

Gender Dimensions of Forced Displacement Operational Note

# Job Opportunities for Women in Displacement Settings

Jeni Klugman, Giselle M. Bello



GENDER DIMENSIONS OF  
FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Understanding Inequality Through Data & Analysis



WORLD BANK GROUP



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# 1. Introduction

As part of its commitment to addressing gender inequality, the World Bank undertook a broad research program on the [Gender Dimensions of Forced Displacement \(GDFD\)](#).<sup>1</sup> The GDFD research program produced nine detailed country investigations and three multi-country papers covering seventeen countries, using existing data and a portfolio of research approaches with analyses at individual and household levels to uncover gender links with poverty, livelihoods, norms, and gender-based violence (GBV) in a range of displacement settings.

The GDFD research program has deepened understanding about key gender disparities among forcibly displaced people, with a focus on poverty, livelihoods, social norms, and GBV. The findings cast new light on the interaction of gender inequality and forced displacement. For example, women's paid work becomes more critical for family incomes during displacement, especially for female-headed forcibly displaced households. However, women are also often limited in their ability to access labor markets in the host community—not least due to care responsibilities, and also often due to the lack of formal documentation for work and security concerns. Even when they are working outside the home, their economic activities are often low status and poorly remunerated.

The purpose of this note is to synthesize key findings relating to women's job opportunities in displacement settings, and outline ways to overcome constraints through policy reforms and program design. The note will highlight emerging good practice from the World Bank's Refugee Window. It complements [several GDFD thematic and policy notes](#), covering the topics of data for the analysis of the gender dimensions of forced displacement, poverty, and GBV (Hanmer, Klugman, and Ortiz 2022). The broader Building the Evidence on Forced Displacement program supported research on forced displacement in education, health, jobs, and social protection (World Bank 2022a). The research on jobs focused on the cost-effectiveness of jobs programs, finding that capital grants tend to be more cost effective than training (Barberis, Brouwer et al. 2022).

This note largely draws on the results of the GDFD research to review evidence about women's paid work in displacement settings, and outline evidence on the ways that policy reforms and program design can overcome the constraints faced by displaced women. The findings suggest that expanding economic opportunities for displaced women by, for example, offering safe and accessible education and training, reproductive health services, and affordable childcare, and lifting legal barriers for working women, can be key to addressing high rates

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<sup>1</sup> With support from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office; and support from the State and Peacebuilding Fund (SPF) for knowledge dissemination.

of poverty among the displaced. While some of the themes are common across refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), there are some key differences, in particular the right to work.

The next section reviews the extent and nature of paid work opportunities for displaced women, then more specifically reviews constraints to inform the discussion of policy and program responses.

## 2. Overview of employment, earning opportunities, and constraints

This section reviews gaps in paid work in a broader context, before highlighting findings from the GDFD research. The upshot is that displaced individuals typically have lower employment rates than their host counterparts, and the employment situation among the displaced is generally worse for women relative to men.

A recent World Bank evidence review found that forcibly displaced people face obstacles in the labor market, compared to hosts and other migrants (Schuettler and Caron 2020). Refugees often face major legal obstacles, and the barriers confronting both refugees and IDPs often include the loss of assets, lack or non-recognition of skills, language problems, negative impacts of forced displacement on their physical health and socio-emotional well-being, the lack of social networks, and discrimination. This was confirmed in an evidence review published by the Joint Data Center Research Digest, highlighting that while refugees' right to work is protected by international law, this is often violated in practice. The review of academic research on the effects of these policies and practices shows, as expected, significant harm to refugees' living conditions in most contexts, and that most segments of the host communities benefit little and may in fact be harmed by restrictions on refugees' work (Ginn 2023).

Empirical analyses published by [Georgetown University and the International Rescue Committee](#) examining gender gaps in employment rates and pay among refugees and the host populations in Turkey, Uganda, Lebanon, Jordan, the United States, and Germany expose systematic differences in rates of employment and often large gender gaps. The comparison of gender gaps across multiple domains (employment, access to cell phones, and financial inclusion, among others) found that gaps are greatest for employment, with rates for displaced men at least 90 percent higher than for displaced women, peaking at 150 percent in Nigeria where approximately 36 percent of displaced men are employed compared to about 15 percent of displaced women. This reflects the broader fact that labor markets around the world remain highly segregated by gender, and compounded by language barriers, lower literacy rates, unpaid care responsibilities, and gender norms that limit refugee women's prospects. As explained further below, the GDFD research found that in some contexts displaced women had higher employment rates than host women but were consistently more likely to be working in lower paying jobs.

**Figure 1: Gender Gaps between Displaced Women and Host Community Men Are Often Largest for Employment**



Source: Klugman 2021.

Note: Gaps show the percentage gap in favor of host countrymen. For Ethiopia, the employment gap is 266 percent, and the financial inclusion gap is 1,063 percent.

Comparisons between displaced women and host countrymen expose even starker gaps, highlighting the cumulative effects of displacement and gender inequality (Figure 1). In Ethiopia, for example, almost three times the share of host countrymen are employed relative to refugee women.

Yet, it is also true that new settings may also broaden opportunities for refugee women. A 2018 joint report by the London School of Economics and Women for Women International on Iraq found that conflict and displacement can increase access to livelihood activities for female refugees (Kaya and Luchtenberg 2018).

## Findings on livelihoods and economic opportunities from the GDFD research

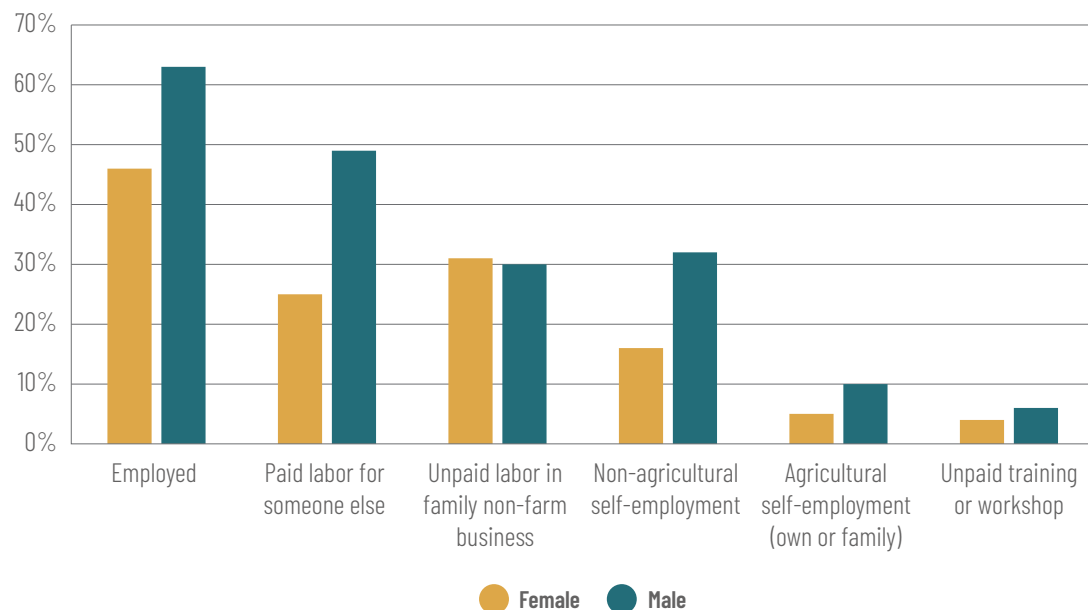
While the results are context specific, gender gaps in access to economic opportunities emerge from the GDFD research in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Sudan, for both refugees and IDPs. The findings underline that displaced women face greater barriers to labor market participation than displaced men, although the identified constraints vary across settings. For example, the lack of access to land emerges as important in Ethiopia, while the lack of education is significant

in Ethiopia and Darfur. Interestingly in Darfur, displaced women were more likely to work than women who had not been displaced, though they were still more likely to be poor.

There are significant gender gaps among the displaced in Darfur: the share of displaced women in paid work was only about one-half that of displaced men (25 versus 49 percent, respectively). Compared to IDP women, IDP men engage in more activities, work more hours per week and months per year in their main activity, and are less likely to have their main activity in agriculture (38 percent women vs 32 percent men) (Bruck and Stojetz 2021). IDP women were more likely to work outside the home than non-IDP women, but are poorer, on average. For men, there is no such difference in employment between IDPs and non-IDPs. Displaced women are much less likely to be employed, and about one-half as likely to be paid by someone else, or in self-employment either on or off the farm (Figure 2).

IDP women were also found to experience chronic gender disadvantages in terms of lower levels of education and poorer health than men. Displaced women were less likely than displaced men of the same age and background to be in school when they left their place of origin, and at destination they still had lower levels of schooling and literacy. The analysis suggests that patriarchal and traditional norms across borders and within countries deny women land ownership and education, which, combined with a lack of provision of public goods and gender-sensitive services, add to the challenges and barriers women face to achieving sustainable livelihoods.

**Figure 2: Gender Gaps in Employment Status, IDP Men and Women, Darfur, Sudan, 2018**



Source: Bruck and Stojetz 2021.

The disadvantages were worse for older IDP women in Darfur, who were more likely to work in low paid agricultural jobs than younger IDP women and tended to be less educated. On the other hand, younger IDP women who grew up in El Fasher were more likely to be educated (like women from host communities), and the IDP gender employment gap narrowed with more protracted displacement. This points to the possibility of economic integration over time, at least where access to services like education was enabled.

The 2017 Skills Profile Survey covered different refugee-hosting regions of Ethiopia—Tigray-Afar (Eritrean), Gambella (South Sudanese), Benishangul-Gumuz (Sudanese and South Sudanese), and Somalis (Somali)—and their host communities, and exposes significant gender gaps in employment, both among refugees and hosts (9 and 15 percentage points, respectively). The number of young children, lack of access to agricultural land, and lack of physical safety were found to *reduce* female employment, while having a female head of household, more years of education, and longer displacement duration *increases* the probability of female employment. Displacement limits economic opportunities: refugees are significantly *less* likely to be self-employed or working in agriculture than individuals in host community households. Somali refugees have better employment opportunities than other refugee groups in Ethiopia, which can be traced to lower language and cultural barriers to integration.

Some of the barriers faced by displaced women appear to have existed prior to displacement—for example, lower years of schooling, which may interact with displacement-induced challenges. Unfortunately, longitudinal data were not available to the GDFD program to examine whether, for example, displaced women who worked in their place of origin have better access to work in their host country/region than women who never worked in their place of origin.

The factors associated with work outside the home for displaced women are in some senses like those facing non-displaced women—for example in Ethiopia, female headship increases the likelihood of women’s employment for both refugees and hosts. However, there are also differences (Table 1): as noted above, it appears that internally displaced women are more likely to be in paid work than women in host communities in Darfur, although their lower levels of education and other constraints mean that their earnings are lower, and they were also more likely to be classed as “unpaid labor.”

The GDFD investigation of livelihoods in northeast Nigeria reveals that, regardless of displacement status, women are about 20 percent less likely to be employed than men (Bruck and Stojetz 2021). Rates of employment among displaced women are around 15 percent, compared to 39 percent for host men. However local conflict substantially reduces the likelihood of any economic activity for all, with no gender differences. The impact is most pronounced when levels of violence are high, as measured by indices of conflict exposure computed at the district level, including exposure to any form of collective violence, exposure to violence against civilians, and exposure to fatalities.



**Table 1: Differences in Employment Status, IDPs, and Host Women in Darfur, Sudan, 2018**

Employment Status	IDP	Host	Difference
Employed	55%	45%	9
Paid labor for someone else	37%	31%	6
Unpaid labor in family non-farm business	30%	21%	9
Non-agricultural self-employment*	24%	22%	2
Agricultural self-employment	8%	11%	-3
Unpaid training or workshop	5%	6%	-2

Source: Bruck and Stojetz 2021, table 6.

Note: Employed equals 1 if an individual engaged in at least one of the listed five forms of work in the past seven days.

\*Significant at 95% level. All other figures significant at 99% level.

In sum, the analysis consistently points to the importance of women's paid work to families, but also to constraints which limit both the extent of employment and earnings. A number of these appear to be amenable to policy and program interventions—not the least eliminating legal restrictions and barriers to work and including expanding access to education and to childcare—while efforts to address norms around gender roles and expectations need to be specifically addressed.

### 3. Addressing key constraints facing displaced women in the labor market

This section explores the implications of the major constraints that especially restrict the livelihood opportunities of displaced women, beginning with legal discrimination. While evidence about what works to advance economic opportunities of displaced women in developing country settings is very limited, we review a range of promising policy responses and emerging good practice. Examples of World Bank operations are highlighted.

One example comes from Yemen, where protracted conflict has forced at least 4 million people to flee their homes since 2015. The Emergency Crisis Response Project was implemented by the World Bank in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other partners, and includes various measures, including large cash-for-work projects, support for small businesses, the rehabilitation of community assets, and the establishment of Village Cooperative Councils. Among the results are that one-half of the 23,600 elected councilors are women, and the training and employment of nearly 3,000 young individuals as schoolteachers, one-half of whom are women. Over 3,000 women received support in the form of livestock, troughs, and fodder, which helped improve their livelihoods, while grants were provided to support almost 6,000 small and micro-enterprises, with 47 percent for female beneficiaries (World Bank 2022b; World Bank 2022c).

Evidence from the United States and some European countries suggests that refugees can close the employment gap over time through financial grants, access to education, and job search assistance (Schuettler and Caron 2020). A 2020 assessment of job interventions for refugees and IDPs highlights several important findings (Schuettler and Caron 2020), including that:

- cash transfer programs for the displaced can reduce poverty and improve their mental health,
- training programs combined with other interventions such as business skills can be effective,
- language training can build social networks which lead to jobs, and
- job search assistance programs are associated with increased employment rates in high-income countries.

However, this assessment did not focus on gender or the gendered dimensions of jobs interventions for refugee women, so the question remains as to whether these interventions bolster employment prospects equally for men and women. The current note will highlight available evidence on these aspects.

Evidence from all the countries investigated in the GDFD program demonstrates that substantial barriers constrain the economic opportunities of displaced women—most notably lack of education and care responsibilities. For example, among Ethiopian refugees, the livelihoods of men and women are impacted differently by displacement; adverse gender norms result in women having fewer opportunities for economic advancement and bearing more care responsibilities at home. In Germany, Kenya, and Niger, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) interviewed women refugees to better understand their barriers and needs for improved livelihoods. The most cited needs included skills building and business support, expanded social networks for information sharing, safe spaces, access to childcare, and support from influential local authorities (International Rescue Committee 2021). Assets lost during displacement (such as land, livestock, and/or equipment) are likely often a key constraint, although this was not directly measured in the GDFD research.

Seven directions of change emerge as critical across all the settings characterized by displacement, even if specific policy and programming implications will vary by context. Table 2 provides a summary overview of these key areas and opportunities for reform when addressing job opportunities for women in displacement settings. The discussion which follows further explores these constraints and opportunities regarding laws and regulatory frameworks, gender norms, childcare, assets and skills, health services, and addressing risks of violence (both in the community and at home). It is important, as part of efforts across all these potential areas of work, to understand and address discriminatory gender norms which constrain women's opportunities and to draw on local knowledge through early consultations with women's groups and community leaders.

A general point to underline is that drawing on local knowledge through early consultations with women's groups and community leaders can provide entry points for dialogue about how to identify gender gaps and locally appropriate ways to respond. The consultations and analyses of specific barriers can help to identify what needs to be prioritized in program design. Relevant World Bank examples include the [Citizen Charter Afghanistan Project](#), where local knowledge of gender roles and responsibilities allowed the project team to effectively navigate dialogue around gender equality and redesign appropriate components, and Pakistan's [FATA Temporarily Displaced Persons Emergency Recovery Project](#), which was a campaign targeting male tribal elders and informing them about benefits of routine health services for women and children, to reduce resistance and to allow women to use one-stop information shops. Through face-to-face interaction, radio campaigns, and short message service (SMS) targeted text messages campaigns, the project aimed to dispel negative perceptions of health centers.

A study from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, among the Rohingya refugees and host communities highlights the importance of context and understanding the views and preferences of displaced people (Holloway and Fan 2018). For some Rohingya women, the dignity of staying in their home

**Table 2: Policy and Program Responses to Expand Livelihood Opportunities for Displaced Women**

Reform direction	Example of reforms
Addressing discriminatory laws and regulatory constraints	Expanding access to work permits/legal employment, facilitating the establishment of home-based businesses, adapting laws to allow refugees to access key assets (primary education, drivers' licenses, bank accounts), allowing freedom of movement.
Tackling constraints related to gender norms	Working with community leaders, women, and men to address constraints around traditional gender roles (e.g., expectations around education, feminized occupations, and care responsibilities).
Supporting access to childcare	Provision of childcare services, such as tax reform to incentivize childcare providers, or employment opportunities with on-site childcare and early childhood development, alongside efforts to change norms around care responsibilities.
Expanding access to education and skills	Dedicate resources and support for displaced learners and teachers; recruiting and training female teachers; GBV prevention actions in and around schools; training of adult displaced women.
Providing support to women engaged in entrepreneurship	Enabling access to finance and assets, skill building and training based on flexible and context-sensitive curriculum, support for networking and ensuring that approaches are trauma informed.
Ensuring access to health services, especially for sexual and reproductive health	Strengthening health facilities and integrating reproductive health (including family planning services) and GBV services into primary health centers; community-level interventions
Address risks of violence in the community and at home	Arranging safe transportation for women to travel to their workplace together; providing protection services and gender-based violence training.

(*purdah*) was a priority, and may have represented a self-protection mechanism, if, for example, their male household members would not have accepted their leaving the house. For others, a preference for self-reliance meant they would be willing to break *purdah* to work outside the home to support their families. In this case, different modalities of assistance would be necessary to meet the needs and preferences of the affected population and avoid exacerbating gender-based violence (GBV) risks for women.

We now turn to ways in which policy and program responses can work to expand livelihood opportunities for women, beginning with addressing discriminatory laws.

### 3.1. Addressing discriminatory laws and regulatory constraints

Legal restrictions constrain refugees' access to paid work in many countries, while many countries have discriminatory laws that restrict women's economic opportunities, regardless of displacement status.

The 1951 Refugee Convention stipulates that refugees should be granted “the most favorable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country ... as regards the right to engage in wage-earning employment” (Article 17) and a “treatment as favorable as possible and, in any event, not less favorable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, as regards the right to engage on his own account in agriculture, industry, handicrafts and commerce and to establish commercial and industrial companies” (Article 18–19) ([UNHCR n.d.](#)).

In many countries, this right is not realized in practice. Refugee status typically does not automatically confer a right to work, and in some countries, people with refugee status are not allowed to work (Jayasinghe 2019; UNHCR 2019). According to the KNOMAD database, refugees can work in the public and private sectors in 31 countries, and in the private sector in 76 countries (KNOMAD 2016) The 2021 Global Compact Report cites a survey from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of 25 countries collectively hosting 11.2 million refugees, where just over one-half (52 percent) have full access to decent work under the law, but only 38 percent of refugees globally have unrestricted access in practice (UNHCR 2021).

The Refugee Work Rights Report found that at least 55 percent of refugees live in countries that significantly restrict refugees' *de facto* work rights in terms of access to wage employment, self-employment, freedom of movement, and rights at work. The report shows that laws are not always implemented—so that *de jure* scores are higher than *de facto* scores overall, with a larger gap in low- and middle-income countries than in high-income countries—however, *de jure* and *de facto* scores are highly correlated, meaning that more inclusive laws on paper do predict more inclusive practices (Ginn et al. 2022).

There are also formal restrictions on the economic opportunities of all women in many refugee hosting countries. Countries with multiple formal restrictions on women's economic opportunities (as measured by Women Business and the Law) are among the 15 largest refugee hosts (World Bank 2022b).

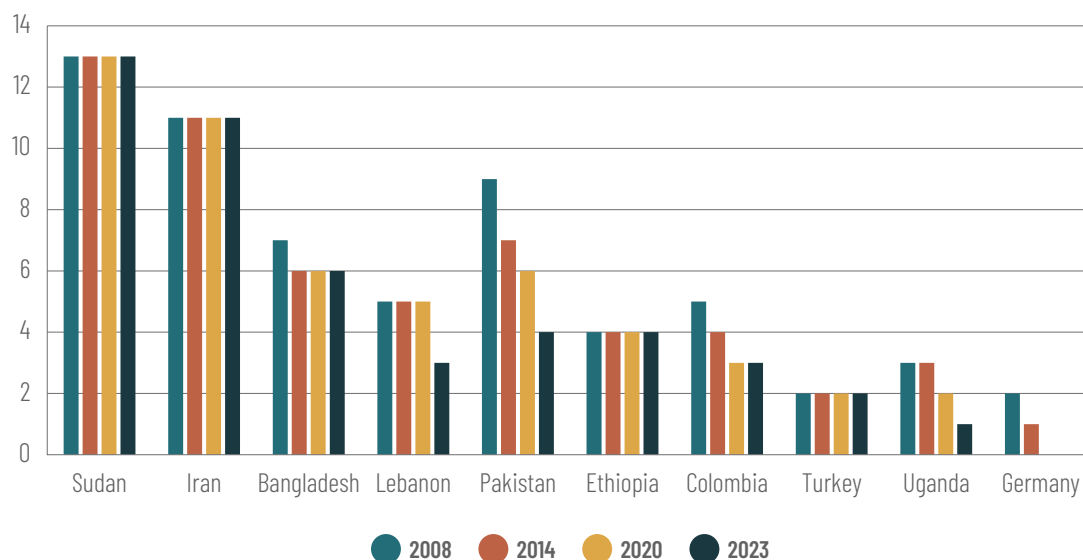
In 2021, the 10 largest refugee hosting countries totaled over 75 economic restrictions pertaining to women, including registering a business, opening a bank

account, and having ownership rights over property (World Bank 2021a). The World Bank's Women, Business, and the Law (WBL) index shows, for example, only two of the ten highest refugee hosting countries prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender, three guarantee equal inheritance rights to surviving spouses, four legally protect equal pay, and five have criminal penalties for sexual harassment in the workplace. The Labour Code of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) explicitly denies women the right to work the same jobs as men, and these stipulations apply to refugees as well as citizens (World Bank 2021b).

As Figure 3 summarizes, most of the top 10 hosting countries have not significantly reduced legal barriers facing women over the past 12 years. In Sudan, Iran, Lebanon, and Ethiopia, the same number of barriers in mobility, the workplace, pay, and entrepreneurship have remained in place. Trends in Colombia and Pakistan reveal some progress.

Recent examples of World Bank support for policy reform designed to open economic opportunities for refugees include Jordan's significantly expanded access to work permits, supported by the World Bank with over US\$1.7 billion in grants and concessional loans. This was known as the Jordan Jobs Compact. By 2018, approximately one-third of working Syrians had a valid work permit, with the vast majority obtained by men. By 2022, 233,699 work permits had been issued to Syrian refugees residing in Jordan (Stave, Kebede, and Kattaa 2021), although relatively few (5.4 percent) were issued to women. Stave, Kebede, and Kattaa (2021) found that work permits increased the labor force participation rate, employment, wages, and stability of work for Syrians who obtained permits (results for women were not separately reported). While women's labor force participation reportedly increased since 2014, the level was still only 9 percent in 2018.

**Figure 3: Number of Legal Restrictions on Women Seeking Jobs in the 10 Largest Refugee-Hosting Countries, 2008, 2014, 2020, and 2023**



Source: World Bank 2021a.

Regulatory reforms adopted in 2018 facilitated the establishment of home-based businesses, which are believed to be especially important for women, who operate most registered home-based businesses. The associated World Bank financing also sought to expand childcare services, which only covered 3 percent of children below five years of age (Stave, Kebede, and Kattaa 2021), by supporting the Jordanian government in establishing and regulating childcare facilities through streamlining the regulatory framework and introducing e-licensing for childcare centers (World Bank 2022d).

Like the Jordan Jobs Compact, the Ethiopian Jobs Compact was launched in 2018 to allow for the integration of refugees into Ethiopia's formal labor market, including a commitment to provide work permits to refugees (World Bank 2018). Implementation was delayed by the pandemic as well as the major conflict in Ethiopia, which had a huge death toll and led to further massive internal displacement. By 2023, only 2,675 work permits had been issued, far short of targets, and data disaggregated by sex is not available (Fanuel 2023). The national legislature has, however, further revised relevant laws to allow refugees to access primary education, obtain drivers' licenses, and open bank accounts (UNHCR 2019).

Uganda is regarded as having one of the most progressive refugee policy frameworks globally. Since the Refugee Act of 2006, Uganda has allowed freedom of movement and legal employment of refugees and provided a plot of land to refugees who live in settlements. Betts et al. (2019) compared outcomes for refugees in Uganda to those of the same nationality in neighboring Kenya, where most refugees are required to live in the camps and not allowed to accept formal jobs beyond "incentive work" with non-profits (Betts, et al. 2019). The findings suggest that outcomes are better for refugees in Uganda—incomes among working refugees are higher in Uganda, and easier travel in Uganda provides more economic opportunities. At the same time, employment and access to basic education are higher in Kenya, including after accounting for local conditions. The results are informative, even if cross-country differences could be driven by factors other than the policy frameworks. Another study found that refugees in Kalobeyei, a newer settlement in Kenya where refugees are provided with a small plot of land and more flexible monthly cash allowances than typical food rations, are happier and have better diets compared to neighboring Kakuma, although they find no effect on employment or assets (MacPherson and Sterck 2021). Results disaggregated by sex were not available.

While there are strong arguments in favor of granting refugees the right to work, it is important to recognize the political economy challenges. Political opposition to granting refugees the right to work can emerge for a variety of reasons, from economic concerns (especially in sectors where there is already high unemployment, and fears of downward wage pressure) to administrative challenges (ensuring compliance with labor laws, providing necessary documentation, and addressing potential language and cultural barriers in the

workplace). In many countries, some politicians have exploited anti-immigrant sentiments for political gain.<sup>2</sup>

We turn now to the ways in which gender norms constrain the livelihood prospects of displaced women and girls, and how these have been considered and addressed in programming.

## 3.2. Tackling constraints related to gender norms

Gendered social norms, the shared behavioral “rules” that define what members of a society do or believe should be done, operate at both the individual (personal) and social (community) levels (Bicchieri 2006; Cislighi and Heise 2016; Gauri, Rahman and Sen 2019). Such norms are often restrictive for women and girls, relative to men and boys, and may be disrupted by displacement. Displacement can expose women and men, girls and boys, to new host community norms that are more expansive, or restrictive, as well as to new economic and social realities that challenge traditional gender roles. Displaced people often move to urban areas, which may open economic opportunities for women and broaden exposure to new gender norms (Cislighi and Heise 2020; Harper et al. 2020; Marcus and Harper 2015; Muñoz-Boudet et al. 2013). For example, a study of Syrian refugees in camps in Jordan found that refugee women were frequently taking on breadwinner roles for the first time, which increased their decision-making power in the community (Jabbar and Zaza 2016). In the absence of men, displaced Nuer women in South Sudan took on male responsibilities as income providers and assumed roles traditionally perceived as male, including negotiating dowries (Grabska 2013).

There is limited evidence about how conflict and displacement interact with gender norms to influence the effectiveness of programs to expand livelihoods. This is partly because measuring complex constructs like gender norms is challenging and constrained by data availability. A recent Campbell Collaboration review identified 104 impact evaluations (75 percent randomized controlled trials) assessing the effects of 14 different types of interventions in fragile and conflict-affected states (Lwamba et al. 2022). While there was not an explicit focus on displacement, it is notable that interventions supporting women’s empowerment and gender equality in these challenging settings boosted positive outcomes related to the primary focus of the intervention, with no significant negative effects. At the same time, however, the review underlined the qualitative evidence that gender norms and practices are potential barriers to intervention effectiveness; this led to the conclusion that gender norms and practices are important elements to consider in program design and implementation to maximize potential benefits.

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<sup>2</sup>See, for example, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/debate-versus-reality-refugees-us>



Whether the livelihood activities deemed unsuitable for women change post displacement appears to vary across settings. One study in Darfur found that IDP women were involved in health-related activities at the community level but were excluded from decisions related to camp infrastructure or management, which were perceived as male fields (De La Puente 2011). In contrast, in the aftermath of Nepal's conflict, widows worked increasingly outside the home, and some of them even crossed over into male-dominated fields, such as construction labor or transport (Ramnarain 2016). Displaced women can face greater labor market challenges than men if their opportunities are restricted to typically "feminine" jobs such as cleaning, cooking, and garment manufacturing.

Two new empirical investigations in the GDFD program interrogated gender norms in displacement in Jordan and Colombia.

The research on gendered social norms in Jordan focused on adolescence, which is the stage when boys' and girls' lives often become strongly gender-differentiated, particularly in socially conservative settings (Krafft, Assad, and Pastoor 2021). Earlier work in Jordan found that adolescent boys steadily gain mobility, leaving the house and the community as they aged, whereas girls' mobility diminished (Jones, Baird, Presler-Marshall, et al., 2019). The GDFD analysis investigated the nationally representative 2016 Jordan Labor Market Panel Survey, which included questions on gender role attitudes and justification of domestic violence against women, as well as on involvement in decision-making and mobility. It reveals that while gender role attitudes are similar across generations and nationalities, Syrian adolescent girls are more restricted in their mobility compared than their Jordanian counterparts, which could reflect the higher (real or perceived) risks they face in the public space. Syrian refugee girls in Lebanon and Jordan, for example, have cited risks of sexual violence on the way to school as a barrier to education (Garbern, Helal, Mihael, et al., 2020). At the same time, Syrian refugee adolescent girls and boys have similar educational outcomes, as do Syrian refugee girls and Jordanian girls (after accounting for socioeconomic status) (Krafft, Ragui, and Pastoor 2021).

The findings have several key implications, including the importance of considering adolescent refugee girls as a distinct group that may have divergent outcomes and face unique challenges that will impact their future inclusion in the labor force. For example, while Syrian adult women had higher mobility relative to Jordanian adult women, Syrian adolescent girls were much more restricted than adult women, or Jordanian adolescent girls. Girls' limited mobility may constrain their abilities to access safe spaces, to connect to friends and social networks, and to access sexual and reproductive health services, among other impacts. Programs designed to empower girls may need to engage with their families and communities who act as gatekeepers. Other studies in the region confirm that while younger men's views are like those of older men—which may be a key constraint to progress on gender equity—there is a substantial fraction of men with gender-equitable views (El Feki, Heilman, and Barker 2017). Schools appear

to be an important site for programs working to change gender norms across generations (Dhar, Tarun, and Jayachandran 2022; Levy et al. 2020).

To examine the case of IDPs in Colombia, three rounds of Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) data for the 2005–2015 period were used to examine the extent to which gender norms limit women’s access to reproductive health, economic opportunities, and mobility, and tolerate violence against women and endorse patriarchy (Rubiano-Matulevich 2021). The investigation operationalizes a definition of gender norms that brings together behaviors and attitudes for displaced and non-displaced women using household survey data for Colombia.

Colombia has widespread internal displacement, as well as deeply rooted gender unequal norms. Women are expected to take on the bulk of domestic responsibilities, whereas men are seen as the head and main breadwinners for their families. Affordable, good-quality childcare services are lacking, no legal provision exists for paid parental leave to be shared between both mother and father, and women do nearly four times as much unpaid domestic and care work as men do.

In Colombia, displaced status is associated with more traditional attitudes around women in the domestic sphere. For example, displacement reduces the probability of disagreeing with the statement “a woman’s main role is family caregiving and cooking” by 6–8 percentage points (Rubiano-Matulevich 2021), and IDP women are 7–9 percentage points less likely to be able to decide what to do with the money they earn than their *non*-IDP counterparts (Rubiano-Matulevich 2021). On the other hand, displacement is associated with less traditional patriarchal attitudes such as “families with men have less problems” or “a good wife obeys her husband.”

The study results also reveal a disconnect between attitudes and behaviors in that displaced women have less rigid patriarchal attitudes, but their ability to decide about contraception and their own earnings diminishes with displacement. These findings shed light on the complexity of gender norm change and suggest that improvements in one area do not imply that improvements on other fronts will automatically follow.

Norms have important bearings on the shape of program responses, and if these are neglected, program effectiveness will likely be limited. For example, female refugees’ access to training programs may be restricted by gender norms that discourage women from appearing in public spaces, as well as the lack of childcare options. One study of refugee training programs in Greece found that men dominated enrollment because gender norms that limited the movement of women and girls meant they could not participate (Pavanello 2018). There were similar findings for women and girl refugees in Jordan, who wanted to learn and work but were prevented by cultural norms (Leghtas 2018). And for many camp-resident women, attending skills training and working outside camps were difficult because of the distance, time, and costs involved, as well as security concerns (Kaya and Luchtenberg 2018). Another study of refugee financial integration in Jordan,

Kenya, Mexico, and Uganda found that the provision of financial services alone did not produce significant improvements in economic outcomes for displaced women ([The Journey Project 2021](#)). Success depended on the ability to navigate pathways to economic inclusion for women, which required the transformation of harmful gender norms. Similarly, the Norwegian Refugee Council finds that in Africa, major barriers to displaced women's land ownership include harmful gender norms and lack of awareness of property rights, highlighting the need for investments in efforts that help inform women of their rights and navigate the process of independently owning property (Aero 2021).

Related analyses under the forced displacement research program on [job interventions](#) notes that approaches differ regarding the share of women among beneficiaries, as well as the impacts on women's labor market outcomes and occupational segregation (Barberis et al. 2022). However, the lack of gender disaggregated quantitative data in project reporting, especially on outcomes, meant that the gender dimensions were not systematically assessed. The study does highlight that women's participation in training and job matching interventions was shaped by gender norms, and therefore often channeled toward sectors perceived to be “for women,” and that their participation in value chain interventions depends on the specific value chains chosen, with high participation, for example, in agriculture. Access to finance interventions targeted to women are typically limited to microfinance services and cash grants for small income-generating activities, while targets for women beneficiaries are less common and less ambitious across interventions designed to promote business growth and entrepreneurship. This can risk reinforcing occupational segregation and further limiting the ability of women to access better jobs and increase their earnings. Program design should seek to help overcome rather than further reinforce restrictive norms.

### 3.3. Addressing care responsibilities

Deep-seated gender norms prevent the equal distribution of caring responsibilities between men and women. Women typically carry most of the responsibilities for the care of children and domestic work. Using panel data from 97 countries, Bloom, et al. (2009) estimated that a birth reduces a woman's labor supply by almost two years during her reproductive life.

In cases of separation from or loss of male family members during displacement, women often become heads of households, making them responsible for both providing financially and taking care of their families. For example, Syrian refugee women in Jordan have reportedly become breadwinners for their households, but their responsibility as the caretakers for their families has not diminished (Culcasi 2019). Similar dynamics have been reported for IDP widows in Nepal (Ramnarain 2016), Chechen refugees in the Czech Republic (Szczepanikova 2005), and IDP women in Darfur (De La Puente 2011).

Gendered expectations around childcare limit displaced women's economic opportunities as well. For example, research from Ethiopia found that the number of young children a refugee household has significantly reduces female—but not male—employment (Admasu 2021).

The GDFD research program revealed that displaced households headed by women in Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Sudan were more likely to experience multidimensional poverty than displaced households headed by men, pointing to the compounding effects of gender inequality on displacement and poverty (Admasu 2021). In Ethiopia, 58 percent of female-headed refugee households are impoverished compared to 19 percent of male-headed refugee households, which was associated with the lack of physical safety, early marriage, and the lack of legal identification.

In Ethiopia, the number of young children in a household was found to significantly reduce female—but not male—employment among refugees, while the number of children in a household increased male employment among hosts (Admasu 2021). This confirms the global pattern whereby gendered divisions of unpaid labor adversely affect women's employment opportunities. These results also imply an unmet need for childcare services, which could be an area for support for small business start-ups in displaced communities. The GDFD results from Ethiopia also underline the importance of education to displaced women's paid employment prospects, more so than access to the internet, physical safety, and remittances (which did not have significant effects in a multivariate probit analysis).

We know from a range of developing country settings (including Chile, Kenya, and Nicaragua) that the provision of childcare services can help enable women's economic opportunities—although direct evidence for displaced women is lacking. Specifically, offering afterschool care for children ages 6–13 in Chile increased employment by 5 percent and labor force participation by 7 percent (Martinez, Claudia, and Peticara 2017); a randomized control trial study in an informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya, found that poor urban women who were offered vouchers for subsidized early childcare were, on average, 8.5 percentage points more likely to be employed than those who were not given vouchers (Clark et al. 2019); and in poor urban areas in Nicaragua, a public program that introduced access to part-time childcare centers for children younger than four years of age increased a mother's work participation by 14 percentage points (Hojman and Boo 2019). Box 1 provides examples of recent World Bank projects addressing childcare.

Because women are often responsible for caregiving and unpaid household labor, programming designed to encourage participation in paid work can result in a “double burden” for women. This needs to be addressed in program design.

Some programs supporting IDPs have specifically worked to offset added burdens facing women. For example, in Burkina Faso, the International Catholic Migration Commission and the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of

### Box 1: Selected World Bank Projects Addressing Childcare

The [Turkey - Resilience, Inclusion and Growth Development Policy Operations Project](#) (P162071) sought to support the labor market participation of women through expanding flexible employment options and promoting active labor market policies (World Bank 2020). The program included a reform to the Income Tax Law to incentivize childcare providers (exempting them from income tax obligations on childcare activities), which was said to boost net enrollment rates from 35.5 to 38.5 percent between 2016–2018. Over the same period, women’s labor force participation slightly increased, from 32.5 to 34.2 percent between 2016 and 2018 (World Bank 2020).

The [Cameroon Adaptive Safety Nets and Economic Inclusion Project](#) (P175363) seeks to expand coverage and shock-responsive capacity of safety nets for poor households, many of whom were refugees. This is in a setting where women have more constrained employment opportunities, in part due to the unequal distribution of care responsibilities at home (World Bank 2023). The project, which launched in 2023, will provide temporary employment opportunities to 55,000 poor households, with on-site childcare and early childhood development. This approach is based on the [Strengthening Social Safety Net Project](#) (P145699) in Egypt, which was seen to boost women’s participation in public works from 40 to 70 percent between 2015 and 2023 (Zeitoun 2023). The project supported the establishment of national programs that provided both conditional and unconditional transfers which targeted women, particularly mothers with children, as well as the elderly and those with severe disabilities.

Migrants and Refugees teamed up to provide a safe space to over 80 displaced children, with education, health care, psychosocial care, and childcare, so that displaced parents, especially mothers, can seek paid work and become self-sufficient ([ICMC 2020](#))

## 3.4. Expanding access to education and skills

Access to education and skills is key for the inclusion of displaced populations, especially women and children.

GDFD findings from Darfur highlight the importance of education in explaining the earnings prospects of adult displaced women. In Sudan, compared to displaced men of the same age and background, displaced women were less likely to be in school when they left and have lower levels of schooling and literacy today, which in turn shaped observed gender gaps in IDP employment. Older displaced women also had less chances to catch up with their education

upon arrival in camp. Displaced women's lower levels of education and other constraints mean that while they tended to work more than host community women, their earnings were lower and were more likely to be classed as "unpaid labor" (Stojetz and Brück 2021).

The various constraints—norms, assets, and others—may well reinforce each other: one study examining panel data for over 300 female-headed IDP households in Iraq found that 43 percent reported lack of education and training as the leading barriers to employment, and another 33 percent cited family disapproval, underlining the power of gender norms in limiting women's opportunities (Davis and Al-Sham 2020). Low levels of school enrollment impeded employment for displaced mothers who had to stay home to provide childcare. The lack of land to cultivate was reported as a challenge for displaced agricultural workers (Cazabat, André, and Fung 2020). Non-recognition of their skills, qualifications, and diplomas means that many refugees find work in less skilled jobs than their qualifications and experience warrant, and/or in the informal economy.

The GDFD research on multidimensional poverty (Admasu, Alkire, and Scharlin-Pettee 2021) also highlighted school disadvantages as the major gender gap between girls and boys within displaced households. While a recent report highlighted that there are major data constraints around the access and quality of education for the internally displaced, the limited evidence available shows that they face many barriers and tend to need dedicated support (Cazabat and Yasukawa 2021).

A series of recent country case studies on education under the Building the Evidence on Forced Displacement research program in Chad, Colombia, Pakistan, and Sudan found that, despite growing political commitments to displaced populations in national education systems, many barriers persist and prevent the full inclusion of displaced learners (Burde et al. 2023). Unfortunately, the study did not disaggregate findings by sex, but the general constraints can be highlighted. These were traced to disconnects and coordination failures which inhibited the flow-down of (inclusive) national policies to the local level. All four countries struggled with coordination between national and local education actors. The sheer lack of resources (e.g., classroom space) and services (e.g., specialized support) was also a major constraint in host countries, compounding other potential practical problems that displaced learners faced in accessing education, such as documentation requirements and learning in a language they do not speak. Teachers also expressed their need for more training and support to address the psychosocial needs of forcibly displaced learners. The lack of monitoring data on the participation of displaced learners in national education systems makes it difficult to understand exactly who is sitting in classrooms and progressing and performing in the system.

A recent review (Pereznieto and Magee 2017) of interventions designed to address threats to girls' education in conflict-affected contexts draws valuable lessons for displacement settings, including:

- The importance of working with communities—parents, teachers, traditional and religious leaders, and girls and boys—to change perceptions about girls' education and encourage active participation to boost ownership and sustainability. This can lead, for example, to providing safe spaces in community run schools, and actively engaged parent-teacher associations and school management committees to ensure the smooth running of schools and better quality of teaching.
- Providing financial (cash or vouchers) or in-kind (food rations or school feeding) support to students.
- Alternative education, which allows for accelerated learning, so that school cycles can be completed more rapidly, as well as flexible schedules which allow students who must work to support their families (particularly girls but also boys) or young mothers and adolescent girls with domestic and child- or sibling-care responsibilities, to attend.
- Invest in recruiting and training female teachers and school staff in conflict-affected contexts, and training teachers in gender-responsive teaching and learning practices.
- Targeted strategies to reduce the risks of sexual and gender-based violence for children in and around schools, such as reducing the distance to school, providing safe means of transport, building protective walls around schools, and having trusted guards in place who can look out for children's safety.

The review also underlines that multipronged approaches work best to mitigate the multiple risks and vulnerabilities girls face.

Efforts to promote training of adult displaced women include, for example, an assessment of the “Women and Girls Oasis” project operated by UN Women and INTERSOS, which facilitated vocational training for Syrian refugee women in Jordan in computer skills, English, and hairdressing, found that most participants reported increases in income and socioeconomic status (Jabbar and Zaza 2016). In Blue Nile, Sudan, there was an explicit focus on the inclusion of women in vocational training and housing for returning IDPs in a project that supported alternative livelihoods with the distribution of livestock—chickens, rather than less portable cows or goats—and training in weaving and other skills, as well as the construction of community centers, which were used as venues for classes in literacy, health and hygiene education, and childcare services (Zeender and Crowther 2019).

Box 2 provides examples of recent World Bank projects addressing education and skills.



**Box 2: Selected World Bank Projects Addressing Education**

The “Somalia Education for Human Capital Development Project” primarily targets disadvantaged groups, such as internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees, individuals living in remote rural areas, learners with special needs, and nomadic pastoralist communities. It adopted a comprehensive approach to enable girls’ education, including female teacher recruitment, increasing the supply and proximity of schools (addressing safety and security concerns), provision of functioning WASH facilities in schools, school grants to attract and retain girls, and active community participation to change social norms around girls’ participation in schooling.

The “Productive Economic Inclusion in Lebanon” project aims to work with both host communities and vulnerable groups, including refugees and displaced people, to enhance access to income-generating activities, entrepreneurship support, and vocational training. By providing targeted support, the project aims to empower refugees and displaced people to improve their economic situation and build resilience.

### 3.5. Support for women engaged in entrepreneurship

Many displaced women show entrepreneurial ambition, with one-third of refugee women interviewed in Uganda and one-fourth in Jordan reporting strong plans to start or develop their own businesses ([FinDev Gateway 2018](#)). However, forcibly displaced refugee entrepreneurs face extra challenges that are beyond the barriers that face immigrants and hosts in their journey toward starting up, growing, and developing their businesses (Nziku and Bikorimana 2023), which may be sharper for women. The barriers can include legal barriers such as documentation and address requirements, the loss of support systems and social networks, marketplace discrimination on the basis of gender and displacement status, insufficient infrastructure, undeveloped entrepreneurial skills, and lack of access to financial services and technology.

Efforts to support displaced women as entrepreneurs can include services for self, home-based, and community employment; providing training, funding, innovation, and incubation programs targeting forcibly displaced women; initiating youth entrepreneurship and employment schemes with an impact on displaced women; and mobilizing talent and investments in support for forcibly displaced women entrepreneurs (Hemenway, Kalidi, and Lundval 2022).

Entrepreneurship training programs tailored to forcibly displaced women can help address the range of interlocking constraints, such as limited access to resources,



legal barriers, cultural norms, and psychological trauma, while recognizing forcibly displaced women may require comprehensive support, including access to health care, legal aid, childcare, and psychosocial support. In a range of settings, support may be needed to enable women to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes, promoting their economic independence and decision-making power. Some key considerations for designing effective programs include the following:

- 1. Access to finance:** Develop approaches tailored to forcibly displaced women's needs, including financial literacy and digital solutions, as part of efforts to develop forcibly displaced people-inclusive financial sector policies and practices.
- 2. Skills training:** Offer practical skills training aligned with local market demands to enhance participants' employability and entrepreneurial potential. This could include training in trades such as tailoring, food processing, handicrafts, or digital skills like graphic design and coding.
- 3. Flexible and context-sensitive curriculum:** Develop training materials that are adaptable to the diverse contexts in which forcibly displaced women find themselves. Consider language barriers, literacy levels, cultural sensitivities, and the specific challenges faced by different communities.
- 4. Networking:** Facilitate opportunities for networking and mentorship to help participants build social capital, access markets, and navigate challenges. Connect them with successful entrepreneurs, business professionals, or diaspora networks who can provide guidance and support.
- 5. Address legal barriers:** Provide legal education and assistance to help participants understand their rights, navigate regulatory barriers, and formalize their businesses. Address legal issues related to property rights, contracts, permits, and business registration.
- 6. Trauma-informed approaches:** Train program staff to sensitively recognize and respond to the trauma experienced by forcibly displaced women. Incorporate trauma-informed practices into program design, such as creating safe and supportive learning environments and offering counseling services.

As in other spheres of activity, partnerships and collaboration with local governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, academic institutions, and private sector actors to leverage resources, expertise, and networks are key. Pooling resources and coordinating efforts can enhance the reach and sustainability of entrepreneurship training programs for forcibly displaced women.

## 3.6. Ensuring access to health services

Ensuring access to health services is crucial for supporting women's livelihood opportunities. This includes the full range of health services, including mental health and psychosocial support, as well as sexual and reproductive health. Health system interactions for IDPs are influenced by contextual factors and age- and gender-specific vulnerabilities (Jones, Yadete, and Pincock, 2019).

Forcibly displaced women encounter various challenges in accessing services, sometimes due to missing or insufficient civil registration documents, unfamiliarity with available services in new locations, restricted geographic access due to curfews or movement constraints, and overall weak service provision (Le Voir, 2023).

A recent International Rescue Committee study, including key informant interviews and a literature review, reviewed ongoing health operations in three challenging contexts—Jordan, Bangladesh, and Chad. In Jordan, dwindling donor funds and limited resources were found to have hindered access to affordable health services for vulnerable refugee and host populations, while in Bangladesh, the structural, technical, and financial limitations of the national health system—as well as the absence of explicit health policies linked to refugee populations—resulted in a challenging landscape for both refugee and vulnerable host populations. In Chad, the government committed to integrating displaced populations in the national health system, but implementation has been slow—this is also the case with implementation of the Reproductive Health Law. Among the recommendations are the importance of long-term, flexible financing to ensure the sustainable provision of quality, affordable, and accessible health services throughout the arc of a crisis—from immediate response to long-term recovery and resilience—and the development of inclusive national policies that promotes equitable access to health services, regardless of legal status.

Addressing the health needs of displaced populations involves a comprehensive consideration of factors like availability, accessibility, approachability, acceptability, and quality of care within health systems (World Bank 2022e). A multipronged approach is needed, including:

1. Offering a comprehensive range of health care services tailored to the specific needs of forcibly displaced women. This includes general medical care, reproductive health services, mental health support, and psychosocial counseling.
2. Ensuring that health care facilities are easily accessible to displaced women, including those living in refugee camps or urban areas. Mobile clinics or outreach programs can help reach women who may face barriers to accessing traditional health care facilities.
3. Training health care providers in trauma-informed care to effectively address the psychological effects of displacement and trauma. This approach recognizes the widespread impact of trauma and aims to create a safe and supportive environment for healing.
4. Tailoring health care services to respect the cultural beliefs and practices of displaced women. This may involve employing female health care providers, offering services in multiple languages, and incorporating cultural traditions into treatment approaches.
5. Involving displaced women and local communities in the design and implementation of health care programs.

6. Facilitating support groups for displaced women to connect with others who have shared experiences, which can provide a sense of community, validation, and mutual support, which are essential for mental health and well-being.

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services empower women to make informed decisions about when and whether to have children. Displaced women often face a lack of understanding about their preventive SRH needs (Egli-Gany et al. 2021). Regrettably, these needs are often not prioritized in health care provisions within these settings (Singh et al. 2021). However, significant evidence gaps characterize SRH outcomes for conflict-affected and displaced populations (Singh et al. 2018), which also limits their visibility in the Sustainable Development Goals agenda (Le Voir 2023).

A recent systematic review on access to preventive SRH care (Davidson et al. 2022). reveals that most efforts revolve around contraception and cervical or breast cancer screening, and barriers summarized in Table 3. It suggests crucial areas for improving clinical practice and policy, including offering women the option to see female health care providers, ensuring adequate consultation time for listening and building trust, enhancing education for displaced women unfamiliar with preventive care, and developing cultural competency among health care providers and interpreters.

Box 3 highlights recent World Bank operations seeking to promote the inclusion of displaced women and girls in SRH.

**Table 3: Addressing Barriers to Preventative SRH among Refugee and Displaced Women**

Barriers	Elements
Interpersonal and patient encounter factors—patient interactions with health care systems and health care providers	Knowledge, awareness, and use of preventive SRH care Language and communication
Health care system factors—health system factors and their impact on outcomes	Provider discrimination and lack of quality health resources Financial barriers and unmet need
Gender and social norms	Family Religion Cultural norms

Source: Adapted from Davidson et al. 2022.

**Box 3: SRH World Bank Operations Including Displaced Women and Girls**

The “[Great Lakes Emergency Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Women’s Health Project](#)” is a regional initiative in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, and Rwanda which aims to address the urgent needs of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and improve women’s health through providing physical, mental, social, and economic assistance to survivors. The project also aims to promote gender equality, behavioral change, and violence prevention through community-level interventions and strengthening existing health facilities.

The “[Lebanon Health Resilience Project](#)” aims to provide essential health services, including reproductive health and gender-based violence (GBV) services, to both poor Lebanese and Syrian refugees through primary health centers. It recognizes the specific health needs of displaced populations, particularly women and girls, who are at higher risk of experiencing reproductive health challenges and GBV in humanitarian settings. By integrating these services into the basic package of care, the project aims to improve access to quality reproductive health services and support for survivors of GBV among both host and displaced populations.

The “[Uganda Health Systems Strengthening Project](#)” aims to improve the delivery of essential health services, including sexual and reproductive health, to both host communities and refugees. The project focuses on strengthening health systems, enhancing the capacity of health facilities, and improving access to quality health care services for vulnerable populations, including refugees. It includes initiatives to provide reproductive health services, family planning, and prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections.

The “[Yemen Emergency Health and Nutrition Project](#)” focuses on providing emergency health and nutrition services to conflict-affected populations, for example, refugees and IDPs, including reproductive health and maternal care.

### 3.7. Address risks of violence in the community and at home

Perceived and real risks of violence against women can constrain their livelihood opportunities. There may be fears about risks of violence outside the home and in travelling to work, as well as in the workplace. It is important to consider the reality of these risks and ways in which these might be mitigated. For example, a recent World Bank project in Ethiopia includes a gender and protection plan with measures to reduce the risks of GBV and create a woman-friendly environment, including the establishment of childcare centers and safe transportation for women working in industrial areas. Another initiative in

Jordan arranged safe transportation to allow Syrian refugee women to travel together to their workplaces (Datta, Louay, and Kavell 2020).

It is also true that violence in the home will likely undermine women's autonomy and possibilities outside the home, both social and economic, as well as potentially disrupt traditional roles in ways that worsen the risk of violence. For example, a study of Syrian refugees in Lebanon found that displacement significantly altered family structures. Women undertook responsibilities outside of their traditional roles, including searching for work and providing for the family. In some cases, this lowered the self-esteem of male spouses, leading to increased violence in the home (El-Masri, Harvey, and Garwood 2013). It is important that programming considers these risks and factors and determines ways to address such constraints.

A companion operational note directly addresses the operational implications of addressing GBV in displacement settings.

## 4. Conclusions

This note has highlighted key implications of the GDFD research for women's livelihoods. Several important directions for support and recurring themes emerged. It is clear the underlying barriers to access economic opportunities need to be addressed. These include structural barriers like legal discrimination and the norms and care responsibilities that limit women's prospects. To best serve displaced and host communities, services need to be informed by local stakeholders and adapted to local settings. Multi-sectoral interventions can play an important role.

There remain important knowledge gaps, including further understanding regarding the types of entrepreneurial activities and the effectiveness of programs addressing women as entrepreneurs. This is especially crucial given the need for programs that help women entrepreneurs go beyond subsistence-level livelihoods.

Finally, the note indicates ways forward to address limitations of the GDFD research. One important area is improving the availability of sex-disaggregated and multi-faceted data and building more evidence about what works to advance economic opportunities of displaced women in developing country settings. Additionally, a better understanding of legal reform priorities and the implementation of laws and policies to support access to jobs and work would advance the livelihoods agenda.

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