international response (with the associated financial and service delivery challenges), the provision of which is affected by the continuous flow of migrants and refugees. In particular, the aims of the research are to (1) identify the situation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Colombia, and (2) identify the needs of the central and local governments regarding infrastructure and social services to both support the incoming population and maintain quality services (such as electricity, transportation, water, sanitation, education, and health) for the existing Colombian population.

A review of migration phenomena in other regions can provide important comparative value, incorporating key dynamics and socio-economic consequences as well as lessons learned from development partner responses in those regions. Through this review, we seek to illuminate potential challenges and best practices applicable to the Venezuelan migration situation in Latin America and the Caribbean. This review of existing literature, and the lessons that can be drawn from them, is divided into two sections: (1) The key migratory dynamics and its socio-economic consequences, and (2) the lessons learned from donor responses to refugee, displaced, and migrant populations. The migratory patterns examined include migration flows from Central Asia and the Middle East towards Europe (East-West); migration in the Horn of Africa, and the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA) towards the United States (South-North). These patterns are similar presentations of highly diverse drivers of migration, as well as different responses from the international community, aimed at supporting the socio-economic integration of migrants and refugees, and asylum seekers through key service delivery and social cohesion strategies.

**Figure 1. Evolution of migration flow into Colombia and government response**



Data and information taken from Migration Colombia. Void in numbers reflect non disclosed information.

Source: own construction with data taken from Migration Colombia.

# KEY DYNAMICS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF CURRENT MIGRATION PHENOMENA





## Central Asia & The Middle East

Most migrants traveling from Central Asia and the Middle East move to neighboring countries. These refugees originate from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, of which the latter constitutes the most significant human displacement situation in the world. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, 6.6 million Syrians are displaced persons,<sup>1</sup> 5.6 million of which are currently registered as refugees in five regional neighboring states: Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt.<sup>2</sup> Broadly speaking, the migration context in these three countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria) is characterized by three closely inter-related patterns:



**(1)** Forced migration and international displacement as a result of multiple, acute, and protracted crises across the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.



**(2)** Complex irregular migration flows, driven by a mix of economic and other factors, within and transiting through the region, particularly to and through North Africa and towards Europe and the Gulf countries.



**(3)** The movement of regular and irregular labor migrants both within and from far beyond the region, with Gulf countries acting as the principal magnet for migrant labor.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html> Accessed November 10, 2020

<sup>2</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria> Accessed November 10, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> "Final Evaluation of the Project. Addressing the needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants in Targeted Sending, Transit and Receiving Countries." pg. 16.

According to the International Agency for Migration (IOM), migrants from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq report fear of both general and targeted violence as a factor in their decision-making.<sup>4</sup> While many of these migrants (most of whom are Syrian) reported leaving “because the violence had become intolerable,” lack of economic opportunity is an increasing driver in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, where conflict continues but no longer constitutes destruction on the scale of Syria. For these migrants, primarily young men, the prospect of economic opportunity abroad is often fostered by familial and social networks settled in neighboring countries, both through regular and irregular migration pathways. Moreover, these migration flows reflect the natural extension of intra-country migration outwards: people first move from rural to ‘safe’ urban areas in order to find basic security, goods, or economic opportunity, but as a conflict worsens (as in Syria) or stagnates (as in Afghanistan), they may be forced to extend their migration across international borders or – facing an ongoing lack of economic prospects – choose to risk irregular migration.

Of the 5.6 million registered Syrian refugees, the majority reside in predominantly urban areas in one of three neighboring countries: Turkey (3.5 million), Lebanon (1.5 million), or Jordan (655,000).<sup>5</sup> These figures demonstrate two key contextual factors. First, while the forced displacement of millions of Syrians was often highlighted in terms of the ‘European refugee crisis,’ in fact, the overwhelming majority of Syrian refugees are living in neighboring states. This is in line with global trends that highlight that most forcibly displaced persons reside in neighboring countries, many of which are developing economies. A third of refugees currently reside in a ‘least developed country’ (LDC).<sup>6</sup> Second, displacement generally occurs laterally, from one developing context to another, where the receiving country is vulnerable to significant shocks across its infrastructure. In the case of Lebanon, for example, Syrian refugees constitute nearly a quarter of the country’s current population—the largest number of Syrian refugees per capita,<sup>7</sup> presenting enormous logistic, economic, and infrastructure barriers to service provision.

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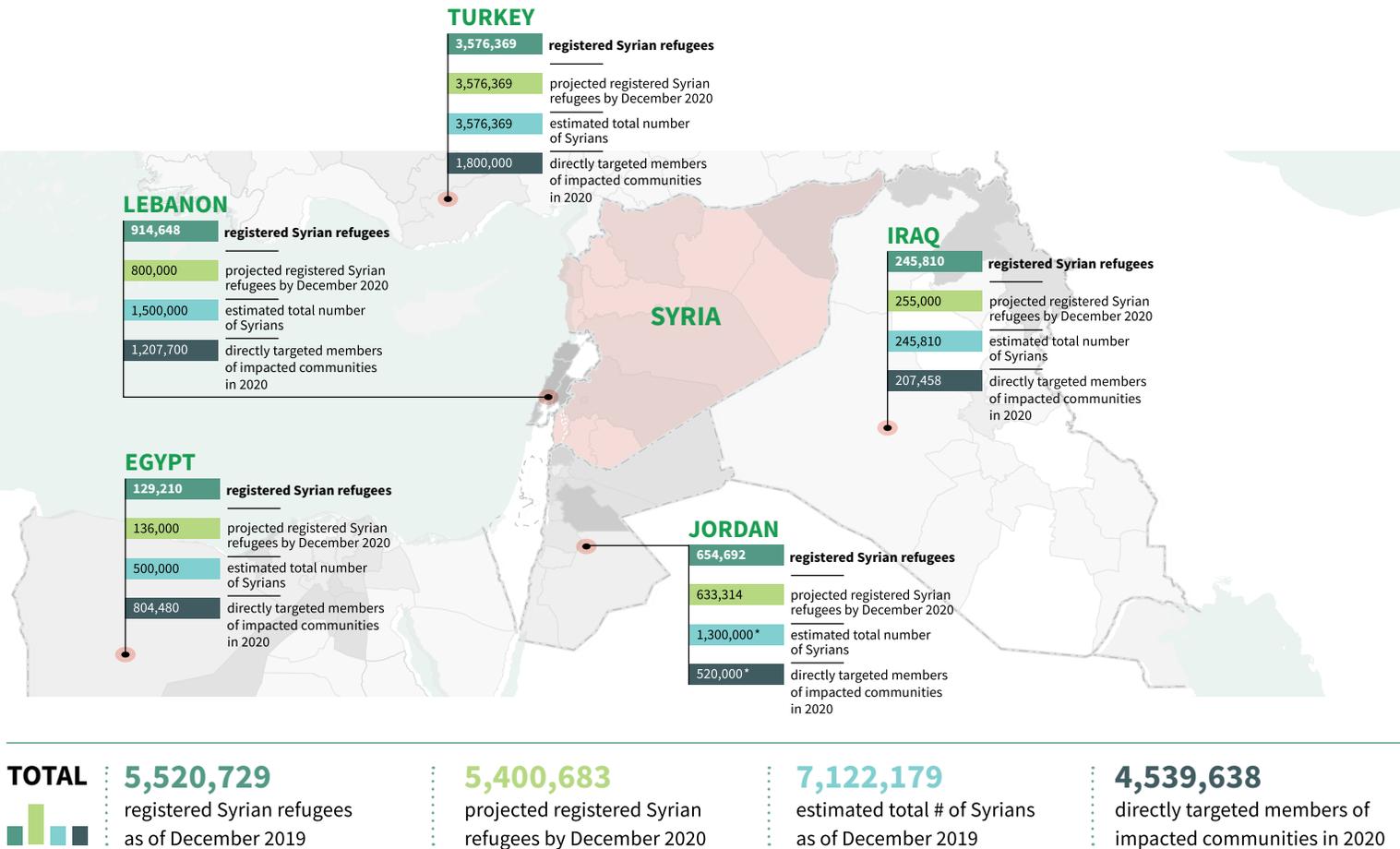
4 Crawley, H. “Beyond ‘mass movement’: understanding the dynamics of migration into Greece, ODI: Humanitarian Practice Network.” Humanitarian Exchange No 67, September 2016, p. 10-13, <https://odihpn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/HE-67-FINAL.pdf>

5 UNHCR USA, Syria Emergency, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/syria-emergency.html>, Accessed 11 May 2020

6 UNHCR. “Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018.” Geneva, 2019, <https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf>, pp. 2, 14- 17

7 UNHCR. “Operations Worldwide, Lebanon.” <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2520>

**Figure 2. Syrian migrants and refugee population as of December 31st, 2019**



**NOTE:** Regional total of 5,520,729 registered Syrian refugees on 31 December 2019, including 35,713 Syrian refugees accommodated in countries in North Africa  
\* Jordan figures are pending review by the Government of Jordan and subject to change in due course

Source: 3PR Regional Refugee Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis, 2020-2021

Moreover, refugees are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. They may encounter discrimination, restrictions on freedom of movement, inadequate or nonexistent livelihood or educational opportunities, and limited access to humanitarian assistance or other support systems.<sup>8</sup> Data indicate that just 15% of Syrian refugees residing in neighboring countries in 2015 were food secure, lacking both economic and physical access to key nutrients such as meat and fruit. Refugees also face barriers in terms of healthcare, due to lack of capacity and awareness,<sup>9</sup> and education, due to factors such as lack of documentation, communication challenges, capacity shortfalls, social integration, and education gaps (as many children have been out of school for years).<sup>10</sup>

In the Syrian context, the “sheer number of refugees has presented a significant strain on the resources of their host countries.”<sup>11</sup> Receiving states do not have the housing and social service infrastructure to meet the needs of

8 Ibid 3. pg. 24-26

9 Ibid, p. 48

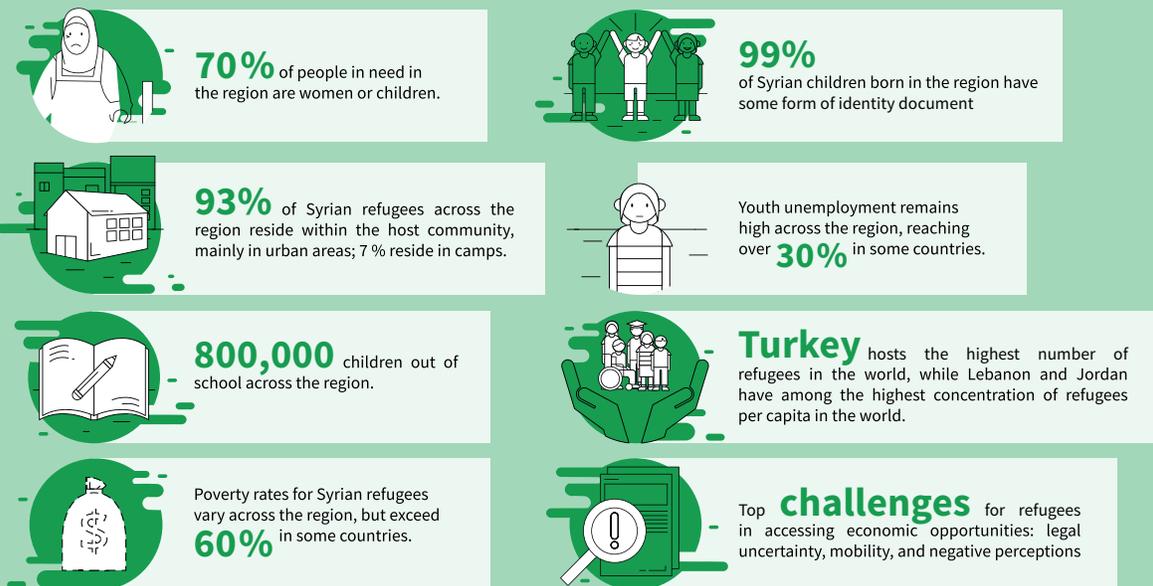
10 Ibid, pp. 69-71

11 Bolme, D., et al. “A Comprehensive Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis: Highlighting the United States’ Role in the International Effort.” University of Washington, Winter 2016, [https://jsis.washington.edu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Task-Force-D-Report-2016-Friedman\\_.pdf](https://jsis.washington.edu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Task-Force-D-Report-2016-Friedman_.pdf), p. 12

Syrian refugees. Meanwhile, “legal discrepancies between [receiving] states regarding the protections granted to refugees means that refugees’ rights are uncertain, resulting in tenuous access to work, education, healthcare, food, and water. The strain on domestic resources accompanying a continuing flow of refugees has exacerbated tensions with local populations, contribut[ing] to restiveness and instability.”<sup>12</sup>

*Figure 3. Facts and Figures - Syrian Migrants and Refugees in Central Asia and The Middle East*

**KEY FACTS & FIGURES**



Source: 3PR Regional Refugee Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis, 2020-2021

According to a 2017 comparative analysis of the role of sub-national governance and politics in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan in determining local responses to the refugee situation in each country, two factors were identified that shape variation in sub-national policies: (1) affiliation and (2) interests. Using an analytic approach based in political economy and political sociology, the authors defined affiliation in the case analysis as political, tribal, or religious commonalities and shared history, while interests related largely to the concept of “policy entrepreneurship” wherein response depends upon whether (and what) a local actor can gain from representing refugees as either a threat or opportunity.<sup>13</sup>

Literature shows that shared affiliation can ameliorate tensions that might naturally arise between migrant and host communities, but it may not be sufficient in cases where limited host community infrastructure is present. For example, the local infrastructure in Mafraq, Jordan, was highly strained by the refugee presence, including

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 13

<sup>13</sup> Betts, A. “Local Politics and the Syrian Refugee Crisis: Exploring Responses in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan.” University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre, [https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/files-1/local-politics-and-syrian-refugee-crisis\\_report-web.pdf](https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/files-1/local-politics-and-syrian-refugee-crisis_report-web.pdf), p. 4

pressure on “schools, water resources, and the creation of unmanageable levels of waste... [leading to] increased resentment.”<sup>14</sup> However, because of the shared kinship (i.e. shared characteristics of origin as result of geographic proximity) between Syrian refugees and residents, violence was rare and “a passive acceptance has endured partly because of longstanding kinship ties that predate the conflict”.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, competition over employment and challenges in accessing housing and education are key points of tensions between host communities and Syrian refugees. Identified points of tension included solid waste management and the provision of healthcare and water services.<sup>16</sup>

In terms of interest, local opinion sways with changes in economic circumstances in host countries. Neighboring countries such as Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon initially welcomed Syrian refugees. For instance, local mayors and chambers of commerce in both Jordan and Turkey worked to frame the situation in terms of “Syrians hav[ing] improved the situation for Jordanians as well... We explain to people that it isn’t just competition for jobs and services. We try to bring projects that benefit all.”<sup>17</sup> These sentiments are further backed by initiatives to improve or expand local infrastructure, by requesting more funding from national and international budgets to assist in meeting the needs of a larger population. In Sahab, Jordan, Syrian businesses have been allowed to relocate to this region, bringing additional jobs and industry to the benefit of Syrians and Jordanians alike. In Turkey, some municipalities have partnered with national and international NGOs to create livelihood projects for the benefit of both Syrian and Turkish residents. In addition, Chambers of Commerce work to integrate Syrian refugees into the socio-economic landscape, and Governorates have established communications mechanisms between local actors to identify and fill gaps while minimizing duplication.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast, the worsening economic recession of the past two years in Lebanon has turned government support and public opinion against Syrian refugees. This is evidenced by recent negative campaigns spurred by local politicians encouraging citizens to act against illegal Syrian labor and blaming the refugees for Lebanon’s economic crisis. In addition, “many municipalities have imposed extralegal restrictions on the movement of Syrians in Lebanon” as a result of apprehension of incursions of Islamist groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State (ISIS) in Lebanon.<sup>19</sup> The combination of hostility from parts of the public and restrictive government policies may soon create conditions for an increasing number of refugees in which survival in Lebanon becomes unsustainable or too difficult. Similarly, the authors of the 2017 comparative analysis used Zarqa, Jordan, to demonstrate that host economic conditions are more important to receiving communities in determining levels of local support for Syrian refugees than affiliation and interests. Zarqa’s Governor is reportedly outspoken about the burden of refugees on the economy, healthcare, education, and public services in the region. Coupled with high rates of youth unemployment, most Jordanians “blame the Syrians”<sup>20</sup> for their economic problems.

The situation of Syrian refugees in neighboring countries clearly shows that when refugees move to a neighboring

14 Ibid, p. 12

15 Ibid 13, pg. 22.

16 REACH, The ‘Evaluating the Effect of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Stability and Resilience in Jordanian Host Communities: Preliminary Impact Assessment’ report . [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/REACH\\_JOR\\_Report\\_EducationandTensionsinCommunitiesHostingSyrianRefugees.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/REACH_JOR_Report_EducationandTensionsinCommunitiesHostingSyrianRefugees.pdf) Accessed November 10, 2020.

17 Ibid 19, pp. 13-14

18 Ibid 19, pp. 25-26

19 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/lebanon/211-easing-syrian-refugees-plight-lebanon> Accessed November 10, 2020.

20 Ibid, p. 14

country, they face the same challenges as the host community of that neighboring population – in addition to their own challenges as a refugee. If they move to a country that has a broken economy and a lack of jobs available (as is the case in Lebanon), refugees now face those issues. Likewise, if they travel to a country where censorship is increasing (as in Turkey), they now face increasing censorship. In this way, refugees are vulnerable to the shocks of the countries in which they are hosted. In Lebanon and Jordan, especially, this is “common ground” between the host and refugee communities and presents the opportunity for collaboration and conflict transformation between groups. Ultimately, an unstable country will have difficulty managing its response to an influx of refugees if it is already in crisis.



## The Horn of Africa

Migration flows within and out of the African continent include labor or economic migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Overall, while 31 million Africans live outside the country of their birth, the majority remain within the African continent; in fact, just 25% of African migrants reside in Europe.<sup>21</sup> In the HoA region, there are 6.5 million IDPs and 2.2 million refugees.<sup>22</sup> Migration flow monitored by the IOM demonstrates that movement of people in the Horn of Africa (HoA) occurs through four routes. The majority of migrants stay in countries along these routes in the Horn of Africa region:



**(1)** An Eastern route through Yemen, the Middle East and beyond.



**(2 and 3)** The Northern route through Sudan, and either through Libya and on to Europe (Central Mediterranean Route) or through Egypt to Israel (Sinai Route).

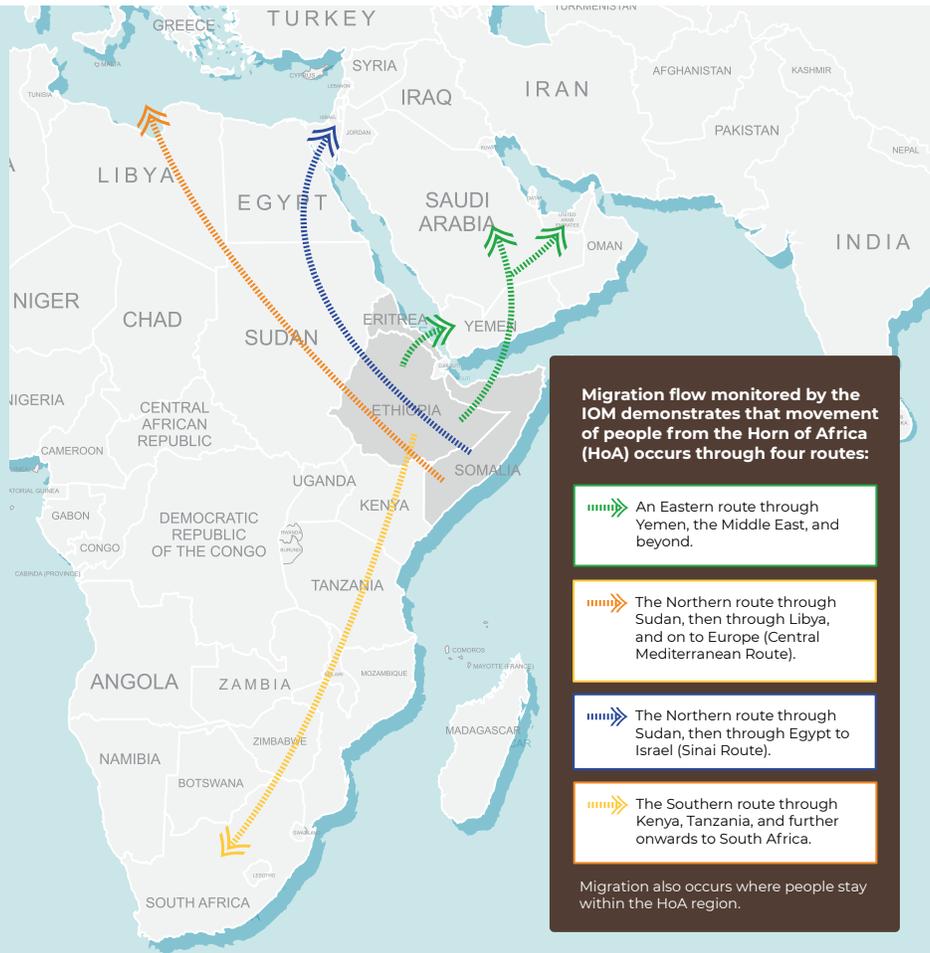


**(4)** The Southern route through Kenya, Tanzania, and further onwards to South Africa.

<sup>21</sup> Adepou A. "Migration Dynamics, Refugees, and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa." Academic Impact, UN, 20 September 2016, <https://academicimpact.un.org/content/migration-dynamics-refugees-and-internally-displaced-persons-africa>

<sup>22</sup> UNHCR & World Bank Group, Eastern Africa HOA Displacement Study: Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the Horn of Africa, 2015.

*Figure 4. Migration Routes from East and Horn of Africa, 2018*



Source: IOM, Mixed Migration of Africa and The Arab Peninsula (January-June 2018)

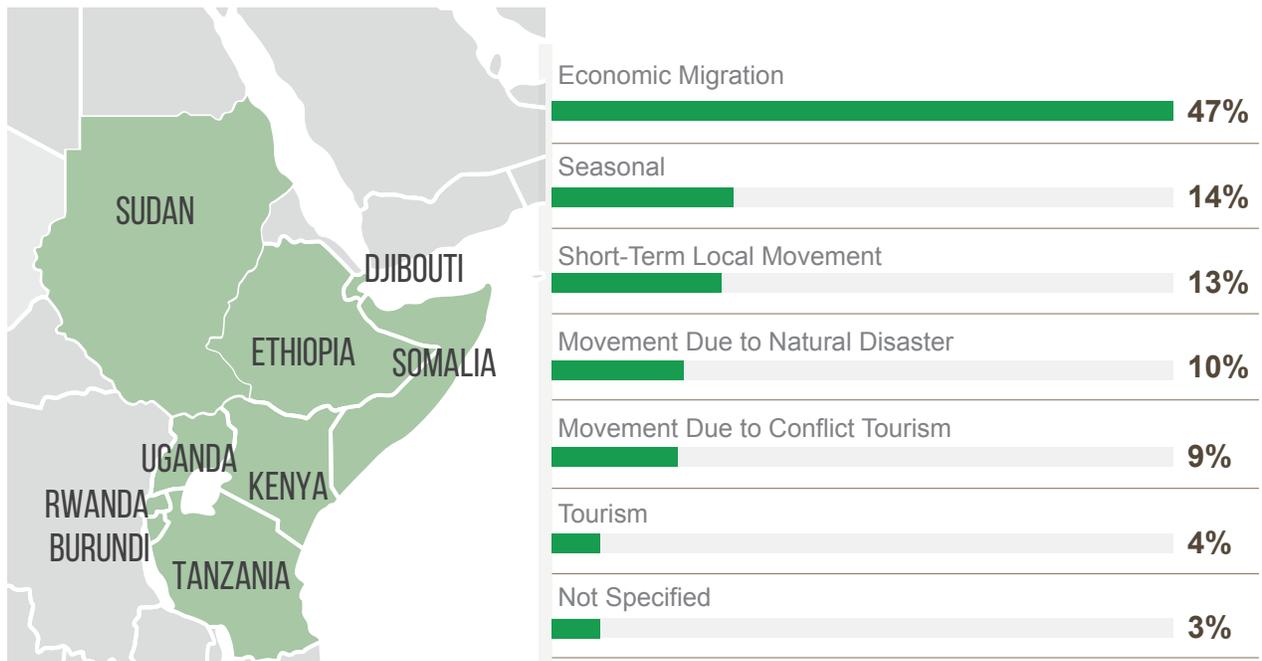
Sudan and Ethiopia host the second and third largest refugee populations in Africa (Uganda hosts the largest population). Sudan is the home of 1 million refugees and 1.9 million internally displaced persons.<sup>23</sup> Ethiopia is currently home to approximately 700,000 refugees, primarily Eritreans, Somalis, Yemenis, and South Sudanese. Most refugees in Ethiopia are living in camps supported by the UNHCR and managed by the Ethiopian government’s Administration of Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). South Sudan remains the third most common country of origin for refugees in the region, with 2.3 million South Sudanese refugees reportedly living outside the country, most of them in neighboring countries. Since 2016, there has been a significant reduction in migration in Eritrea. The reasons behind this reduction are unclear but may be linked to changes in migration patterns that have seen more Eritreans moving towards South Africa or the Arabian Peninsula, and refugees being stuck in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Sudan.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> UNHCR Sudan. <https://reporting.unhcr.org/sudan#:~:text=Population%20trends,estimated%20to%20be%20internal-ly%20displaced>

<sup>24</sup> Migration and conflict in the Horn of Africa: a review of recent literature. January 2020. <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/files/2020/02/Literature-review-final-130120.pdf>.

According to a sample of over 15,000 migrant respondents interviewed in 2018 by the IOM, the drivers of migration in the HoA were diverse. While most movements outside the HoA were motivated by economic reasons, intra-regional migration within HoA was driven by diverse factors, such as natural disasters, war or conflict, or to rejoin family.<sup>25</sup> An in-depth analysis of migration trends in the HoA sponsored by the EU Trust Fund for Africa, indicated that the principal drivers of migration are structural in nature and include the level of economic development in the country of origin, migrants’ social networks, and demographic change in the country of origin. Additional factors include the level of geographical and cultural difference between origin and destination countries (with migrants more likely to move to countries that are closer to their own country, geographically and culturally); the level of education of migrants; and the GDP of both destination and origin countries. With regards to the latter, rising GDP per capita in countries of origin leads to an initial increase in migration, and a subsequent decrease over time. In terms of demographic changes, countries with high fertility-rates do not (yet) produce higher migration, but young people are found to express a greater intention to migrate, so a ‘youth bulge’ of migration can be expected in future.<sup>26</sup> In this perspective, migration is often the result of extensive planning and saving, with irregular migration frequently following failed attempts at accessing legitimate migration channels. This finding holds true across migration contexts generally, particularly among economic migrants.

*Figure 5. Types of Migration Flows Observed in East Africa and Horn of Africa*



Source: IOM, Mixed Migration of Africa and The Arab Peninsula (January-June 2018)

Reasons for displacement may also be driven by country policies. For instance, in Eritrea, a 1995 Proclamation on National Service is a major driver of forced migration from the country, as well as a factor in high rates of asylum

<sup>25</sup> <https://migration.iom.int/data-stories/migration-flows-horn-africa-and-yemen> Accessed November 10, 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Migration and conflict in the Horn of Africa: a review of recent literature. January 2020. Research Evidence and Facility

claims from Eritreans. Migration reportedly remains “the main route out of generational and socio-economic immobility” for Eritrean young people.<sup>27</sup>

The extent of mixed-migration and implementation of tighter migration controls throughout the region has also caused related illicit markets to flourish, including human smuggling, human trafficking, and organ trafficking, among others. Studies show that 86 percent of migrants from the Horn of Africa to South Africa use smugglers, as do 66 percent of those migrating from the Horn of Africa to North Africa and Europe. Smuggling networks from the Horn of Africa are organized and flourishing; in many cases, these networks involve government officials either directly or indirectly, as their cooperation is needed for smuggling to continue. In the HoA region, victims of trafficking are exploited in a range of industries including domestic work, agriculture, construction, entertainment, forestry, fishing, mining, and textiles. Exploitation also includes forced prostitution, forced marriage, engagement of children in armed conflicts, forced begging, forced labor, and organ trafficking. Smugglers are the most common cause of violence experienced by migrants travelling from the Horn of Africa to North Africa and Europe, with 76 percent of incidents attributed to them. By contrast, among those moving from the Horn of Africa to Yemen and Saudi Arabia, smugglers were only responsible for 19 percent of incidents, the third-highest group after ‘single unknown individuals’ at 41 percent, and security forces at 27 percent.<sup>28</sup>

National governments in the HoA region are currently developing or implementing mechanisms to: (1) interrupt trafficking networks; (2) provide vulnerable migrants or victims of trafficking with easily accessible information on trafficking and other vulnerabilities (both before, during, and after migration journeys); (3) improve community understanding of irregular migration risks; and (4) provide critical referral information to state and civil actors to ensure a greater ability to identify and intercept potential trafficking victims and provide them with medical, legal, and other support.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid 26, pg. 22-23.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid 26, pg. 30-33.



## The Northern Triangle of Central America

As with migration in the HoA region, there is no “single, dominant factor – such as a war or a natural catastrophe – driving recent migration patterns in NTCA countries.”<sup>29</sup> On the contrary, countries with the highest rate of outward migration share an “interlocking set of political, economic, and social challenges that have given rise to pervasive insecurity and desperation,” broadly categorized as: crime and violence; extreme poverty and economic collapse; environmental degradation and loss of traditional lifestyles; and impunity and elite indifference.<sup>30</sup>

Trends in migration flows indicate that migration routes stem either from central to north America (the primary destination of choice being the U.S.A, with Mexico as the second destination)<sup>31</sup> or entail intra-regional migration between Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. In Mexico, the number of incoming migrants has increased since 2018. A recent study published by the Network of Reporting Organizations of Migrant Rights (REDODEM) demonstrated that 83 percent of migrants in Mexico were males, while women and girls represented 16 percent and less than 1 percent were persons whose gender identity was not defined. In recent years, the number of children migrating to Mexico, particularly among ages 15 to 17, has increased dramatically. Data reported between January and April of 2019, showed that 68 percent of migrant children were accompanied by an adult, while 32 percent were not. Researchers have also observed a recent “feminization” of migration from places like Guatemala, where a growing number of young single mothers or female heads of household are moving north to support their families.<sup>32</sup>

### *Figure 6. Central American migration routes, in transit through Mexico, 2017*

29 Restrepo, D., et al, Getting Migration in the Americas Right: A National Interest-Driven Approach, Center for American Progress, 24 June 2019. Pg. 22-24

30 Ibid 29 pg. 28.

31 Wilson, J., Recent Migration to the United States from Central America: Frequently Asked Questions, Congressional Research Service, 29 January 2019, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R45489.pdf>.

32 Ibid 43, pg. 45.



Source: *Desarrollo y migración: Desafíos y oportunidades en los países del norte de centro america.* 2019.

Intra-regional migration between NTCA countries shows a similar pattern in the composition of migrants by sex. In the cases of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, migration to other countries in the Central American region is markedly female, with a relationship that ranges from 92 men for every 100 women in the case of El Salvador to 97 men for every 100 women in the case of Guatemala. In contrast, in all three cases, immigration from other countries in the Central American region is markedly male, with relationships ranging from 107 men for every 100 women in the case of Honduras to 114 men for every 100 women for Guatemala.<sup>33</sup>

Various studies of NTCA migrants suggest that direct violence against themselves or their families is often a key reason to undertake a migration journey, with 40% of NTCA asylum-seekers indicating they or family members had experienced violence of this nature.<sup>34</sup> The region also accounts for roughly 40 percent of global homicides despite containing just 8 percent of the world population, a statistic largely driven by increasing gang and narco-trafficking activity and which further demonstrates the potential reach of violence.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, a recent study found that the “probability that an individual intends to migrate is 10-15 percentage points higher for Salvadorans and Hondurans who have been victims of multiple crimes than for those who have not.”<sup>36</sup> In the REDODEM

33 *Desarrollo y migración: Desafíos y oportunidades en los países del norte de centro america.* CEPAL 2019. Pg. 25

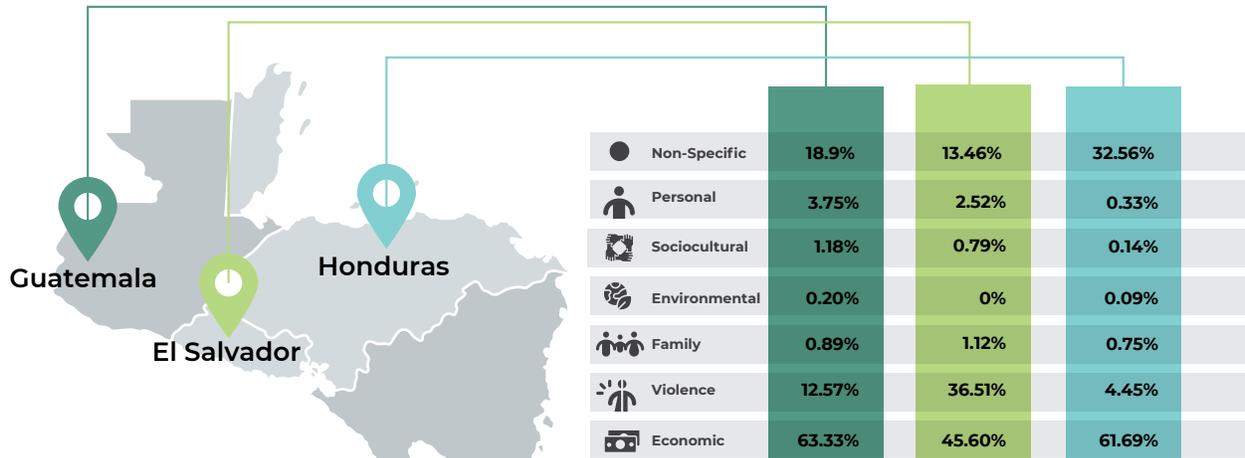
34 Forced to Flee Central America’s Northern Triangle: A neglected humanitarian crisis, Medecins Sans Frontieres, May 2017, [https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/msf\\_forced-to-flee-central-americas-north-ern-triangle.pdf](https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/msf_forced-to-flee-central-americas-north-ern-triangle.pdf), p. 5

35 *Ibid* pg. 8.

36 Hiskey, J., et al., Leaving the Devil You Know: Crime Victimization, US Deterrence Policy, and the Emigration Decision in Central America, *Latin American Research Review*, vol. 53, no. 3 (2018)

study, the reasons most cited by women for leaving their countries were the following: domestic violence, family reunification, search for relatives, and the persecution of organized crime.<sup>37</sup>

*Figure 7. Reasons for leaving the country of origin, by people in situation of mobility and in transit (January-December, 2019)*



Source: own creation with data pulled from REDODEM, Migraciones en México: fronteras, omisiones y transgresiones Informe 2019.

The agricultural sector accounts for roughly 25 percent of NTCA employment;<sup>38</sup> however, changing weather patterns, such as drought, have led to food insecurity and devastated livelihoods in the region.<sup>39</sup> Such environmental degradation can lead to displacement to main cities, causing rapid and unplanned urbanization. In these circumstances, local infrastructure and employment markets often fail to meet the new demands, in turn leading to unemployment, and greater susceptibility to recruitment to gangs and involvement in illicit economies. Armed groups are also known to enlist children as young as 12 years’ old, both by ‘choice’ (enticing Venezuelan migrants with steady income) and by force, including threatening to kill recruits or their families if they refuse. InSight Crime reported that recruits received up to VES 50,000 per month (USD 300 in the parallel market) which equates to 25 months of minimum wage in Venezuela (a monthly minimum wage is USD 12),<sup>40</sup> offering an attractive and unique income source in areas with higher rates of unemployment and informal work.

Migrants are not only abused and exploited by criminal gangs. A survey of 31,000 migrants conducted by a network of civil society groups that work with undocumented migrants in Mexico found that 20 percent of respondents

37 Migraciones en México: fronteras, omisiones y transgresiones Informe 2019. REDODEM. [http://redodem.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/REDODEM\\_Informe\\_2019.pdf](http://redodem.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/REDODEM_Informe_2019.pdf), pg. 45

38 Wilson, J., Recent Migration to the United States from Central America: Frequently Asked Questions, Congressional Research Service, 29 January 2019, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R45489.pdf>, p. 5

39 Restrepo, D., et al, Getting Migration in the Americas Right: A National Interest-Driven Approach, pg. 10-14 <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2019/06/24/471322/getting-migration-americas-right/>

40 Venezuela Investigative Unit. “GameChangers 2018: Venezuelan Migration, A New Gold Mine for Organized Crime.” InSight Crime, 8 January 2019, <https://es.insightcrime.org/noticias/analisis/gamechangers-2018-migracion-venezolana-crimen-organizado/>

said they had suffered various crimes at the hands of authorities, including robbery, extortion, beatings, and illegal detentions. These abuses by border agents are likely contributing to increased uptake of more dangerous migration routes. Instead of simply discouraging undocumented migrants, local authority interventions have “made them even more afraid of migration agents and other authorities, forcing them onto more isolated and potentially more dangerous routes.” Migrants reported walking for hours along remote paths from the border to avoid migration authorities. Enforcement has, according to a shelter director, “ma[d]e migrants more vulnerable, more invisible, more trafficked.”<sup>41</sup>

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41 Easy Prey: Criminal Violence and Central American Migration. July 28, 2016. Pg. 24-26.

# **APPLICABILITY OF MIGRATION LITERATURE TO THE VENEZUELAN MIGRANT CRISIS IN COLOMBIA**





While the movement of Venezuelan migrants to Colombia involves risks associated with South-South migration, the context also benefits from mitigating factors.



## 1. Existence of Identity and Interest Factors

The Venezuela-Colombia context significantly benefits from the countries' shared history, language, and socio-cultural characteristics. Their shared histories of decolonization, government systems, recent political instability, and migration flows further mitigate unrest in the face of the current migration crisis. However, these factors do not preclude xenophobia, particularly if local economies deteriorate due to either the strain of the migration crisis or other external factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

To this end, it is vital that programming identifies the 'identity and interest' factors that shape sub-national policymaking, or the application thereof. Identifying these factors may include the following steps:

Assess host community openness or resistance to Venezuelan migrants. Assessments may be conducted in various receiving communities to ascertain levels of openness or resistance towards Venezuelan migrants in specific localities, and the specific factors that contribute to this reaction. This could include identification of existing local ties to ascertain, for example, how localities with high rates of pendular migration prior to the crisis respond to Venezuelan migrants compared with those without a prior history of pendular movement.

Assess attitudes toward migrants, perceptions of host community, and infrastructure capacity among host government authorities and local leaders. Identification of attitudes or perceptions from local authorities, such as mayors, may be necessary to address divergent perceptions of local priorities to ensure assistance meets an existing need, that it is both compatible with and does not duplicate existing efforts.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Betts, A. "Local Politics and the Syrian Refugee Crisis: Exploring Responses in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan." University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre. [https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/files-1/local-politics-and-syrian-refugee-crisis\\_report-web.pdf](https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/files-1/local-politics-and-syrian-refugee-crisis_report-web.pdf). pg. 28

Thoroughly map private sector stakeholders in host communities. Local business actors and Chambers of Commerce have also proven to be key intermediaries for influencing local politics, whether through investment in – or lobbying on behalf of – incorporating migrants into local economies. Tapping into these networks is a key, on-the-ground means of linking existing skills to needs and opportunities.



## 2. Spillover and Existing Instability

While the shared history and characteristics of both countries may help to mitigate severe negative outcomes for both Venezuelans and Colombians, Colombia's current stability is fragile. Studies have demonstrated that the risk of falling back into civil war (the 'conflict trap') is highest in the first decade following the cessation of violence.<sup>43</sup> Colombia, having experienced over six decades of protracted violence, large-scale violence against civilians, and a highly unstable neighbor, is particularly at risk from this conflict trap given the resurgence of multiple non-state actors that have transformed the conflict dynamics.

The already-high vulnerability of Venezuelan immigrants and some returnees (due to their irregular status and unemployment or precarious economic condition), makes this population particularly prone to becoming victims or victimizers within the Colombian conflict when illegal armed groups are present in their areas of residence, work, or transit.

These factors, combined with the ongoing political instability of Venezuela and long-time conflict dynamics of Colombia, have allowed transnational criminal structures to consolidate their power in the border region, exploiting the vulnerability of Venezuelan migrants and returnees, and intensifying the risk factors for conflict escalation across the region.

<sup>43</sup> Hegre, H., et al. "The Conflict Trap." PRIO, 11 October 2011, <https://folk.uio.no/haavarmn/ConflictTrapPaper.pdf>, p.

**LESSONS LEARNED  
FROM DONOR  
RESPONSES  
TO REFUGEE,  
DISPLACED,  
AND MIGRANT  
POPULATIONS**

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International actors and host country governments employ different approaches in response to increased migration flows stemming from conflict and instability in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the Horn of Africa (HoA), and countries in the Northern Triangle in Central America (NTCA). Numerous actors and varied approaches are employed to attend displaced and migrant populations in these regions. As such, to understand the measures taken and their impact, it is necessary to combine existing literature and lessons learned on responses to human migration. The following section includes a review of literature of completed and evaluated (as well as ongoing) programs and projects in response to Syrian refugees in the Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Syria), North Africa (Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Algeria) and migration in the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, and Djibouti).

## Methods

The literature reviewed consisted of a search for publicly available reports,<sup>44</sup> published between January 2015 and February 2020. The type of publications analyzed included research studies, meta-analytic reports of program evaluations or learnings, mid-term evaluations, and final evaluation reports. In terms of geography, the literature search focused on countries which were principal hosts or emitters of refugees, IDPs, or returnees. This includes the following countries:

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44 The websites consulted to perform the literature review include the following: <http://www.mixedmigration.org/>  
<https://www.refworld.org/>  
<https://www.samuelhall.org/publications>  
<https://evaluation.iom.int/repository>  
<https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/evaluations.aspx>  
<https://www.unhcr.org/>

**1.**

Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Libya, Morocco, and Algeria in North Africa and the Horn of Africa.

**2.**

Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, and Syria in Middle East and North Africa.

**3.**

Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Search criteria of document titles were based on projects that provided support for refugees, internally displaced persons, and returnees. The criteria were defined as the following: A project provided direct support to refugees, IDPs (including migrants), and/or returnees if it either (i) explicitly named refugees/IDPs/returnees as receiving a specific project intervention, or (ii) the presence of refugees/IDPs/returnees within a community was used as criterion for project of intervention site selection. Project interventions targeting rehabilitation or reconstruction to support the eventual return of refugees or IDPs were not included as direct support to forced displacement. The literature search identified forty publications that matched the search criteria within the period of observation. The representation of publications per regions included: Horn of Africa (n=12), Middle East and North Africa (n=8), the Northern Triangle Central America (n=8), and multi-region representation (n=6).

The migration response space consists of many actors, including international non-governmental organizations, international multilateral organizations and bilateral donors, private sector actors, and host country governments – both national and local. Studies and evaluation reports on responses implemented by the following actors were reviewed: International Organization on Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Labor Organization (ILO), United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (UKaid/DFID),<sup>45</sup> United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the European Union (EU), the KfW Development Bank, the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Department of State (U.S. DoS), and the United Nations World Food Program (WFP). The findings summarized here include development partner responses focused on emergency humanitarian aid, such as transit assistance, migratory emergency response, service provision (health, WASH, and livelihoods), and reintegration to returnee migrants. It also includes prolonged engagement of development activities with refugee, displaced, and migrant populations in host countries, like infrastructure development in host communities and employment programs and schooling for migrants.

<sup>45</sup> DFID was merged with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in September 2020 to form the new department Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.



## General Characteristics of Development Actor Responses to Migration

The responses by donors to human displacement and migration vary in terms of the level of involvement with host country governments and by the types of support provided to foreign nationals and host countries. The responses include (1) direct support of host country governments to attend migrant population needs, and (2) provision of technical support and the implementation of temporary (shorter than one year) or prolonged (longer than one year) service delivery and infrastructure support, in coordination with or parallel to host country government activities. The types of responses include technical support with research, policy development, coordination between government agencies and international actors, and implementation of service delivery and infrastructure activities for displaced persons and migrants.

Among service delivery responses, donors implemented activities that addressed the basic needs of migrants, refugees, and displaced persons, as well as providing comprehensive coverage of services. These services included health care, basic and vocational education, employment programs, community awareness-raising campaigns on migration issues, and gender empowerment. With regards to infrastructure, donors' investments related to migrant and host communities included housing, water and sanitation, sewage waste management, roads, lighting, municipal government infrastructure, and energy. Many of these responses included the participation or employment of refugee, displaced, and migrant populations.

Finally, donors implement responses through bilateral investments with host country governments and, in some cases, through regional response and funding mechanisms, such as the Jordan Compact,<sup>46</sup> the World Bank Global Concessional Funding Facility (GCCFF),<sup>47</sup> and the Regional Migration Program in the Horn of Africa.



## Lessons Learned from Donor Responses

### Benefits to Host Government and Communities

The results of the literature review found that building on available local resources and capacities within communities and public institutions generates immediate positive effects and promotes sustainability of

46 Veronique Barbelet, Jessica Hagen-Zanker and Dina Mansour-Ille. "Jordan Compact: Lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts." ODI. February, 2018.

47 The Bank Group helped establish two new refugee-specific financing instruments: The GCCF for middle-income countries and the IDA18 Regional Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities for eligible IDA countries. These new financing instruments build on lessons from prior instruments, including multi-donor trust funds, that push for more targeted, refugee-specific, support to ensure both refugees and vulnerable host communities benefit fully from concessional financing.

interventions aimed to support refugees, IDPs, and returnees. From emergency response,<sup>48</sup> to infrastructure,<sup>49 50</sup> and to livelihood-oriented<sup>51</sup> projects in the Middle East, HoA, and NTCA regions, it was found that benefits to host governments (e.g. capacity-building) and addressing host communities' needs (including service delivery and infrastructure) had a positive impact on project achievements.

When countries like Turkey and Ethiopia hosted large numbers of refugees, it was necessary to mitigate the protracted negative fiscal, economic, and social development effects of the refugees on host governments and communities. One evaluation in Turkey found that there was a need to recognize the socio-economic pressures that displacement puts on host communities, particularly across a range of "key sectors such as, housing, employment and livelihoods, education, health, municipal services, and intercommunal relations."<sup>52</sup> In an evaluation on host community acceptance in Ethiopia, researchers found that, even in contexts where there was buy-in from public institutions to host refugees, intragroup "conflict among hosts (and to some extent refugees) can be a significant determinant of the social impact of displacement."<sup>53</sup> One portfolio review of World Bank projects in the HoA and Middle East found that both host community government officials and residents recognized the issues with host community infrastructure and service capacity such as lack of (and cost of) housing, over-saturation of public services (i.e. schools and health services) and municipal services, and minor crimes. A balanced approach towards addressing forced displacement and migration created co-benefits that mitigate its impacts and create political goodwill.<sup>54</sup> In contrast, failing to target host community needs, such as community service delivery and infrastructure, reduced the effectiveness of the institutions' intended development approaches.<sup>55</sup>

When projects successfully addressed host government capacity-building needs, studies found that the quality of service delivered to migrants improved as result of increased awareness and attitudes of government staff.<sup>56</sup> An evaluation of a regional IOM reintegration project in NTCA countries demonstrated that ownership and sustainability was more likely in Guatemala where support and training to municipalities was strongest relative to El Salvador, where participation by host community authorities and groups was limited.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, in the Middle East region, an evaluation of IOM<sup>58</sup> and ILO<sup>59</sup> projects indicated that host community participation was key to the success of responses to Syrian refugees in transit and in destination countries. It also produced the unintended positive effect of reducing irregular migration when returnees shared their migration experiences with their communities of origin. On the other hand, quality of service delivery to migrants suffered when training did

48 Final Evaluation of the Project. Addressing the needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants in Targeted Sending, Transit and Receiving Countries." July 2018. p. 4

49 "Evaluation of International Organization for Migration (IOM) South Sudan Health and WASH response: 2014 – 2016"

50 Veronique Barbelet, Jessica Hagen-Zanker and Dina Mansour-Ille. "Jordan Compact: Lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts." ODI. February, 2018.

51 Informe Final Evaluación Final del Proyecto Retorno y Reintegración en el Triangulo Norte de Centroamérica - OIM." Abril 2020 p. 3

52 The World Bank, "Turkey's Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Road Ahead" December 2015.

53 Impact of Refugees on Hosting Communities in Ethiopia: A SOCIAL ANALYSIS. The World Bank. Pg. 33

54 The World Bank Group, IFC, MIGA "World Bank Group Support in Situations Involving Conflict-Induced Displacement," June 20, 2019.

55 The World Bank Group, IFC, MIGA "World Bank Group Support in Situations Involving Conflict-Induced Displacement," June 20, 2019.

56 Social Impact "Regional Summary Report: Horn of Africa: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Regional Migration Program Models on Providing Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants" April, 2017.

57 Ibid 70, pg. 25.

58 Danish Refugee Council. "Unprepared for (re)integration Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria on Refugee Returns to Urban Areas" November, 2019. . Pg. 58.

59 ILO Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis: Program Support to Jordanian Compact" 2018. Pg. 23

not address government staff management and technical skills (e.g. assessing migrant vulnerability, providing psycho-social support, or building referral networks).<sup>60</sup> Minimal attention to these dimensions limited the project leaders' ability to implement interventions in border areas, as well as scale up interventions in neighboring municipalities.<sup>61</sup>

## Policy and Strategy

Regarding development partner responses, literature identified positive and negative implications of addressing economic livelihoods of refugees, IDPs, and returnees. Evaluators found that development partner responses fared best when they filled 'gaps' in a host country's national legislative framework that permitted decent work<sup>62</sup> and social protection of refugees and IDPs with their programming activities. In contrast, failing to address economic livelihoods and non-camp activities, evaluators found, could have negative consequences on sustainability of reintegration and emergency assistance initiatives.

An evaluation of Turkey's response to the Syrian refugee crisis emphasized the benefits from non-camp approaches that give "refugees the opportunity to secure their own homes, livelihoods, and services to maximize self-reliance during their displacement period."<sup>63</sup> In contrast, evaluators of the Jordan Compact found that support to Jordanian firms "enhanced opportunities to access new markets"<sup>64</sup> where refugees could provide temporary work, benefiting host communities and refugee community self-reliance. Similarly, an evaluation of an IOM reintegration project in Iraq found that the development partner ensured "the sustainability of livelihood activities by designing the interventions based on the assessed needs of the local market and the potential opportunities" they presented.<sup>65</sup> A review of OECD responses to the Syrian refugee crisis found that development partner strategies are especially relevant in light of refugee movement to urban areas outside of camps. Evaluators found the "flow of refugees in or around cities in neighboring countries has significantly increased the urban population of some cities and engendered a range of economic and social impacts, including an increased demand for housing, jobs and health services."<sup>66</sup>

In the HoA region, according to evaluators, Ethiopia provides an interesting case study on the transition from more restrictive policies concerning refugees towards implementation of activities that support their self-reliance. Despite Ethiopia's restrictive policy environment, some development partners "are supporting the development of a national compact in Ethiopia that is focused on job creation."<sup>67</sup> A recent evaluation of an IOM transit assistance project in the HoA region emphasized that it was advisable for development partners to generate agreements with microfinance agencies and occupational training institutions to provide opportunities

60 REACH, "Jordan emergency services and social resilience project (JESSRP) monitoring study 1" January 2016, pg. 37-40.

61 Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat, Danish Refugee Council "Local Integration Focus: Refugees In Ethiopia" February, 2018. , pg. 42.

62 <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm>

63 Betts, et al. Pg. 41

64 Jordan Compact: Lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts." ODI. February, 2018. Pg. 49

65 Midterm Evaluation: Contribute to the Economic Recovery of Iraq through Employment Creation and Revitalization of Local Economies" December 2019. Pg. 41

66 Responding to Refugee Crises in Developing Countries What Can We Learn From Evaluations? September 2017. Pg. 36

67 Thinking forward about Livelihoods for Refugees in Ethiopia: Learning from NRC's Programming.. Pg. 52

for refugees to collaborate with these organizations and start their own businesses.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, in El Salvador, evaluators found that limited attention had been directed to economic aspects of integration of refugees, which were deemed critical to achieve the goal of the project and the sustainability thereof.<sup>69</sup>

## Capacity-Building, Program Management, and Use of Technology

Multiple examples of good practices in program management and coordination with stakeholders, training and capacity-building, and the use of technology in emergency responses were identified by the literature review across development partner responses in different regions. When successful, evaluators found that partners used procedural approaches to coordination and identified capacity-building and technology needs, as well as including experts in interventions. These measures produced a high level of satisfaction among the host country and beneficiary population.<sup>70 71 72</sup>

### *Training and Capacity-Building*

In Turkey's response to the Syrian crisis, evaluators identified a successful example of strengthening "national and local institutions to respond to displacement crisis instead of introducing parallel external delivery channels."<sup>73</sup> Similarly, in Sudan, training and sensitization for community stakeholders on environmental sanitation and solid waste disposal practices contributed to a reduction in the prevalence of diseases that would have otherwise arisen from sanitation hazards.<sup>74</sup> In North Africa, evaluators found that the IOM "advocated for networking and widening the base for dialogue amongst different partners working on migration issues to meet for the first time and work in a collaborative manner" - this promoted better coordination with CSOs.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, in Nicaragua, the IOM was credited with adequately planning technical and management needs, which helped to limit start-up delays during implementation.<sup>76</sup> The evaluation of IOM's transit assistance in the HoA identified that sensitizing local authorities on international migration frameworks was critical to create buy-in to IOM operational responses to refugees in emergency contexts. Similarly, during the assessment of IOM capacity-strengthening in Nicaragua, researchers found that the project's "migration school" curriculum was institutionalized in national institutions due to high levels of user satisfaction.<sup>77</sup>

In the HoA and NTCA countries, evaluators emphasized that strengthening capacity to address refugee and migrant psycho-social needs is critical to support vulnerable populations. In the HoA region, key stakeholders requested more capacity-building tailored to the "return migration context"; in Somalia, evaluators documented that many migrants "suffer from specific traumas and challenges upon reintegration, and that their problems

68 Ibid Responding to Refugee Crises in Developing Countries What Can We Learn From Evaluations? September 2017. pg. 13

69 "Informe Final Evaluación Final del Proyecto Retorno y Reintegración en el Triangulo Norte de Centroamérica - OIM." Abril 2020. Pg.55.

70 Ibid 67. Pg. 57.

71 "Evaluación Final: Fortalecimiento institucional para la promoción de los derechos de los migrantes irregulares en tránsito por Nicaragua". Enero 2019. Pg. 22

72 Ibid 68. Pg. 38

73 Ibid 71. Pg 28.

74 The World Bank, "Turkey's Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Road Ahead" December 2015. pg. 48

75 Final Evaluation of the Project. Addressing the needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants in Targeted Sending, Transit and Receiving Countries." July 2018. Pg. 58.

76 Ibid 90. Pg. 53.

77 Ibid 90. Pg.21.

and needs may differ from those in the country of origin.”<sup>78</sup> In El Salvador and Guatemala, researchers identified that migrants transiting through safe houses, sometimes staying up to three months, experienced negative psychological consequences, such as anxiety and post-traumatic stress. Although civil society actors partnered with caregivers to attend affected migrants and families, development partners should also integrate psychosocial support in transit assistance.<sup>79</sup>

### *Program Management and Coordination*

In contrast, during the evaluation of DFID’s emergency response, researchers found that a “lack of a clear template or agreed corporate position on what structure, staffing and resources are required” for dealing with a crisis hampered decision-making at all levels. Also, a lack of effective team building as a result of poor communication from headquarters and field staff produced tension during implementation.<sup>80</sup> A review of U.S. DoS migration models in the Horn of Africa identified that the development partner needed to develop strategies, including partnerships and e-learning, to increase the reach of capacity-building activities; in the same way, collaboration with civil service training academies was necessary for impacts to be self-sustaining.<sup>81</sup>

### *Use of Technology*

Lastly, the use of technology was especially relevant for strengthening local capacity, when development partners adequately planned activities. Evaluators deemed the integration of technology as an “enabler” in their appraisal of ILO’s support to the Jordan Compact project. The evaluator found that the project’s integration of a job-matching platform and a labor-law application enhanced “male and female beneficiaries’ access to reliable information and services, while streamlining program efficiency.”<sup>82</sup> Similarly, the IOM has introduced e-learning opportunities with self-guided, as well as tutored, options in NTCA countries. According to evaluators, interviews with beneficiaries identified that they “greatly valued these e-learning courses and were eager for further modules and courses.” These courses focused on issues such as unaccompanied migrant children for migration authorities.<sup>83</sup>

## **Targeting Migrant Needs and Vulnerabilities**

Services for migrants had to be well-targeted to their needs and vulnerabilities within the host community context, according to literature on development partner responses in the HoA and NTCA regions. In one evaluation of DFID emergency support for the Syrian refugee crisis, evaluators found evidence that DFID pays attention to some particularly vulnerable categories (e.g. victims of sexual and gender-based violence) and this influenced the design of programs. For example, female outreach workers were selected to deal with the limited mobility of certain groups of women and girls.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, donor responses that implemented gender-sensitive approaches more successfully mitigated barriers of participation and access of mothers and women to employment programs and service delivery.<sup>85</sup>

78 Mid Term Review of EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa. May 2019. Pg. 22.

79 Evaluation of effectiveness of the Protection Transfer Arrangement in Central America Evaluation Report December 2018. Pg. 31

80 DFID Syria Crisis Unit, Humanitarian Programme Process Evaluation. January 2015. Pg. 16.

81 Evaluating the Effectiveness of Regional Migration Program Models on Providing Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants. January 2017. Pg. 16.

82 Final Evaluation of the Project. Addressing the needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants in Targeted Sending, Transit and Receiving Countries.” July 2018. pg. 24.

83 Ibid 79. Pg. 33.

84 “Evaluación Final: Fortalecimiento institucional para la promoción de los derechos de los migrantes irregulares en tránsito por Nicaragua”. Enero 2019. pg. 11

85 Final Evaluation of the Project. Addressing the needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants in Targeted Sending, Transit and Receiving Countries.” July 2018. Pg. 44-45

In contrast, evaluations of initiatives from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and the World Bank (WB) determined that traditional tools for identification (such as profiling, registration, referrals, and targeting) were not always helpful in identifying those who seek assistance and are the most vulnerable. For instance, one evaluation of migration responses in the MENA and HoA regions noted that single young males – often less vulnerable in more traditional humanitarian settings – were often excluded from assistance programs and, simultaneously, targeted by more restrictive migration management processes, such as detention during identification procedures. As a result, young males became more vulnerable than other, more “traditional” vulnerable groups.<sup>86</sup> Even in ambitious development partner responses that aimed to influence policies related to refugee status and labor rights,<sup>87</sup> failing to target service delivery to vulnerable refugees can limit the success of emergency response projects.

## **MERL**

A recurrent theme in almost all studies and evaluations during the literature review was the need to improve Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) systems in development partner responses to IDPs, refugees, and returnees. In projects in the MENA and HoA regions, evaluations identified challenges in the design, capacity, operations research, and adaptation and learning aspects of MERL systems. In contrast, projects in the NTCA regions demonstrated deficiencies in capacity, operations research, and adaptation and learning aspects. The literature review emphasized that poor MERL systems contributed to accountability deficits within project activities.

The studies and evaluations indicated that projects across the Middle East, including Syria<sup>88</sup> and Jordan,<sup>89</sup> displayed a lack of specified indicators, standardized definitions, reporting procedures, and data collection methodologies. In evaluations of IOM responses to displacement in North Africa<sup>90</sup> and WB projects in the Middle East,<sup>91</sup> stakeholders experienced difficulties tracking technical assistance and capacity-building in countries to meet refugee needs. A desk review of mixed-migration projects implemented by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) found that poor documentation practices were common in emergency projects in the MENA region – a result also identified in a portfolio review of IOM transit assistance.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, project capacity to use data for decision-making and program learning was also limited in projects such as the Jordan Compact.<sup>93</sup> The use of inconsistent or poor-quality documentation made it difficult to monitor the implementation of activities overall and presented challenges in ensuring community priorities were included in the project planning process.

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86 UNHCR & World Bank Group, Eastern Africa HOA Displacement Study: Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the Horn of Africa, 2015 pg. 36.

87 DFID Syria Crisis Unit, Humanitarian Programme Process Evaluation. January 2015.. Pg. 12

88 “Evaluación Final: Fortalecimiento institucional para la promoción de los derechos de los migrantes irregulares en tránsito por Nicaragua”. Enero 2019. Pg. pg. 14-15.

89 Final Evaluation of the Project. Addressing the needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants in Targeted Sending, Transit and Receiving Countries.” July 2018. Pg. 63

90 Midterm External Evaluation of the Project “Fostering Health and Protection to Vulnerable Migrants Transiting Through Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen” (IOM). Pg. 63

91 Final Evaluation of the Project. Addressing the needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants in Targeted Sending, Transit and Receiving Countries.” July 2018.pg. 63

92 Informe Final Evaluación Final del Proyecto Retorno y Reintegración en el Triangulo Norte de Centroamérica - OIM.” Abril 2020, pg. 61.

93 Veronique Barbelet, Jessica Hagen-Zanker and Dina Mansour-Ille. “Jordan Compact: Lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts.” ODI. February, 2018. Pg. 23

Similar results were evident in literature on projects implemented in the HoA region. In a review of DRC reintegration projects, evaluators found that host country governments counted the number of beneficiaries receiving project support using mostly output indicators rather than outcome indicators,<sup>94</sup> and did not use standard definitions in measurement tools<sup>95</sup> which were used to measure access to services and access to rights. Moreover, evaluators found that in projects across the HoA region, interventions were not systematically assessing needs of beneficiaries<sup>96 97</sup> or implementing other operations research activities,<sup>98</sup> such as market needs assessments.<sup>99</sup>

In the NTCA region, evaluators found similar qualities in the MERL systems employed in projects there. A review of U.S. DoS emergency assistance in NTCA countries found that leadership was not adequately dedicating resources, staff, and time to training on MERL or implementing assessments to identify staff capacity needs.<sup>100</sup> In contrast, evaluators of a review of IOM projects on reintegration found good practices of conducting operations research and sharing it with local authorities in El Salvador and Honduras, which spurred the development of joint action plans with national authorities.<sup>101</sup>

Finally, studies and evaluations of donor responses recommended numerous ways to improve monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs:

**1.**

Design robust monitoring and evaluation metrics that track outcomes and contextual indicators that assesses population groups' vulnerabilities during implementation.

**2.**

Provide technical assistance throughout design and roll-out phases to regional staff and government stakeholders to instill capacity to implement these measurement systems.

**3.**

Utilize a mixed-methods approach to measure and monitor those phenomena impacting migrant populations which are harder to measure. These include stigma and discrimination, gender-based violence, and child labor, as well as migrant and host population knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to access and utilization of services delivered.

94 Unprepared for (re)integration Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria on Refugee Returns to Urban Areas. Pg. 32 Ibid 5, 6 and 13..

95 Evaluation of the IOM Project "Improving the Protection of Vulnerable Migrants Travelling through the Horn of Africa, 2013-2015, and Previous Phases". June 2016. Pg. 17

96 Final Evaluation of the Project. Addressing the needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants in Targeted Sending, Transit and Receiving Countries." July 2018. pg. 25

97 Evaluation of reintegration activities in the Sahel and lake chad region. June 2020. Pg. 48.

98 Ibid 96. Pg. 26.

99 Thinking forward about Livelihoods for Refugees in Ethiopia: Learning from NRC's Programming. Pg. 25

100 Ibid Mid Term Review of EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa. May 2019.. Pg. 28

101 Evaluación Final del Proyecto Retorno y Reintegración en el Triángulo Norte de Centroamérica – OIM. Pg. 48

# CONCLUSION

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Experiences from development partner responses in the MENA, HoA, and NTCA regions demonstrate that assessing the needs of host governments and refugees and IDPs is crucial.

Overall, development partners' planning and needs identification mechanisms underlie the successes and shortcomings of emergency responses as evidenced by evaluators' findings. Through needs assessments in countries that hosted large number of refugees, such as Turkey and Ethiopia, development partners mitigated the protracted negative fiscal, economic, and social development effects of the refugees on host governments and communities. In contrast, various development partners across the MENA and HoA regions used profiling, registration, referrals, and targeting mechanisms with limited success to identify the most vulnerable, which in turn, limited their interventions' impacts on beneficiary populations.

Partner responses fared best when they used their programming activities to fill "gaps" in a host country's national and local government policy framework that permitted decent work and social protection of refugees and IDPs. Partner response that supported refugees and returnees to secure their own homes, livelihoods, and services during their displacement or reintegration period benefited host communities by providing access to migrant labor and helped refugee communities to become more self-reliant. In contrast, evaluators found that failing to address economic livelihoods and non-camp activities had negative consequences on sustainability of reintegration and emergency assistance initiatives.

Lastly, development partner responses need to improve the design, capacity, operations research, and adaptation and learning aspects of MERL systems. Fundamental design elements of MERL systems were lacking across projects such as well-defined indicators, standardized definitions, reporting and learning procedures, and beneficiary focused data collection methodologies. Similarly, interventions were not systematically assessing needs of beneficiaries or implementing other operations research activities and integrating this information into programmatic decision-making. The inconsistencies of these MERL systems made it difficult to monitor the

implementation of activities overall and presented challenges in ensuring community priorities were included in the project planning process. Overall, the literature review emphasized that poor MERL systems contributed to accountability deficits within project activities.

## Implications for the Colombian Response

The results of the literature review identified lessons and best practices that are applicable to Colombia's response to the Venezuelan migration crisis.

### **Thoroughly assess Venezuelan migrant vulnerabilities**

Tools for profiling, registering, referring, and targeting Venezuelan migrants must go beyond traditional notions of vulnerability and integrate intersectional approaches to assessing vulnerability of refugee populations.<sup>102</sup> These approaches may help programs identify cultural and socio-economic barriers to services experienced by Venezuelan migrants across sex, gender, and racial identities.

### **Address policy limitations of Colombian government to deliver services to Venezuelan migrants and create an enabling environment for them to thrive in host communities**

Development partner responses should work with national and local governments to change policies to permit local employers to hire Venezuelan migrant labor and expand access of public services to vulnerable Venezuelan migrants without national identity documents. Intervention responses that address policy changes are more likely to be adopted by host country governments if capacity-strengthening and targeted financing is provided in a situation when a significant migrant influx occurs, as in Colombia.

### **Provide adequate resources for monitoring and evaluation and learning activities within Colombia**

Resources may come in the form of staff and activities to develop robust MERL systems to report on outcomes of intervention activities and track changes in living conditions of hard-to-reach and vulnerable Venezuelan migrants. These investments should specifically emphasize development of learning and knowledge management mechanisms to internally learn from good practices and share them with host governments and communities.

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<sup>102</sup> "Intersectionality and Other Critical Approaches in Refugee Research" Local Engagement Refugee Research Network Paper No. 3 - December 2019. DINA TAHA. Pg. 14 –17.

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