The dance group at the Scalibrini mission, welcoming visitors. The Scalabrini Mission has been in Ecuador for 23 years, partnering with CRS to serve about 1700 families annually. The Scalabrini mission focuses on integration and sustainability with dignity.
Photo: Simmons, Ryla 2016

# Little by Little:

## EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE ON REFUGEE INTEGRATION INTO HOST COMMUNITIES

**CRS**
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

**faith. action. results.**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For any questions, comments and requests regarding this report, contact Emily Wei at emily.wei@crs.org.

**Catholic Relief Services** is the official humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. Founded in 1943 by the Catholic Bishops of the United States, CRS was created to serve World War II survivors in Europe. Since then, we have expanded in size to reach more than 120 million people in more than 100 countries on five continents.

Our mission is to assist impoverished and disadvantaged people overseas, working in the spirit of Catholic social teaching to promote the sacredness of human life and the dignity of the human person. Although our mission is rooted in the Catholic faith, our operations serve people based solely on need, regardless of their race, religion or ethnicity. Within the United States, CRS engages Catholics to live their faith in solidarity with the poor and suffering people of the world.

**Causal Design** is a social enterprise specialized in data-driven policy analysis. We partner with international development clients, donors, and local counterparts to provide rigorous independent program evaluation, expand cultures of evidence within organizations, and support efforts to relieve human suffering and end poverty. Our service delivery is focused on Impact Evaluation, M&E Capacity Building, and Growth Diagnostics.

**Catholic Relief Services**
228 West Lexington Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201 3413
1.888.277.7575
www.crs.org

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Share the Journey**
#sharejourney

*"All of us need friends. We need our families. It is important to have friends, acquaintances who can help you find a job, be more open, get to know the city, etc. You need to let people get to know you. It is very difficult here. There is discrimination, so people get to know you little by little."*

*— Male Colombian refugee*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND

Conflict and crisis leaves an unprecedented 22.5 million people living in exile today. The sheer number of people seeking international protection and the capacity of host countries to cope with those numbers are changing the conversation around how the international community should best respond. As outlined in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants—a set of commitments to enhance the protection of refugees and migrants unanimously adopted at the UN General Assembly last year—new approaches are needed to reflect the long-term displacement of refugees, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. These efforts must address the immediate humanitarian needs of new arrivals while also incorporating and reflecting the long-term needs of both refugees and host communities.

To better understand how local integration plays out within communities, particularly the process of social integration, Catholic Relief Services contracted the DC-based research firm Causal Design to undertake a three-country qualitative study. This investigation consisted of a series of focus group discussions and key informant interviews with community members (host and refugee), practitioners, government and UN officials, and leaders from civil society in three different contexts: Ecuador, India, and Jordan.

## RESULTS

The process of settling in a new place and the role of social connections in informing and facilitating that process is universal. What amplifies the importance of those connections for refugees living outside camps is that their ability to survive, and ideally thrive, depends on establishing new relationships with the host community. This study strongly suggests that social acceptance is an integral component of a refugee's integration process and thus should be prioritized in programming and policy development.

While promoting social integration does not directly address an immediate survival need, it can facilitate access to other components of the integration process, such as housing and employment, and potentially improve other outcomes of interest, such as mental health. Given that almost 75 percent

of refugees are displaced for more than five years (UNHCR, 2012), policymakers and practitioners must respond with an approach that supports integral human development in addition to addressing immediate humanitarian needs.

This study reinforces what the New York Declaration and past research has shown: host communities play a significant role in the integration of refugees. What has been somewhat ignored in the past, however, is that the presence of refugees has deep implications for host communities' everyday lives. Just like refugees, host communities require support that reflects the multifaceted ways—economic, political, social, and developmental—in which their lives are affected.

Further, the study elucidates a variety of tools and means for donors, practitioners, and host governments to foster social acceptance and relationships between members of both communities. These include utilizing existing community spaces, such as schools, or creating new opportunities, such as community savings groups, where refugees and members of the host community can get to know one another on a personal level. Recruiting thought leaders, developing education campaigns, and influencing the media can further help to inform the public about refugees and dispel stereotypes and misinformation. These opportunities for personal interaction and greater community awareness can also counter the spread of stereotypes and misinformation, which inherently block social integration.

The unprecedented number of people forcibly displaced from their homes today demands a reexamination of what has been done in the past and the consideration of new approaches going forward. Although formal integration is a non-starter in many host countries, informal integration, including social acceptance, offers a pathway for refugees to pursue dignified lives while waiting to return home or resettle in a third country. Creating opportunities for refugees to contribute to and engage with the host country also has the potential to reduce the burden placed on the local community, a key component in fostering the development of meaningful relationships.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### TO DONORS AND PRACTITIONERS:

- **Fund and pursue programs that support and serve refugees through an inclusive and holistic model.** Social acceptance is a critical component of a refugee's integration process. Promoting programs that take into account the integral human development of both refugees and host communities will likely improve the access to and impacts of essential services, including housing, employment, and education. Donors should enable integrated, rather than sectoral, responses to refugees and host communities. This also includes addressing the psychosocial needs of communities, particularly of those who have experienced violence and trauma.

- **Identify beneficiaries based on vulnerability, and include necessary support to host communities.** Donors should remove nationality-specific restrictions on funds directed toward refugees living outside camps. Funding that approaches refugees as isolated beneficiaries fails to acknowledge the broader context in which refugees live, namely the community around them. Rather than supporting refugees alone based on their nationality, donors should support them at the community level by focusing on vulnerability. This approach has the potential to reduce tensions among refugee and host communities and improve the strength and stability of the community overall.

- **Develop education campaigns centered on refugee experiences.** Misinformation about and misconceptions of refugees fuel stereotypes and discrimination, which directly impede the integration process. Members of the host community may lack accurate information about various aspects of refugees' lives, including why they fled their homes and what they experience in exile. Educating community members about the realities of refugees' lives can help counter stereotypes, xenophobia, and perceptions of competition between groups while also building feelings of empathy for their new neighbors. This can be done through media, community activities, or other existing arbiters of social norms.

- **Incorporate the use of shared community spaces into programs.** Various barriers exist that limit when, where, and how refugees and members of the host community interact with one another. This lack of exposure hinders the development of personal relationships and can allow stereotypes to flourish. Programming that addresses community-wide needs should be provided in ways that intentionally facilitate and promote social engagement. Through these interactions, community members may start to view refugees as individuals rather than as threats. This approach prioritizes social acceptance and community cohesion.

### TO HOST COUNTRIES:

- **Sensitize the host community to refugees' struggles.** Host governments define the parameters of refugees' lives within their borders. The decisions they make regarding refugees also have direct implications for their citizens' everyday lives—not all of them positive. To address host communities' potential frustrations as they adapt, national and local governments should work to educate the host communities on refugees' experiences and actively promote positive social interactions among members of both communities.

- **Establish standardized refugee policies and regulations that reflect international norms.** Developing and employing government approaches that are defined by nationality instead of legal status can create confusion and perceptions of competition within refugee communities. Countries should instead develop policies that reflect international protection norms and apply them to refugees regardless of nationality, thus reducing any opportunity to play politics with refugees' lives.

### TO SERVICE PROVIDERS (GOVERNMENT AND NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS):

- **Ensure service providers have the skills and knowledge to support refugees.** Individual practitioners and administrators are gatekeepers to the various institutions that inform the concrete components of the refugee integration process, including access to medical care, education, and legal status, among others. If they are uninformed of the laws that detail what refugees can rightfully access or lack the training required to address the unique needs of refugees, they can be a hindrance rather than a helper. All service providers should be trained on the legal rights and psychosocial needs of refugees to ensure they are equipped to perform their duties.

## INTRODUCTION

Conflict and crisis have forced an unprecedented number of people to flee their homes. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that as of June 2017, 65.6 million people have been forcibly displaced, around one-third of whom are refugees (UNHCR, 2017b). These numbers are double what UNHCR reported a decade ago (UNHCR, 2008).

Developing countries bear a disproportionate burden of hosting refugees: 88 percent of refugees stay in low- and middle-income countries (Center for Global Development and the International Rescue Committee, 2017). Further, three-quarters of refugees live outside camps today[1] (Center for Global Development and the International Rescue Committee, 2017), which creates additional challenges for service provision and protection. While the average length of displacement has remained fairly steady since the mid-1990s[2] (Devictor and Do, 2016), the sheer number of people seeking protection and the capacity of host countries to cope with those numbers are changing the conversation around how the international community should best respond.

In response to the rapidly changing landscape of refugee needs, international leaders and policymakers hosted several meetings in 2016 that either partially or exclusively focused on forcibly displaced persons, including the London Conference in February,[3] the World Humanitarian Summit in May,[4] and the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants in September.[5] At the 2016 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), member states unanimously adopted the "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants," a set of commitments to enhance the protection of refugees and migrants that addresses today's migration challenges and tomorrow's needs. UNHCR's Volker Türk said the New York Declaration reframes the approach to refugees as one requiring a holistic response, including a focus on the host communities as stakeholders and players in the process (UNHCR, 2016).

The New York Declaration also calls for a two-year review process to develop a comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF); the framework will inform a global compact on refugees scheduled for review at the 2018 UNGA (General Assembly, 2016). The proposed CRRF is based on the idea that the large number of refugees today demands a multifaceted, multi-sectoral, equitable, and whole-of-society approach. The framework acknowledges that the impact of large movements of refugees is not only humanitarian, but also economic, political, social, and developmental (UNHCR, 2017c). Significantly, it considers the role of host communities in the refugee response and emphasizes the need for development programs that benefit both refugees and host communities (UNHCR, 2017c).

---

1   In 2014, UNHCR estimated that 40 percent of refugees lived in camps (UNHCR, 2014).
2   Those who have fled their countries spend an average of 10 years away; that average jumps to 21 years for refugees who have spent at least five years away (Devictor and Do, 2016).
3   The London Conference, "Supporting Syria and the Region," focused exclusively on the Syrian conflict and its impact (Mahecic, 2016).
4   The World Humanitarian Summit focused on five core responsibilities, including "Leave No One Behind: A Commitment To Address Forced Displacement" (World Humanitarian Summit, 2016).
5   The UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants occurred on September 19, 2016, during the 2016 United Nations General Assembly.

## BACKGROUND

Repatriation and resettlement have historically been the more politically palatable durable solutions as local integration can carry negative connotations of permanence[6] for host countries (Jacobsen, 2001). Yet the protracted nature of many of today's conflicts increasingly delay repatriation (UNHCR, 2015): at the end of 2014, 45 percent of refugees were in protracted situations. Resettlement options for refugees are similarly constricted as governments around the world reduce the number of refugees they are willing to admit (Kingsley, 2016; Green, 2017; Davis and Jordan, 2017). This reality has refocused attention on integration of refugees into host communities.

> ### WHAT IS INTEGRATION?
>
> - Integration is a multifaceted process that requires engagement from three groups, including: 1) the refugee to adapt to the new country's legal, economic, and social rules and build a life that enables them to contribute to their new home; 2) the host country to support the administrative and logistical efforts of refugees to integrate; and 3) the host community to welcome the new arrivals and allow for cultural diversity (Hopkins, 2013).
>
> - The main components viewed as critical to integration are: housing, employment, language, family unification, social networks and cohesion, political and civic participation, health, and education (New York Declaration, 2016; Center for Global Development and the International Rescue Committee, 2017; Jacobsen, 2001).
>
> - Integration sometimes, but not always, leads to naturalization (Hopkins, 2013).

While not an explicit goal, *de facto* integration already occurs for many refugees in urban settings because refugees know they cannot survive without being able to live and work among the host community (Beversluis et al. 2016). The shift to focusing on integration as a specific outcome of interest for the humanitarian community is a reflection that successful integration—resulting in naturalization or not—has direct links to the social, economic, and human development of refugees in urban areas.

The presence of refugees can bring concerns over security and crime as well as economic and environmental burdens placed on host countries (Jacobsen, 2001). Failure to counter these concerns and promote positive relationships between members of the host and refugee communities can have dire consequences. On the Greek island of Leros, a group of host community members attacked more than 100 Iraqi refugees and threatened that something terrible would happen if they did not leave (Strickland, 2016). South Africa has seen multiple waves of xenophobic violence in the past decade, where foreign migrants are blamed for crime and then attacked by South Africans (Chutel, 2017); the most notable series of attacks occurred in 2008 when more than 60 people died, one of whom was burned alive (Sosibo, 2015). Attacks against Syrians have been documented in Lebanon, Turkey, and Germany (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Sharma, 2017; Draper, 2015).

Despite these alarming events, most work related to refugee integration thus far has focused on issues of housing and livelihoods with little explicit attention paid to social cohesion. Limited data exists on the process and impact of social integration of refugees, particularly from the perspective of both refugees and members of the host community. This qualitative study attempts to fill this gap by examining:

- how each group perceives the other;

- how each group develops those perceptions;

- how those perceptions influence the types of relationships they build with each other; and

- how those relationships influence other components of refugees' integration.

---

6 Local integration, when a formal process, usually ends with naturalization.

## UNHCR-DEFINED KEY TERMS

- **Host communities:** Communities that host large populations of refugees or internally displaced persons, typically in camps or integrated into households directly.

- **Local integration (formal):** A durable solution to the problem of refugees that involves their permanent settlement in a country of first asylum and eventually being granted nationality of that country.

- **Refugee:** A person who meets the eligibility criteria under the applicable refugee definition, as provided for in international or regional refugee instruments, under UNHCR's mandate, and/or in national legislation.

- **Repatriation:** Return to the country of origin based on the refugees' free and informed decision. Voluntary repatriation may be organized (i.e., when it takes place under the auspices of the concerned governments and UNHCR) or spontaneous (i.e., the refugees return by their own means with UNHCR and governments having little or no direct involvement in the process of return).

- **Resettlement:** The transfer of refugees from the country in which they have sought refuge to another State that has agreed to admit them. The refugees will usually be granted asylum or some other form of long-term resident rights and, in many cases, will have the opportunity to become naturalized citizens. For this reason, resettlement is a durable solution as well as a tool for the protection of refugees. It is also a practical example of international burden- and responsibility-sharing.

(UNHCR, 2006)



Thousands of Sri Lankan refugees have spent years or decades in the crowded camps, and have limited ways to earn a living. Here, men take the fish they have caught to dry in the sun. Photo: Sheahen, Laura 2011

## METHODS & DESIGN

Catholic Relief Services selected three countries where they work for inclusion in this study: Ecuador, India, and Jordan. These sites offer wide geographic coverage and diversity of legal systems, related conflict dynamics, and length of displacement. All data collection occurred in urban or peri-urban sites from July to September 2017.

This study sought to examine refugee integration through a holistic lens, thus community members (both host and refugee), practitioners, and policymakers were interviewed. A total of 110 individuals participated in 16 key informant interviews (KII) and 15 focus group discussions (FGD). Graphic 1 shows a broad overview of data collection by country.

Appendix 1 details additional information on the study participants. Relevant key informants were identified and recruited by the Catholic Relief Services Country Office teams with input from the lead researcher. Catholic Relief Services Country Offices in conjunction with their implementing partners recruited community participants for FGDs from their databases of past, current, and potential beneficiaries. All participants were at least 18 years old. Specific refugee communities were selected for each country: Colombians in Ecuador; Sri Lankans in India; and Syrians and Iraqis in Jordan.

All community members agreed to participate through a verbal consent process; key informants read and signed a consent form. All interviews were conducted in the language most comfortable for the participant(s); a translator facilitated interviews when needed.

The lead researcher took detailed notes during each interview; interviews were recorded (audio only) when given permission by participants. These rough transcripts were reviewed to develop a codebook of salient themes and then coded using DeDoose (version 7.6.17). The coded data was then analyzed to identify cross-cutting topics, which are presented here. Preliminary findings were shared with practitioners and policymakers through multiple venues to get expert feedback to ensure accuracy and relevance.
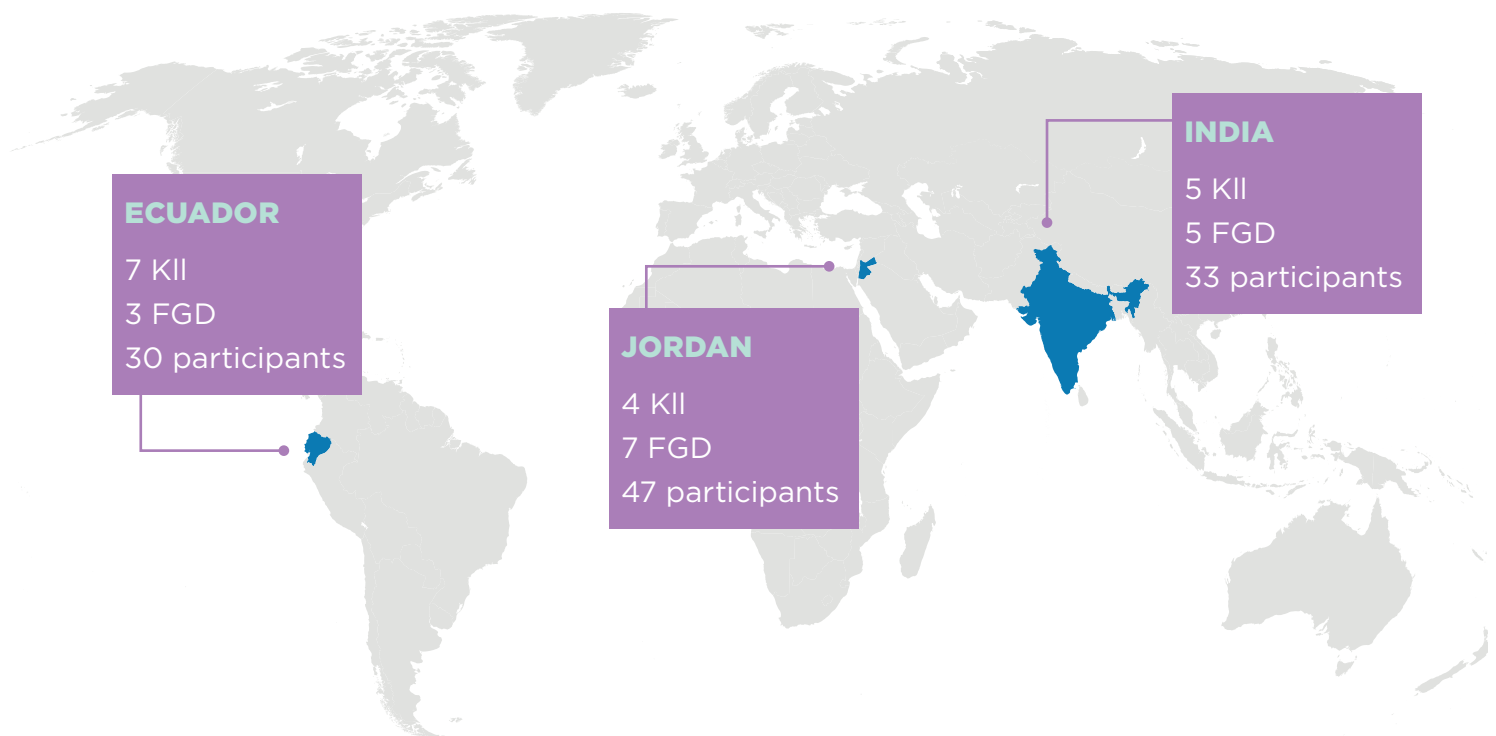
## GRAPHIC 1. DATA COLLECTION OVERVIEW BY COUNTRY



**INDIA**
5 KII
5 FGD
33 participants

**ECUADOR**
7 KII
3 FGD
30 participants

**JORDAN**
4 KII
7 FGD
47 participants

## TABLE 1. COUNTRIES AT A GLANCE

| | ECUADOR | INDIA | JORDAN |
|---|---|---|---|
| # of persons of concern[a] | 127,390 | 207,070 | 720,812[b] |
| Persons of concern per 1,000 inhabitants[c] | 7.77 (16,385,068 total population) | 0.16 (1,324,000,000 total population) | 76.23 (9,455,802 total population) |
| # of persons of concern[a] from focus country of origin | 101,161 (Colombia) | 63,162 (Sri Lanka) | 60,904 (Iraq) 648,836 (Syria) |
| Party to 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees? | YES | NO | NO |
| Party to 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees? | YES | NO | NO |

[a] This includes refugees, individuals in refugee-like situations, and asylum seekers (UNHCR Population Statistics, 2017).
[b] This does not include Palestinian refugees.
[c] This is calculated using the number of persons of concern in the country (UNHCR Population Statistics, 2017) and the country population in 2016 (World Bank Open Data, 2017).

### ECUADOR LEGAL OVERVIEW

INTERNATIONAL LAW:

• Ecuador is a party to both the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol.

• Ecuador has historically complied with the 1984 Cartagena Declaration, a regional non-binding agreement that expands the definition of who is considered a refugee (Vivanco and Frelick, 2013b).

DOMESTIC LAW:

• In 2008, Ecuador ratified a new constitution that increased refugees' rights and expanded their access to citizenship (Converti, 2015). Ecuador's Constitution now includes the following protections for refugees: people cannot be considered illegal because of their migration status; the right to asylum and sanctuary is recognized; refoulement is prohibited; and Ecuador shall seek to implement policies that protect the rights of refugees and all people in Latin America (Republic of Ecuador, 2008).

• In 2012, Ecuador implemented Executive Decree 1182, a restrictive policy that some argued violated the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees (Applebaum, 2012; Vivanco and Frelick, 2013a). Many of the parts that were criticized in this decree were overturned in a 2014 Ecuadorian Constitutional Court ruling (Asylum Access, 2014).

• In 2017, Ecuador passed the Human Mobility Law, which grants equal rights to refugees, decriminalizes irregular migration, and grants access to identification cards for refugees (UNHCR, 2017a).

## INDIA LEGAL OVERVIEW

### INTERNATIONAL LAW:

- India is not a party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees nor its 1967 Protocol.

- India has recognized refugees from Tibet and Sri Lanka and honored UNHCR decisions of refugee status determination for individuals from other countries.

### DOMESTIC LAW:

- India has no clearly defined legal framework that addresses refugees and asylum seekers within the country. Rather, refugees and asylum seekers are treated the same as other foreigners under the 1946 Foreigner's Act (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, n.d.a). Under India's Citizenship Amendment Act (2003), all non-citizens, regardless of refugee or asylum status, are defined as residing in India illegally (Valatheeswaran and Rajan, 2011).

- Different refugee and asylum-seeking groups are afforded different levels of protection (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, n.d.a). Further, each state can elect to provide additional levels of protection or support to refugees, like Tamil Nadu does for Sri Lankans living in state-run refugee camps.

- India does, however, generally provide "protection against the expulsion or return of refugees to countries where refugees would face threats to their safety or freedom due to race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion" (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, n.d.a, pg. 26).

- UNHCR-registered refugees are granted work authorization, but some labor market discrimination exists (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, n.d.a). Recognized refugees and asylum seekers are generally allowed access to housing, primary and secondary education, health care, and the courts, but access varies by state and population (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, n.d.a). Denial of access is generally due to a lack of knowledge on refugee rights by the service provider (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, n.d.a).

## JORDAN LEGAL OVERVIEW

### INTERNATIONAL LAW:

- Jordan is not a party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees nor its 1967 Protocol.

- Jordan abides by UNHCR's eligibility determinations for those seeking protection and has a memorandum of understanding with UNHCR, which "contains the definition of refugee, confirms adherence to the principle of nonrefoulement, and allows recognized refugees a maximum stay of one year, during which period UNHCR must find a durable solution" (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, n.d.b, p. 20).

### DOMESTIC LAW:

- Article 21(1) of Jordan's Constitution provides protection for political refugees, but no legislation has been enacted to support this. Refugees and asylum seekers are currently subject to Law No. 24 of 1973 on Residency and Foreigners' Affairs, which does not distinguish between refugees and non-refugees (Saliba, 2016).

- Most of Jordan's refugee policies and regulations are determined by nationality rather than by protection status. In particular, there is a stark contrast between policies for Syrian refugees and policies applying to all other refugees:

  - Syrian refugees are charged the same health care rates as uninsured Jordanians (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, n.d.b) while other refugees must pay the foreigner's rate for health care;

  - Syrian refugee children receive free primary and secondary education (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, n.d.b), whereas other refugees are permitted to attend school, but must pay tuition and cannot attend public schools (Seeley, 2016; Dhingra, 2016); and

  - Refugees have limited access to parts of the formal labor market (International Labour Organization, 2017); only Syrian refugees can obtain work permits, which are restricted to four sectors (construction, agriculture, domestic work, and manufacturing).

- All refugees have equal access to justice regardless of legal status, but they do not always exercise this right (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, n.d.b).
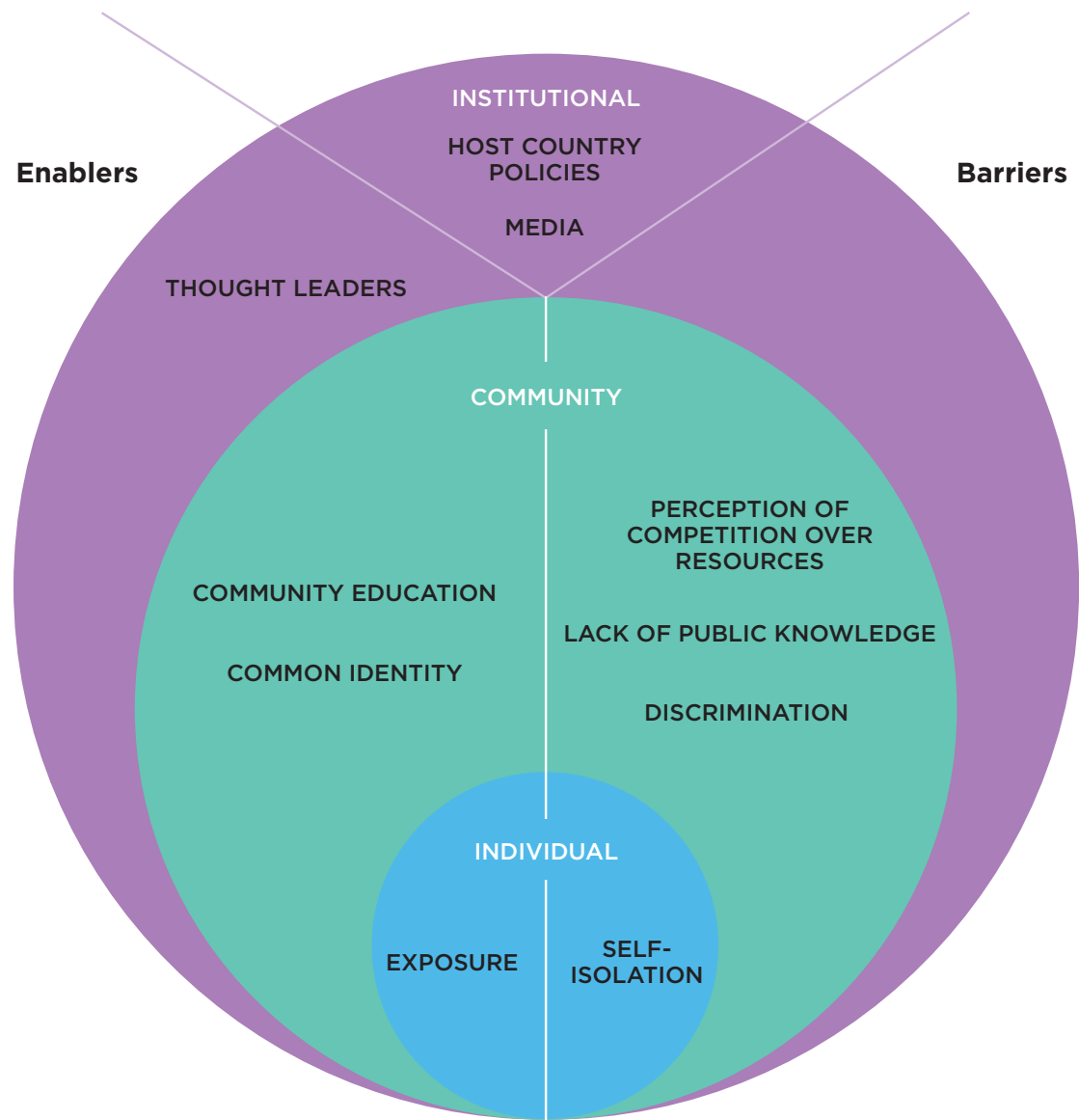
# FINDINGS

Three main topics emerged from the study that reveal the process and outcome of social integration of refugees and relationship building between refugee and host communities. These themes elucidate the ways in which quality interactions between community members can both counter tensions that may arise between them and promote more cohesive communities overall. Graphic 2 provides an overview of the factors that inform social integration.

This section will explore these three topics—manifestations of social integration, factors that enable the process, and factors that hinder the process—using specific examples from the three field sites to highlight how social acceptance occurs on the ground.[7]

## GRAPHIC 2. SPLIT SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES

**Enablers**                                    **Barriers**

INSTITUTIONAL

HOST COUNTRY POLICIES

MEDIA

THOUGHT LEADERS

COMMUNITY

PERCEPTION OF COMPETITION OVER RESOURCES

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

LACK OF PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

COMMON IDENTITY

DISCRIMINATION

INDIVIDUAL

EXPOSURE

SELF-ISOLATION

---

7   It is important to note that these findings represent community members' perceptions of what is happening in their countries and do not necessarily reflect actual policy or programming.

## MANIFESTATIONS OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION: WHAT DOES ACCEPTANCE LOOK LIKE?

### ACCESS TO SERVICES AND RIGHTS

The integration process consists of various components that collectively inform how well one is able to establish a life in a new place. For some refugees, having personal relationships with members of the host community means they are able to access goods or services that are otherwise denied to them based on their nationality or legal status. Having a member of the host community as an advocate can tip the scales when individuals or systems are unable or unwilling to support refugees.

This was true for one Colombian woman who fled to Ecuador ten years ago with her five-year-old son. She could not find a place to rent because she faced Ecuadorian landlords who wanted nothing to do with Colombian tenants. Only when an Ecuadorian friend stepped in and signed a lease on her behalf, in his name, did she find a home. The landlord did not learn that a Colombian family was the new tenant until move-in day; at that point it was too late for the landlord to do anything because they had already paid three-months' rent. Her Ecuadorian friend also tried to help her register her son in public school, a service that refugees have a legal right to in Ecuador. The woman in charge of the school turned them away multiple times, saying she wanted to know nothing of Colombians and that Colombians are worth nothing. Together, the two of them attempted to navigate the administrative system to get her son in the classroom, but it was still an uphill battle.

Strong community links can also help refugees find employment opportunities even when barriers like discrimination are not a problem. Community members in India, for example, alert their Sri Lankan neighbors in nearby camps of new job openings in the area, and Indian business owners go to camps to recruit residents when opening new factories or starting new construction work. On a smaller scale, one Indian man described how he builds roofs out of coconut leaves and sometimes invites Sri Lankan men to join, allowing them to work in a loose collective.

### INTERMARRIAGE

Marriage across communities is a sign of community-level acceptance and can help establish long-lasting bonds between different groups. Where communities live along a shared border—even before the influx of refugees—long-standing family ties exist because of intermarriage, business links, and ease of movement between the two countries. This is true along the Ecuador-Colombia border as well as the Jordan-Syria and Jordan-Iraq borders. These existing social and familial networks mean that social acceptance is easier for those refugees who lived near and remained close to the border of the host country. For refugees who move further into the country, to places like Quito, Ecuador, and Amman, Jordan, or for those who arrive from a country with no shared border, like Sri Lankans in India, new social connections are needed and marriage is one avenue to forge strong bonds.

In India, a man from the host community said that most parents will accept when children from the two communities decide to get married; even if they do not initially support it, any disapproval goes away once new grandchildren are added to the family. Community members in Jordan also cited intermarriage as a marker of community bonding: a Jordanian man who married an Iraqi woman said that he is now not only linked to her family—now his in-laws—but also to the larger Iraqi community in Amman through social gatherings. Others said that Jordanian men and Syrian women are also getting married; this brings the whole Syrian family into the Jordanian network because the woman's family will move in with her and her husband. [8]

### POSITIVE FEELINGS, PERSPECTIVE ON FUTURE

Numerous refugee participants described feelings, experiences, and outlooks that suggest they carry some level of mental or emotional trauma. An Iraqi woman said that she fears for her daughter's safety and has nightmares of men in black hoods beheading people. Colombian men talked about the challenge of leaving their whole lives behind, which leave some feeling depressed and having little hope for their futures. Thus it is noteworthy that building new relationships and social connections in their current homes was linked to positive feelings and thoughts on the future. A Syrian woman said of the support she receives from Jordanians, "We came from our country in a state of desperation. They helped us get back on our feet… They fed us, gave us psychological support, gave us

---

8   Jordanian men describe intermarriage as a positive outcome. Jordanian women are skeptical of Syrian women's intentions and suggest that Syrian women are using Jordanian men to support their families.

everything." A Sri Lankan woman who has lived outside the camp for 11 years said that she was afraid when she first left the camp because she no longer had constant security, but she now feels safe because of how easily she interacts with her Indian neighbors.

Some members of the host community reciprocated these positive feelings, describing emotional benefits from their relationships with refugees. In Ecuador, women in the host community said that they are learning to be more courageous and open through their friendships with Colombian women. In India, men in the host community, particularly the younger ones, expressed happiness over their friendships with Sri Lankans and how they enjoy being able to invite one another to celebrations, like weddings.

### SHARING RESOURCES

Low- and middle-income countries host 88 percent of refugees today (Center for Global Development and the International Rescue Committee, 2017).

This means that the host governments take in new residents with high vulnerability while potentially already struggling to provide for their own citizens. At the community level, the struggle to survive can strain community relations, especially when people have perceptions of competition over finite resources. This greater economic context makes it all the more significant when community members are willing to share resources with each other.

Early in the arrival of Sri Lankan refugees in India, the government was ill prepared to respond to the needs of refugees, so communities stepped in to offer food and shelter. This readiness to share continues today when either community faces limited resources. Each community has their own government-run infrastructure for basic utilities, like water and electricity. Community participants described how they share water with one another when needed without any issues—if the Indian tank was low, Sri Lankans would share what they had, and vice versa.

## TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN:

Not all of the factors that inform refugees' social integration clearly sit on one side of the social-ecological model (see Graphic 2). Two sit in the middle because they can both hurt and help the process depending on how they are applied.

### MEDIA

The media, both news and entertainment, has broad power to influence public perceptions in the stories they choose to tell, the language they use, and how they portray refugees. In India, an interviewee described how the media helped facilitate Indian acceptance of Sri Lankan refugees. He said that news coverage would use the phrase "our Tamil brothers and sisters" to describe the refugees, which reinforced the cultural connections between the two communities.

In Ecuador, key informants described the opposite approach and impact, where differences and stereotypes are promoted by the media. Several people mentioned that Colombian soap operas, which are very popular among Ecuadorians,

reinforce the stereotypes of Colombians as being violent, involved in the drug trade, and prostitutes. The news media also reinforces these by focusing their crime coverage on Colombians. For example, a civil society leader said that if a robbery occurs and one of the thieves is Colombian, the headline will focus on the one Colombian and ignore the five Ecuadorians who also participated.

Because of the media's impact on community perceptions of outsiders, some civil society groups are trying to work with the media. The Office of Human Mobility in Pichincha, Ecuador, is working to better educate the news media on the reality of refugees—and migrants more broadly—in the province and country as well as serve as a source of information for accurate migration related stories.

### HOST COUNTRY POLICIES

Host country policies inherently inform how refugees and members of the host community interact as they dictate the parameters of refugees' lives, from where they live to if they attend school to the types of employment they can seek.

The camp structure in India[9] presents the most concrete example of how host country policy influences social interaction. While the community members who participated in the study live near each other—close enough that one Indian woman said the Sri Lankans live in a different part of the same neighborhood—some camps are geographically isolated, which means limited interactions between Sri Lankans and Indians. Further, security oversight of Sri Lankan refugees limits how far and where they can travel; this was most directly linked to the types of jobs Sri Lankans can get because employers are reluctant to hire people who must miss several days of work every month to return to the camp for the monthly roll call.

Alongside these restrictions are a variety of policies from the Tamil Nadu state government that encourage integration and positive social interactions. Sri Lankan refugees, for example, are able to attend public schools for free and do so alongside their Indian neighbors. In the discussion with Indian men, three participants were young enough that Sri Lankan refugees began arriving before they were born; they described how they learned about the Sri Lankan students' refugee identities naturally and without judgement. Another policy the Indian government implemented that helps relations between the two communities is the development of separate service provision infrastructure; this removed what was once a source of tension and violence.

Jordan also has a range of policies that have both positive and negative implications for social integration. While the decision to open public schools to Syrian children is widely viewed as a positive development, some see the implementation—creating a separate second shift—as a missed opportunity for children to interact with one another. The employment restrictions placed on refugees—only Syrians can acquire work permits and only in four sectors[10] —has downstream implications for how refugees interact with members of the host community and how members of the host community perceive refugees. Jordanians expressed frustration that they are losing work to Syrians because they are willing to work for less.[11]  Syrian men acknowledged this dynamic but emphasized that they have limited options for livelihoods and are doing what they need to do to survive. Iraqi refugees, who have no legal options for work in Jordan, have fewer opportunities for natural interaction with Jordanians because there is no common work place.

One policy that has the potential for improving relations between the communities, or at least reducing the resentment some Jordanians feel toward refugees, is the requirement that 30 percent of all refugee-related funding goes toward support for Jordanians. This quota is intended to address vulnerabilities in both communities, which may improve Jordanians' perceptions of refugees as they are also benefitting from the international response.

Among the interviews in Ecuador, almost all practitioners, policy experts, and civil society leaders acknowledged that the government stands apart from neighboring countries due to its progressive approach to immigration, which is enshrined in both the Constitution and the recent Human Mobility Law. But those key informants also see a large disconnect between the rhetoric—the promotion of human rights and no discrimination based on migration status—and actual implementation in policy and practice. One major concern is that the Ecuadorian government is playing politics with refugees to support their foreign affairs. Because the Ecuadorian government wants positive relations with both Colombia and Venezuela, some see the government denying protection and legal status to individuals fleeing those countries because granting protection would imply that these neighbors are failing to protect their own citizens. Some interviewees in India saw similar policy behaviors where the government would develop nationality-specific refugee policies in ways that match their international relations strategy, i.e., granting protection basically equivalent to citizenship to Tibetan refugees as a way to annoy China. These efforts make some refugees and those seeking asylum feel insecure because their legal status is seen as being linked to changing national priorities.

9   Sri Lankan refugees can live outside the camps, but they lose the financial benefits they receive as camp residents. Sri Lankans who participated in the study said that money and the inability to support oneself without government support kept them in the camps. The participants who live outside said that they, and most other Sri Lankans like them, are able to survive because of remittances they receive from family living abroad.
10  Syrian refugees can only get work permits in the following sectors: construction, agriculture, domestic work, and manufacturing. These sectors are made up of mostly migrant workers, so there is limited competition for jobs with Jordanians.
11  This dynamic occurs separate from the four approved employment sectors, in sectors where Syrians do not have documentation to work. Syrians do this work under the table.

## ENABLERS OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION: WHAT HELPS REFUGEES AND MEMBERS OF THE HOST COMMUNITY BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH ONE ANOTHER?

### EXPOSURE

Fear of the unknown, the spread of misinformation about refugees, and existing social networks can make host community members disinterested in getting to know their new neighbors. The single greatest enabler of social acceptance described was, quite simply, host community members having the opportunity to interact with and get to know refugees, both personally as individuals and generally as human beings. These types of quality connections develop in structured environments, like at work, as well as organically through one-on-one meetings.

In Ecuador and Jordan, refugees said that one way they demonstrate their trustworthiness is through their work. By selling sweets or newspapers on the streets of Ibarra, Ecuador, or working in a clothing store in Amman, they can show local community members that they, both as individuals and as representatives of refugees more broadly, add value to the community.

Exposure in and around schools is another way people described individuals from different communities getting to know one another. The Tamil Nadu state government provides free public education to Sri Lankan refugees, so Sri Lankan children attend public schools alongside their Indian neighbors; this meant that the younger Indians got to the know their Sri Lankan classmates as peers and friends before learning about their refugee status. They said they did not even know their Sri Lankan classmates were refugees until they were 12 or 13 years old.

A more facilitated approach is employed in Jordan, where public schools are segregated: Jordanian students attend in the morning and Syrians attend in the afternoon. Since opportunities for engagement do not exist during class, some nongovernmental organizations are working on the periphery of schools to engage the extended community, including parents and teachers. Two practitioners highlighted their respective work with Jordanian teachers to ensure they have the training needed to support Syrian children and address issues of bullying. One described how working within and around schools is beneficial for all involved:

> "We're looking for teachers who say, 'We were really skeptical of teaching Syrian children, but now we see they're just like Jordanian children, but they might have some special needs and we love helping them.' And we're looking for parents who are starting to create a community of parents within the school and who have a better understanding of the opportunities available for them in Jordan."

Because of high levels of discrimination against Colombians, few existing shared spaces where Ecuadorians and Colombians can build quality relationships were mentioned. To address this, organizations like the Scalabrini Mission facilitate the creation and management of community groups, which offer social interaction as well as economic benefits. These groups bring together vulnerable members from a variety of communities, including Ecuadorian, Colombian, and Venezuelan, for shared savings groups, leadership training, and skills classes.

Similarly, UNHCR in Jordan is helping to facilitate the creation and management of community support committees (CSC), which include leaders from both the Jordanian and individual refugee communities; these groups help spread information and identify community needs and then organize relevant activities that bring together members from both communities to interact and benefit. A key informant said the following on the importance of those social interactions:

> "[Refugees have] put pressure on different services. It's difficult to accept the other who you see filling up your schools when you don't know them. But when you know it's your friend, it's something much easier to accept. It's a simplistic way of looking at it, but I think it's an important issue of the CSCs. Creating that cohesion, pushing back against the idea of refugees are taking our jobs, using up our services. It's push back against the rhetoric of 'othering.'"

At the individual level, refugees said the impetus to build personal relationships must come from themselves because they recognize that they need those connections to survive and there is less interest from the host community. A Colombian man explained:

> "All of us need friends. We need our families. It is important to have friends, acquaintances

*who can help you find a job, be more open, get to know the city, etc. You need to let people get to know you. It is very difficult here. There is discrimination, so people get to know you little by little."*

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION

In addition to personal connections, community and institutional awareness further facilitate refugees' social integration. Host community members who said that they know about the conflicts that bring refugees to their countries and the struggles they faced when fleeing and continue to face being away from home expressed sympathy for the refugees in their neighborhoods. They are also willing to develop relationships with refugees, and most said they have friends who are refugees. This was true in all three countries.

Education is being used to overcome social barriers to refugee acceptance, like poor public understanding and discrimination. For the larger community, UNHCR Jordan is working through the CSCs to counter misinformation and build awareness among Jordanians. In Ecuador, the staff of the Office of Human Mobility in Pichincha are taking classes on Islam so that they are better able to understand and support the needs of Muslim refugees arriving in Ecuador from the Middle East, since they have limited exposure to the religion otherwise. In Jordan, organizations like Caritas and Save the Children are working directly with teachers and collaborating with the Ministry of Education to address the gaps in knowledge that may lead to poor service provision for Syrian children in schools.

## COMMON IDENTITY

Sharing a core feature of one's cultural identity—such as a common language, culture, or ethnicity—offered, at the very least, an opening for social integration; at most, this commonality meant that social acceptance happened with little or no facilitation. The three countries included in the study present a broad spectrum of how this plays out within communities.

Ecuador sits at one end of the spectrum. Language is the critical base for refugees developing relationships, but it does not negate other barriers like discrimination. Civil society and policy leaders see that Spanish-speaking refugees have an easier time than those coming from the Middle East and Africa, who are more ostracized and sometimes targets of

violence by Ecuadorians. But this common language does little to address the stereotypes and xenophobia that divide Colombians and Ecuadorians.

On the other end of the spectrum is India. Because Indians in Tamil Nadu and the Sri Lankans who fled to India share the same Tamil ethnicity, language, and culture, social acceptance comes more naturally. While one practitioner questioned whether true social cohesion exists between the two communities, there was consensus among all interviewees that the two communities live alongside each other easily and warmly embrace each other. It was repeated across interviews that they are Tamil brothers and sisters.

Jordan exists somewhere between the other two. Community members cited their common language, similar cultures, and coming from the same region as offering levels of commonality that allow for Syrian and Iraqi refugees to live within Jordan with some level of ease. But these commonalities do not mean it is easy to establish relationships with Jordanians or that Syrians and Iraqis imagine a long-term future in the country.

## THOUGHT LEADERS

Some community and national leaders are influencing public opinion to support refugees and their integration into the community. Because of their potential impact, local organizations recruit powerful individuals for their efforts in shaping community perspectives.

As mentioned in the Exposure section, UNHCR in Jordan is working with leaders from both host and refugee communities through the CSCs. They intentionally enlist high-level and visible Jordanians from the government for these groups to send a message to both Jordanians and refugees: that engagement with refugees is a national duty and that Jordan cares about refugees and is actively working to support them, respectively.

In Ecuador, the Pichincha provincial government is working to recruit local business owners for their effort to bring migrants, including refugees, into the economy and to signal to the wider Ecuadorian community that migrants are a valuable asset. Pichincha's Office of Human Mobility is employing a new approach, originally developed in Chile, of bestowing a special Migrant Seal on select businesses that provide livelihood opportunities to migrants. This distinction elevates the profile of the business through public relations support from the Office of Human Mobility and media attention.

Students at the Latin School of Ashrafieh, in Amman, Jordan, where remedial classes for refugee children are offered Monday through Wednesday in the afternoons.

Durand, Oscar 2016

## BARRIERS TO SOCIAL INTEGRATION: WHAT BLOCKS THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTEGRATED, COHESIVE COMMUNITIES?

### DISCRIMINATION

Stereotypes and xenophobia, which manifest as discriminatory practices, stand as barriers to refugees' social integration into host countries, although the impact depends on the context.[12] Discrimination can limit refugees' access to services and ability to exercise their rights. It also hinders the willingness of community members, particularly from the host community, to interact with other groups.

In Ecuador, Colombian men are seen as gang members, drug traffickers, and thieves, while Colombian women are seen as prostitutes and trying to steal Ecuadorian women's husbands. These beliefs, which key informants and Colombian refugees describe as pervasive, result in Colombians being denied housing, medical care, and seats in the classroom. Of the health care system in particular, a practitioner said:

> "For health access, we have a very discretionary system by public officials. It depends on the individual doctor or nurse you interact with, despite laws protecting against discrimination. Some are very open minded. Some, because of discrimination or xenophobia, will deny care based on nationality. They say, 'You're not Ecuadorian. You don't have the right ID. Go back to your country.' This prevails even though legislation actually forbids discrimination based on nationality. It's very discretionary."

In some cases, the only way refugees are able to access services—to which they have a right—is through legal pressure offered by organizations like the Scalabrini Mission, which occasionally sends lawyers with refugees when they seek services, such as at a school or hospital.

While refugees do not see all Jordanians as unwelcoming, they do face discrimination. Syrian and Iraqi refugees said that they are cursed on the street and called "refugee" as an insult. Both Syrian and Iraqi women said that they have to keep their children indoors because they fear they will be beaten or threatened by neighbors. In an extreme example, a Syrian mother described how a large group of armed Jordanians arrived at her door because her son's kite fell into the neighbor's yard. Regardless of whether having experienced low- or high-levels of discrimination, all said that these interactions negatively impact refugees' feelings of being settled in Jordan.

### PERCEIVED COMPETITION OVER FINITE RESOURCES

Stereotypes held about refugees are exacerbated by perceptions of both competition between communities over finite resources and support and the impact of refugees on the economy. Some members of the host community think that refugees are receiving goods or services that would otherwise be theirs, particularly those provided by the government. Others feel like they are forgotten and are frustrated that nongovernmental organizations that ignored them before are now offering support to refugees. In Ecuador, for example, women shared that they feel forgotten and called on organizations that support refugees to also support vulnerable members of the host community since they are also poor and in need.

Nowhere was this competition felt more fiercely than in Jordan, where tension exists not only between Jordanians and refugees, but also among the refugee communities. Most of the frustration was directed at Syrian refugees, while Syrians expressed frustration that the support they received was inadequate and the limitations placed on them by the government were too great.

Jordanians feel a drastic shift in the economy that they attribute to refugees: they blame refugees for their struggle to support their families. Jordanians shared multiple examples of how Syrians take their jobs by being willing to work for less than Jordanians in the same industries. One man, who works as a plumber, said that he has only worked two jobs in the past six months because there are now multiple Syrian plumbers in his neighborhood and they all charge less than he does. A woman said that she fears for her job security because a Syrian woman was recently hired at the dentist office where she works and requested a lower salary. Jordanians also feel like they are being pushed out of their homes because of rising rent, which they blame on wealthy refugees who can afford to pay more. Despite

being Jordanians living in Jordan, they feel they are suffering at the expense of others. As one Jordanian woman said, "No one is there to help us—only the Syrians. In a way, it's making us hate these people even though we don't want to. We know they also want to live their lives, but it's very hard for us."

Iraqi refugees feel similar sentiments of being abandoned in favor of Syrian refugees. While Syrian children can access public education, theirs cannot. Syrians pay the same price at public hospitals as uninsured Jordanians, but Iraqis pay the same price as any other foreigner.[13] They expressed frustration that, unlike Syrians, they have no legal avenues to work in Jordan and are struggling to survive on the money sent from family living abroad and occasional support they receive from nongovernmental organizations and local churches. They also expressed their frustration with UNHCR, who they see as having completely abandoned Iraqis in favor of Syrians, both in providing monetary support while living in Jordan and prioritizing their resettlement to other countries, like the U.S., Canada, and Australia.[14]

Funding can influence these inter-community tensions. A practitioner in India said that the services their organization provided to Sri Lankans, which focused solely on Sri Lankan refugees living in camps, were driven by donor priorities rather than a reflection of needs on the ground. They lamented that more effort was not made to address these limitations since the services missed an opportunity to promote community cohesion and provide services in a needs-based approach rather than a nationality-based one. A nongovernmental organization leader in Jordan described how narrowly allocated funding that focuses on nationality over vulnerability is partially fueling Jordanians' frustrations and must change in order for programming to build stronger, more cohesive communities.

### ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENT APPROACH

India offers a unique counter-point because the government has removed the opportunity for the perception of competition. The government provides services in a way that community members described as mostly equal to Indians and Sri Lankan refugees. The Sri Lankan refugee camps have separate infrastructure that is built and provided by the government. These separate systems, including water tanks and rations shops, came to be because of past instances of violence occurring between the neighboring areas and exploitation of Sri Lankans by Indians with regards to service provision. While there is segregated housing, Sri Lankan refugees have access to the same health care and education as Indians and participate in the labor market with few restrictions.[15] Further, they receive a monthly allowance comparable to what Indians in similar economic situations receive.

### LACK OF PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Limited public awareness of refugees' lives and experiences has implications for personal interactions and service provision. Those without that knowledge or with misinformation are, as a whole, less sensitive to the needs of refugees, which is particularly problematic in places where misinformation and stereotypes abound. This dynamic came through in the discussion with Jordanian women who seemed to lack information about the conflict in Syria and bristled at the suggestion that Jordan should further integrate refugees into their communities. There was further confusion about who was receiving support, what support refugees receive, and who provides that support.

Among some service providers—both government and nongovernmental organizations—there is a lack of awareness about the services refugees have access to and the rights they have in the host country. This was of greatest concern in Ecuador where Colombian community members, civil society leaders, and practitioners detailed multiple accounts of refugees

---

13  Even though there are some organizations that provide medical care, Iraqi refugees' health bills can still be substantial.

14  When asked about Iraqis' perceptions of UNHCR's support, representatives from UNHCR said that while the global focus is on Syrian refugees, there are individual donor countries that are also focused on the smaller refugee communities in Jordan. Further, they highlighted that UNHCR attempts to adjust the support they provide to reflect the restrictions other organizations or agencies might have in their own service provision to non-Syrian refugees. They also said that Iraqis' frustrations are a reflection of misperceptions of UNHCR's work and, in fact, the support offered to Iraqis and Syrians is equitable, though not equal, given the differences in population size.

15  Sri Lankans are not eligible for government jobs and cannot pursue graduate studies in medicine or engineering.

being turned away from clinics and schools because practitioners combined their lack of knowledge with xenophobia as justification.

Others raised concerns over poorly trained administrators and service providers who could inadvertently harm refugees' integration efforts. In Jordan, there was concern that teachers in particular were not fully informed or trained to provide the care required by refugee children. This capacity issue manifested itself in ways such as teachers using exclusionary or bullying language. In Jordan as well as Ecuador, some refugees feel that the bureaucrats who assess their asylum applications are ill informed about the conflicts that forced them to seek protection, which results in incorrect decisions.

## HOST COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Host community members from all three countries expressed some variation of the perspective that refugees are a threat to some component of their lives. For Ecuadorians, Colombian men bring a literal threat of violence and the women are trying to steal Ecuadorian women's husbands. In Jordan, refugees take Jordanian jobs and drive up the cost of living, making day-to-day survival a struggle. It was less pronounced in India, but some suggested that Sri Lankan refugees were a potential threat to Indians' jobs or positioning within the caste system.

### SELF-ISOLATION

In some cases, community members felt it was in their best interest to not interact with members of another community. Refugees feel that they will automatically be blamed should anything go wrong, like a car accident or an argument on the street, and that they have little or no path for protection or recourse. As mentioned in the Discrimination section, this means that Syrian and Iraqi refugees feel they must keep their children indoors for fear of any altercations with Jordanian neighbors. Sri Lankan women said that they think Indians avoid interaction with Sri Lankans because the Q branch[16] will become involved if anything happens, which Indians want to avoid;

similarly, Indian women said that they have no issues with Sri Lankans, but that each community largely keeps to themselves.

Further, all Jordanian women, with one exception, said that they have no friends who are refugees and that all of the information they have about refugees either comes from the media or through what they hear from their Jordanian networks. The impact of this isolation and lack of meaningful engagement could be seen in the tension that occasionally flared during the discussion between one woman in the group who holds dual Jordanian-Syrian citizenship and the rest of the participants. She was directly questioned about why her countrymen ruined their own country (Syria), why Jordanians must bear the burden of their conflict, and why they cannot go back. Despite also being a Jordanian citizen, her fellow participants did not view her as such.

Others cited financial strain as another reason why it was better to keep to themselves. Jordanian culture dictates that you cannot only invite one individual over to your house for a meal; rather, you have to invite their entire family, which quickly becomes expensive. Further, if you accept an invitation to someone's home, you are expected to reciprocate. Community members in Jordan said that, overall, they are focused on daily survival and that socializing and other cultural activities are not priorities.

---

16  Q branch is the intelligence branch of the Tamil Nadu state police. It monitors the Sri Lankan refugee camps.

Judith, a farmer with CRS staff, Alex Moncada. CRS' Borderlands Coffee Project works with both Colombian refugees and Ecuadorian natives to grow a variety of crops, not just coffee, so that they always have a source of food, something to sell, and something to hedge their bets in case one crop fails.

Simmons, Ryla 2016

## CONCLUSION

The process of settling in a new place and the role of social connections in informing and facilitating that process is universal. What amplifies the importance of those connections for refugees living outside camps is that their ability to survive, and ideally thrive, depends on establishing new relationships with the host community. This study strongly suggests that social acceptance is an integral component of a refugee's integration process and thus should be prioritized in programming and policy development.

While promoting social integration does not directly address an immediate survival need, it can facilitate access to other components of the integration process, such as housing and employment, and potentially improve other outcomes of interest, such as mental health. Given that almost 75 percent of refugees are displaced for more than five years (UNHCR, 2012), policymakers and practitioners must respond with an approach that supports integral human development in addition to addressing immediate humanitarian needs.

This study reinforces what the New York Declaration and past research has shown: host communities play a significant role in the integration of refugees. What has been somewhat ignored in the past, however, is that the presence of refugees has deep implications for host communities' everyday lives. Just like refugees, host communities require support that reflects the multifaceted ways—economic, political, social, and developmental—in which their lives are affected.

Further, the study elucidates a variety of tools and means to foster social acceptance and relationships between members of both communities. These include utilizing existing community spaces, like schools, or creating new opportunities, like community savings groups, where refugees and members of the host community can get to know one another on a personal level. Recruiting thought leaders, developing education campaigns, and influencing the media can further help to inform the public about refugees and dispel stereotypes and misinformation. These opportunities for personal interaction and greater community awareness can also make the lives and plight of refugees personal, rather than just a story or rumor.

The unprecedented number of people forcibly displaced from their homes today demands a reexamination of what has been done in the past and the consideration of new approaches going forward. Although formal integration—which offers a path to citizenship—is a non-starter in many host countries, informal integration offers a pathway for refugees to pursue dignified lives while waiting to return home or resettle in a third country. Creating opportunities for refugees to contribute to and engage with the host country also has the potential to reduce the burden placed on the local community, a key component in fostering the development of meaningful relationships.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### TO DONORS AND PRACTITIONERS:

- **Fund and pursue programs that support and serve refugees through an inclusive and holistic model**. Social acceptance is a critical component of a refugee's integration process. Promoting programs that take into account the critical human development of both refugees and host communities will likely improve the access to and impacts of essential services, including housing, employment, and education. Donors should enable integrated, rather than sectoral, responses to refugees and host communities. This also includes addressing the psychosocial needs of communities, particularly of those who have experienced violence and trauma.

- **Identify beneficiaries based on vulnerability, and include necessary support to host communities.** Donors should remove nationality-specific restrictions on funds directed toward refugees living outside camps. Funding that approaches refugees as isolated beneficiaries fails to acknowledge the broader context in which refugees live, namely the community around them. Rather than supporting refugees alone based on their nationality, donors should support them at the community level by focusing on vulnerability. This approach has the potential to reduce tensions among refugee and host communities and improve the strength and stability of the community overall.

- **Develop education campaigns centered on refugee experiences.** Misinformation about and misconceptions of refugees fuel stereotypes and discrimination, which directly impede the integration process. Members of the host community may lack accurate information about various aspects of refugees' lives, including why they fled their homes and what they experience in exile. Educating community members about the realities of refugees' lives can help counter stereotypes, xenophobia, and perceptions of competition between groups while also building feelings of empathy for their new neighbors. This can be done through media, community activities, or other existing arbiters of social norms.

- **Incorporate the use of shared community spaces into programs.** Various barriers exist that limit when, where, and how refugees and members of the host community interact with one another. This lack of exposure hinders the development of personal relationships and can allow stereotypes to flourish. Programming that addresses community-wide needs should be provided in ways that intentionally facilitate and promote social engagement. Through these interactions, community members may start to view refugees as individuals rather than as threats. This approach prioritizes social acceptance and community cohesion.

### TO HOST COUNTRIES:

- **Sensitize the host community to refugees' struggles.** Host governments define the parameters of refugees' lives within their borders. The decisions they make regarding refugees also have direct implications for their citizens' everyday lives—not all of them positive. To address host communities' potential frustrations as they adapt, national and local governments should work to educate the host communities on refugees' experiences and actively promote positive social interactions among members of both communities.

- **Establish standardized refugee policies and regulations that reflect international norms.** Developing and employing government approaches that are defined by nationality instead of legal status can create confusion and perceptions of competition within refugee communities. Countries should instead develop policies that reflect international protection norms and apply them to refugees regardless of nationality, thus reducing any opportunity to play politics with refugees' lives.

### TO SERVICE PROVIDERS (GOVERNMENT AND NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS):

- **Ensure service providers have the skills and knowledge to support refugees.** Individual practitioners and administrators are gatekeepers to the various institutions that inform the concrete components of the refugee integration process, including access to medical care, education, and legal status, among others. If they are uninformed of the laws that detail what refugees can rightfully access or lack the training required to address the unique needs of refugees, they can be a hindrance rather than a helper. All service providers should be trained on the legal rights and psychosocial needs of refugees to ensure they are equipped to perform their duties.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Applebaum, A. (2012, Sept. 27) *The Right to Work in Ecuador: A Positive Development within a Restrictive New Law.* Retrieved from https://rtwasylumaccess.wordpress.com/2012/09/27/the-right-to-work-in-ecuador-a-positive-development-within-a-restrictive-new-law/

Asylum Access. (2014, Sept. 15). *Ecuador advances the protection of refugees.* Retrieved from http://asylumaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Ecuador-advances-the-protection-of-refugees.pdf

Beversluis D., Schoeller-Diaz, D., Anderson M., Anderson N., Slaughter, A., Patel, R. B. (2017). Developing and Validating the Refugee Integration Scale in Nairobi, Kenya. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 30*(1), 106–132. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/few018

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. (n.d.a). *India 2016 Human Rights Report.* U.S. Department of State. Retrieved from https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265748.pdf

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. (n.d.b). J*ordan 2016 Human Rights Report.* U.S. Department of State. Retrieved from https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265716.pdf

Center for Global Development and International Rescue Committee. (2017). *Refugee Compacts: Addressing the Crisis of Protracted Displacement.* Retrieved from https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/Refugee-Compacts-Report.pdf

Chutel, L. (2017, February 21). African migrants in South Africa are in fear for their lives - again. *Quartz Africa.* Retrieved from https://qz.com/915845/nigerians-somalis-and-malawians-have-been-attacked-in-south-africa-sparking-fears-of-a-repeat-of-xenophobic-violence/

Converti, L. (2015, July 31). *Unfinished Business: Ecuador Continues to Manage its Refugee Population.* Council on Hemispheric Affairs. Retrieved from http://www.coha.org/unfinished-business-ecuador-continues-to-manage-its-refugee-population/

Davis, J. H., and Jordan, M. (2017, September 12). White House Weighs Lowering Refugee Quota to Below 50,000. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/12/us/politics/trump-refugee-quota.html

Devictor, X., and Quy-Toan D. (2016). How Many Years Have Refugees Been in Exile? (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper Series 7810). Washington, DC: World Bank Policy Research. Available from doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-7810

Dhingra, R. (2016, Mar. 02). Losing Syria's Youngest Generation: The Education Crisis Facing Syrian Refugees in Jordan. *Middle East Research and Information Project.* Retrieved from http://merip.org/mero/mero030216

Draper, L. (2015, November 2). Refugees Targeted in Series of Violent Attacks Across Germany. *Newsweek.* Retrieved from http://www.newsweek.com/refugees-germanygermany-asylum-seekerswismarmagdeburgrefugee-centersmarkus-597760

General Assembly resolution 71/1. *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.* A/RES/71/1 (Oct. 3, 2016). Available from http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1

Green, A. (2017, June 27). Inside Israel's Secret Program to Get Rid of African Refugees. *Foreign Policy.* Retrieved from http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/27/inside-israels-secret-program-to-get-rid-of-african_refugees_uganda_rwanda/

Hopkins, G. (2013). *A New Beginning: Refugee integration in Europe.* Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/52403d389.pdf

Human Rights Watch. (2014, September 30). *Lebanon: Rising Violence Targets Syrian Refugees.* Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/09/30/lebanon-rising-violence-targets-syrian-refugees

International Labour Organization. (2017). Work Permits and Employment of Syrian Refugees in Jordan. Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_559151.pdf

Jacobsen, K. (2001). The Forgotten Solution: Local Integration for Refugees in Developing Countries. (New Issues in Refugee Research working paper No. 45). Medford, MA: New Issues in Refugee Research. Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/3b7d24059.pdf

Kingsley, P. (2016, April 28). Ban Ki-moon attacks 'increasingly restrictive' EU asylum policies. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/27/austria-set-to-bring-in-stringent-new-law-on-asylum-seekers

Mahecic, A, and Gaynor, T (Ed.). (2016, February 3). *London Syria Conference: World leaders urged to help Syrians.* Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2016/2/56b1fc4f6/london-syria-conference-world-leaders-urged-help-syrians.html

The Refugee Project. (2017). [Graphic showing refugee inflows and outflows by country over time]. *The Refugee Project.* Retrieved from http://www.therefugeeproject.org/

Republic of Ecuador. (2008). *Constitution of 2008.* Ecuador. Official Register. Retrieved from http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Ecuador/english08.html

Saliba, I. (2016). *Refugee Law and Policy: Jordan.* Law Library of Congress. Retrieved from https://www.loc.gov/law/help/refugee-law/jordan.php

Seeley, N. (2016, Winter). The Politics of Aid to Iraqi Refugees in Jordan. *Middle East Research and Information Project* (256). Retrieved from http://www.merip.org/mer/mer256/politics-aid-iraqi-refugees-jordan

Sharma, S. (2017, April 8). Syrian refugees flee after Turkish knife gang attacks camp. *Middle East Eye.* Retrieved from http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syrian-refugees-flee-after-turkish-knife-gang-attacks-camp-1348385243

Sosibo, K. (2015, April 24). Xenophobia: What did we learn from 2008? *Mail & Guardian.* Retrieved from https://mg.co.za/article/2015-04-23-xenophobia-what-did-we-learn-from-2008

Strickland, P. (2016, July 10). Volunteers leave Greek island after attacks on refugees. Al Jazeera. Retrieved from http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/volunteers-leave-greek-island-attacks-refugees-160710132258629.html

UNHCR. (June 2006). *UNHCR Master Glossary of Terms,* Rev.1. Retrieved from http://www.refworld.org/docid/42ce7d444.html.

UNHCR. (2008, December 31). *UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2007.* Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/4981b19d2/unhcr-statistical-yearbook-2007.html

UNHCR. (2012). *Finding Durable Solutions.* Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/fundraising/51b1d61d0/unhcr-global-report-2012-finding-durable-solutions.html

UNHCR. (2014). *Policy on Alternatives to Camps.* Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/5422b8f09.html

UNHCR. (2015). *World at War.* Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/556725e69.html

UNHCR. (2016, September 30). *Q&A: The New York Declaration is a 'once in a lifetime chance' for refugees.* Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2016/9/57ee3af54/qa-new-york-declaration-once-lifetime-chance-refugees.html

UNHCR. (2017a, January 13). *UNHCR welcomes Ecuador's new Human Mobility Law.* United Nations. Retrieved from http://www.refworld.org/country,,UNHCR,,ECU,,5878cf164,0.html

UNHCR. (2017b, June 19). [Graphs providing a profile of people forcibly displaced across the world]. *Figures at a glance.* Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/images/infographics/(English)_FiguresAtAGlance_Infographic(4JULY2017)_StaffNumberUpdate.png

UNHCR. Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. *Follow up to the New York Declaration and the comprehensive refugee response framework.* U.N. Doc. EC/68/SC/CRP.21 (Jun. 19, 2017c).

UNHCR Population Statistics. (2017). [Interactive map providing number of refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, returnees, stateless persons, and others by country for each year from 1951 through 2016]. UN Refugee Agency. Retrieved from http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview#_ga=2.179872611.634892778.1504550109-1188478829.1504550109

UN Data. (2017). *Table with data on Refugees* [Table]. Retrieved from http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=UNHCR&f=indID%3AType-Ref

Valetheeswaran C., and Rajan, I. (2011). Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India: Rehabilitation mechanisms, livelihood strategies, and lasting solutions. *Refugee Survey Quarterly,* 30(2), 24-44.

Vivanco, JM, and Frelick, B. (2013a, Jun. 20). *Letter to President Correa on Refugee Rights.* Human Rights Watch. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/06/20/letter-president-correa-refugee-rights

Vivanco, JM, and Frelick, B. (2013b, Jul. 22). *Response to Ecuadorian Government on Refugee Rights.* Human Rights Watch. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/22/response-ecuadorian-government-refugee-rights

World Bank Open Data. (2017). [Interactive graph providing total population of India, Jordan, and Ecuador in 2016]. The World Bank Data. Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?end=2016&locations=IN-JO-EC&start=2016&view=bar

World Humanitarian Summit. (2016). *LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND: A COMMITMENT TO ADDRESS FORCED DISPLACEMENT.* Istanbul, Turkey. Retrieved from http://agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017/Jul/LEAVE_NO_ONE_BEHIND-A_COMMITMENT_TO_ADDRESS_FORCED_DISPLACEMENT.pdf

# APPENDIX 1. OVERVIEW OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

**TABLE 2. COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED IN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

| COUNTRY | NO. OF PARTICIPANTS | NATIONALITY | GENDER | AGE RANGE (YEARS) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ecuador | 7 | Colombian | Female | 18-58 |
| | 7 | Colombian | Male | 22-55 |
| | 9 | Ecuadorian | Female | 19-48 |
| India | 6 | Sri Lankan | Female | 27-46 |
| | 4 | Sri Lankan | Male | 24-60 |
| | 2 | Sri Lankan (non-camp) | Mixed | 52-56 |
| | 8 | Indian | Female | 28-46 |
| | 8 | Indian | Male | 19-55 |
| Jordan | 7 | Iraqi | Female | 24-58 |
| | 5 | Iraqi | Male | 21-65 |
| | 6 | Syrian | Female | 23-57 |
| | 6 | Syrian | Male | 30-77 |
| | 8 | Jordanian | Female | 29-64 |
| | 8 | Jordanian | Male | 40-71 |

## TABLE 3. ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDED IN KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

| COUNTRY | ORGANIZATION |
| --- | --- |
| Ecuador | UNHCR |
| | Catholic Relief Services |
| | Provincial Government of Pichincha |
| | Coalition for Migration and Refugees |
| | Scalabrini Mission |
| | Grupo Fenix |
| India | Catholic Relief Services |
| | Department of Rehabilitation, Government of Tamil Nadu |
| | Jesuit Relief Services |
| Jordan | Caritas Jordan |
| | Catholic Relief Services |
| | Mercy Corps |
| | Save the Children Jordan |
| | UNHCR |