

A BRIDGE TO FIRMER GROUND:  
**LEARNING FROM INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES TO SUPPORT  
PATHWAYS TO SOLUTIONS IN THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT**



CHAPTER

**2**

**SOCIAL  
PROTECTION**

**MARCH 2021**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Syrian refugees in the region often find it difficult to earn a living. In Lebanon more than 90 percent of Syrian refugees lived below the poverty line as of October 2020,<sup>1</sup> and in Jordan, 78 percent of refugees lived in poverty in 2019.<sup>2</sup> These vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as the economic downturn that followed the implementation of quarantine measures wiped out livelihoods opportunities across the region for many, including refugees.<sup>3</sup>

## Box 1. About this Project

This chapter is part of a research project by the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), titled “A Bridge To Firmer Ground: Learning from International Experiences to Support Pathways to Solutions in the Syrian Refugee Context”. As the protracted Syrian refugee crisis continues and refugee communities, host governments, and international donors and implementers attempt to move toward durable solutions, this project analyzes projects, policies, and approaches from around the world and draws global lessons learned for the Syrian context. This report provides recommendations for host-country policymakers, regional and international bodies, and nongovernmental actors.

The other chapters of this research report are available [here](#).

As a result, many refugees rely on social assistance to meet their basic needs. However, national social protection systems (including both social assistance and social insurance programs) are limited in scope and generally do not cover refugees. Syrians are instead often served through a patchwork of social assistance programs run by international organizations. Because these programs are reliant on donor funding and utilize parallel distribution structures and targeting criteria, there are questions about their sustainability in the medium- and long-term. Initial steps toward aligning refugee and national social safety net systems are being taken. In Jordan, the government is exploring the extension of social insurance to workers in the informal economy, which could benefit many refugee workers, as well as members of the host community: the Joint Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment (JCVA) aims to align targeting systems so that they are based on similar vulnerability criteria,<sup>4</sup> and in Turkey, the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) that serves Syrian refugees is run through Turkey’s social assistance offices.

Social safety net programs for Syrians in the region have broadly transitioned to cash-based assistance.<sup>5</sup> However, several barriers still hamper refugees’ access to benefits. The exclusion of refugees from banking and financial services has added a layer of complexity for distributing cash assistance. In Jordan and Lebanon, documentation requirements applied by banks often make accounts inaccessible to refugees.<sup>6</sup> To overcome this challenge, social safety net programs have used bank accounts held by implementing partners or turned to mobile money systems to distribute benefits. But these also pose barriers. In order to activate and use a SIM card, Jordan requires proof of identification, and in order to purchase a SIM card, an Asylum Seeker Certificate from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is not considered sufficient. Instead, non-Jordanians must have a Ministry of Interior (MOI) card or a valid passport,<sup>7</sup> requirements which refugees may not be able to fulfill. While financial inclusion remains a significant issue, few social assistance programs in the region have linked their programming with efforts to address it.

Finally, there is a need across the region for better referral structures and coordination between cash programs and other services. In Jordan, a 2016–17 study found that both adults and children said they needed psychological support in addition to cash assistance.<sup>8</sup> And in Turkey, while the ESSN is broadly viewed as effective at reaching beneficiaries with cash assistance, it does not include links to services in other sectors.<sup>9</sup>

This chapter presents four case studies that provide lessons learned on how cash assistance can better help meet refugees’ basic needs through a digital wallet (2), on how social assistance can be linked with financial inclusion (3), and on how refugees can be incorporated into national social protection (social insurance) frameworks (4).

## 2. USING CASH TO PROVIDE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE TRANSFERS

As part of their inclusion in host states, refugees are entitled to assistance to meet their basic needs, based on specific criteria and depending on the availability of funding. In Kenya and in other refugee contexts globally, the World Food Program (WFP) has increasingly relied on cash-based transfers (CBTs) are believed to provide economic injections into local economies and have multiplier effects, thus creating livelihood opportunities for refugees and host communities, and boosting the resilience of both.<sup>10</sup>

Beneficiaries usually prefer cash transfers because they are able to spend the cash as they choose.<sup>11</sup> There can be concerns that cash distributions may be mis-used, either intentionally or due to financial illiteracy.<sup>12</sup> As a result, WFP often uses vouchers, which may be redeemed at approved vendors for specific types of goods, as is the case with Kenya's Bamba Chakula cash assistance program. Despite the differences between the Kenya and the Syrian refugee context, and acknowledging the advanced cash assistance systems in Syrian refugee hosting countries, Bamba Chakula can help highlight some challenges and opportunities that could inform the existing and upcoming CBT programs in the region.

### BAMBA CHAKULA IN KENYA

<b>Country</b>	Kenya
<b>Years active</b>	2015–present
<b>Key objectives</b>	The Bamba Chakula cash assistance program allows refugees to buy food not provided at distribution centers; supports digital cash and minimizes general food distribution to save resources; strengthens and supports local markets; and provides livelihood opportunities for refugees and host communities.
<b>Target population</b>	Nearly 418,000 refugees in the Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyei camps have benefited from the program. <sup>13</sup>
<b>Budget</b>	The European Union's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States collectively provided USD 2.5 million of funding per month for the program in 2019.

### CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF BAMBA CHAKULA

Kenya hosts one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world—reaching nearly 500,000 in 2020.<sup>14</sup> Many of the refugees live in camps in Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyei due to Kenya's strict encampment policy, which limits refugee mobility and livelihood opportunities.<sup>15</sup> All three camps are located on semi-arid lands, leading to chronic issues of food insecurity.<sup>16</sup> To address these issues, WFP began implementing Bamba Chakula, a food voucher program, in 2015.<sup>17</sup> WFP partnered with Safaricom, which runs the ubiquitous mobile money transfer platform M-PESA, to implement Bamba Chakula. The program was initially launched in Kakuma and expanded to Dadaab in 2016 and to Kalobeyei since the camp was founded. By using vouchers, WFP was able to overcome government concerns that direct cash transfers could present security issues.<sup>18</sup>

## Box 2. Bamba Chakula

Bamba Chakula is deposited as a voucher in a digital wallet associated with a unique SIM card given to each household. Refugees use the SIM card to purchase food items from vendors contracted by the World Food Program (WFP). Vendors are then reimbursed for the Bamba Chakula payments through M-PESA.<sup>19</sup> Based on this system, WFP provides a percentage of the staple cereal portion of monthly food assistance as a voucher (initially 10 percent and more recently up to ~50 percent).<sup>20</sup> Single-member households receive greater proportions of their assistance through Bamba Chakula to account for the ability of larger households to optimize the distribution of food rations across their members.<sup>21</sup> Refugees in Kalobeyei receive almost all of their food assistance through Bamba Chakula's food vouchers, in line with the camp's self-reliance model.<sup>22</sup>


WFP is leading the implementation of Bamba Chakula, including by providing technical support to beneficiaries and vendors; conducting program education and outreach among beneficiaries to ensure they are aware of and able to use their vouchers; monitoring the market to evaluate how the intervention is affecting prices; and contracting and managing a sufficient number of vendors, who must agree to certain provisions to ensure they are offering fair market prices, maintaining food safety, and abiding by the guidelines placed on the use of Bamba Chakula.<sup>23</sup> Other actors provide additional support, including UNHCR (which provides the biometric identification system underpinning Bamba Chakula) and the non-governmental organizations World Vision, CARE, and the Norwegian Refugee Council (which provide in-kind assistance, market monitoring, and technical expertise).<sup>24</sup>

Evaluations of Bamba Chakula point to several successes. Bamba Chakula has been correlated with reduced food insecurity among refugees,<sup>25</sup> moderately improved dietary diversity, and improved food security for host populations through the injection of money into the local economy.<sup>26</sup> Refugees appreciate the functionality of Bamba Chakula and the increased flexibility in food choice, as well as its ease of use.<sup>27</sup> This success is due in part to the program's robust partnerships between implementing organizations and consistent market monitoring.<sup>28</sup>

## LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

There are three main takeaways from the Bamba Chakula experience that may be applicable to countries hosting Syrian refugees, complementing their own best practices in CBT programming.

1



**CASH ASSISTANCE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO REFUGEES' SELF-RELIANCE, WHEN THE CONTEXT ITSELF IS CONDUCIVE.**


- Programming needs to promote an enabling environment for refugees to achieve self-reliance in the medium- to long-term.

Bamba Chakula shows that cash assistance by itself largely addresses short-term rather than medium- or long-term needs. Lack of accommodating legislation as well as Kenya's encampment policy, the remoteness of the camps, and the restrictions on refugees' employment inhibit refugees from obtaining livelihoods and integrating in host communities.<sup>29</sup> In the Kalobeyei settlement, however, where other programs and policies have been developed to support self-reliance, including, kitchen gardens and agricultural training, cash assistance has supported self-reliance.<sup>30</sup>

Syrian refugee hosting countries place fewer restrictions on refugees' right to work and movement than does Kenya. Despite this, evaluations of CBT programs in the Syrian refugee context have come to similar conclusions: cash assistance helps refugees meet the most basic needs and reduces negative coping mechanisms; however, livelihood opportunities remain scarce and self-reliance elusive. In Lebanon, measures of refugees' socio-economic welfare regress when they stop receiving

supplementary cash assistance,<sup>31</sup> and in Turkey, there is a push to transition the ESSN toward a more sustainable, development-driven approach.<sup>32</sup> In Jordan, WFP will advocate for a more sustainable approach to its unconditional food assistance (GFA) to Syrian refugees in partnership with the Government, donors and other key stakeholders. This will likely involve a three-prong approach with beneficiary profiling, implementation with/through development partners of a variety of response packages (from social assistance, vocational and skill development, SMEs investment to durable employment) and coordination/advocacy.<sup>33</sup>

2




**PLACING RESTRICTIONS ON HOW REFUGEES USE CASH ASSISTANCE MAY LIMIT ITS EFFECTIVENESS.**

- Restricting how and where cash-based assistance can be used may limit its effectiveness and encourage the circumvention of restrictions.

In Kenya, the restrictions embedded within Bamba Chakula's vouchers have led beneficiaries and vendors to create informal systems to circumvent them. For example, beneficiaries sometimes barter portions of their Bamba Chakula transfers for non-food items, which they are not permitted to purchase with Bamba Chakula, or for the cash to buy them—a coping mechanism Bamba Chakula was explicitly intended to combat.<sup>34</sup> This is exacerbated by the lack of coordination between aid interventions, as cuts in rations of non-food items by one program are not compensated for with increases in another program.<sup>35</sup> Restrictions on which vendors are able to accept Bamba Chakula have also had effects on local markets. Approved shopkeepers have started informal markets, renting out places in their Bamba Chakula lines for non-contracted vendors to sell goods to beneficiaries, thus undercutting the goals of WFP's application and contracting requirements.<sup>36</sup>

Vendor limitations are also reported to have adverse consequences in the Syrian refugee context. In Jordan, for example, anecdotal evidence shows that limiting beneficiaries' choice of vendors has resulted in non-competitive pricing and other discriminatory practices (at least as perceived by beneficiaries).<sup>37</sup> When these restrictions are lifted, beneficiaries tend to shop outside the WFP-contracted network.<sup>38</sup> While cash assistance provided in the Syrian refugee context is generally multipurpose and unconditional, a number of households receive restricted assistance. For instance in Lebanon, 54,150 economically vulnerable Syrian families receive 100,000 LBP per person per month to use in WFP shops to buy food and essential household items.<sup>39</sup> Overall, the use of unrestricted cash in these contexts has led to increased food security and beneficiaries' satisfaction with assistance, demonstrating the importance of designing cash benefits in this way.<sup>40</sup>

3



**ENSURE THE STABILITY AND PREDICTABILITY OF TRANSFERS.**

- The value of cash-based transfers is dependent on market prices, sufficient funding, and consistent delivery.

Funding constraints and instability have hampered Bamba Chakula's effectiveness. Bamba Chakula transfer amounts do not change in response to in-kind assistance ration cuts in other programs or to changes in prices due to market fluctuations, drought, and political instability.<sup>41</sup> Shifts and delays in the timing of dispersals can cause beneficiaries to revert to negative coping mechanisms such as borrowing money to fill gaps between transfers.<sup>42</sup> Refugees can accumulate significant debts to vendors who allow them to use Bamba Chakula SIM cards as collateral.<sup>43</sup> Additional funding constraints due to COVID-19 have further limited both the amount of in-kind and Bamba Chakula assistance WFP can provide, reducing the benefits of the program.<sup>44</sup> In light of the negative impact of the pandemic in the Syrian refugee context, including challenges linked to currency devaluation in

Lebanon, ensuring the stability and predictability of transfers is crucial. Evidence from Lebanon has shown that cash programmes have proven resilient and adapted to the multi-pronged crises faced in the country from late 2019 onwards. However, given the continued need for cash assistance in the region to support vulnerable refugees, it will be critical to ensure that mechanisms for flexible and consistent funding are in place going forward.

### Recommendations

Donors:

- Avoid restrictions on the use of benefits whenever possible to maximize beneficiaries' ability to adapt the use of cash to their individual needs.
- Move toward more sustainable assistance models, including by expanding livelihood opportunities.
- Provide consistent, sustainable and flexible funding, including multi-year funding when appropriate, to avoid disruptions in the provision of benefits and to keep up with inflation and other shifts in the context.

Implementing partners:

- Advocate for a sufficiently enabling environment through the reduction of restrictions on mobility and the right to work to foster refugees' self-reliance in the long term.
- Continue to use innovative, appropriately tailored cash transfer modalities, such as mobile money, to overcome distribution barriers.
- Leverage various cash assistance modalities to improve refugees' financial inclusion, including by ensuring access to mobile money and bank accounts.



By: UNDP/ Mustafa Bilge Satkin

### 3. PROMOTING FINANCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Refugees are largely excluded from financial services in most first asylum countries. A lack of access to formal status or identity documentation can make it impossible to open bank accounts, and encampment policies may preclude refugees from visiting physical bank locations. Even where refugees legally have the right to open an account with their refugee ID, individual banks may not allow them to do so. In Jordan, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) found that just 9 of 15 banks surveyed allowed Syrian refugees to open a bank account, and those that did required a valid passport and work permit. As a result, fewer than 8 percent of refugees in Jordan have access to banking services,<sup>45</sup> which can pose a barrier to receiving cash assistance. Mobile money transfers have been used in Jordan to help overcome these distribution barriers, while regulations have made this more difficult in Lebanon. Yet even as mobile money can streamline distribution, it does little to build refugees' connections and access to the financial services sector, which is critical to supporting livelihood development. Mobile money transfers in Jordan and Lebanon, for example, were made using accounts held by implementing partners rather than beneficiaries themselves.<sup>46</sup> MyBucks Bank in Dzaleka Camp, Malawi, has worked with UNHCR to develop a unique solution to these challenges.

#### MYBUCKS BANK IN DZALEKA CAMP, MALAWI

<b>Country</b>	Malawi
<b>Years active</b>	2017–present
<b>Key objectives</b>	The opening of a branch of MyBucks Bank in Dzaleka Camp was intended to improve camp residents' access to financial and banking services. The branch also provides financial literacy training and disburses cash assistance.
<b>Target population</b>	44,385 refugees and asylum seekers living in Dzaleka Camp, as of December 2019. <sup>47</sup> Banking services are also open to the local population.
<b>Budget</b>	The bank is fully self-supporting via its financial products. The financial literacy classes are funded through MyBucks partnership with Opportunity International, an international microfinance organization. <sup>48</sup>

#### CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE INITIATIVE

As of December 2019, UNHCR reported that 96 percent of refugees in Dzaleka Camp were living in poverty.<sup>49</sup> Many of them depended on food and cash assistance to meet their basic needs.<sup>50</sup> Fostering livelihood activities is thus a high priority for UNHCR and international assistance agencies working in the camp. UNHCR has developed a series of initiatives in the camp that aim to connect refugees with high-demand production activities in local markets.<sup>51</sup> Efforts to build livelihoods among the refugee population, however, have been hampered by a lack of access to banking services, including both loans and savings products. Refugees in Dzaleka face several barriers to banking. First, restrictions on travel outside the camp limit their ability to physically access banking services.<sup>52</sup> Second, in order to open an account, banks in Malawi have most often required a government-issued photo ID, which most refugees do not have. As a result, very few refugees are able to access banking services via mainstream commercial banks.<sup>53</sup>

In 2017, UNHCR and the Malawi government entered into an agreement with the financial tech company MyBucks to build a local branch in the Dzaleka Camp that would accept UNHCR refugee cards as ID, thus overcoming both the location and documentation barriers otherwise faced by refugees. The branch opened in April 2018, following an in-depth market assessment by MyBucks as well as consultations with the Dzaleka Camp administrator, refugee camp leaders, and host community leaders.<sup>54</sup> In 2020, the bank expanded its services to include issuing cash transfer payments on behalf of UNHCR. The bank itself is fully owned and operated by MyBucks.

### Box 3. What Is the Dzaleka MyBucks Bank?

The bank in Dzaleka Camp is a privately owned branch of MyBucks Bank offering full financial services to refugees and the local community, including savings accounts, group lending, foreign exchange transfers, and an ATM. Unlike other banks in the area, MyBucks is able to accept refugee documents issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as a form of identification to open an account via a waiver from the Malawi central bank. The bank also provides free financial literacy and business skills training to its clients, funded under a partnership between MyBucks and Opportunity International.

In 2019, UNHCR launched its Solutions Capital Initiative in Malawi under the framework of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The initiative included a partnership with MyBucks to provide cash transfers rather than food vouchers to Dzaleka residents for the first time, via the Dzaleka MyBucks branch, consolidating UNHCR's social assistance and livelihood activities in one location and easing coordination. The initiative also includes Graduation Approach programming, with business and financial training that will be delivered via the local branch of MyBucks Bank.<sup>55</sup>

While MyBucks Bank's branch in Dzaleka has not been formally evaluated, data provided by MyBucks and UNHCR suggest that the bank is so far meeting its goals. As of June 2019, the bank reported holding nearly 6,500 active savings accounts and disbursing more than 600 small-business loans.<sup>56</sup> The bank reported a loan repayment rate of 100 percent as of May 2020, two years after the branch first opened.<sup>57</sup> The high repayment rate has allowed its financial services to be self-supporting. In addition, several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the camp have chosen to transfer their organizational accounts to the MyBucks Dzaleka branch, increasing the bank's medium-term financial viability.<sup>58</sup>

## LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

The initial success of the MyBucks model offers several lessons on how to construct social assistance and financial service programs in a way that is sustainable and helps to promote self-reliance. Stakeholders view the model as having high potential to be replicated elsewhere. UNHCR and MyBucks have explored possibilities to replicate the model elsewhere in Africa, where MyBucks is heavily invested. UNHCR has presented the model to colleagues in Zimbabwe and Angola, and MyBucks is exploring opening up branches in refugee communities in Zambia and Mozambique.<sup>59</sup> While the MyBucks project itself may not be directly replicable in the Syrian refugee context, since the bank is not invested there, several of the lessons learned may apply nonetheless.

1



### ALIGN THE DELIVERY OF CASH ASSISTANCE AND LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMMING WITH FINANCIAL INCLUSION INITIATIVES

- A one-stop shop for financial services can provide cash-based assistance, cash support for livelihood development, financial literacy training, as well as regular savings and loan services—all in one location.
- The alignment of cash assistance and livelihood interventions with accessible banking services helps to ensure that financial inclusion is not a barrier to self-reliance.



The lack of alignment of social assistance, livelihoods, and financial inclusion interventions is a key gap in the Syrian context, and a lack of financial inclusion has inhibited the ability of Syrian refugees to benefit from cash transfers.<sup>60</sup> A review of cash transfer programs in Jordan and Lebanon, for example, found that because transfers were highly digitized and happened outside the formal banking sector via accounts held in the names of aid agencies, they do not improve beneficiaries' financial inclusion.<sup>61</sup> This challenge has been overcome in the case of the My Bucks Dzaleka branch, which adopts a multipronged approach in supporting financial inclusion. The branch disburses cash grants, but also serves as a center for business development and financial literacy training for beneficiaries participating in livelihood development via the Graduation Approach. Through its partnership with Opportunity International, MyBucks also provides financial literacy and business development training to the wider community. Participants have ready access to MyBucks banking services, though the effect of these interventions on individual outcomes has not yet been formally evaluated.

## 2



**IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH ACTORS IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR THAT HAVE SHARED INTERESTS AND CAPACITY TO SERVE LOW-INCOME CLIENTS.**

- Providing financial literacy and providing services to the unbanked can be a key part of a bank's corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy.
- Setting up a bank branch in a refugee camp can be part of a wider regional investment strategy.

Although the initiative for the Dzaleka branch came from UNHCR, the development of the MyBucks branch was largely led by the MyBucks corporation. UNHCR acted as a close partner, providing MyBucks with needed information and contacts among stakeholders in Dzaleka and the Malawi government; however, MyBucks maintained ownership of the project, including by conducting market assessments and designing the financial products that would be offered. The branch in Dzaleka operates as a private, independent, and self-sustaining entity. Crucially, MyBucks negotiated directly with the Malawi government to obtain an agreement that allows refugees to use their UNHCR registration cards as ID to open accounts rather than only permitting a government-issued ID to be used.<sup>62</sup>

A similar initiative could prove useful in the Syrian refugee context, particularly in Jordan and Lebanon, where regulatory frameworks and banks' lack of familiarity with low-income clients have proven to be barriers to refugees' inclusion in the formal financial system. Targeted pilot projects for delivering cash assistance, and efforts to promote financial inclusion, implemented alongside interested and experienced banks or financial service actors, could help to demonstrate the feasibility of waiving regulatory barriers more broadly. Developing strong relationships with non-traditional partners in the financial services industry and allowing them to make a business case for needed regulatory changes may also facilitate negotiations with government partners. Finally, allowing partners in the financial services industry to take ownership of the design and implementation of pilot projects may make these better tailored to the context and more sustainable over time.

## Recommendations

National governments:

- Work with financial institutions to develop solutions to regulatory and policy barriers, such as ID requirements, that restrict access to formal financial products for refugees.

Donors:

- Align the delivery of cash assistance and livelihoods training with financial inclusion initiatives.

Implementing partners:

- Where possible, provide cash assistance via formal financial institutions that allow beneficiaries to develop experience with and trust in the financial services sector.
- Identify and develop partnerships with actors in the financial services sector that have shared interests and capacity to serve low-income clients.
- Where partners in the financial services sector have the capacity and knowledge to take on a leading role in designing and implementing an intervention, consider allowing them to do so. Widening ownership of an intervention beyond the aid sector may allow it to be better tailored to the context and more sustainable over time.

Financial institutions:

- Reconsider assumptions regarding the feasibility of doing business with traditionally unbanked populations, including refugees. Work with partners, such as UNHCR and NGOs, to identify potential strategies for incorporating these populations into business plans in a sustainable way.



By: cemT

## 4. TRANSFORMING NATIONAL SOCIAL SAFETY NETS TO ALLOW FOR REFUGEES' INCLUSION

Social protection for refugees is most often provided through parallel initiatives implemented by international humanitarian agencies and funded by international donors. Distribution of benefits occurs completely separately from national systems, and with different qualification criteria. Most refugee social protection programs rely on the continued generosity of international donors in order to operate, and tend to be non-contributory schemes. To address this lack of sustainability, there has been a push to begin to include refugees into national contributory social protection schemes, such as social security. Incorporating refugees who are active in the labor market into social insurance funds is particularly appealing. Because these funds rely on contributions by employed workers, they have the potential to be financially self-supporting, unlike assistance provided by humanitarian agencies. Two initiatives, in Germany and Cameroon, provide lessons on how this might be done.

### INCLUDING REFUGEES IN GERMANY'S CONTRIBUTORY UNEMPLOYMENT SCHEME

<b>Country</b>	Germany
<b>Years active</b>	1957–present
<b>Key objectives</b>	Ensuring that formally employed refugees and asylum seekers in Germany who have been formally employed have the same rights to unemployment benefits (and with the same requirements) as German workers <sup>63</sup>
<b>Target population</b>	Unemployed refugees in Germany who have worked for 12 months or more with an obligation to pay social security
<b>Budget</b>	EUR 6.5 billion (in 2019) in contributory insurance benefits paid for by the German Federal Employment Agency <sup>64</sup>

### CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE INITIATIVE

German residents benefit from unemployment insurance, provided they meet several criteria. Key among these is having worked formally in a job subject to social security contributions prior to their unemployment. Unemployment insurance is provided under *Arbeitslosengeld I* (ALG I), a contributory insurance scheme largely based on the social security contributions of employees and employers.<sup>65</sup> Foreign workers in Germany first became eligible for contributory social insurance during the so-called guest worker period<sup>66</sup> in the 1950s, when changes in employment regulations provided foreigners, including refugees, with unrestricted access to the German labor market.<sup>67</sup> Under law at the time, persons (regardless of residence status) with a job subject to social security contributions were eligible for unemployment insurance, and resident foreign nationals, including recognized refugees, were thus automatically included in the scheme.<sup>68</sup>

At present, anyone resident in Germany who is employed in a formal job with social security contributions is eligible for ALG I. Refugees and asylum seekers may work legally in the formal labor market in Germany, and are thus included in the scheme, provided they meet certain criteria (see box 4). This means they receive the same rights to unemployment benefits and are subject to the same requirements as German citizens. Because all contributions are held together in a common fund, refugees' financial contributions, based on their employment, strengthen the safety net available to Germany as a whole, while also safeguarding the refugees themselves during periods of unemployment.

#### Box 4. How Does Germany's Contributory Unemployment Insurance Work?

To be included in ALG I, beneficiaries, including refugees, must:

- Be unemployed;
- Apply for ALG I benefits with the employment agency;
- Have been employed in a job with social security contributions for at least 12 months within the last 2 years;
- Be actively seeking employment; and
- Cooperate with a job center to find a new job.<sup>69</sup>

All ALG beneficiaries are entitled to about 60 percent of their last gross salary.<sup>70</sup> This can be as high as 67 percent if there are children in the household. The duration for which beneficiaries are eligible for ALG I depends on their previous employment (see Table 1).<sup>71</sup> Beneficiaries also receive health and pension benefits, as well as subsidies to undertake professional training.<sup>72</sup>

Formal employment (in months)	Age	Duration of ALG I (in months)
12	any	6
16	any	8
20	any	10
24	any	12
30	≥50	15
36	≥55	18
48	≥58	24

Like many other types of insurance in Germany, such as health and pension insurance schemes, unemployment insurance is financed by contributions from employers and employees. The German Federal Employment Agency provides additional funding for complementary measures such as training aimed at supporting beneficiaries' reentry into the labor market.

There are several reasons why including refugees in ALG I may be beneficial, though evaluations of the scheme's specific impact on refugees are scarce. According to the latest figures, around 368,000 nationals from the major countries of origin of asylum seekers<sup>73</sup> are employed in jobs with social security contributions.<sup>74</sup> Many of these are short-term jobs, however, and unemployment insurance can be an important safety net to help them secure their livelihood during periods of unemployment.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, it can also accelerate their re-entry into the formal labor market by, for example, subsidizing professional training or language learning. Including refugees in unemployment insurance is also in line with practices and laws under which refugees are protected from discrimination, whether at the international (e.g., Article 24 of the Geneva Convention<sup>76</sup>) or national (e.g., Article 2[1] of the General Equal Treatment Act<sup>77</sup>) level.

#### LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

While the case study shows that providing refugees with unemployment insurance is generally possible, the size and scale of coverage that refugees receive in Germany might be difficult to replicate in Syria's neighboring countries. However, two lessons may hold value for contexts where Syrian refugees' access to social insurance schemes has been limited.

1



### **ENABLE ACCESS TO THE FORMAL LABOR MARKET IS A CRITICAL BARRIER TO ALLOW REFUGEES TO BENEFIT FROM UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.**

- Access to the formal labor market determines eligibility for contributory social insurance as much as legal frameworks.
- Finding long-term employment subject to social security contributions is a key barrier to accessing unemployment insurance.

Refugees in Germany are legally eligible for ALG I, but their limited inclusion in the formal labor market often prevents them from benefiting from this right in practice. A recent study conducted by the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs found that only 9–15 percent of surveyed refugees had a job with social security contributions for one month or longer between 2017 and 2019.<sup>78</sup> In fact, for one-third of surveyed refugees, the longest period of employment subject to social security contributions was only half a year. This partly explains why only 2 percent of surveyed refugees actually benefited from ALG I between 2017 and 2019, when the share of those employed in a job with social security contributions was much higher.<sup>79</sup>

Finding formal, long-term employment is an even greater challenge in Syrian refugee hosting countries. In Jordan, for example, twice as many Syrian refugees work in informal markets as in the formal labor market;<sup>80</sup> in Turkey, the number of informal Syrian workers is between 750,000 and 950,000 (35 to 45 percent of the total Syrian population in Turkey).<sup>81</sup> In Lebanon in January 2019, the World Bank reported that the Lebanese economy would have needed to create six times as many jobs just to absorb regular market entrants.<sup>82</sup> Syrian refugees face a range of barriers to accessing formal employment, including the availability of formal employment in largely informal economies; employers' willingness to register and make contributions; minimum periods of working days per month to be eligible for social insurance; as well as a lack of coverage in sectors where refugees are often employed (e.g., agriculture<sup>83</sup>).

2



### **SUPPORT FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BY INCLUDING REFUGEES.**

- Including refugees in unemployment insurance does not require international assistance but can be done through national, self-funded systems, provided necessary legal frameworks are in place.
- Whether it is financially possible to include refugees in unemployment insurance depends heavily on the availability of larger well-funded and functioning social protection schemes.

One of the key questions underlying the inclusion of refugees in social insurance schemes is whether this practice is financially viable. Much of this depends on the availability of large, well-funded and functioning social insurance schemes. Unemployment is typically one branch of national social security systems. Over the course of several decades, Germany has developed one of the most comprehensive social security and social protection systems globally, committing about one-quarter of its gross domestic product to public social spending annually.<sup>84</sup> Including refugees in German

unemployment insurance therefore does not require special measures or international assistance, but is instead possible thanks to the non-discriminatory legal frameworks, in line with international standards, and national funding structures that are already in place.

In the Syrian refugee context, limited social welfare systems, including limited administrative capacity and narrow legal eligibility requirements, remain a constant challenge to including refugees in social security, including unemployment insurance. Although the Social Security Law in Jordan makes it mandatory for all workers employed 16 days or more per month with a single employer to register for social security, refugee workers—who are often in daily, seasonal, or other precarious forms of work—tend to be excluded. Because these categories of workers are not covered by the social security law, they do not have access to funds that would buffer loss of income and instability during periods of unemployment. To overcome these barriers, international actors such as the World Bank have promoted Syrian refugees' access to unemployment insurance.<sup>85</sup> There have been some positive first steps. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), the International Labour Organization (ILO), together with UN partners, is providing support to the local government to implement social security reforms, though high levels of unemployment and political instability in the country have hampered progress in the short term.<sup>86</sup>

### Recommendations

National governments:

- Expand refugees' right to work in the formal labor market. This will facilitate their coverage under existing contributory unemployment insurance schemes, allowing refugees to benefit from their host country's social safety net while expanding the net itself by growing its contribution base.
- Provide refugees with access to contributory unemployment insurance schemes, and facilitate the process by which refugees and employers can make contributions.

Donors:

- Explore the opportunities of supporting the development of social insurance schemes in refugee-hosting countries, and advocate with host governments to ensure that refugees are included, both legally and practically, in these schemes.

Implementing partners:

- Educate refugees and employers about their rights and obligations to pay into and benefit from contributory unemployment insurance schemes.

## THE TRANSITIONAL SAFETY NET FOR CENTRAL AFRICAN REFUGEES IN CAMEROON

<b>Country</b>	Cameroon
<b>Years active</b>	2018–20
<b>Key objectives</b>	The Transitional Safety Net provides continuous support to refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) and host communities over a two-year period, contributing to meeting their basic needs as well as enabling them to engage in income-generating activities and reduce their reliance on humanitarian assistance.
<b>Target population</b>	More than 6,000 households. <sup>87</sup> The caseload is split between 70 percent refugees from CAR and 30 percent Cameroonians.
<b>Budget</b>	USD 5,285,238 self-funded by UNHCR (for 2019) <sup>88</sup>

## CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE TRANSITIONAL SAFETY NET

Cameroon has hosted over 300,000 refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) since December 2013,<sup>89</sup> mainly in the eastern, Adamawa, and northern regions.<sup>90</sup> These three regions offer limited access to services and job opportunities,<sup>91</sup> and hosting refugees has exacerbated these difficulties, including by adding pressure on local infrastructure.<sup>92</sup> In Cameroon, refugees have access to a whole range of social and economic rights, including the right to work, and access to education and healthcare, but the majority of CAR refugees still live in extreme poverty—with 81 percent of refugees considered highly vulnerable by WFP as of January 2019.<sup>93</sup>

Before 2013, social safety nets in Cameroon covered only 1 percent of the total population and were mostly ad hoc.<sup>94</sup> In 2013, the World Bank launched the Social Safety Nets Project (SSNP) with an initial credit of USD 50 million to support the development of a more comprehensive and sustainable social assistance system.<sup>95</sup> In 2018, the World Bank approved additional financing from the International Development Association's IDA18 refugee window to increase the number of beneficiaries under the SSNP, extend the geographic scope of the program, and specifically target refugees alongside Cameroonians.<sup>96</sup> Under this additional financing, the SSNP targets areas where at least one-third of the population are refugees.<sup>97</sup>

To support this process, UNHCR launched the Transitional Safety Net (TSN) pilot program in 2018, aimed at providing social assistance to CAR refugees and Cameroonians specifically in the eastern and northern host regions.<sup>98</sup> The TSN is intended as a stopgap measure to provide assistance to refugees not covered under the Social Safety Net (SSN) while the national program is rolled out. The TSN is intended to complement the government's SSN supported by the World Bank's SSNP, and it transfers the same amount of cash for the same duration—roughly USD 640 in total over a period of two years.

### Box 5. What Is the Transitional Safety Net?

The Transitional Safety Net (TSN) program aims to provide assistance to refugee populations until the Social Safety Net (SSN) can be expanded.<sup>99</sup> For now, the TSN provides households with monthly and annual cash transfers of roughly USD 15 and USD 142, respectively.<sup>100</sup> Annual cash transfers are intended to stimulate investments in income-generating activities, while monthly cash transfers can be used to cover basic needs.<sup>101</sup> Phase two of the project will also include financial training, support for beneficiaries to engage in income-generating activities, as well as referrals of vulnerable refugees to social services.<sup>102</sup> In addition, the second phase will deliver capacity-building activities to support the inclusion of refugees in the SSN, such as the training of local authorities.<sup>103</sup>


The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) leads the TSN financially and operationally, but also seeks collaboration with the World Food Program (WFP), which provides food assistance in parallel to the TSN in the form of monthly food distributions. UNHCR and WFP have a joint targeting approach to assistance, whereby WFP targets the most vulnerable refugees through its food assistance and UNHCR targets the next level of vulnerable refugees through cash transfers.<sup>104</sup> The World Bank is not directly involved in the TSN, and according to interviewees, the coordination between UNHCR and the World Bank has been limited despite both actors implementing social safety nets in Cameroon.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, coordination between UNHCR and the Government of Cameroon in capacity-building efforts is limited.

The TSN was launched in September 2018 with 500 households in the eastern region and a further 1,365 households in the northern region.<sup>106</sup> The project has since expanded to 6,900 households, mainly in the eastern region.<sup>107</sup> At present, there is no assessment of the TSN's impact on refugees and host communities, although UNHCR is planning to review its cash-based interventions in Cameroon in early 2021. But an impact evaluation of a cash transfer pilot between 2013 and 2016 by the Government of Cameroon found positive results in a similar program for Cameroon nationals. The pilot contributed to reducing poverty and food insecurity,<sup>108</sup> and increased savings, payment of school fees, access to identification documents, and voting registration.<sup>109</sup> While these results are specific to Cameroon nationals, they suggest that cash transfers could have a positive affect within the context, and are supported by similar studies elsewhere.<sup>110</sup>

## LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

While the TSN is still ongoing, there are a few key lessons that can be drawn from this experience they may have value for the Syrian refugee context. These include the importance of harmonizing and addressing barriers to social safety net systems, as well as linking cash assistance to livelihood support.

1



### HARMONIZE REFUGEE SUPPORT WITH OTHER SOCIAL SAFETY NETS.

- The targeting criteria of different social safety nets should be aligned to avoid overlap in the delivery of cash assistance and the selection of beneficiaries, primarily based on vulnerability criteria.
- A minimum expenditure basket should be used to define poverty lines and assess the most pressing needs of host communities and refugees.

Because the Transitional Safety Net (TSN) aims to complement the Social Safety Net (SSN), UNHCR has targeted geographic areas where the SSN has limited presence. The TSN also aims to complement the refugee and host community caseload of the SSN, targeting 70 percent refugees (versus 30 percent in the SSN) and 30 percent host communities (versus 70 percent in the SSN).<sup>111</sup> With the SSN mainly targeting Cameroonians, UNHCR can fill a gap in refugee assistance with fewer risks of exacerbating social tensions between groups. According to UNHCR, however, there are practical challenges associated with targeting a set percentage of refugees and households. For example, the share of Cameroonian households identified as poor under the TSN and SSN tends to be greater in some geographies than the 30 or 70 percent allocated, respectively. While this may mean that fewer refugee households receive cash assistance than initially intended, it does ensure that the most vulnerable households are targeted first. The TSN also has the same transfer value as the SSN.<sup>112</sup> This has reportedly helped establish a comprehensive and shared understanding of the poverty lines and minimum needs of households, further harmonizing the targeting approach of these actors.<sup>113</sup>

In Syria's neighboring countries, humanitarian assistance programs (including for refugees) are largely run in parallel to national social safety nets. In Jordan, for example, a range of international NGOs provide cash assistance to both Jordanians and refugees, but there are rarely interconnections between these interventions and Jordan's national social safety net program.<sup>114</sup> While the authorities have recently tried to better connect these initiatives, Jordanians and Syrians still share concerns about their accessibility, transparency, and fairness.<sup>115</sup> Lessons may apply from the TSN, which has tried to align its targeting criteria with other cash-based interventions in Cameroon (SSN and WFP food assistance) to help ensure it reaches poor refugee and host community households who do not yet receive cash-based assistance. But the TSN experience has also highlighted a number of common challenges in terms of coordinating such interventions with the government and other partners in the region, who might have different objectives and levels of funding available. While according to UNHCR, local authorities, refugees, and Cameroonians think this system is fair,<sup>116</sup> this has not been rigorously evaluated, with the effectiveness of this system also depending on the level of coordination between these actors (e.g., information-sharing on targeted households). In Lebanon, on the other hand, the Ministry of Social Affairs has started to develop a national social protection system, including cash transfers, but it is unlikely to include Syrian refugees.<sup>117</sup> This is in part due to the government facing serious budgetary constraints and giving priority to its nationals, almost half of which have also lacked access to social protection in the past, and who now also face severe economic challenges.<sup>118</sup> Here, the Cameroonian experience provides a good example of how social safety net programs may complement activities at the national level by including refugees as a target group.



## 2



### ADDRESS INFORMAL BARRIERS THAT PREVENT REFUGEES FROM ACCESSING SOCIAL SAFETY NETS.

- Efforts should be made to inform refugees of the rights they are entitled to and the different services available to them.
- Providing refugees and host communities with mobile telephones and cash assistance through mobile money can increase their financial inclusion and the impact of social safety nets.

The TSN seeks to overcome several key barriers to social safety nets. First, research has shown that refugees tend to lack awareness of their rights under these systems, which limits their ability to request the services they are entitled to.<sup>119</sup> Some Syrian refugees and vulnerable host community members, for example, lack information about how to access social assistance, or are unsure whether they are eligible for such services. The TSN has identified this issue and is planning to implement awareness-raising and training components for vulnerable households (including refugees and Cameroonians) on the rights they are entitled to and the different services available to them.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, narrow financial inclusion can hamper access to cash transfers. Financial inclusion is a key issue for many Syrian refugees, who have limited access to financial services. The TSN has tried to address the lack of access to documentation and financial services among CAR refugees in Cameroon (which has made their access to social safety nets complicated<sup>121</sup>) by ensuring refugees who do not have a bank account can still access cash. To do so, the TSN has provided mobile phones to CAR refugees and Cameroonians in host regions so they can cash out money at local mobile money vendors. UNHCR has also negotiated highly competitive transfer fees (0.3 percent) with the financial service provider that delivers mobile money to targeted households, making the services less costly.<sup>122</sup>

## 3



### ENSURE CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS ALSO SUPPORT LIVELIHOOD, AND WHERE NECESSARY LINK TO OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE TO ACHIEVE THIS.

- As part of their exit strategy, cash-based interventions should enable recipients to secure their livelihoods.
- Where cash assistance alone does not provide sufficient assistance, vulnerable refugees should receive other types of assistance (e.g., training, referrals).
- Post-distribution monitoring is critical to build a better evidence base and advocate for long-term funding.

One of the key goals of the TSN, as part of its exit strategy, is to help narrow the gap between cash-based interventions (CBIs) and livelihoods. Developing a comprehensive CBI remains a challenge in the Syrian refugee context, despite ongoing needs. Research on the effects of cash assistance in Jordan, for example, has shown that while these interventions may help families avoid harmful coping strategies, they can be insufficient on their own to fully develop refugees' self-reliance.<sup>123</sup> In Lebanon, a recent evaluation of the multipurpose cash assistance (MPC) program highlighted that vulnerable households experienced positive effects on their education, healthcare, and to some extent livelihoods, but a longer timeframe for MPC was needed to scale and sustain this impact.<sup>124</sup> The TSN aims to achieve scale and sustainability by providing monthly and annual cash transfers over a 24-month period.<sup>125</sup> A second phase of the TSN may also incorporate training in income-generating activities and referrals for vulnerable households to appropriate services (e.g., health or social assistance) in order to better support the transition to self-reliance.

## Recommendations

Donors:

- Support social safety net programs that are coordinated and include a plan for an eventual transition to a single national system.

National governments:

- Coordinate with donors and implementing partners to align the criteria of refugee social assistance programs with national social safety nets.

Implementing partners:

- Align the targeting criteria of different social safety nets to avoid overlap and enable the eventual transition to a single national social safety net.
- Take a collaborative approach among stakeholders when designing safety net programs, and ensure strong coordination among all partners during implementation.
- Incorporate livelihood development alongside cash transfers to enable the eventual transition of beneficiaries off of social assistance.



By: UNDP/ Rana Sweidan

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Social assistance remains a crucial tool for mitigating the effects of poverty and a lack of livelihoods among refugees, both in the Syrian refugee context and elsewhere. Yet the inability of refugees to access national social welfare systems—and the insufficiency of these systems in many countries, even for nationals—means refugees are reliant on separate systems funded by international donors and are thus vulnerable to funding cuts. Moreover, these separate systems may not be sufficiently coordinated with other services and thus miss opportunities to identify vulnerabilities and provide referrals to appropriate supports. Refugees’ lack of inclusion in financial services can make it difficult to even distribute benefits to them.

The case studies presented in this section provide some lessons learned for how these barriers could be overcome. Bamba Chakula and the MyBucks Bank in Dzaleka demonstrate the value of aligning cash assistance with other interventions and ensuring cash assistance programs are able to provide referrals to other services. In Dzaleka, the MyBucks Bank provides another model for distributing cash assistance that draws on the private sector to facilitate refugee financial inclusion. In Germany, the social insurance system illustrates how refugees can be included in contributory social safety nets, which are self-supporting. Finally, Cameroon’s Transitional Safety Net initiative shows how investments in social assistance for refugees can be aligned with and supportive of wider efforts to improve social safety nets for society as a whole.

### Main Recommendations

National governments:

- Consider how parallel social assistance systems can be harmonized or aligned, and where possible national social assistance programs opened to refugees. aligning
- Consider opening contributory social insurance systems to refugees, and ensure any informal barriers to their use are removed, while also enabling more access to the formal labor market.
- Collaborate with international partners and civil society to address technical and financial support needs, and address concerns and manage potential social tensions.

Implementing partners:

- Ensure that social assistance and financial inclusion initiatives are accountable and provide autonomy to beneficiaries. Programs should be designed to give autonomy to refugees and allow them to make decisions for themselves regarding how to put their cash benefits to use or what financial services they need.
- Reach out to non-traditional partners, including the financial services sector, and allow them to take ownership for designing and implementing interventions and services, to ensure that programs are tailored to the market context.
- Develop monitoring and evaluation practices to build up the evidence base on what works, improve practices, and provide persuasive narratives to donors.

Other civil-society actors:

- Educate refugees and employers about their rights and responsibilities with regard to contributory social insurance schemes.

Donors:

- Identify areas where investments in social protection for refugees can be used to strengthen social protection systems on the national level.
- Work with implementing partners and national governments to include refugees in existing social safety net programs.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), [“Nine Out of Ten Syrian Refugee Families in Lebanon Are Now Living in Extreme Poverty, UN Study Says,”](#) updated December 18, 2020.
- 2 Harry Brown, Nicola Giordano, Charles Maughan, and Alix Wadeson, [Vulnerability Assessment Framework: Population Study 2019](#) (Jordan: UNHCR, 2019).
- 3 Ellen Francis, [“Lockdowns Pile Job Losses and Hunger onto Syrian Refugees’ Plight,”](#) Reuters, May 10, 2020.
- 4 Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) and Program on Forced Migration and Health, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, [“In My Own Hands: A Medium-Term Approach towards Self-Reliance and Resilience of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan”](#) (executive summary, DSP and Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, Amman, Jordan, January 2020).
- 5 European Union, [“Action Document for EU Trust Fund to Be Used for the Decisions of the Operational Board,”](#) updated June 27, 2018.
- 6 Anneleen Vos, [“A Decade in Search of Work: A Review of Policy Commitments for Syrian Refugees’ Livelihoods in Jordan and Lebanon”](#) (brief, International Rescue Committee, Amman, Jordan, June 2020).
- 7 UNHCR, [“Refugee Access to Financial Services: Jordan,”](#) updated March 2019.
- 8 Bassam Abu Hamad et al., [A Promise of Tomorrow: The Effects of UNHCR and UNICEF Cash Assistance on Syrian Refugees in Jordan](#) (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2017).
- 9 Iffat Idris, [Linking Social Protection and Humanitarian Response—Best Practice](#) (Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, 2019).
- 10 WFP, “Vouchers for Food Assistance in Kenya’s Refugee Camps,” 2–3; WFP, [“Cash Transfers for Fast and Effective Assistance”](#) (fact sheet, May 2018).
- 11 Majewski et al., WFP’s 2008 Cash and Voucher Policy (2008–14), vii.
- 12 These include a prohibition on refugees holding bank accounts as well as bans on direct cash transfers. Rahul Oka et al., [Understanding Stakeholders’ Interpretations and Use of Voucher-Based Refugee Relief Assistance](#) (Washington, DC: PRM Research/Evaluation—Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 2019).
- 13 UNHCR, [“Kenya Statistics Package”](#) (statistical summary as of August 31, 2020).
- 14 Refugees began fleeing to Kenya from Somalia and South Sudan in the nineties with subsequent waves over the following decades. WFP, [Kenya: Annual Country Report 2019](#) (Rome, Italy: WFP, 2019), 6.
- 15 Beatrice Mwangela et al., [An Evaluation of the Effects and a Cost Benefit Analysis of the GFD Cash Modality Scale Up \(Cash Based Transfers for PRRO 200737\) for Refugees and Host Communities in Kenya: August 2015–November 2017: Evaluation Report](#) (Nairobi: WFP Kenya, 2018), 2. While Dadaab and Kakuma have operated since the nineties, Kalobeyei was established in 2016 based on a self-reliance model as part of the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio and Economic Development Program (KISED), which was developed in partnership with UNHCR, the Government of Turkana County, and partner organizations as part of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. The program is predicated on creating an environment conducive to refugee integration through host community capacity building and market development. For more information, see UNHCR, [Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan in Turkana West](#) (Kenya: UNHCR, 2018).
- 16 Mwangela et al., Evaluation of the Effects, 6.
- 17 Food vouchers had previously been piloted in Dadaab, first by Action Against Hunger in 2007 and 2008, reaching 15,000 households, and second by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and WFP in 2014, targeting 3,000 pregnant refugee women and lactating mothers. The DRC-WFP program proved the viability of food vouchers in Kenya, and advocacy from donors such as the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) provided an evidence base for WFP to start and move forward with a shift to a CBT model. Action Against Hunger International, [Meta-Evaluation of ACF Fresh Food Voucher Programs](#) (Paris: Action Against Hunger International, 2012), 8; Danish Refugee Council, [“I Now Have a Choice Over My Meals—DRC’s Fresh Food Voucher Program in Dadaab,”](#) Reliefweb, December 19, 2014; Author interview with Irène Bosire, Program Specialist, and Matteo Paoltroni, Technical Assistant, ECHO-Kenya, September 17, 2020.
- 18 Refugees and shop owners also preferred electronic delivery to avoid the risks associated with carrying cash. WFP, [“Bamba Chakula—Vouchers for Food Assistance in Kenya’s Refugee Camps: Update April 2015”](#) (fact sheet, April 1, 2015), 1–2.
- 19 WFP, “Bamba Chakula—Vouchers for Food Assistance in Kenya’s Refugee Camps.”
- 20 WFP, “Bamba Chakula—Vouchers for Food Assistance in Kenya’s Refugee Camps,” 2; WFP, [“Bamba Chakula: Delivering Digital Cash in Kenya’s Refugee Camps: Update September/October 2015”](#) (fact sheet, October 1, 2015), 1–2.
- 21 WFP, “Bamba Chakula: Delivering Digital Cash in Kenya’s Refugee Camps: Update September/October 2015,” 1.
- 22 WFP, [“Bamba Chakula: Delivering Digital Cash in Kenya’s Refugee Camps: Update March–June 2016”](#) (fact sheet, June 1, 2016), 3.
- 23 WFP, [“Bamba Chakula: Vouchers for Food Assistance in Kenya’s Refugee Camps: Update June 2015”](#) (fact sheet, June 1, 2015).
- 24 Mwangela et al., Evaluation of the Effects, 38; WFP, [“Bamba Chakula: Delivering Digital Cash in Kenya’s Refugee Camps: Update January/February 2016”](#) (fact sheet, February 1, 2016).
- 25 Two studies comparing food security in Kalobeyei with Kakuma found greater food security and nutrient diversity in Kalobeyei, with the most likely reason being the greater amount of Bamba Chakula received there. See Mwangela et al., Evaluation of the Effects, 21–25; Claire MacPherson and Olivier Sterck, [“Humanitarian vs. Development Aid for Refugees: Evidence from a Regression Discontinuity Design”](#) (CSAE working paper WPS/2019-15, Centre for the Study of African Economies, Oxford, UK, October 2019). Other evidence points to a lack of food diversity provided by vendors due to the high cleanliness and storage standards required by WFP for storage of meat and vegetables. Oka et al., Understanding Stakeholders’ Interpretations.
- 26 Mwangela et al., Evaluation of the Effects, 33–35.
- 27 Mwangela et al., Evaluation of the Effects, 13.

- 28 Mwongela et al., Evaluation of the Effects, 38.
- 29 Mwongela et al., Evaluation of the Effects, 11. Author interview with Irène Bosire, Program Specialist, and Matteo Paoltroni, Technical Assistant, ECHO-Kenya, September 17, 2020. The remoteness affects local markets, and thus Bamba Chakula as well. Food supply is low and local prices high due to the lack of market integration with the rest of Kenya and poor infrastructure. See Mwongela et al., Evaluation of the Effects, 37–38; and Luba Shara and Daniela Henrike Klau-Panhaus, [Kakuma as a Marketplace: A Consumer and Market Study of a Refugee Camp and Town in Northwest Kenya](#) (Washington, DC: International Finance Corporation, 2018), 19.
- 30 Alexander Betts et al., [The Kalobeyei Model: Towards Self-Reliance for Refugees?](#) (Oxford: Refugee Studies Centre, 2019); Alexander Betts, ["Refuge, Reformed,"](#) Foreign Policy blog, November 22, 2018.
- 31 Jad Chaaban et al., [Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance in Lebanon: Impact Evaluation on the Well-Being of Syrian Refugees](#) (Beirut: American University of Beirut and CAMEALEON, 2020).
- 32 P. Facundo Cuevas, O. Kaan Inan, Aysha Twose, and Çiğdem Çelik, [Vulnerability and Protection of Refugees in Turkey: Findings from the Rollout of the Largest Humanitarian Cash Assistance Program in the World](#) (Washington, DC: World Bank and WFP, 2019), 42.
- 33 Author interview with Laurene Gouplet, Head of Program, Stefano Santoro, Head of Cash Based Transfers Unit, and Giorgio Felici, Program Policy Officer, WFP Jordan, October 13, 2020..
- 34 Betts et al., The Kalobeyei Model; Oka et al., Understanding Stakeholders' Interpretations.
- 35 Mwongela et al., Evaluation of the Effects, 31.
- 36 Oka et al., Understanding Stakeholders' Interpretations.
- 37 Brian Majewski et al., [WFP's General Food Assistance to Syrian Refugees in Jordan 2015 to Mid-2018: Evaluation Report](#) (Amman, Jordan: WFP, 2018), 38.
- 38 Felix Schuler et al., [Food-Restricted Voucher or Unrestricted Cash? How to Best Support Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon?](#) (report prepared by the Boston Consulting Group for the WFP, April 2017), 69.
- 39 UNHCR and WFP, "Cash assistance for food and other basic needs provided by UNHCR and WFP to refugees in Lebanon", December 2020
- 40 Schuler et al., Food-Restricted Voucher or Unrestricted Cash?
- 41 Mwongela et al., Evaluation of the Effects, 36.
- 42 Mwongela et al., Evaluation of the Effects, 36–37.
- 43 Oka et al., Understanding Stakeholders' Interpretations.
- 44 Kevin J. Kelley, ["Kenya: Refugees in Kenya Suffer Aid Cuts Amid Covid-19 Pandemic,"](#) allAfrica, August 28, 2020.
- 45 Vos, "A Decade in Search of Work."
- 46 Nadine Chehade, Peter McConaghy, and Chrissy Martin Meier, ["Humanitarian Cash Transfers and Financial Inclusion: Lessons from Jordan and Lebanon"](#) (working paper, Consultative Group to Assist the Poor and World Bank Group, Washington, DC, 2020).
- 47 UNHCR, ["Malawi"](#) (fact sheet, December 2019).
- 48 Opportunity International, ["MyBucks and Opportunity International Partner to Drive Financial Inclusion for 460 Million Unbanked Citizens of Africa"](#) (press release, November 19, 2015).
- 49 UNHCR, "Malawi."
- 50 The WFP reported providing 41,000 out of a total of 44,000 refugees in Dzaleka with food assistance in 2020. WFP, ["European Union Helps WFP Provide Lifesaving Food Assistance in Malawi"](#) (press release, August 27, 2020).
- 51 Author interview with Richmond Msowoya, UNHCR, August 27, 2020.
- 52 UNHCR, ["Malawi: Banking Services in Dzaleka Refugee Camp"](#) (fact sheet, June 20, 2019).
- 53 Author interview with Richmond Msowoya.
- 54 Richmond Msowoya, "MyBucks Malawi-Dzaleka Camp" (PowerPoint presentation, UNHCR, May 2020); author interview with Richmond Msowoya.
- 55 UNHCR, ["Malawi: Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion through Solutions Capital Initiatives"](#) (press release, June 30, 2019); Msowoya, "MyBucks Malawi-Dzaleka Camp."
- 56 Mark Vivier, "MyBucks Refugee Financial Inclusion and Upliftment Model: Graduating Refugees from Extreme Poverty" PowerPoint presentation, June 2019); Msowoya, "MyBucks Malawi-Dzaleka Camp."
- 57 Msowoya, "MyBucks Malawi-Dzaleka Camp."
- 58 Msowoya, "MyBucks Malawi-Dzaleka Camp."
- 59 Author interview with Richmond Msowoya.
- 60 UNHCR, "Refugee Access to Financial Services"; Chehade, McConaghy, and Martin Meier, "Humanitarian Cash Transfers."
- 61 Chehade, McConaghy, and Martin Meier, "Humanitarian Cash Transfers."
- 62 Author interview with Richmond Msowoya.
- 63 Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, ["Arbeitslosengeld,"](#) updated August 11, 2020; Handelskammer Hamburg, ["Flüchtlinge in Ausbildung und Beschäftigung Bringen,"](#) updated January 2016.
- 64 Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung, ["Die Kosten der Arbeitslosigkeit sind 2019 leicht gestiegen,"](#) updated December 28, 2020.
- 65 ALG I is different from Arbeitslosengeld II or ALG II (often referred to as Hartz IV). ALG II is a social welfare scheme paid for by the federal government, for which most unemployed residents in Germany are eligible, regardless of their work history.

- 66 This describes the period of the late 1950s and 1960s during which Germany recruited a large number of foreign workers to fill labor shortages in areas such as large-scale manufacturing, heavy industry, and mining. Wolfgang Seifert, "[Geschichte der Zuwanderung nach Deutschland nach 1950](#)," Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, May 31, 2012.
- 67 Asma Sarraj-Herzberg, "[Arbeitsverbot für Geflüchtete](#)," Heinrich Böll Stiftung Heimatkunde Migrationspolitisches Portal, September 29, 2014.
- 68 Joachim Kopp and Manfred Geiken, "[Flüchtling/Sozialversicherung](#)," Lexikonbeitrag aus Haufe Personal Office Platin, accessed January 11, 2021.
- 69 Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, "[Das Dritte Buch Sozialgesetzbuch—Arbeitsförderung \(Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 24. März 1997, BGBl. I S. 594, 595\)](#)," updated December 22, 2020; Laura Müller and Karim Alwasiti, eds., "[To Have Rights and to Receive Rights: Information for Persons Recognised as Entitled to Political Asylum, Refugees and People with Subsidiary Protection Status](#)" (brochure, Flüchtlingsrat Niedersachsen e.V., Hildesheim, November 2014); Claudius Voigt, [Arbeitshilfe zum Thema Flucht und Migration: Soziale Rechte für Flüchtlinge](#) (Berlin: Der Paritätische Gesamtverband, 2019); Andreus Müller, Matthias M. Mayer, and Nadine Bauer, "[Soziale Absicherung von Drittstaatsangehörigen in Deutschland: Studie der deutschen nationalen Kontaktstelle für das Europäische Migrationsnetzwerk \(EMN\)](#)" (working paper 57, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, Nuremberg, 2014).
- 70 Müller and Alwasiti, eds., "To Have Rights and to Receive Rights."
- 71 Adapted from Müller, Mayer, and Bauer, "Soziale Absicherung von Drittstaatsangehörigen in Deutschland."
- 72 Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "[Förderung von Weiterbildung](#)," accessed January 11, 2021.
- 73 This is an approximate estimate used to gain better insight into the potential refugee caseload in the labor market. These countries typically include Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, and Syria. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, [Glossar der Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit \(BA\), Grundlagen: Definitionen—Glossar der Statistik der BA](#) (Nürnberg: Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2020).
- 74 Bundesagentur für Arbeit, "[Tabellenanhang: Auswirkungen der Migration auf den deutschen Arbeitsmarkt \(Monatszahlen\)](#)," updated December 2020; Tagesschau.de, "[360.000 Geflüchtete in regulären Jobs](#)," Tagesschau.de, August 28, 2020.
- 75 Twenty percent of surveyed refugees who ended their previous employment did so as a result of a fixed-term position. Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, [Begleitevaluation der arbeitsmarktpolitischen Integrationsmaßnahmen für Geflüchtete, Zweiter Zwischenbericht](#) (Forschungsbericht 546, Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2020).
- 76 For example, Article 24 accords the same treatment to refugees as to nationals in respect to labor legislation and social security. UNHCR, "[Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees](#)," July 28, 1951.
- 77 Article 2(1) prohibits discrimination with regard to providing social security in Germany. Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, [Guide to the General Equal Treatment Act: Explanations and Examples](#) (Berlin: Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, 2019).
- 78 Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, Begleitevaluation der arbeitsmarktpolitischen Integrationsmaßnahmen für Geflüchtete.
- 79 This figure is well below the 34 percent of refugees who were in formal employment in August 2019, for example. Die Bundesregierung, "[Mehr Geflüchtete beschäftigt](#)," updated September 9, 2019.
- 80 DSP, "[Improving Self-Reliance and Resilience in Jordan: Lessons Learned from Livelihoods Interventions](#)" (policy brief, DSP, May 2020).
- 81 International Crisis Group (ICG), [Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions](#), Europe Report no. 248 (Brussels: ICG, 2018).
- 82 Government of Lebanon and United Nations, "[Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020 \(2019 Update\)](#)," updated January 31, 2019.
- 83 For instance, in Jordan, some categories of agriculture workers are not covered under the Labor Law, and therefore not required to be registered under social security. Maha Kattaa, Meredith Byrne, and Alaa Al-Arabi, [Decent Work and the Agriculture Sector in Jordan: Evidence from Workers' and Employers' Surveys](#) (Jordan: International Labour Organization, Regional Office for Arab States, 2018).
- 84 Facts about Germany, "[Strong Welfare State](#)," accessed January 11, 2021; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "[Social Expenditure Database \(SOCX\)](#)," accessed January 11, 2021.
- 85 World Bank, "[\\$100 Million to Improve Access to Jobs and Create Better Work Conditions for Jordanians and Syrian Refugees](#)" (press release, World Bank, Washington, DC, June 10, 2020).
- 86 International Labor Organization (ILO), "[Decent Work Country Program, Iraq: Recovery and Reform: 2019–2023](#)," ILO Regional Office for Arab States, Beirut, 2019; Kerina Tull, [Human Capital in Iraq](#) (Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, 2018).
- 87 UNHCR Cameroon, "[Transitional Safety Net for Central African Refugees](#)" (fact sheet, 2018).
- 88 UNHCR Cameroon, "Transitional Safety Net," 8.
- 89 UNHCR, [Central African Republic Regional Refugee Response Plan January–December 2015](#) (Geneva: UNHCR, 2015).
- 90 Thirty percent of these Central African Republic (CAR) refugees live in seven organized refugee sites (Borgop, Ngam, Ngarissingo, Lolo, Mabile, Timangolo, and Gado) and 70 percent are spread across 300 host villages. UNHCR and WFP Joint Assessment Mission (JAM), [Central African Refugees \(CAR\) and Host Population Living in the East, Adamawa, North Regions of Cameroon: Primary Data Collected from 21 to 31 January 2019](#) (Geneva and Rome: UNHCR and WFP, 2019).
- 91 UNHCR, [Cameroon Multi-Year Multi-Partner Protection and Solutions Strategy, 2018–2020](#) (Geneva: UNHCR, 2018), 11.
- 92 World Bank, [Cameroon—Social Safety Net Project: Additional Financing \(English\)](#) (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2018), 65; WFP and UNHCR JAM, CAR and Host Population, 11.
- 93 WFP and UNHCR JAM, CAR and Host Population.
- 94 Carlo del Ninno and Kaleb Tamiru, "[Cameroon Social Safety Nets](#)" (Social Protection & Labor Discussion Paper no. 1404, Africa Social Safety Net and Social Protection Assessment Series, World Bank, Washington, DC, June 2012).
- 95 As of January 2018, 54,000 Cameroonian households had benefited from the cash transfer program, which was accompanied by community awareness campaigns and training in income-generating activities. World Bank, Cameroon—Social Safety Net Project, 2–4.

- 96 World Bank, Cameroon—Social Safety Net Project, 11–15; UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net,” 5–6.
- 97 To achieve this, the World Bank used maps to help identify refugees’ presence and then measure the number of refugees and host communities identified in line with the project’s poverty criteria in these geographies. See World Bank, Cameroon—Social Safety Net Project.
- 98 UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net,” 2.
- 99 UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net,” 7.
- 100 UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net,” 5, 8. Money is delivered via UNHCR’s Common Cash facility, with a .3 percent transfer fee.
- 101 Author interview with Amayel Sow, Cash-based Interventions Officer at UNHCR Cameroon, September 23, 2020.
- 102 UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net,” 6.
- 103 Author interview with Amayel Sow, Cash-based Interventions Officer at UNHCR Cameroon, September 23, 2020. These activities were first planned under the TSN pilot but have not yet been implemented. UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net,” 5–6.
- 104 Mihai Magheru, [Country Mapping—Large Scale Cash Transfers for COVID-19 Response](#) (Geneva: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], 2020).
- 105 Author interview with Amayel Sow, Cash-based Interventions Officer at UNHCR Cameroon, September 23, 2020.
- 106 UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net.”
- 107 Magheru, Country Mapping; UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net.”
- 108 World Bank, Cameroon—Social Safety Net Project, 62.
- 109 World Bank, Cameroon—Social Safety Net Project, 61–62.
- 110 Cécile Cherrier, “[Operational Note No. 10: Forced Displacement](#),” Supporting People through Crisis (SPaN), European Commission, Brussels, May 2019; Chaaban et al., Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance in Lebanon; UNHCR, “[Summary of Findings: Impact of Cash Based Interventions \(CBI\) on Protection Outcomes, September 2018–April 2019](#)” (fact sheet, 2019); UNHCR, [Post-Distribution Monitoring Cash-Based Interventions: Bangladesh Refugee Situation](#) (Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh: UNHCR, 2018).
- 111 UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net.”
- 112 The transfer value is based on the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) for CAR refugees in the country, which defines the minimum amount of cash needed for a household to meet basic needs. UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net.”
- 113 Author interview with Amayel Sow, Cash-based Interventions Officer at UNHCR Cameroon, September 23, 2020; UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net.”
- 114 DSP and Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, “In My Own Hands.”
- 115 The Joint Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment (JCVA) aims to align targeting systems so that they are based on similar vulnerability criteria. DSP and Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, “In My Own Hands.”
- 116 UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net.”
- 117 Government of Lebanon and United Nations, “[Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020 \(2020 Update\)](#),” updated March 17, 2020.
- 118 Lea Bou Khater, “[Lebanon Must Move Toward Universal Social Protection: Bring Back the State](#),” Executive Magazine, March 6, 2020.
- 119 Evan Easton-Calabria and Kate Pincock, “[Refugee-Led Social Protection: Reconciling Refugee Assistance](#),” Forced Migration Review, June 2018; Rochelle Johnston, Anna Kvittingen, Dina Baslan, and Simon Verduijn, “[Social Networks in Refugee Response: What We Can Learn from Sudanese and Yemeni in Jordan](#)” (discussion policy paper #2, Mixed Migration Centre, Amman, Jordan, October 1, 2019); Rachel Sabates-Wheeler, “[Mapping Differential Vulnerabilities and Rights: ‘Opening’ Access to Social Protection for Forcibly Displaced Populations](#),” Comparative Migration Studies 7, article no. 38 (September 9, 2019).
- 120 Author interview with Amayel Sow, Cash-based Interventions Officer at UNHCR Cameroon, September 23, 2020.
- 121 UNHCR, Cameroon Multi-Year Multi-Partner Protection and Solutions Strategy; UNHCR, [Country Reports: Displaced & Disconnected](#) (Geneva: UNHCR Innovation Service, 2019).
- 122 UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net.”
- 123 Hamad et al., A Promise of Tomorrow.
- 124 More specifically, the evaluation results showed a decreasing trend in the reliance on emergency coping strategies among households who received long-term multipurpose cash assistance (MPC) (11.1 percent) compared to the control group (13.3 percent). Chaaban et al., Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance in Lebanon.
- 125 Ninety percent of CAR refugees in Cameroon live under the national poverty line (as of September 2018). UNHCR Cameroon, “Transitional Safety Net.”



This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP II) for Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, which is supported by the Czech Republic, Denmark, the European Union, Ireland and Switzerland. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the Durable Solutions Platform and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the RDPP or its donors.