



Forced Displacement Literature Review¹

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¹ The JDC Literature Review provides summaries of recently published research to encourage the exchange of ideas on topics related to forced displacement. The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in the literature included in this review are entirely those of their authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Joint Data Center, UNHCR, the World Bank, the Executive Directors of the World Bank or the governments they represent. For convenience, the literature review contains links to websites operated by third parties. The Joint Data Center and its affiliate organizations do not represent or endorse these sites or the content, services and products they may offer, and do not guarantee the accuracy or reliability of any information, data, opinions, advice or statements provided on these sites.



“Before You Were Born, Your Mother Ran” Displacement and disillusion in south-east Myanmar

Chloe Sydney


Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre’s Invisible Majority Thematic Series, December 2019

<https://www.internal-displacement.org/.../documents/201912-myanmar-cross-border-report.pdf>

Around 162,000 people, predominantly ethnic Karen, remain internally displaced in southeast Myanmar due to armed conflict between Myanmar’s army (Tatmadaw) and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), one of the longest ongoing ethnic conflicts in the world. Violent counterinsurgency operations have included direct attacks against civilians, persecution and forced recruitment. Despite a nationwide ceasefire agreement signed in 2015, clashes continue, leading to new displacement. This study **examines the relationship between internal displacement, cross-border movements and durable solutions in southeast Myanmar**, focusing on drivers of displacement, priorities and preconditions for voluntary return, and obstacles and opportunities for durable solutions. The analysis is based on a preliminary desk review, a (non-representative) survey and qualitative interviews with IDPs and returning refugees in Myanmar, and refugees in Thailand (primarily from the Karen ethnic group).

Key findings:

- **Multiple displacements precede cross-border movements.** A third of survey respondents had been displaced more than five times, often hiding in the jungle before returning to their homes. Cross-border movement is often a last resort; nearly half of the refugees and returning refugees surveyed were internally displaced before crossing into Thailand. Barriers to cross border movements include lack of safety en route to Thailand and the cost of transportation.
- **Aid has been cut to IDP camps, but barriers to return remain.** An estimated 100,000 IDPs are living in forced relocation sites (resembling villages) in government-controlled areas. Most other IDPs are thought to be hiding in the jungle. A minority of IDPs in southeast Myanmar lives in camps. Ee Tu Hta IDP camp hosts approximately 2,400 IDPs. A decline in donor support has affected the provision of food aid and services. Most surveyed IDPs intend to return to their areas of origin in the future, despite better safety in Ee Tu Hta. Insecurity continues to be a key barrier to return.
- **Refugees in Thailand face protection challenges and lack of recognition.** Around 95,000 refugees from Myanmar live in nine refugee camps in Thailand. In addition, an estimated 50 percent of undocumented migrants from Myanmar in Thailand may also



have grounds to be recognized as refugees. Refugees and undocumented migrants are not permitted to work in Thailand, but many find work informally, exposing them to exploitation from employers and threats of deportation. Decreased donor support is contributing to a reduction in monthly rice rations and worsening service provision in the camps, which may be encouraging potentially premature returns to Myanmar. Conflict and violence continue to be the main barriers to return.

- **Expectations regarding refugee returns have not been met.** Positive steps towards democratization in Myanmar in 2012 led the international community to expect rapid returns. However, only around 19,000 refugees have returned from Thailand's refugee camps; the overwhelming majority of these returns have been spontaneous (without assistance). Only 729 refugees have returned through UNHCR's facilitated voluntary repatriation operation. Impediments to facilitated returns include concern about the breakdown of the ceasefire agreement and fear of providing personal details to the government.

Measuring the Costs of Internal Displacement on IDPs And Hosts: Case Studies in Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya And Somalia

Christelle Cazabat

IDMC Thematic Series: The ripple effect: economic impacts of internal displacement, January 2020

<https://www.internal-displacement.org/research-areas/economic-impacts-of-displacement>

This report **presents the first results of IDMC's standardized survey for assessing the economic impacts of internal displacement on livelihoods, housing, health, education and security of IDPs and host communities.** Data from the survey and key informant interviews are used to compare the situation of IDPs and hosts before and after displacement. The four case studies illustrate diverse internal displacement situations:

- In Eswatini (Swaziland), surveyed IDPs were displaced for less than a year by storms, and remained close to their area of origin, often in the same community.
- In Ethiopia, surveyed IDPs were forced out of the Somali Regional State by violence and received support from the Ethiopian government to settle in the Oromia region.
- In Kenya, surveyed IDPs in Nakuru County have been displaced for more than a decade, following the post-election violence that occurred in 2007 and 2008.
- In Somalia, surveyed IDPs left their rural homes because of drought in 2017 or 2018 to move to the capital city of Mogadishu.

Key findings:

- In Eswatini, the results suggest limited economic impacts of internal displacement, apart from a perception of reduced purchasing power and signs of psychosocial distress for both IDPs and hosts. The financial costs associated with housing were effectively mitigated for the beneficiaries of the National Disaster Management Agency's support system, which provided them with temporary shelter and aid to rebuild or repair their homes. Most IDPs found refuge within their own community, sharing a house with acquaintances while their homes were repaired. This allowed them to continue their income-generating activities, and use the same healthcare facilities and schools.
- Apart from a positive impact on perceived security, displacement in Ethiopia has led to a deterioration in livelihoods, housing conditions and health of most IDPs. Displaced children have improved access to school, but numerous barriers to quality education persist. Surveyed hosts do not seem to be greatly affected by the arrival of IDPs, apart from a rise in prices and deterioration in the mental wellbeing of surveyed men.
- In Kenya, results show poorer conditions for IDPs. Interviews link the deterioration of livelihoods, housing conditions, education and health with displacement. Security appears to be the only area where IDPs are better off than before they were displaced.
- In Somalia, displacement brought some improvements in access to educational and health facilities and in perceived physical and mental health. It also came with reduced access to work and a lower income for IDPs, although surveyed hosts experienced the opposite. More than a third of surveyed hosts reported reduced access to healthcare and a deterioration in their perceived physical and mental health since the arrival of IDPs. This is likely linked with overcrowding of local health facilities.

Iraq's Universal Public Distribution System: Utilization and Impacts During Displacement

Lokendra Phadera, Dhiraj Sharma, and Matthew Wai-Poi


World Bank Policy Research Working Paper WPS 9155, February 2020

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33360>

This paper **examines whether Iraq's Public Distribution System, a universal food subsidy program, has mitigated the welfare loss of forcibly displaced households following the most recent wave of violence and displacement in 2014.** The analysis is based on data from the 2017-18 Rapid Welfare Monitoring Survey (SWIFT).

Main findings:

- **Displaced households fare poorly across all measures of welfare compared to non-displaced households.** IDPs have lower daily calorie intake, are more likely to face



hunger, and are 18 percentage points more likely to be poor (relative to the poverty rate of 15 percent for the non-displaced). Displaced households that are not poor are 17 percentage points more likely to fall below the poverty line, compared to non-displaced households. Displaced households report that their current living conditions are far worse than before January 2014, the onset of the latest wave of displacement.

- **Access to PDS plays an important role in mitigating welfare loss.** Compared to displaced households that have lost access to PDS, displaced households that continue to receive PDS benefits have: higher food and non-food expenditures, and consequently are less likely to be poor; significantly lower vulnerability to poverty; and higher calorie intake and therefore more food secure. Although they have a greater total calorie intake, PDS beneficiaries consume significantly fewer calories from non-ration food than displaced non-beneficiaries. This suggests that the constant supply of ration food may ease the strain of fulfilling households' calorie requirements, freeing up resources that can be diverted to other needs.
- **The PDS program alone is not sufficient to alter an IDP's overall economic outlook.** There is no statistical association between an IDP's subjective perception of their overall economic situation and having access to the ration program. This suggests that forced displacement distresses one's economic condition to such an extent that the food ration program compensates some of the welfare loss and reduces vulnerability, but is unable to reinstate IDPs to their previous level of wellbeing.

The authors conclude that **the PDS program is significant in fulfilling households' basic calorie and food requirements even during crisis for both displaced and non-displaced households.** However, access to PDS remains elusive for many displaced Iraqis. 14 percent of displaced households did not receive a ration of any kind even once in the 12 months preceding the survey. Even those IDPs receiving some PDS benefits do not receive the full benefits that they are entitled to.


Understanding Decisions Made on Asylum Applications in Host Countries

Ismael Issifou

World Bank Policy Research Working Paper WPS 9153, February 2020

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33358>

This paper **examines the political and economic factors explaining the processing of individual asylum applications and their outcomes.** The author considers heterogeneity in terms of efficiency (if procedures for status recognition are fast or slow), generosity (the number of favorable decisions on asylum claims), and the type of protection granted (full



refugee status or other forms of protection). The analysis is based on a panel data set constructed from UNHCR's data on individual asylum claims and decisions from 2000 to 2017.

Key findings:

- During election years in OECD countries, there is an increase in the number of applications processed (total decisions) together with an increase in the number of asylum claims rejected, i.e. more efficiency at the expense of favorable decisions on individual asylum applications.
- Political polarization in OECD countries leads to fewer applications processed, decreases the number of applications rejected, and increases the complementary forms of protection granted to asylum seekers.
- No evidence found of election years and political polarization having an effect on asylum claims in low and middle-income countries.
- Applying for asylum in neighboring countries increases the number of favorable decisions of any kind made on asylum claims and reduces the number of applications rejected. Distance shows the opposite effect, being negatively and significantly associated with asylum applications approved.
- The choice of destination of asylum applications based on the economic size of host countries appears to be inefficient because GDP in host countries is negatively and significantly associated with the number of applications processed and the number of favorable decisions, i.e. these countries are less efficient and less generous in their approval policies.
- To a lesser extent, labor market conditions matter, sound fiscal policy is relevant (fiscal crises have no significant effect on the type of decisions made, but are negatively associated with the number of applications processed), and government expenditure over GDP does not favor full recognition of asylum applications.


Refugee Camp Population Estimates Using Automated Feature Extraction

Brandon Green and Justine I. Blanford

Proceedings of the 53rd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, 2020

<https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10125/64009>

There is a growing trend in the use of aerial and satellite images to derive estimates of displaced populations in camps. High-resolution satellite imagery can be used to map physical structures in refugee and IDP camps, including changes to the number and type of



these structures over time. Manual and automated feature extraction are two methods that can be used to map physical structures in refugee and IDP camps to support population estimates and geospatial analysis. Population estimates can be calculated by multiplying the number of dwellings by the estimated number of people per building, by multiplying the rooftop areas by the estimated average number of people per covered area, or by dividing the rooftop area by the estimated average covered area per person.

The authors of this paper **develop a toolkit and workflow that can be used to automatically calculate estimates of displaced populations in camps** based on feature information derived from an established automated extraction method. For the purpose of this study, the Rohingya refugee crisis was used, focusing on areas in and around existing refugee communities in two main refugee settlements, Kutupalong and Nayapara, in Bangladesh. Population estimates for each of the refugee camps were determined by: (a) identifying building features; and then using these features to (b) estimate the camp population based on the total area of the building features and UNHCR 'covered area per person' statistics. Accuracy of population estimates was determined by comparing the population estimates from the tool with those recorded by UNHCR for each camp.


This study demonstrates the **potential scalable and transferable benefits of automated feature extraction methods**, as the toolkit functioned as designed. A benefit of this method is the average processing time for each camp was 30 minutes compared to hours using manual extraction as demonstrated in other studies. However, the accuracy of automated tools using automated feature extraction methods rely on well-defined classifier definition files (used to classify pixels or group of pixels into different roof types and non-building features based on their spectral, textual or spatial properties). This study highlights the difficulty of developing well-defined classifier definition files that are geographically and temporally transferable.

How Business Can Invest in the Future of the Rohingya and Host Community In Bangladesh

Irene Yuan Sun, John Speakman, and Cindy Huang

Center for Global Development (CGD) and the Tent Partnership for Refugees, December 2019

<https://www.cgdev.org/publication/how-business-can-invest-future-rohingya-and-host-community-bangladesh>



This brief **presents the background to the Rohingya crisis and how it is affecting Bangladesh, why business should get involved, what investment and sourcing opportunities exist, and what next steps for interested businesses could be.** The authors argue that businesses have an important role to play because their involvement has the potential to shape how the Government of Bangladesh treats refugees; by investing in the local area, businesses can create new jobs for both refugees and Bangladeshis, improving the welfare of both groups.

The authors identify four viable areas for business investment/procurement in Cox's Bazar, based on interviews with businesses and business groups, technical experts, and government officials. These include:

- **Clean energy.** The Government of Bangladesh has an ambitious target of sourcing 30 percent of Bangladesh's energy mix from renewable means by 2041. Cox's Bazar has strong natural potential for solar and wind power production. The Government of Bangladesh is already conducting tenders for renewable energy production in Cox's Bazar. There could be useful linkages to ongoing efforts by humanitarian actors to train refugees and host communities in solar panel installation and repair.
- **Fish, shrimp, and seafood.** With its long coastline and natural water resources, Cox's Bazar is an area naturally endowed for fish and other seafood production. There is opportunity to invest across the value chains in both aquaculture and shrimp production.
- **Fruits such as mango and pineapple.** Cox's Bazar is ecologically suitable for the production of high-quality mangoes, pineapples, coconuts, honey, and other high value agri-products. Boosting agri-business, particularly processing, would be a promising way forward.
- **Handicrafts, specialized clothing, and home goods.** The Rohingya community has a long history of producing high quality and intricate handicrafts, including carved wooden objects, embroidery, and other labor-intensive crafts. BRAC's Aarong social enterprise is well established and runs a supply chain spanning 65,000 rural artisans to well-performing retail outlets in large cities in the country.

In addition to exploring the investment and sourcing opportunities outlined above, businesses can support vocational training opportunities, work with policymakers, and support efforts of humanitarian agencies.

Turkey's Education Policies towards Syrian Refugees: A Macro-level Analysis


K. Onur Unutulmaz

This study **discusses the transformation of Turkey's education policies towards Syrian refugees**. The author analyzes education policies towards refugees in countries hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees and identifies five common challenges: (1) the language barrier is an impediment to accessing education (except in Jordan where the schools teach in Arabic); (2) bullying, discrimination and hostility towards refugee children are obstacles to children enrolling/staying in school; (3) resource gaps, including funding, physical infrastructure and human resources; (4) coordination problems due to multiple state and non-state actors at the local, national and international levels; and (5) the unique context and dynamics in each situation which militates against the application of a single policy in all contexts.

Turkey's approach to the education of Syrians in the country has evolved from one characterized by almost complete neglect and a *laissez-faire* attitude with respect to education provided by various civil society actors to one defined by a state strategy of full integration. This happened in three overlapping stages:

- A *laissez-faire* attitude towards community-based education, shaped by a vision of temporariness (2011-2014). Education provided to Syrians was in Arabic, and therefore did not create any language barrier. The curriculum and teaching materials were not centrally controlled.
- A mixed education model under strict government control with extensive involvement from local, national and international NGOs, shaped by growing security concerns about the increasing number of Syrians and by the emerging realization of the strong likelihood of their long-term presence in Turkey (2014–present).
- A strategy aiming to fully integrate all Syrians into the Turkish formal education system, shaped by the growing realization that at least a significant part of the Syrian population in Turkey will be permanent (2016–2018/2019 onwards).

In explaining why such a radical transformation has taken place in the education policies towards Syrians, three factors appear to be the most significant: (a) the general perception of and political vision for Syrian refugees by the Turkish state—education policies are both a manifestation of and an instrument through which this political vision is materialized and declared; (b) the recognition of the close relationship between education policies and the prospects of integrating Syrians socially, culturally and economically into Turkish society; and (c) security concerns at national as well as local levels.



While the current strategy of complete integration of Syrians into formal education system is positive, it also brings about a number of significant challenges including: the difficulty of securing the necessary additional human resources, physical infrastructure and finances; the structure and existing problems of Turkey's national education system; the dominant emphasis on cultural homogeneity in building a national identity and its mistrust of ethnic and cultural diversity; the lack of a comprehensive immigration and integration policy; the increasing securitization and politicization of the issue of Syrian refugees; and resistance on the part of Syrian refugees arising from fears of assimilation and the importance they attach to the Arabic language.

Building Inter-Ethnic Cohesion in Schools: An Intervention on Perspective-Taking

Sule Alan, Ceren Baysan, Mert Gumren, Elif Kubilay

Human Capital and Economic Opportunity Global Working Group (HCEO), Working Paper, January 2020

<https://hceconomics.uchicago.edu/research/working-paper/building-inter-ethnic-cohesion-schools-intervention-perspective-taking>

Research has shown that perspective-taking (a cognitive process of viewing a situation from the perspective of another person) is associated with lower social aggression, higher trust, and social cooperation. It is also related to being able to analyze social situations through slow deliberations (weighing pros and cons before action), which has been shown to reduce crime and violent behavior in various contexts. This paper **presents an experimental evaluation of an educational program in southeastern Turkey that aims to build social cohesion in schools by developing perspective-taking ability in children**. The program was implemented in schools where the ethnic composition has changed rapidly due to the influx of refugee children, which is perceived by host communities to have had a detrimental effect on schools by increasing peer violence, and creating visible ethnic segregation in schools. The program was implemented as a cluster randomized controlled trial covering around 7,000 children (18 percent of whom were refugees), aged 8-12, from 80 elementary schools. 40 schools were randomly selected to implement the program in the 2018-19 academic year, involving a full-year curricular module to be covered by teachers for at least 3 hours per week.

Key results:

- **The program was highly effective in lowering high intensity peer violence and victimization in school grounds**, as measured via diary logs completed by school administrators.
- **The program increased the likelihood of forming inter-ethnic friendship ties, thereby reducing ethnic segregation in the classroom.** Treated children (refugees and hosts) were significantly less likely to be socially excluded and more likely to receive emotional and academic support from their classmates. These effects were particularly strong for refugee children: refugee children in treated schools were 7 percentage points more likely to form a friendship tie with a host child and 12 and 10 percentage points more likely to receive emotional and academic support from host classmates, compared to refugee children in untreated schools.
- **There were also significant improvements in prosocial behaviors of children**, measured by incentivized games. Treated children showed more trust and reciprocity towards their classmates as well as towards anonymous peers outside of their schools. They also showed higher altruistic tendencies towards anonymous recipients and positively discriminated in favor of refugees in donating parts of their endowments in a dictator game. This heightened prosociality was welfare improving in terms of the payoffs children received in incentivized games.
- **Overall, the program appears to have been effective in building a cohesive classroom environment, and refugees were the primary beneficiaries of this environment.** In addition to facilitating their social inclusion, treated children achieved better test scores in Turkish language tests.

The analysis suggests that **these results emerge because of improvements in children's perspective-taking abilities**. The program also improves children's ability to self-regulate impulsivity (ability to weigh the pros and cons of a prospective act), which may have also contributed to reductions in peer violence and victimization. The authors conclude that well-targeted educational strategies can go a long way in building social capital, even in socio-politically difficult circumstances. Additionally, developing perspective-taking ability in children is possible through educational tools and teacher training.


Refugees and social capital: Evidence from Northern Lebanon

Anselm Hager and Justin Valasek

WZB Discussion Paper, No. SP II 2020-301

<https://cms.wzb.eu/en/research/markets-and-choice/economics-of-change/research-articles>

This paper **examines impact of refugee settlement on social cohesion in Northern Lebanon**, a developing country with a history of ethnic and sectarian conflict, where



refugees represent about 25 percent of the population. Lebanon captures two important features of refugee migration in developing countries that are different from the ‘developed world’: (1) arriving refugees may have an initial social distance that is closer to the native population, and (2) initial political and social institutions may be less robust. The authors focus on the impact of refugee settlement on prosocial behavior such as trust, altruism, cooperation and reciprocity between social groups. They consider the impact of the refugee crisis on social capital between three social groups: the native population (Lebanese), the new refugee population (Syrians), and an established migrant population (Palestinians). They examine two channels through which proximity to new refugees impacts social capital: a “global” impact as the country as a whole reacts to the challenge of settling new refugees, and a “local” impact as individuals react to an influx of refugees in their local communities.

The analysis is based on survey responses from 1,000 Lebanese respondents from districts in the immediate north of Lebanon (Akkar, Hermel and north-eastern Baalbek). The authors employ an instrumental variable approach to address the potential endogeneity of refugees’ settlement choices, using altitude as the instrumental variable. Key results:

- Respondents that are primed with the refugee crisis (i.e. first asked several questions about the impact of the refugee crisis on their families and the country) respond by reporting lower levels of social capital towards Syrian refugees, suggesting **a negative global impact of the refugee crisis on social capital**.
- The priming effect on social capital is driven entirely by respondents with no local exposure to refugees.
- Proximity to refugees is positively related to natives’ reported measures of trust and prosocial preferences towards refugees. **The positive effect of contact dominates conflict** between natives and Syrian refugees in areas of co-habitation.
- **Proximity to recent refugees has a positive spillover effect on other migrant groups:** Lebanese natives in closer proximity to Syrian refugees also report higher levels of social capital towards Palestinian refugees.

The authors conclude that, while developing countries may have less stable political and social institutions, **the potential negative impact of a refugee crisis is mitigated a close physical proximity to refugees, which results in a higher degree of positive contact.**