



International
Labour
Organization

▶ ILO 101 Guide: Organizational values, policy areas, and key programmes and tools in refugee and other displacement contexts



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This guide (ILO 101) has been produced by the International Labour Office to provide the UNHCR and other partner organizations with a comprehensive explanation of core ILO concepts, policy areas and key programmes and tools related to its work and values in refugee and other displacement contexts.

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*ILO 101 Guide: Organizational values, policy areas, and key programmes
and tools in refugee and other displacement contexts.*

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► Introduction to the ILO

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the United Nations specialized agency for the world of work. It is the only tripartite UN agency, bringing together representatives of governments employers' and workers' organizations to adopt international labour standards (ILS) and develop policies and programmes promoting decent work for all women and men. The ILO is the oldest UN agency. The International Labour Office, the permanent secretariat of the International Labour Organization, has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, and a global network of technical experts and field offices in more than 40 countries.

In 1919, the ILO was founded as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended the First World War, in the belief that social justice is essential to universal and lasting peace. In 1944, during another period of international crisis, ILO constituents built on these aims by adopting the Declaration of Philadelphia, which states that labour is not a commodity and sets out basic human and economic rights under the principle that "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere". In 1946, the ILO became the first specialized agency of the United Nations. On its 50th anniversary in 1969, the ILO was awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize.

The ILO has a constitutional mandate to protect the rights and interests of all workers, including those employed in countries other than their own. Its comprehensive normative framework aims to improve working conditions for women and men, strengthen labour market governance and protect the most vulnerable. Fundamental rights at work, as embodied in the ten fundamental ILO Conventions and defined in the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work,¹ apply to all categories of workers and represent minimum standards of protection applicable to refugees and other forcibly displaced persons (FDPs). Two Conventions specifically provide a framework for protection of migrant workers as well as refugees and forcibly displaced persons who enter labour markets outside their home countries: the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143).²

Refugees and the communities that host them are recognized by the ILO as needing special attention, particularly in the current context of large movements of people. In 2016, the ILO held a tripartite technical meeting to provide practical guidance on the application of policy measures to improve access for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market and national social protection systems. The meeting resulted in the adoption of a set of voluntary, non-binding [guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market](#) rooted in ILS and universal human rights instruments, and inspired by good practices implemented in the field. Elements of the guiding principles were incorporated into the [Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017](#) (No. 205) by the International Labour Conference (ILC). It is the only international normative instrument providing guidance for engaging in crisis situations arising from conflict and disaster and building peace and resilience through employment and decent work. ILS cover all workers, including refugees, unless otherwise stated. The ILO supervisory bodies have also increasingly addressed the situation of refugees in the context of the application of a number of ILO Conventions.

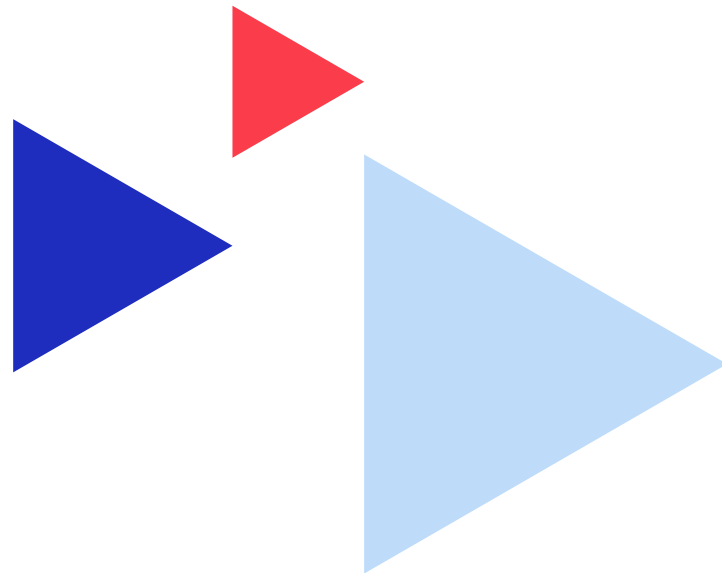
¹ The five fundamental principles are: a) freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; b) the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; c) the effective abolition of child labour; d) the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation; and e) a safe and healthy working environment.

² In its 2016 General Survey concerning the ILO's migrant worker instruments, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) has stated that: "Refugees and displaced persons, where they are employed as workers outside their own countries, are covered by the instruments." ILO: Promoting Fair Migration, General Survey concerning the migrant workers' instruments, Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Report III (Part 1B), ILC, 105th Session, Geneva, 2016 (hereinafter General Survey on migrant workers, 2016), para. 113.

The ILO is actively collaborating with the UNHCR towards the implementation of the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (GCR). The ILO is contributing to a range of labour market and employment interventions, including reinforcing policy and regulatory environments, improving access to sustainable livelihoods, employment and skills training opportunities, as well as strengthening social protection and rights at work. As part of the [Global Refugee Forum](#) (GRF), set up to support and monitor the implementation of the GCR, the ILO became a co-sponsor of the jobs and livelihoods theme and made a pledge to intensify cooperation with the multilateral system and scale up technical support to governments, employers' and workers' organizations and other stakeholders to facilitate decent work opportunities for host communities and refugees, including women and youth affected by crisis. The ILO also promoted the inclusion of an indicator on decent work in the [GCR monitoring framework](#).

Target audience

As part of [ILO-UNHCR MOU](#) and the implementation of the [Joint Action Plan](#), it was jointly agreed in 2019 that each organization would produce a "101 guide" for the benefit of staff in the other organizations. This guide³ (ILO 101) has been produced by the International Labour Office to provide the UNHCR and other partner organizations with a comprehensive explanation of core ILO concepts, policy areas and key programmes and tools related to its work and values.



³ While this is a new document, its content is based on and at times extracted from existing publications and the ILO website. Where relevant, links to the original sources are provided.

► ILO's organizational values, policy areas, and key programmes and tools

1. Tripartism

This tripartite structure makes the ILO a unique forum in which the governments and the workers' and employer's organizations of its Member States (also known as social partners), can freely and openly debate and elaborate labour standards and policies. The ILO supports and assists efforts by individual Members to make progress on a tripartite basis towards all the [strategic objectives](#), through country programmes for decent work, where appropriate, and within the framework of the United Nations system. The ILO supports, wherever necessary, the institutional capacity of Member States, as well as representative organizations of employers and workers, to facilitate a meaningful and coherent social policy and sustainable development. The Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the ILO's Bureau for Employers' Organizations (ACTEMP) make the ILO's resources available to employers and workers organizations and keep the ILO constantly aware of their views, concerns and priorities.

The ILO's mandate and its unique tripartite structure, as well as its operational experience in contributing to crisis situations and refugee response, have enabled the organization to guide its constituents and other partners on labour market access and decent work for refugees.

Building close partnerships with government officials through tripartism and social dialogue at national and local levels creates opportunities for advocacy work and capacity-building, and for better alignment of refugee programming with national development priorities. Together with other UN entities and ILO tripartite constituents, the ILO is also contributing to joint guidance and operational approaches to address the COVID-19 pandemic.



For further details:

- [ILO "Tripartite Constituents"](#)

2. Social justice

The ILO was created in the aftermath of the First World War with the ambition of bringing together representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations in the pursuit of the common good, and notably social justice as a prerequisite of universal peace.

The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, adopted by governments, workers and employers in June 2008, is designed to strengthen the ILO's capacity to promote the Decent Work Agenda and to forge an effective response to the increasingly significant challenges of globalization. The Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization emphasizes that, in order to achieve the ILO's objectives in the context of globalization, the Organization must "promote the ILO's standard-setting policy as a cornerstone of ILO activities by enhancing its relevance in the world of work, and ensure the role of standards as a useful means of achieving the constitutional objectives of the Organization".

Social justice, as defined by the ILO's Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, is the outcome of developed and established measures of social protection, measures that are sustainable and adapted to national circumstances, and – significantly – extend social security to all. Achieving social justice means that full and productive employment and decent work, as well as social protection, are at the centre of economic and social policies.

As the ILO celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2019, the importance of achieving social justice was seen as ever more pressing with the rise in inequality and exclusion, which is a threat to social cohesion, economic growth and human progress. [The ILO Centenary Declaration](#) and its human-centred approach draws inspiration from the ILO's founding principles to renew the social justice mandate and reinvigorate the ILO to shape a future of decent work for all. **Social justice is of key importance in displacement contexts to lessen the vulnerability and exclusion suffered by many displaced persons.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities regarding access to health services, income support and access to employment, leading to social tensions that could undermine development, peace and social cohesion. Refugees experienced more marginalization and discrimination as host communities felt they were spreading the disease and using up limited resources in the country. Anchoring social protection schemes in national legislation which are open to all people residing in the country, including refugees and asylum seekers, will promote transparency and accountability, and contribute to equitable and sustainable financing mechanisms. This will help to promote social justice and build more resilient economies and societies.

For further details:

- ILO (2008), "[ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization](#)"

3. International labour standards and their supervision

Since 1919, the ILO has developed and maintained a system of international labour standards (ILS) aimed at promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity. ILS have grown into a comprehensive system of instruments on work and social policy, backed by a supervisory system designed to address all sorts of problems in their application at the national level.

ILS are legal instruments drawn up by the ILO's constituents (governments, employers' and workers' organizations) setting out basic principles and rights at work. They are either Conventions (or Protocols), which are legally binding international treaties that can be ratified by Member States, or Recommendations, which serve as non-binding guidelines. Conventions and Recommendations are adopted at the annual International Labour Conference.

The International Labour Conference has adopted 190 Conventions, 206 Recommendations and 6 Protocols, covering all elements of work and social justice. To ensure that the body of standards remains up to date and relevant to the world of work, the organization has undertaken a number of reviews of the standards over the course of its first 100 years.

The ILO works constantly to increase the coverage of labour protection and ensure the legal framework is relevant to the current realities of the world of work. It regularly examines the application of standards in Member States and points out areas where they could be better applied. The many ILS developed and adopted by the ILO are important for safeguarding the dignity and rights of all workers, including migrant workers and refugees.

The ILO Constitution protects all persons in their working environment including "*the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own*". **In principle, ILS are applicable to all workers irrespective of nationality and immigration status unless otherwise stated.** ILO instruments such as the [Migration for Employment Convention \(Revised\) 1949 \(No. 97\)](#) and the [Migrant Workers \(Supplementary Provisions\) Convention, 1975 \(No. 143\)](#) with their accompanying Recommendations Nos. 86 and 151 are specific ILS international labour standards that apply to migrant workers, refugees and displaced persons who are workers in country other than their own.

ILO's governance structure

The **International Labour Conference (ILC)**, ILO's highest decision-making body, often called the "international parliament of labour", brings together delegates of governments, workers' and employer's organizations from the ILO Member States. It meets in Geneva once a year, in June, to adopt new ILS, and pass resolutions that provide guidelines for the ILO's general policy and future activities, among other business. The ILO has 187 member countries. Every two years the ILC adopts the ILO's biennial work programme and budget, which is financed by Member States.

The **Governing Body (GB)** is the executive body of the ILO that takes decisions on ILO policy, decides the agenda of the ILC, adopts the draft Programme and Budget of the organization for submission to the Conference, and elects the Director-General. It is composed of 56 titular members (28 governments, 14 employers and 14 workers) and 66 deputy members (28 governments, 19 employers and 19 workers).

ILO supervisory system

ILS are backed by a supervisory system (a regular system of supervision and special procedures) that helps to ensure that countries implement the Conventions they ratify. The ILO supervisory mechanism is unique because of the role played by the workers and employers, and the tripartite supervision (ILC and the GB). The supervisory bodies regularly examine the application, in law and in practice, of ILO standards in Member States and point out where they could be better applied. If there are any problems in the application of standards, the ILO seeks to assist countries through social dialogue and technical assistance.

The regular supervisory procedure: the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) and the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS). Once a country has ratified an ILO Convention, it is required to report regularly on the measures taken for its implementation. The role of the CEACR is to provide an impartial and technical evaluation of the application of ILS in ILO Member States. The CEACR makes two types of comments: *observations* (which are published in the committee's report), and *direct requests*, which relate to more technical questions or requests for further information. The annual report of the CEACR reflects a technical and legislative analysis of the application of ratified Conventions at the country level, with specific reference



International Labour Conference, Photo © Crozet/Pouteau, ILO

to observations communicated by workers' and employers' organizations. It is published in February and submitted to the CAS, which examines the report in a tripartite setting by selecting from it a number of individual observations for discussion. The governments concerned are invited to provide information on their case. In most cases, the CAS draws up conclusions recommending that governments take specific steps to remedy a problem or accept ILO missions or technical assistance. The reports of both the CEACR and the CAS are available on the internet to millions of users. The governments and social partners thus have an even greater incentive to solve problems in the application of standards in order to avoid critical comments by these bodies.

Representations and complaints procedures. In addition to the regular supervisory procedure, the application of Conventions is supervised through representations and complaints. Under the representations procedure, international or national workers' or employer's organizations have the right to present to the GB a representation against any Member State for non-observance of a ratified Convention. The GB may set up a tripartite committee to examine the representation and the government's response, and to propose recommendations. A complaint may be filed against a Member State which has ratified a Convention by another Member State which has ratified the Convention, a delegate to the ILC or the GB of its own motion. Upon receipt of a complaint, the GB may establish an independent Commission of Inquiry. This is the ILO's highest-level investigative procedure, usually set up when a Member State is accused of committing persistent and serious violations and has repeatedly refused to address them. When a country refuses to fulfil the recommendations of a Commission of Inquiry, the GB can take action under Article 33 of the ILO Constitution. Article 33 was invoked for the first time in 2000.

The Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA). Freedom of association and collective bargaining are among the founding principles of the ILO. The CFA examines complaints of violations of freedom of association, whether the country concerned had ratified the relevant Conventions or not. Complaints may be brought against a Member State by employers' and workers' organizations. The CFA is a tripartite Governing Body Committee and evaluates specific allegations relating to non-compliance with the principles of freedom of association; it engages in a constructive tripartite dialogue to promote respect for trade union rights in law and practice. In cases where the country has ratified the relevant instruments, legislative aspects of the case may be referred to the CEACR.

For further details:

- ILO (2019), [“Rules of the Game: an introduction to the standards-related work of the International Labour Organization International Labour Office”](#)
- ILO (2019), [“Applying and Promoting International Labour Standards”](#)
- ILO, [“NORMLEX: Information System on International Labour Standards”](#)

4. Fundamental principles and rights at work

The 1998 [ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work](#) (FPRW) provides that “all Members, even if they have not ratified the Conventions in question, have an obligation arising from the very fact of membership in the Organization to respect, to promote and to realize, in good faith and in accordance with the Constitution, the principles concerning the fundamental rights which are the subject of those Conventions, namely:

- freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;
- the effective abolition of child labour;
- the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation;
- safe and healthy working environment.

The ILO GB identified ten “fundamental” Conventions, covering subjects that are considered to be fundamental principles and rights at work.

In addition, the [Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930](#) is also considered part of the fundamental ILO instruments. The [resolution](#) concerning the recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work adopted by the ILC in 2012 emphasizes the mutually reinforcing interdependence of FPRW.

The ILO works with constituents to promote the fundamental rights at work. Fundamental principles and rights at work provide the foundation on which equitable and just societies are built. They are the starting point for a virtuous circle of effective social dialogue, better conditions for workers, rising enterprise productivity, more and better jobs and social protection, and for formalizing the informal economy. The ILO Fundamentals branch works at both a policy and implementation level to promote and ensure FPRW and often have active projects doing so on the ground. The Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch provides policy guidance and technical assistance to the development of national OSH policies, programmes and systems with the aim of protecting workers against sickness, disease and injury arising out of employment. An integrated approach to the five FPRW is promoted by both Branches.

For further details:

- ILO (2022), [“A Safe and Healthy Working Environment is a Fundamental Principle and Right at Work”](#)
- ILO (2019), [“Your Rights at Work”](#)
- ILO, [“Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work”](#)
- ILO (2017), [“Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: From Challenges to Opportunities”](#)
- ILO, [“Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch”](#)
- ILO [“Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch”](#)

5. Decent work

Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives and covers four pillars:

1. Employment creation
2. Social protection
3. Fundamental principles and rights at work
4. Social dialogue

It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection across the life course, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, and to organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives, and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

Productive employment and decent work are key elements to achieving a fair globalization and poverty reduction. During the UN General Assembly in September 2015, decent work and the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda became of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without decent work, and vice versa. Hence, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Decent Work Agenda (DWA) are intimately related and mutually reinforcing. Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda calls for the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work, and is a key area of engagement

for the ILO and its constituents. Furthermore, key aspects of decent work are widely embedded in the targets of many of the other 16 goals of the UN's new development vision.

Migrant and refugee workers are often susceptible to decent work deficits due to restrictions on access to the formal labour market. They can be vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, discrimination and xenophobia, and may lack access to social protection and language skills preventing their effective participation in labour markets. **The ILO's mandate, standards, and unique tripartite structure, as well as its growing operational experience in contributing to refugee responses, enable it to guide its constituents and other partners in their efforts to promote decent work for refugees.**

The ILO has a long experience in promoting decent work and sustainable development in areas hosting refugees, in partnership with governments, employers and workers, as well as other UN agencies. Currently, the ILO manages a substantial development cooperation portfolio to enhance the access to decent work for host communities and refugees. ILO instruments such as "Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market" and "Recommendation 205 – Employment and

Decent Work for Peace and Resilience" promotes the Decent Work Agenda. Other ILO instruments, e.g. C.102 Social Security Convention and C.118 Equality of Treatment (social security) Convention applies to refugees and stateless persons without any condition of reciprocity. In addition, Decent work is included in the body of the Global Compact for Refugees in the indicators framework developed by the UNHCR to assess progress towards its implementation.

Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) have been established as the main vehicle for delivery of ILO support to countries over a three- to five-year period. DWCPs have two basic objectives. They promote decent work as a key component of national development strategies. At the same time, they organize ILO knowledge, instruments, advocacy and cooperation at the service of tripartite constituents in a results-based framework to advance the Decent Work Agenda and its four strategic objectives.

For further details:

- ILO (2016), "ILO Decent Work Country Programme"
- ILO, "The ILO's Decent Work Agenda"
- ILO, "2030 Development Agenda: ILO Focus Targets"

6. Social dialogue

Social dialogue is one of the pillars of the ILO Decent Work Agenda. It is instrumental in maintaining and improving working conditions for all workers.

Social dialogue refers to any type of negotiation, consultation or exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments and employers' and workers' organizations, on issues of common interest relating to work and related economic and social policies. Social dialogue is an important mechanism for building consensus, developing policy, preventing and resolving labour disputes, determining wages, improving working conditions and promoting sustainable enterprises.

The extent to which workers can express themselves on work-related matters and participate in defining their working conditions is one of the dimensions of decent work. Combined with strong freedom of association, sound collective bargaining practices ensure that employers and workers have an equal voice in negotiations and that the outcome is fair and equitable. Collective bargaining allows both sides

to negotiate a fair employment relationship and prevents costly labour disputes. Indeed, some research has indicated that countries with highly coordinated collective bargaining tend to have less inequality in wages, lower and less persistent unemployment, and fewer and shorter strikes than countries where collective bargaining is less established. Typical issues on the bargaining agenda include wages, working time, training, occupational health and safety and equal treatment. The ability of workers to organize freely to defend their interests collectively in negotiations with the employer is a pivotal element of democracy at the workplace. In order to exercise this right, the right of every worker to form and join a workers' organization must be recognized. This right is enshrined in the fundamental Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87).

ILO instruments promote the participation of refugees and forcibly displaced persons in representative organizations, including in relation to their right to form and join trade unions, to participate in collective bargaining mechanisms and to access justice and judicial remedies against abusive working conditions. The ILO instruments on migrant workers emphasize the pivotal role of social dialogue and the importance of consultations with employers and workers' organizations. The right to collective bargaining⁴ is a fundamental human right at work and is the only form of social dialogue that is recognized any such legal status. It is rooted in the ILO Constitution and in the [Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949](#) (No. 98), [Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981](#) (No. 154) and reaffirmed as a fundamental right in the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The objective of these negotiations is to arrive at a collective agreement that regulates terms and conditions of employment. Collective agreements may also address the rights and responsibilities of the parties, thus ensuring harmonious and productive industries and workplaces. Collective agreements can also contribute towards ensuring that workers get a fair share of productivity gains while not impairing the capacity of employers to operate profitably. Enhancing the inclusiveness of collective bargaining and collective agreements is a key means for reducing inequality and extending labour protection.

Paragraph 23 (b) of the [ILO's guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market](#) states that "national policies should at a minimum include measures to facilitate the participation of all workers, including refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, in representative organizations, including in relation to their right to form and join trade unions, participate in collective bargaining mechanisms and to access justice and judicial remedies against abusive working conditions".

Cooperation on the access of refugees and FDPs to labour markets should be built on trust and social dialogue between governments and social partners through early and equal emphasis on the development concerns of host communities. Since the initial phase of the COVID-19 outbreak, social dialogue played an important role in shaping national policy responses during the pandemic in a majority of ILO member states. The ILO has intensified its support to the tripartite constituents, with a view to placing social dialogue at the heart of policymaking in crisis-responses, in line with international labour standards and drawing on best international practice.

⁴ [Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981](#) (No. 154) defines collective bargaining as all negotiations which take place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers' organizations, on the one hand, and one or more workers' organizations, on the other, for (a) determining working conditions and terms of employment; and/or (b) regulating relations between employers and workers; and/or (c) regulating relations between employers or their organizations and a workers' organization or workers' organizations.

For further details:

- ILO (2018), “[Social Dialogue and Tripartism](#)” International Labour Organization
- ILO (2018), “[Collective Agreements: Extending Labour Protection](#)” (edited by Susan Hayter and Jelle Visser)
- ILO (2015), “[Collective Bargaining: A Policy Guide](#)”
- ILO (2013), “[National Tripartite Social Dialogue: An ILO Guide for Improved Governance](#)”
- ILO, “[International Labour Standards on Collective Bargaining](#)”

7. Social Protection

Social protection is a human right. It ensures access to healthcare and income security for all over the life cycle. Social protection provides for households when in need due to ill health, unemployment, injury, pregnancy or old age. The [ILO Social Security \(Minimum Standards\) Convention, 1952](#) (No. 102) defines nine life contingencies for which all members of society need to be protected along the life cycle through a rights-based approach: healthcare, sickness, maternity, unemployment, disability, death of the breadwinner, employment injury, old age and maintenance of children.

Social protection and the right to social security have been an integral element of the ILO’s mandate since its creation in 1919. The most recently adopted standard, the [ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012](#) (No. 202), reflects the global tripartite commitment to guarantee at least a basic level of social security to all in the form of a nationally defined social protection floor, and to ensure progressively wider scope and higher levels of protection. One of the four pillars of the ILO’s Decent Work agenda is that everyone is entitled to social protection, and aims at universality of coverage.

Transitional social protection schemes can support the gradual integration of refugees into public social security systems. In several countries, the ILO has assessed the current social protection policy and regulatory frameworks and programmes, with the aim of covering the entire population with basic social protection floors and progressively improving coverage over time.

ILO standards on social protection recognize equality of treatment and non-discrimination as key principles. Convention No.102 applies without any restriction with respect to specific groups of the population, and [Convention No.118 Equality of Treatment \(social security\)](#) applies to refugees and stateless persons without any condition of reciprocity. The ILO’s [Equality of Treatment \(Accident Compensation\) Convention, 1925](#) (No. 19) and [Employment Injury Benefits Convention, 1964 \[Schedule I amended in 1980\]](#) (No. 121) provide protection to all workers in the case of occupational injuries and diseases. The integration of refugees into national social protection programmes can provide sustainable and cost-effective solutions to move out of humanitarian assistance, particularly in protracted situations. Establishing sustainable social protection systems in countries of origin can further facilitate refugees’ voluntary return and re-integration, act as an economic and social stabilizer and contribute to preventing future crises.

The ILO has always recognized that there are various actors in social protection, and therefore, social dialogue and partnerships are central to its operations and its efforts to extend effective social protection to all. With this in mind, the ILO and UNHCR initiated joint work in 2014 on social health protection looking at the integration of refugees into national social protection schemes providing healthcare. This partnership has resulted in the identification of opportunities for the inclusion of refugees in national social health systems in eight West and Central African countries.

The ILO and UNHCR see the integration of refugees into social health protection schemes as a contribution to universal health coverage (UHC) and as a first step towards overcoming barriers for their inclusion in social protection systems. Lessons learned from the ILO-UNHCR partnership on how to extend social health protection to refugees are compiled in the joint handbook below.

► Sustainable Development Goals and targets with a direct or indirect reference to social protection



Target 1.3 – Implement nationally appropriate **social protection systems and measures for all**, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.



Target 3.8 – Achieve **universal health coverage**, including **financial risk protection**, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.



Target 5.4 – **Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work** through the provision of public services, infrastructure and **social protection policies** and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.



Target 8.5 – By 2030, **achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men**, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value. *[Social protection is one of the four pillars of decent work.]*



Target 10.4 – **Adopt** policies, especially fiscal, wage and **social protection policies**, and **progressively achieve greater equality**.

For further details:

- ILO (2021), “[Extending Social Protection to Migrant Workers, Refugees, and their Families: Guide for Policymakers and Practitioners](#)”
- ILO and UNHCR (2020), “[Handbook on Social Health Protection for Refugees](#)”
- ILO (2019), “[Universal Social Protection for Human Dignity, Social Justice and Sustainable Development](#)”
- ILO (2017), “[World Social Protection Report 2017–19](#)”
- ILO (2008), “[Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization](#)”
- ILO (2008), “[Social Health Protection: An ILO Strategy towards Universal Access to Health Care](#)”
- ILO, “[Building Social Protection Floors with the ILO Together, to Change the Lives of Millions of Refugees](#)”

8. Gender equality, diversity and inclusion

Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is critical to the ILO's aim of decent work for all women and men and is at the heart of the ILO's mandate, beginning with its constitution adopted some 100 years ago. Over the years this vision of gender equality and empowerment in the world of work has been reinforced by the ILO tripartite constituents through international labour standards, declarations and resolutions. Among key standards are the [Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 \(No. 100\)](#); the [Discrimination \(Employment and Occupation\) Convention, 1958 \(No. 111\)](#); the [Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 \(No. 156\)](#); the [Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 \(No. 183\)](#), [Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 \(No. 189\)](#) and the [Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 \(No.190\)](#)

The ILO strives for the elimination of discrimination, be it based on sex, gender, race, ethnicity, indigenous status, disability or HIV status, as well as nationality or migrant status, and for the advancement of equality. The ILO provides advice, tools, guidance and technical assistance to governments and employers' and workers' organizations with respect to promoting more inclusive workplaces and addressing multiple grounds of discrimination.

ILO's action over the last decades has also focused on the voice and visibility of women in all their diversity in the world of work. ILO expertise has contributed to advancing women's economic empowerment through its research, services and advocacy efforts in lifelong learning and skills development, entrepreneurial skills enhancement, and microfinance and credit access.

A transformative and measurable gender equality agenda features prominently in the ILO Centenary Declaration adopted in 2019. The commitment of ILO's constituents to deliver on that agenda is also reflected in the ILO's current programmatic priorities, which combine the fight against gender discrimination and bias in respect of women's access to, and progress in labour markets; the just valuation of women's work and reduction of the gender pay gap; support for a more even distribution of unpaid care work between families and the State and between men and women; and the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work (as highlighted in the recently adopted [C190 - Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 \(No. 190\)](#)).

►► Humanity can only be at its best when gender equality becomes a reality for all, everywhere. We must and will make it happen.

► ILO Director-General

Women are amongst those most adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, 64 million women lost their jobs, and women's employment loss stood at 5 per cent, compared with 3.9 per cent for men. COVID-19 has exacerbated the already existing inequalities. Gender-based discrimination, the heavy burden of unpaid care work (which remains unequally distributed), exposure to violence and harassment, and the "glass ceiling" are prolonging gender gaps in decent employment. Women are also often found in occupations that are among the most vulnerable to decent work deficits such as domestic service, home-based jobs, or contributing towards family-run activities, and in general in the informal economy. COVID-19 has also highlighted that women tend to face increased exposure to domestic violence and suffer a general lack of personal space when confinement measures are in place and when access to services, such as health and childcare, or support to victims of domestic violence, are reduced or no longer available.

In addition, migration status, ethnicity, disability and HIV status are some of the characteristics which, when intersecting with gender, further exacerbate the likelihood of women experiencing unfavourable working conditions, and might increase informality rates. While women refugees face many of the same barriers as men, they are at greater risk of multiple discrimination regarding pay, access to employment and livelihood opportunities, vocational training, or services. Informal work arrangements and limited bargaining power can also put refugees, especially women, at higher risk of being laid off or seeing their wages cut during the crisis. The gender dimension across refugee populations is especially acute as women also have less access to social protection and will bear a disproportionate burden in the care economy in the case of closure of schools or care systems.

A better future of work for women can only be realized by redressing discrimination and disadvantage and overcoming entrenched stereotypes relating to women in society, the value of their work and their position in the labour market. Increasing the institutional capacity of Member States, as well as of representative organizations of employers and workers, to facilitate meaningful and coherent social dialogue on gender equality, will be necessary to mark an improvement in current practices.

In many refugee-hosting countries, the ILO supports host and refugee women to access and remain in the formal labour market through targeted packages of career support and small business development services.

Through the “Employment through Labour Intensive Infrastructure in Jordan” project, the ILO is working towards advancing gender equality and supporting job creation among refugees and host communities through public works. Moreover, through the Microfund for Women initiative the ILO is providing sustainable financial and non-financial services to the entrepreneurial poor, especially women from both refugee and host communities, in order to empower them socially and economically. ILO’s technical assistance to

countries on ensuring that migrant workers and refugees are not left behind by COVID-19 responses addresses the specific circumstances and needs of women migrant workers, such as domestic workers. The ILO promotes a transformative agenda for gender equality. In order to address such vast equality deficits, the very recent [Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis](#), adopted at the ILC in June 2020, highlights the importance of a gender-responsive recovery.

Since the adoption of the [Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 \(No. 189\)](#), domestic workers have gained legal protection in many countries. Considering that domestic workers are some of the most marginalized workers, the Convention sets out to ensure that they enjoy decent work, like all other workers, while taking into account the specificities of the sector. Since then, much progress has been made towards achieving decent work for domestic workers; however, for far too many workers in this sector, decent work has not yet become a reality. Since the beginning of COVID-19, more domestic workers than other employees have lost their jobs or are seeing a dramatic reduction in working hours and correspondingly lower wages.

Equality of opportunity and treatment is a fundamental principle of social justice that has been at the core of the ILO’s work since it was founded in 1919. Reasonable adjustments at the workplace, often also referred to as reasonable accommodations, aim to provide equal opportunities for employees at the workplace, so their skills and talents can be used to full capacity. Reasonable accommodations may include adaptations to the job, including modification of machinery and equipment and/or of an employee’s job content, working time and work organization.⁵ They are an essential component for promoting diversity and inclusion at the workplace and the right to equality in employment, vocational

⁵ ILO (2016), [Promoting diversity and inclusion through workplace adjustments: A practical guide](#).

training and education. The need for a reasonable accommodation may arise from family responsibilities for children, parents or other dependents, status of a refugee, religious requirements, a temporary or permanent disability, HIV status, or other causes, which may include accidents, chronic illnesses or age-related impairments. People with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, face enormous attitudinal, physical and informational barriers to equal opportunities in the world of work.⁶ Thus, accessible and inclusive workplace facilitate in creating decent work for persons with disabilities.

For further details:

- ILO (2022), “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in the World of Work in Fragile, Conflict and Disaster Settings”
- ILO (2021), “Making Decent Work a Reality for Domestic Workers: progress and prospects ten years after the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)”
- ILO (2020), “The COVID-19 Response: Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work”
- ILO (2020), “Policy Brief: Protecting the rights at work of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons during the COVID-19 pandemic, Recommendations for Policy-makers and Constituents”
- ILO (2019), “A quantum leap for gender equality : for a better future of work for all”
- ILO (2009), “Gender equality at the heart of decent work”
- ILO, “Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work”

9. Skills and lifelong learning

Skills and lifelong learning are essential for a human-centred development, fostering people’s capabilities and employability. More rapidly changing labour markets require enhanced investments in skills development. Education and training systems based on social dialogue are better equipped to respond to changing demands and provide skills based on labour market demand. Lifelong learning can be instrumental in helping to prevent people, women in particular, from being left behind during social and economic development.

The ILO provides policy advice and technical assistance to strengthen skills and lifelong learning systems in light of the new realities of the future world of work. The ILO assists in the development of skills policies and systems linked to labour market needs, in anticipating and building competencies for the jobs of the future, and in supporting the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups in skills development.

For people in vulnerable situations, such as refugees, it is important to overcome the range of existing barriers to access education and training. Recognition of prior learning and upgrading of apprenticeships in the informal economy are measures to respond flexibly to different needs.

Examples of ILO’s interventions to support the skilling of refugees for better labour market access include work on recognition of prior learning in Jordan, implementation of TVET and soft skills training in Turkey, with an increased focus on strengthening links with the private sector and supporting work-based learning, and support to market-based non-formal training in Lebanon.

Employment services (public and private) accompany jobseekers and provide services to employers to ensure the best match between skills and jobs. The basic mandate of Public Employment Services (PES) is to facilitate the adjustment of firms and workers to changing labour market conditions.

⁶ ILO, *Disability and work*.

In Turkey, through İŞMEP, which is a [Work Based Learning](#) (WBL) programme, Syrian and Turkish workers are developing their skills on the job, putting newly acquired skills directly into practice. İŞMEP is focusing on recent graduates, recognizing that they need an opportunity to put theory into practice and acquire skills required by the labour market. The programme also helps employers to retain their employees: some of the financial support continues through KIGEP, if they are kept in employment after the programme ends. The WBL programme of the ILO Office for Turkey has so far supported 200 Syrian and Turkish employees to find a job and

develop their skills. It is designed with the aim of easing the pressure on the labour market and enhancing refugees' self-reliance.

The ILO and UNHCR, in coordination with the Government of Jordan, established employment service centres inside the Zaatari refugee camp in 2017 and Azraq refugee camp in 2018. This allowed refugees to receive counselling services on employment, to be provided with work permits and attend job fairs where they can meet employers and gain access to formal work opportunities across Jordan.

For further details:

- UNHCR, ILO, Fin Church Aid & GIZ (2022), "[Skills and Labour Market Transitions for Refugees and Host Communities: Case Studies and Country Practices on the Inclusion of Refugees in Technical and Vocational Education and Training \(TVET\) and Employment](#)"
- ILO, "[Lifelong Learning: Concepts, Issues and Actions](#)"
- ILO "[Skill Certification Programme Improves Opportunities of Employment for Jordanian and Syrian Workers](#)"
- ILO, "[Skills for Social Inclusion](#)"

10. Transition to formality

As of 2020, more than 2 billion workers are earning their livelihoods in the informal economy. This is 62 per cent of all those working worldwide.⁷ As such, it represents an important part of the economy, and certainly of the labour market, in many countries, and plays a major role in employment creation, production and income generation. Agriculture is the sector with the highest level of informal employment – estimated at more than 90 per cent. People living in rural areas are almost twice as likely to be in informal employment as those in urban areas. In countries with high rates of population growth or urbanization, the informal sector tends to absorb most of the expanding labour force in the urban areas. Informal employment offers a necessary survival strategy in countries that lack social safety nets, such as unemployment insurance, or where wages and pensions are low, especially in the public sector.

Employment in the informal sector includes all persons who, during a given reference period, were employed in at least one informal sector enterprise, irrespective of their status in employment and whether it was their main or a secondary job. Workers in the informal economy are likely to suffer disproportionately from the adverse effects of the COVID-19 associated lockdown or physical distancing measures. For workers and business owners in the informal economy, stopping work or working remotely from home is not an option, as staying at home means losing their jobs.⁸ According to an [ILO estimate](#), almost 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy in all world regions have already been affected by the lockdown and containment measures imposed to slow the spread of the virus and/or are working in the hardest-hit sectors. Another [ILO estimate](#) shows that, assuming a situation without any alternative income sources, lost labour income will result in an increase in relative poverty for informal workers and

⁷ ILO (2020), [COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy, Immediate responses and policy challenges](#).

⁸ ILO (2020), [Impact of lockdown measures on the informal economy](#).

their families of more than 21 percentage points in upper-middle income countries, almost 52 points in high income countries and 56 points in lower and low income countries.

Formalization processes and measures aiming to facilitate transitions to formality need to be tailored to specific circumstances faced by different countries and categories of economic units or workers. The 2002 ILC Resolution and Conclusions on Decent Work and Informal Economy was a milestone in the ILO's integrated approach to informality. While many ILS apply to workers in the informal economy, the [Recommendation concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy \(R204\)](#), adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2015, constitutes a historic landmark for the world of work, as it is the first international standard focusing exclusively on the informal economy in its entirety.

As an illustration, in 2015, the ILO estimated that 50 per cent of Jordanian and 99 per cent of Syrian refugee workers were working in the informal economy. Restriction of movement and work often resulted in unfair competition for unauthorized and unprotected jobs in the informal economy. In Jordan, since 2016, the ILO and UNHCR have collaborated closely with the World Bank and the Government of Jordan, who jointly designed the Programme for Results: Economic Opportunities for Jordanians and Syrian Refugees. This programme has supported Syrian refugees' formal access to the Jordanian labour market to enable them to be self-reliant and to contribute towards the Jordanian economy. The extension of the four-year programme until June 2022 will support the government of Jordan in providing Syrians with more flexible work permits to reduce

informality and ensure they are covered under the labour law. In Turkey, out of 3.6 million Syrian refugees, 1 million are estimated to participate in the labour market, however, more than 90 per cent are estimated to do so informally. The ILO has introduced an incentive scheme to support transition to formal and decent work through the Transition to Formality Programme (KIGEP), in collaboration with the Social Security Institution (SSI) and the DG International Labour Force of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services. Until the beginning of 2021, more than 10,500 Turkish and Syrian workers (56 per cent Syrian refugees, 16 per cent women) were supported to access formal jobs by covering their social security premiums for six months as well as work permit fees in the case of Syrian workers.

Recommendation No. 204 acknowledges the broad diversity of situations of informality including specific national contexts and priorities for the transition to the formal economy, and provides practical guidance to address these priorities. It clearly defines a broad and detailed scope of application to all workers and economic units – including enterprises, entrepreneurs and households – in the informal economy. Such informal work may be found in all economic sectors and in public and private spheres. Recommendation 204 is built on the shared understanding and experience of ILO constituents that it is through an integrated strategy, a policy mix and institutional coordination to promote the employment and income opportunities, that the rights and social protection of the millions involved that transition to the formal economy can be best facilitated. Owing to remaining restrictions in accessing the formal labour market, refugees continue to seek work in the informal economy where they are paid lower wages and work longer hours, often without any contract or social protection. Throughout the world, many refugees take up work under exploitative conditions because of the lack of better options.

Upgrading the informal economy requires a comprehensive mix of policies. For informal enterprises, this would include policies that foster their growth through entrepreneurship development, training and credit facilities, as well as encouraging them to register as formal enterprises, including through the provision of financial incentives. For workers, it would include policies supporting market-relevant and productivity-enhancing skills development and social protection.

The ILO supports the development of pathways to develop and accredit skills and the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and certification, to improve refugee workers' access to decent work opportunities.

At the same time, the ILO is providing support to tripartite constituents to strengthen labour market governance mechanisms to increase the issuance of work permits, strengthen labour inspection systems and enhance access to social protection.

For further details:

- ILO (2020), “[Promoting transition to formality for peace and resilience](#)”
- ILO, “[Informal Economy](#)”

11. Financial services for refugees and host communities

The financial sector has an important role to play in the world of work, and it could take on an even bigger one. With an emphasis on social justice, the ILO Social Finance Programme supports efforts to extend financial services to excluded persons for the promotion of better employment and the reduction in the vulnerability of the working poor. The pursuit of better employment involves creating sustainable jobs and ensuring an improved quality of employment through innovative financial services and conducive policies. The reduction of vulnerability can be achieved by improving access to appropriate risk mitigating financial services including micro insurance.

Throughout its long-standing collaboration with the UNHCR, the ILO has contributed to the capacity-building of UNHCR staff and its implementing partners, to encourage and facilitate sustainable and viable access to finance for refugees and host communities. The ILO Social Finance Programme uses a participatory approach to promote the financial inclusion of forcibly displaced persons and host communities to achieve the following three main objectives.

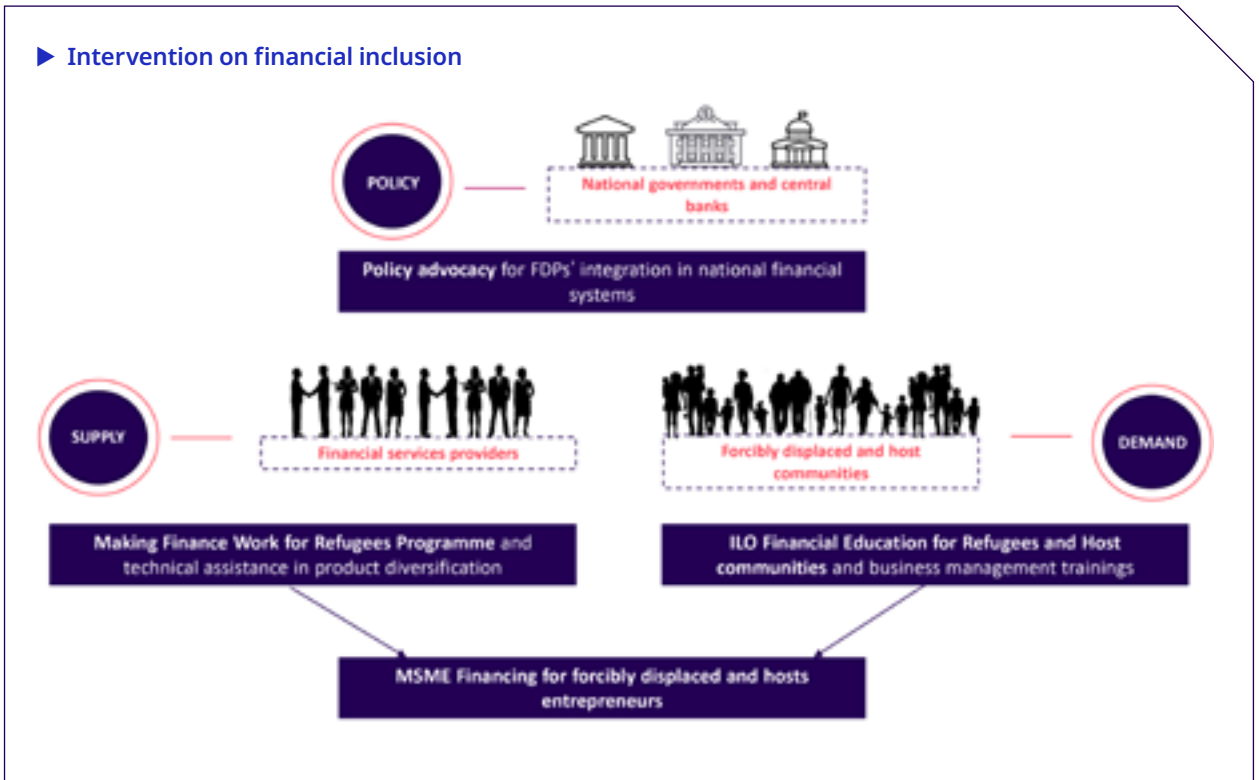
At the policy level, the first objective is to advocate for the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons within financial systems. This objective relates to advocating for facilitating measures to enable forcibly displaced persons to be better integrated within host countries’ financial systems. In addition, Social Finance provides the necessary technical assistance and tools to support national governments in framing country-wide Financial Inclusion and Financial Education strategies with national partners. The programme also supports them in the technical adaptation of Financial Education programmes to reach various vulnerable groups, using different outreach models.

On the supply side, the second objective regards the promotion of an improved and more adequate supply of financial products and services for forcibly displaced persons. Jointly developed with ITC/ILO, the [Making Finance Work for Refugees programme](#) targets top and middle managers of financial institutions wanting to serve the refugee market and host communities together. Adapted from the very successful Making Microfinance Work, the training programme helps institutions improve their performance with regards to the refugees’ market segments they want to serve, while informing the strategic thinking around new products to offer, in view of advancing financial inclusion and responsible finance for refugee and host communities sustainably. As a result of the training programme, financial service providers are then accompanied practically to diversify their product and service offering and ensure that they have the keys to serve the needs of FDPs sustainably.

On the demand side, the third objective is to support forcibly displaced persons to make well informed financial decisions sustainably, and to access financial services tailored to their needs. This objective is achieved through financial education and the support delivered to enable MSME financing as a result of business management training.

- **Financial education.** With more than a decade of experience, the ILO Global Programme on Financial Education is a holistic programme addressing policy dialogue and capacity-building at all levels. It works with policymakers, meso-level training providers and multipliers, as well as directly with a wide range of beneficiaries, to increase their financial literacy. Based on its Financial Education tools, Social Finance has finalized the development of new training materials on [Financial Education for Refugee and Host communities](#) and is currently rolling out training in East Africa and the Middle East in the framework of the PROSPECTS programme.

► **MSME financing.** Lastly, the ILO will pilot business plan competitions (BPCs) in the context of migration and forced displacement, to ensure that MSMEs owned by forcibly displaced persons and host communities are able to transform their business ideas into action, following a business management training (for example, ILO Start and Improve Your Business). To achieve this, the ILO will be piloting a new model allowing for SIYB trainees submitting qualitative business plans to access finance to fund their concrete business ideas. This funding is in part composed of an ILO grant, while the rest is provided by a financial services provider through a loan. The model allows for a portion of the grant to be readily available to the grant recipient to start funding their action plan, while the rest is allocated to a blocked savings account within the financial services provider. This model allows for grant recipients to access readily available funding for their enterprise and to start acting on their business ideas quickly after the training. In addition, it enables them to build their incentives on saving money through formal financial services providers and also allows them to build a financial history with a formal financial institution, useful to ask for a loan in the future. Lastly, when the financial services provider’s risk aversion is high, leading to exclusion, the model foresees that the financial services provider could use the savings account as a guarantee, which can be leveraged to unlock access to credit in the future. This entire model is meant to unlock sustainable access to finance opportunities for capacity-building recipients, while generating trust and bringing guarantees to financial services providers, thus ensuring the sustainable and viable financial inclusion of the target group.



The ILO Social Finance Programme is currently in discussion with the UNHCR to find ways to integrate more work benefiting forcibly displaced persons' access to financial services through two additional streams of work:

- **Impact insurance** can effectively be used as a tool to reduce and mitigate various potential risks and provides households with an essential safety net. The work of the [Impact Insurance Facility](#) is especially relevant in the context of refugees, as financial services, including impact insurance, can be a good stepping stone, enabling them to start productive activities and get protected.
- **Impact investing is unleashing the power of capital for the good.** The ILO encourages the international community to increase investments to achieve the SDGs and promote investments in decent and sustainable work and provides tools and processes to improve the social impact of such investments.

For further details:

- ILO (2020), "[Social Finance, Annual Report 2019](#)"
- ILO (2020), "[E-learning on Financial Education](#)"
- ILO, "[Financial Inclusion for Refugees and Host Communities](#)"
- ILO, "[Financial Education](#)"
- UNHCR and ILO (2011), "[Investing in Solutions: A Practical Guide for the Use of Microfinance in UNHCR operations](#)"

12. Green jobs and environment-employment linkages

Climate change and environmental degradation pose significant barriers to economic growth and employment, and can lead to deteriorating human health and disruption of livelihoods. These impacts, especially extreme weather events and disasters, can precipitate displacement and migration. Developing countries stand to suffer most because their communities may be vulnerable and least able to adapt, particularly areas with high-density populations like the Asian mega deltas, Small Island States, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

There are few governments which provide for regular channels of mobility or refuge for those affected by climate or disaster. Consequently, those who are displaced or migrate because of climate vulnerability may be forced to enter irregular channels of migration or take work in the informal economy where they have an increased risk of exploitation and abuse.

Yet, ILO's experience has shown that labour mobility, when adhering to international labour standards, can support countries impacted by extreme weather events and play an important role in future development. Migration may reduce population pressure on climate-stressed environments and could benefit destination countries by helping to fill labour shortages and improving economic productivity.

For example, [the ILO's work in the Pacific](#) has helped Small Island States utilize voluntary and regular migration pathways as climate adaptation strategies while minimizing and addressing potential risks. Similarly, [the ILO project in the IGAD region](#) is improving opportunities for regulated labour mobility and decent work within the IGAD countries to current and potential migrants.

Well-managed and rights-based labour mobility and adaptation policies can provide an opportunity to boost resilience and enhance development while reducing the risk of future displacement. As the UN specialized agency with the mandate to promote and protect social justice in the world of work, the ILO is well positioned to support States and regional groups to consider the role of labour mobility within climate adaptation strategies, and in contributing to a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies. If properly managed, climate change action can lead to more and better jobs, and inclusive labour migration policies. The ILO supports governments, employers' and workers' organizations to maximize positive employment and social gains in the shift towards sustainability.



Following the Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Sustainable Development, Decent Work and Green Jobs, held in 2015, the ILO's governing body adopted the [Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all](#). The Guidelines offer a unique policy framework and a practical tool to guide the transformation to low-carbon and climate-resilient economies, taking into account the social and employment-related dimensions of the transition.

Green jobs are a key vehicle for advancing a just transition. Green jobs are decent jobs that contribute towards preserving or restoring the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, or in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency. Green jobs reduce the consumption of energy and raw materials efficiency, limit greenhouse gas emissions, minimize waste and pollution, protect and restore ecosystems and support adaptation to the effects of climate change.

By engaging governments, workers and employers as active agents of change, the ILO supports the creation of green jobs in several ways, namely, assessing the potential for green jobs in key sectors or areas, it promotes environmentally friendly value chain development, it assists the assessment and provision of skills for a green economy, it fosters green entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on youth, it helps enterprises improve their productivity, resource efficiency and resilience, and it helps communities to improve resilience through employment-intensive programmes. The ILO is also supporting various countries in Africa (for example, countries in the IGAD region) and in Asia (such as the South Asia region) through research and knowledge generation, to create effective policies to address climate change and displacement issues.

For further details:

- ILO (2018), "[World Employment Social Outlook 2018: Greening With Jobs](#)"
- ILO (2016), "[Labour Mobility and Regional Climate Adaptation](#)"
- ILO, "[Resource Guide on Green Jobs](#)"

13. Fair recruitment

In today's globalized economy, workers are increasingly looking for job opportunities beyond their home country in search of decent work and better livelihoods. In addition, millions of workers migrate internally in search of employment. Public and private employment agencies, when appropriately regulated, play an important role in the efficient and equitable functioning of labour markets by matching available jobs with suitably qualified workers. However, the recruitment landscape is growing increasingly complex, and there is concern about exploitative recruitment practices and unscrupulous agencies, informal intermediaries and other actors that operate outside the legal framework. These unfair recruiters tend to target low-skilled workers, and these abusive practices often place them at risk of labour exploitation, including forced labour and human trafficking. Fair recruitment is critical as the worker's experience during the recruitment process is indicative of working conditions and development outcomes.

The COVID-19 crisis has added further complexity – including increasing measures and costs – to the recruitment process.

What is fair recruitment? Recruitment carried out within the law, in line with international labour standards, and with respect for human rights, without discrimination and protecting workers from abusive situations. The recruitment process covers the selection, transport, placement into employment and – for migrant workers – return to the worker's country of origin if needed.

International labour standards apply to all workers, including migrant workers, irrespective of migration status. Requirements on fair recruitment are contained in the following ILS:

- Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181)
- Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention (No. 143) and Recommendation No. 151, 1975
- Migration for Employment Convention (Revised) (No. 97) and Recommendation No. 86, 1949

In 2016, the ILO embarked on a process to develop a new set of recommendations on fair recruitment, designed to fill a gap in specific knowledge and guidance on how to promote fair recruitment practices.

The **ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines (GP & OP) for Fair Recruitment** were adopted in 2016, and complemented by the **Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs**, adopted in 2018. Both documents were negotiated by a tripartite group of experts and adopted by the ILO's governing body. The General Principles target implementation at all levels, while the Operational Guidelines outline responsibilities of specific stakeholders, including governments, enterprises and public employment services, labour recruiters and employers. The Definition is based on findings of ILO's comprehensive research and recognizes the principle that workers shall not be charged, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any fees or related costs for their recruitment. The document is available in more than 15 languages.

The documents constitute the most up-to-date, internationally agreed guidance in the area of recruitment. They are grounded in international labour standards, were adopted through a process of tripartite social dialogue, and are informed by extensive research. The guidance is therefore the most legitimate reference point for private and public actors seeking guidelines on recruitment policies and practices. They are being used by international organizations and have served as a reference point for global and regional processes focusing on migration and forced labour, as well as the development and revision of national regulatory frameworks and bilateral labour agreements.

The ILO’s work in this area is coordinated under the umbrella of the global **Fair Recruitment Initiative** (FRI) that was launched in 2014 to protect workers from abuse and exploitation, while also responding to labour market needs. The FRI has been critical to ILO’s work in the area of national and international recruitment of workers and has added renewed impetus and visibility to this important topic. The Fair Recruitment Initiative’s vision is to ensure that recruitment practices nationally and across borders are grounded in labour standards, are developed through social dialogue, and ensure gender equality.

Through the implementation of the first phase of the strategy between 2014 and 2019, the role of the ILO and its constituents has expanded, and the development of additional knowledge, tools and guidance has contributed to advancing the international debate on this subject. The **2021–2025 FRI Strategy (Phase II)** will continue to be grounded in relevant international labour standards (ILS), global guidance, and social dialogue between governance institutions and actors of the labour market – that is, those who directly experience the challenges and opportunities of implementing fair recruitment practices. The FRI has combined global policy dialogue, knowledge and data generation with on-the-ground interventions where tools are tested, implemented, and expertise created. The 2021–2025 Fair Recruitment Initiative Strategy is grounded in four pillars.



The ILO’s work has shown that fair recruitment is achievable when all actors come together to play their part. Labour recruiters, both public and private, play an important role in matching skills supply and labour demand within and across borders, which, when undertaken effectively, can contribute considerably to enhanced development outcomes for migrants and their countries of origin and destination, as well as to improved coherence between employment and migration policies.

In response to the global refugee crisis, increasing attention is also being paid on how access to the labour market for refugees can be promoted and facilitated through more targeted recruitment. GP & OG’s principles 12 and 12.1 focus on this issue.

12. Governments should respect human rights and promote fair recruitment in conflict and crisis situations.

12.1. Governments should take steps to ensure that enterprises, agencies and international assistance programmes operating in conflict and crisis situations are not involved with human rights and recruitment abuses.

As some governments and the private sector are scaling up complementary pathways for refugees, including through labour mobility schemes, the integration of the GP & OG would prove to be an important protection safeguard, as it provides useful guidance for multiple stakeholders to ensure fair recruitment through the whole recruitment or migration cycle.

For further details:

- ILO (2021), “ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative Strategy 2021–2025 – Taking stock, moving forward”
- ILO (2021), “Infostory: Ensuring fair recruitment: What the ILO has achieved”
- ILO (2021), “Locked down and in limbo: The global impact of COVID-19 on migrant worker rights and recruitment”
- ILO (2021), “Establishing Fair Recruitment Processes: An ILO online training toolkit”
- ILO (2014), “Fair migration: Setting an ILO agenda”

14. Employment-intensive investments

Employment-intensive investments link infrastructure development with employment creation, poverty reduction, and local economic and social development. In using local labour and resources, they create much needed employment and income, reduce costs, save foreign currency, and support local industry while increasing the capacity of local institutions.

Employment Intensive Investments Programmes (EIIP) support ILO Member States in the design, formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes aiming to address unemployment and underemployment through public investment, typically in infrastructure development. EIIP reinforces and builds institutional and operational capacity to provide productive and decent work that has an economic, environmental and social impact. EIIP’s strategy is to promote employment-intensive approaches and local resource-based (LRB) technologies in delivering public investments – in particular for local infrastructure. EIIP interventions cover various sectors and subsectors, including rural roads, irrigation, water and soil conservation, community forestry, and cultural heritage. Over the years, EIIP has developed a comprehensive package of product lines, covering the following six thematic areas:

- 1. Employment impact assessments;**
- 2. Public and private sector development;**
- 3. Public employment programmes;**
- 4. Local resource-based approaches and community infrastructure;**
- 5. Green works;**
- 6. Emergency employment.**

- ILO 101 Guide: Organizational values, policy areas, and key programmes and tools in refugee and other displacement contexts



EIIP, which has been implemented in all major regions of the world since 1970s, aims to increase the labour intensity of existing infrastructure programmes, and to pilot employment-intensive works and public employment programmes in times of social and economic hardship and crisis.⁹

In July 2016, as part of its response to the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan, the ILO started EIIP projects in Jordan to improve the living conditions of Syrian refugees and Jordanians through improved rural infrastructure by using employment-intensive approaches, and increased employability and access to the labour market. In Lebanon, the EIIP used Local Resource-Based Technology (LRBT), including labour-intensive approaches to rehabilitate and improve rural roads, drainage and irrigation canals and water catchment cisterns.

An EIIP approach includes more intensive monitoring of working conditions, but also of the quality of assets resulting from the work. Through better wages and better supervision, EIIP projects achieve significant work outputs, increased productivity and better quality of work.

For further details:

- ILO (2019), “[Employment through Labour Intensive Infrastructure in Jordan](#)”

⁹ Briefs on regional and country projects in the infrastructure sector executed with technical assistance from the Employment Intensive Investment Programme in different regions and countries can be accessed [here](#).

15. Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS)

The Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS), developed by the ILO and UNHCR, is a holistic and market-based livelihoods strategy that seeks to apply the “market systems” or “making markets work for the poor” approach to the context of forced displacement.

Traditional approaches to livelihoods typically build the capacity of the target group through vocational training, for example. However, such approaches often run into significant problems as several people may start up the same income-generating activity, in locations where additional market demand might not exist. This can result in a large percentage of new start-ups failing after a short time and may furthermore generate negative spillover effects on members of the host community who are already operating in this sector.

Hence, AIMS is based on the assumption that, in order for people to build sustainable livelihoods, two conditions need to be fulfilled:

- **The existence of opportunities**, either for self-employment if certain goods or services are demanded on the market, or for salaried employment if employers are looking for employees to recruit;
- **The availability of the necessary skills and competencies** to access these existing opportunities.

AIMS seeks to work on both sides in parallel. On the one hand, tailored interventions aim at developing the skills and capacities of the target group to engage with the market, and make use of existing opportunities, for instance through technical or entrepreneurial skills development and strengthening social networks. On the other hand, the ILO’s value chain development approach is used to develop sectors and value chains with the potential to expand and diversify the market opportunities available to the target group as well as the host community.

This is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach; it adjusts to each local context, legal framework and market reality by considering the supporting functions, rules and regulations that refugees and host communities are subjected to in each context. What AIMS proposes, subsequently, is a framework that makes it possible to identify sectors with potential economic opportunities for the refugee target group while at the same time paving the way for demand-side labour market interventions. In doing so, the framework ultimately enables the design of targeted interventions that respond to local market realities and challenges, in identified key value-chains.

As part of its Integrated Livelihood Promotion Plan, the UNHCR has been collaborating with the ILO, and has managed to work with more than 20 UNHCR (diverse) operations helping them in the optimal implementation of the approach, and conducting AIMS assessments resulting in promising pilots and projects. As of mid-2021, AIMS assessments are being implemented directly or indirectly in Peru, Ecuador, Egypt, Sudan, Honduras, Mexico and Costa Rica. Further discussions are ongoing to apply AIMS assessments in Nepal, Aruba and Curacao. The objective of the ILO–UNHCR livelihoods cooperation is to integrate the results and recommendations of the assessments into UNHCR

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livelihoods programming in order to inform and strengthen the impact and sustainability of UNHCR livelihoods interventions for refugees and host communities.

For further details:

- ILO (2019), “[Market Systems Development Interventions for Refugee and Host Communities in Jijiga, Ethiopia](#)”
- ILO and UNHCR (2017), “[Guide to market-based livelihood interventions for refugees](#)”
- ILO, “[Approach to Inclusive Market Systems \(AIMS\) for Refugees and Host Communities](#)”

16. Conflict sensitivity, social cohesion and sustaining peace

The entry of refugees into a limited national labour market can sometimes exacerbate an already challenging situation and put at risk peacebuilding and social cohesion in a host country. Indeed, it can lead to frustration, scapegoating and discrimination, thus hampering refugees’ chances of being able to earn a living and to integrate into the host society. Furthermore, countries that are already experiencing forced displacement face a multiple burden due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 crisis can potentially ignite or exacerbate grievances, discrimination, mistrust and a sense of injustice over access to health services, decent jobs and livelihoods, which are potential conflict drivers that could undermine development, peace and social cohesion.¹⁰

Jobs and decent work for refugee and host communities is complementary to the humanitarian protection agenda and the urgent focus on short-term crisis responses, and one of the most important turnkeys in translating the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus into tangible action.¹¹ The Decent Work Agenda is an essential element of the triple Nexus, whereby employment, decent working conditions and social dialogue can contribute to social cohesion among refugees and host communities. A two-fold approach to a crisis – implemented in collaboration with Member States, tripartite constituents, and international and national partners – can stimulate and assist long-term socio-economic development in an inclusive and rights-based manner, as well as providing an immediate conflict-sensitive response centred on decent work and employment while explicitly contributing to social cohesion and peace.¹²

Decent work, employment and livelihood programmes in forcibly displaced situations should therefore systematically conduct a preliminary peace and conflict analysis to understand how decent work priorities and actions interact with peace and conflict dynamics on the ground.¹³ On this basis, the theory of change illustrated below was developed on the ways decent work and employment programming can contribute to social cohesion and peace by addressing key conflict drivers.

1. Inclusive economic opportunities can increase the opportunity cost of engaging in violence.
2. There is evidence that if conflict is driven by negative perceptions and lack of trust among communities, decent employment programmes may reduce conflict and promote social cohesion by increasing constructive inter-group contact. By bringing refugees and host community together, and strengthening opportunities for dialogue among social groups – including between the government, the workers and employers’ organizations – employment and decent work programmes may break down stereotypes, increase understanding and trust, and enhance social cohesion.

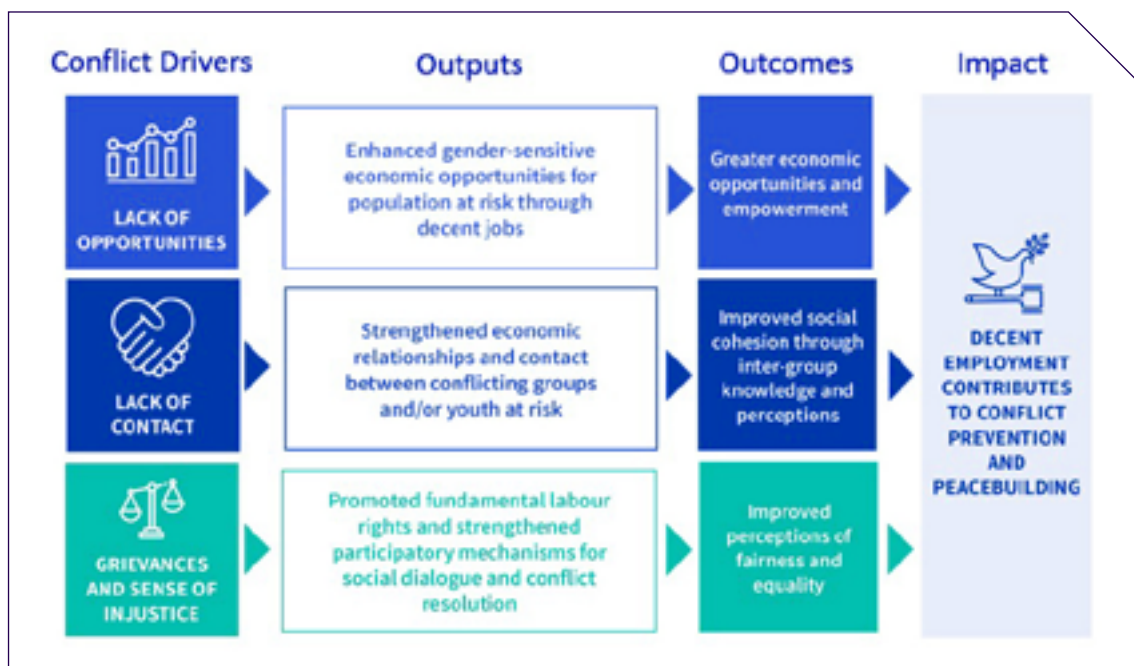
¹⁰ ILO (2002), Handbook, [JPR Guidance: Jobs for Peace and Resilience \(JPR\) A response to COVID-19 in fragile contexts Key recommendations from the JPR Task Team](#).

¹¹ ILO (2020), Employment and decent work for forcibly displaced persons and their host communities, *Compendium of ILO’s lessons learned, emerging good practices and policy guidance*.

¹² ILO and PBSO (2021), Sustaining Peace through employment and decent work, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_771498.pdf.

¹³ It is suggested to use ILO’s [Guidance note: Peace and conflict analysis, a guidance note for ILO’s programming in conflict and fragile contexts](#).

3. Many of today's violent conflicts relate to group-based grievances arising from inequality, non-respect of human and labour rights, exclusion, lack of participatory mechanisms and dialogue, as well as feelings of injustice. In some cases, it is not unemployment, but the experience of exploitative, precarious, informal work – basically non-respect of fundamental rights at work – that spurs grievances. It follows that inclusive and transparent employment and social protection programmes, which aim to improve equality in opportunities and livelihoods (as well as quality and fundamental rights at work) for both communities could reduce the risk of conflict by addressing grievances.



For refugees, the opportunity to access decent work is fundamental to their protection and well-being, to restoring their dignity and life purpose. Being able to access employment, maintain and expand their skills and find a decent job prevents long gaps in education and economic activity. The opportunity to access decent work is integral to the restoration of human dignity and freedom, strengthening resilience, enabling the fulfilment of the right to private and family life and attaining durable solutions and social justice. Furthermore, working together allows for more interaction between refugees and host communities and helps foster a climate of trust and peaceful coexistence.

For further details:

- ILO and UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (2021), “Sustaining Peace through decent work and employment”
- ILO (2021), “Guidance note: Peace and conflict analysis, a guidance note for ILO’s programming in conflict and fragile contexts”
- ILO (2021), “Employment and decent work in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus”
- ILO (2021), “Jobs for Peace and Resilience (JPR): Global flagship programme”
- ILO (2021), “Guidance note: Peace and conflict analysis, a guidance note for ILO’s programming in conflict and fragile contexts”
- ILO (2019), Handbook “how to design, monitor and evaluate peacebuilding results into employment programmes” and motion picture: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/recovery-and-reconstruction/WCMS_823034/lang--en/index.htm
- ILO, “Work, Peace and Resilience”

17. Jobs for Peace and Resilience (JPR)

Through its Jobs for Peace and Resilience (JPR) flagship programme, the ILO contributes to more peaceful and resilient societies through development cooperation projects that promote employment, decent work and social dialogue in fragile situations. The JPR flagship programme was launched in 2015 and later became the main tool for translating the normative guidance provided by Recommendation No. 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience (2017) into tangible action.

The JPR programme adopts a modular approach that combines employment-intensive investment, vocational and entrepreneurial-skills training, employment services, and private-sector and local economic development in a coherent and context-specific manner to create an enabling policy environment for socio-economic recovery. Considerations of how employment and decent work link to peace and resilience are key to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

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Building on the ILO's long-standing experience and added value in promoting employment, decent work and social dialogue in fragile and crisis situations, the JPR focuses on the following key objectives:

- providing direct job creation and income security through employment-intensive investments;
- improving employability through skills development;
- generating decent and productive employment through entrepreneurship, enterprise and cooperative support;
- bridging labour supply and demand through employment services.

The promotion of social dialogue and the ILO's fundamental principles and rights at work, as well as institution-building, form an integral part of the approach, which has been implemented in more than 30 countries across all regions.

Acknowledging the specific challenges and needs that youth and women face in situations of fragility, conflict and disaster, the programme considers them as a primary target group, particularly in forcibly displaced contexts. By enhancing economic opportunities, contact and trust among host communities and forcibly displaced populations, and by addressing grievances and tensions, the JPR aims to reinforce social cohesion, build resilience to future shocks and contribute to sustaining peace.

The implementation of the JPR programme in fragile, disaster- or conflict-affected situations is closely coordinated with other ILO flagship programme concerns, including social protection, child labour and occupational safety and health. Furthermore, strategic partnerships and strong coordination with relevant United Nations agencies, as well as other international organizations and development partners, are critical elements of the programme.

For further details:

- ILO (2016), "[Employment and decent work in situations of fragility, conflict and disaster](#)"
- ILO, "[Jobs for Peace and Resilience \(JPR\): Global flagship programme](#)"

18. Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities (PROSPECTS)

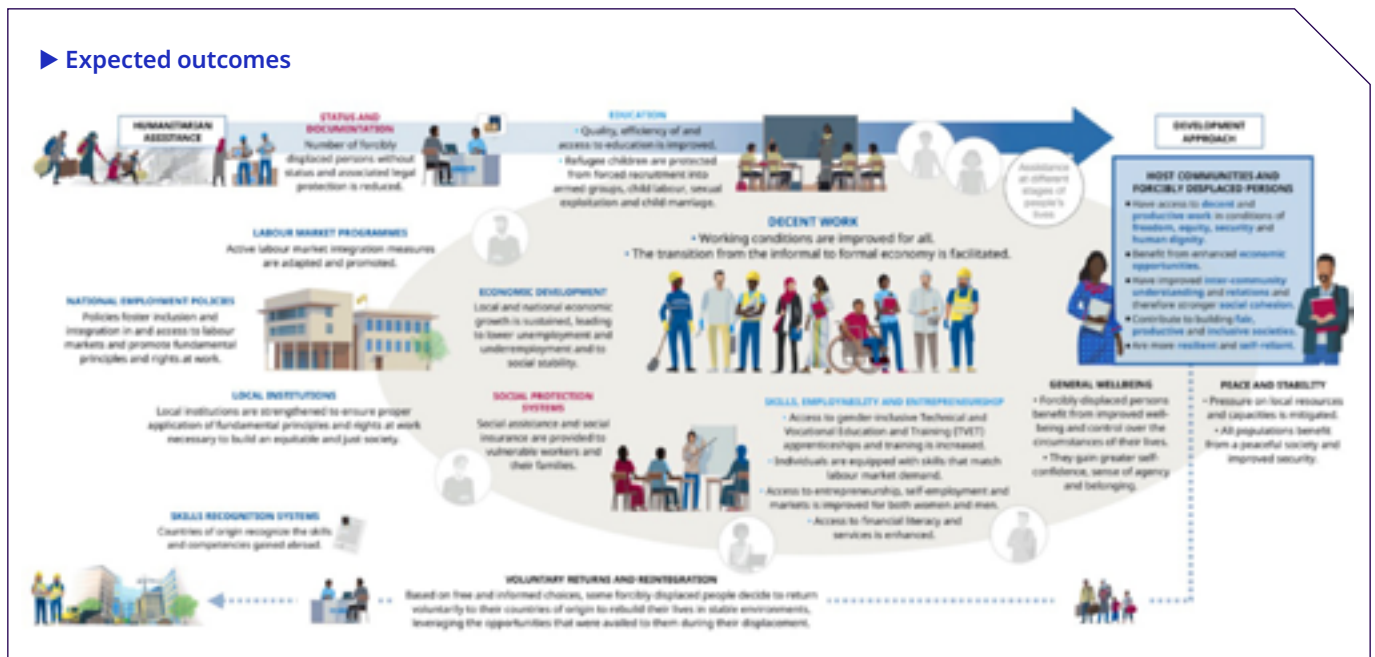
PROSPECTS is an ambitious multilateral partnership initiative launched in 2018 that focuses on improving the access of refugees and their host communities to educational, training, employment and livelihoods opportunities, while strengthening the protection environment. The programme is being implemented in eight countries in the MENA region (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon) and the East/Horn of Africa region (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan).

This innovative partnership, spearheaded by the Government of the Netherlands, brings together the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank and the ILO. It aims to shift the paradigm from a humanitarian to a development approach in responding to forced displacement crises. The programme has emerged as a groundbreaking New Way of Working for multilateral partners in this field, combining and leveraging the mandates, experience and expertise of these five agencies to be more efficient and effective in joint programme design and implementation. Coordinating these joint efforts through multi-annual country, regional and global programmes, the partners direct support to transform the way in which governments and other stakeholders, including the social partners and the private sector, respond to forced displacement crises through, among others:

- fostering an enabling environment for socio-economic inclusion and access to decent work;
- improving access to education, training and protection for vulnerable communities, including women, persons with disabilities and children on the move;
- strengthening the resilience of host communities.

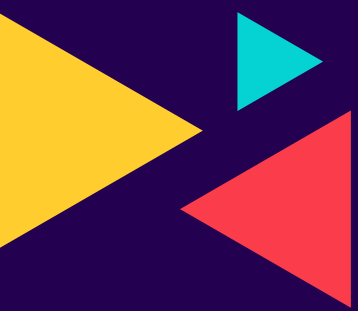
Grounded on results-based and country-led approaches, PROSPECTS aims to develop and implement evidence-based solutions tailored to each local context, while also testing and learning from innovative, operational solutions to the problems faced by host communities and forcibly displaced people, including IDPs. The partners work through a gender-responsive and rights-based integrated approach designed to strengthen labour markets and local economies, and to enhance business development and social protection. The programme also underpins systemic change through support for policy, legislative and regulatory reform, and building the capacity of relevant government and non-government actors to ensure that these reforms lead to positive change on the ground, transforming the lives of refugee and host communities for the better. Building on a truly holistic foundation, PROSPECTS embraces a multi-stakeholder and whole of government and society approach, involving central and local government, social partners and civil society, private sector, academia, host communities and forcibly displaced persons, donors, multilateral and international organizations and the media.

The partnership focuses on three critical pillars of intervention that enable forcibly displaced persons to overcome their specific vulnerabilities and host communities to pursue their own development efforts in transformed environments. These are: education, learning and training; decent work; and protection, including social protection, and legal status. To ensure coherent and mutually reinforcing action, the ILO connects its work under each of these pillars through cross-cutting interventions implemented in close coordination, collaboration and complementarity with the other partners.



For further details:

- Brochure: “Improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities”
- “PROSPECTS webpage”
- Video: “PROSPECTS: Improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities”



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