

Migrants and forcibly displaced people are often in vulnerable and unsafe situations, with limited access to essential services. Sida's support to social protection serves as an efficient tool for inclusion and poverty reduction, to build resilience, social cohesion, and long-term solutions, while linking up with humanitarian efforts and reaching both host population and migrants or displaced persons.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this brief is to highlight migrants<sup>1</sup> and forcibly displaced persons' rights to access social protection, and to show that it is an effective tool to support resilience, inclusion and to reduce poverty in migration contexts. This brief can be used by Sida, Swedish Embassies, humanitarian and development partners working with support in displacement affected communities and societies with migrant populations.

The broad aim of the publication is to give examples of how to expand access to social protection for forcibly displaced populations and migrants. It includes recent Sida contribution examples that illustrate how migrants and forcibly displaced are progressively included in national social protection systems and linked to humanitarian assistance, in order to promote dignity and self-reliance. Finally, the brief argues that durable solutions to forced displacement can be supported by providing access to social protection systems for the whole of society.

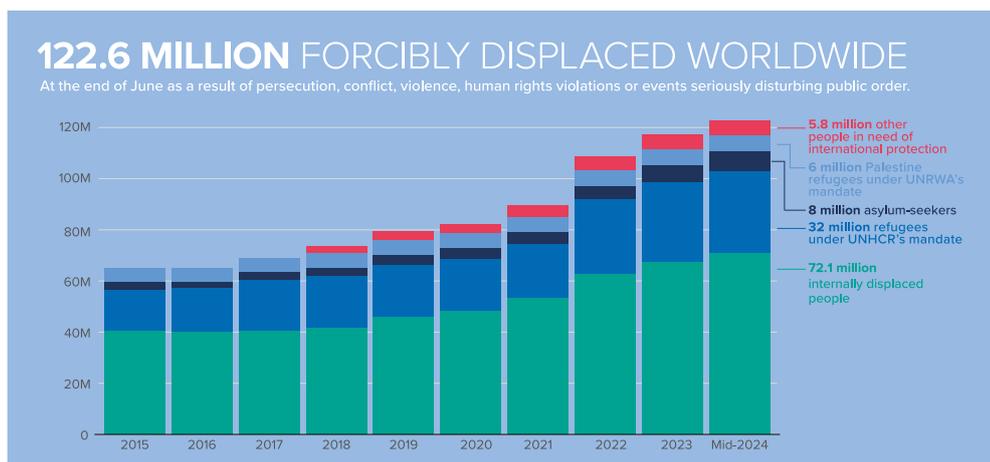
## 2. SWEDISH POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION OBJECTIVES

The Swedish government policy, 'Development assistance for a new era, freedom, empowerment and

sustainable growth', gives priority to 'Strengthened synergies between development assistance and migration policy' as well as 'strengthened synergies between humanitarian, development and peace-building efforts'.<sup>2</sup> Thus, there is an enhanced focus on long-term solutions for migrants, returnees, internally displaced populations (IDPs) and refugees in Swedish development cooperation. In addition, linking humanitarian efforts with long-term support can prevent and reduce the risk of protracted humanitarian crises and promote a more efficient response.

### Support to social protection could play a key role in achieving long-term development goals linked to migration and displacement such as:

- to increase migrants' and displaced enjoyment of rights in host communities, including through improved access to economic livelihoods and to basic public services;
- to strengthen the capacity of host communities in low- and middle-income countries to receive and host migrants and refugees;
- to strengthen the pre-conditions for return and viable reintegration;
- to counter risks and vulnerabilities for host communities, migrants and refugees.



## Social protection - a tool for inclusion and poverty reduction

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) calls for inclusive sustainable development and to 'Leave no one behind'. Target 1.3 states: **Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all**, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.
- Several international instruments recognize **the human right to social security for refugees** and social security standards provide guidance for materializing their equal treatment within national systems (ILO, ISSA and ITCILO 2021; ILO 2024d). Particular attention should be given to extending coverage to previously uncovered categories of the population, such as migrants and displaced populations according to UN (FAO, ILO and UNICEF 2022).
- UN Resolution (2018) on Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration relates in Objective 21(h) that states should: 'Cooperate in facilitating (...) the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants into community life by providing them with **equal access to social protection and services** (...) in order to fully build upon their entrepreneurship, skills and human capital as active members of society and contributors to sustainable development in the country of origin upon return.'
- **Social security**<sup>3</sup> is a basic human right that is protected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and in other international human rights instruments, including the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Extending social protection to all, including migrant workers and their families, is key to; ensure income security for all, reduce poverty and inequality, achieve decent work and reduce vulnerability and social exclusion.<sup>4</sup>
- **Social protection** is a concept used in parallel. It is defined as: "a set of policies and programmes designed to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability throughout the life cycle." It includes for example: benefits for children and families, benefits for maternity, unemployment, employment injury, sickness, old age, disability, survivors, as well as health protection.

### 3. MIGRANTS AND FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS AT RISK OF POVERTY

Migrants and forcibly displaced persons are at record level worldwide<sup>5</sup>. Most refugees and IDPs are found in low- and middle income countries (LMIC) where essential services and safety nets are rare, and the host population may be deprived of such services as well. The multitude of crises, including protracted ones, underscores the urgency of extending the reach of social protection systems or safety nets to include forcibly displaced persons, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons to address poverty.

According to UN Migration (IOM), only 15 per cent of all migrants have equal access as nationals to social protection in the least developed countries (LDCs).<sup>6</sup> Mobile populations often end up in vulnerable and informal employment sectors where social protection systems and insurances are lacking. Migrant domestic worker, who are mostly women, is a specific vulnerable group with limited access to social protection.

Migrants and displaced persons are at risk to be left behind, since many countries are not signatories

of international conventions, or have not translated them into national laws and policies. Even when inclusive laws are in place, the enjoyment of rights varies in practice, often due to political and financial concerns, and due to the limitations of social protection systems. In practice there are several examples of shortcomings. Many social assistance programs require proof of citizenship or residency. Migrants 'en route' or in transit, are often outside of any systems due to the lack of documentation or proof of identification. A stateless person often lack access to essential services and may be excluded from government social safety nets.

### 4. SIDA'S CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESULTS

Social protection or social security can be delivered in various forms and systems and in some cases linking up with humanitarian efforts for displaced people. Some examples of Sida development cooperation illustrates different methods such as; capacity support to statistics; innovation of digital tools for the access to services; cash transfer programmes; inclusive child benefits; and safety nets for resilience in crisis.

### **Regional level migration statistics in Africa enables social protection for migrant workers**

The Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP) has strengthened the capacity for statistical information and analysis, so that the East and Central African Social Security Association (ECASSA) now includes a migrant module in their questionnaire. This set-up enables the region to: (1) produce comparable statistical data between the social security agencies at national and regional levels; (2) inform policy making and support the administration and delivery of social protection, and coordination of social security; (3) support countries in monitoring progress towards social protection related targets.<sup>7</sup>

### **A mobile app provides access to governmental services to vulnerable groups in Ukraine**

In Ukraine, Sida supported UNDP to develop public digital services to help citizens, IDPs, veterans, low-income families, and other vulnerable groups to store their personal documents in a single portal called eDopomoga through which government services, including social protection, can be accessed.<sup>8</sup> This service has a whole of society approach and has reached millions of people. It was rewarded a nomination for best innovation from International Trade Council 2022.<sup>9</sup>

### **Cash-transfer enables increased school attendance and well-being for refugee children in Jordan**

Sida's support to UNICEF's cash transfer programme "Hajati" enables vulnerable girls and boys, irrespective of their nationality and registration status, to stay at school, which prevents child labour and child marriage. An impact evaluation found that children are now more likely to go to school; less likely to engage in economic activities, including exposure to work-related hazards; less likely to show symptoms of depression and report low self-esteem.<sup>10</sup>

### **Child-benefits meet the needs of refugees and host communities in the West Nile region, Uganda**

In Uganda, World Food Programme (WFP) implements a pilot project with the intention to strengthen resilience through a child benefit in the West Nile region, which hosts more than one million refugees. The implementation takes place through two parallel sources, where Uganda's government provides child benefits to the host population, and WFP assists the refugee population.<sup>11 12</sup> This is an example of a coordinated so called 'twin-track model'.



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### **Safety Nets include IDPs and host communities in Ethiopian crisis affected communities**

In Ethiopia a broad social protection programme implemented by UNICEF has been gradually adjusted to better respond to shocks, such as conflict, COVID-19, climate, etc.<sup>13</sup> Today, an effective Safety Nets programme is established. UNICEF and the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs are reaching out to IDPs and the host population in drought and conflict-affected regions, such as Afar, Amhara and Oromia, and provides resilience to the most vulnerable.<sup>14</sup>

## **5. DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO DISPLACEMENT THROUGH ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION**

Social protection is a right but, also a tool which proves to be increasingly important for poverty reduction in low- and medium income countries, as well as in migration or displacement contexts. Durable solutions to forced displacement can be achieved by providing access to social protection systems for people in need.

### Systems strengthening

Integrating migrant groups into national social protection programs requires system adaptations and increased capacities, and can be challenging for new, weak or limited social protection systems.

- Identify how the system can be strengthened, including through technical and innovative solutions.
- Use coordinated so called twin track models for shock-responsive social protection, particularly in fragile contexts.
- Avoid the establishment of parallel systems, and focus on a whole of society approach.

### Analysis, data use and -generation

Data coverage is generally limited and there is a strong need to invest in statistics and research on social protection for migrant workers and forcibly displaced to inform policy and to monitor progress.

- Include displaced (refugees and IDPs) and migrants systematically in research, data collection systems and use available statistics to address poverty and inclusion (rights).

### Policy measures

Long-term policy responses require inclusive social protection systems that provide more sustainable

protection of refugees, IDPs and migrant workers and their families.

- Policy measures include the ratification and implementation of international standards; building national social protection floors; promote equality of treatment between nationals and non-nationals; improve fiscal space for social protection.
- Incorporate refugees and IDPs into national social protection policy and planning, including in analysis of their specific needs.

### Sustainable financing

External financing will be needed in the building and strengthening of inclusive social protection systems, especially for the inclusion of additional refugee populations in national systems.<sup>15</sup>

- In countries where there are barriers for host government to include refugees in the systems, the humanitarian and development funds can fill gaps temporarily<sup>16</sup>.
- Support multi-year financing including pooling and layering of finance, and multi-sector approaches to include migrants, forcibly displaced persons and host population in social protection with a whole of society approach with equal access for displaced, migrants and host communities.

### Related Sida publications

- Brief on MDPA Migration and Displacement [MDPA Migration and Displacement](#)
- Brief on HRBA displacement and migration [Human Rights Based Approach and Migration](#)
- Brief on HRBA and social protection [Human Rights Based Approach and Social Protection](#)
- Social Protection Guidance Note [Faktablad Social protection Guidance Note](#)
- Adaptive and Shock Responsive Social Protection [Faktablad Adaptive and Shock Responsive](#)
- Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus – Guidance Note for [Humanitarian-Development- Peace Nexus](#)

## Endnotes

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- 1 A migrant moves within a country or crossing international borders for a variety of reasons.
- 2 [Development-assistance-for-a-new-era--freedom-empowerment-and-sustainable-growth-accessible.pdf \[government.se\]](#)
- 3 The Human Rights declaration use the concept 'social security', while Agenda 2030 has introduced 'social protection'.
- 4 [Human Rights Based Approach and Social Protection | Sida](#)[Human Rights Based Approach and Social Protection | Sida](#)
- 5 "For the 12th consecutive year the number of refugees and displaced people has grown - from 114-120 million", Global Trends Report 2023, UNHCR, June 2024.
- 6 IOM Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) countries
- 7 AU's home page [Labour Migration Governance partners in Africa pledge to strengthen cooperation | African Union](#)
- 8 Government Portal, n.d.; Ukraine Now, 2023
- 9 eDopomoga won the International Trade Council's highest award "Technical Innovation of the Year, 2022.
- 10 By the UNICEF Office of Research, Innocenti, [The Difference a Dollar a Day Can Make: Lessons from UNICEF Jordan's Hajati cash transfer programme](#), UNICEF Jordan and UNICEF Office Research, August 2020.
- 11 Sida's strategy report, Uganda 2023
- 12 WFP's website 2023 ['I feel like the proudest mother in the world': WFP in Uganda | World Food Programme](#)
- 13 Sida's webpage 2023, [Sida's work in Ethiopia | Sida](#)
- 14 Sida's strategy report Ethiopia, 2023
- 15 [Key findings: social protection responses to forced displacement | ODI: Think change](#)
- 16 [SPACE\\_Social protection for migrants and refugees.pdf](#)