Ministry of Foreign Affairs

IOB Evaluation

Beyond Forced Displacement

Evaluating the Prospects partnership 2019-2024

April 2026

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List of abbreviations

BHOS	Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking)
CBO	Community-based organisation
CRFF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CSO	Civil society organisation
CT	Country team(s)
DAFD	Development approaches to forced displacement
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSH	Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid Department (MFA)
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FCV	Fragility, conflict and violence
FDPs	Forcibly displaced persons
GBV	Gender- based violence
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GoJ	Government of Jordan
GSC	Global Steering Committee
HCs	Host communities
HQ	Headquarters
IDA	International Development Association
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IFC	International Financing Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
KKCF	Kakuma Kalobeyei Challenge Fund
MACP	Multi-Annual Country Plan
MAGRP	Multi-Annual Global and Regional Programming
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MHPSS	Mental healthcare and psychosocial support
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFIs	Microfinance institutions
MOA	Department for Migration, Displacement and Asylum
MoE	Ministry of Education

MoL	Ministry of Labour
MSME	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
NSPS	National Social Protection Strategy
(I)NGO	(International) Non-governmental organisation
NWoW	New Way of Working
OF	Opportunity Fund
RDG	Refugee Donor Group (Kenya)
RDPP	Regional Development Protection Programme
RCO	Resident coordinator's office
RLO	Refugee-led organisation
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
ToC	Theory of Change
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
3RP	Regional refugee and resilience

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Rationale and aim of the evaluation

In recent years, the number of forcibly displaced persons (FDPs) worldwide has nearly doubled, from approximately 65 million in 2016 to 117 million in 2025.[1] This includes both refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). Most are hosted in low- and middle-income countries with limited resources and capacity to address the situation. This has significant socio-economic consequences for both refugees and host communities. Moreover, situations of forced displacement are becoming increasingly protracted[2] and disproportionately affect women and children.[3]

These developments have prompted international policy dialogue on a new approach to forced displacement, in which the Netherlands played an active role, leading to the adoption of a development approach to forced displacement in the Dutch policy. This approach was implemented in 2018 by launching the Prospects partnership as an innovative model of cooperation with five international organisations: the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank. The partnership aims to improve prospects for FDPs and vulnerable host communities in eight countries affected by forced displacement: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Sudan and Uganda. Prospects seeks to strengthen the self-reliance and resilience of FDPs and host communities by addressing three thematic areas: 1) education and learning, 2) employment and livelihood opportunities, and 3) protection and social inclusion.[4]

Prospects is the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs'(MFA) response to the increasing need for a 'humanitarian-development nexus' approach (hereafter: the nexus approach) to forced displacement. This approach is based on the premise that, while critical for FDPs, humanitarian aid alone is insufficient in protracted crises and must be complemented by a development approach that addresses the medium- and long-term dimensions. Within Prospects, three areas were identified as key to managing protracted forced displacement crises for FDPs and host communities: economic opportunities and access to jobs; education and skills development; and protection services.[5]

In line with the nexus approach, Prospects has adopted elements of the New Way of Working (NWoW).[6] The NWoW encourages humanitarian and development actors to move beyond the traditional silos of humanitarian assistance and development by working together and using their comparative advantages in pursuit of collective outcomes.[7] Within Prospects, this approach was expected to generate synergies that strengthen strategic coordination, ensure coherence in identifying priority activities and create opportunities for complementarity across individual programmes. Partners were expected to collaborate at the global and country levels, collecting, analysing and sharing information on what works and what does not work. Ultimately, this should transform how Prospects partners and other stakeholders respond to the forced displacement crisis. The Prospects partnership was considered innovative due to its significant size, the practical operationalisation of the nexus approach and the NWoW, and the unusual combination of UN organisations and international financial institutions (IFIs).

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1 UNHCR (2026c), *Mid-Year Trends | UNHCR*, (accessed January 2026). This includes internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers and other people in need of international protection.

2 In 2023, 67% of refugees had lived in displacement for more than five years, a similar situation faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs). OECD (2024), '*The humanitarian-development-peace nexus and forced displacement: Progress, insights and recommendations for operational practice*', OECD Development Policy Papers No. 57, OECD, Paris, November 2024. See also: IFC, ILO, UNHCR, UNICEF, the World Bank (2018), '*Prospects: Improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities – Global Vision Note*',(accessed January 2026).

3 For example, on average, Syrian refugees in Lebanon were relatively young. About half of the Syrian refugee population in these countries consisted of children under the age of 18. See: IOB (2024), '*Between Prospects and Precarity; An evaluation of Dutch assistance to refugee reception in the Syria region (2016-2021)*', The Hague, IOB, March 2024.

4 As defined in the programme's Theory of Change (ToC), reconstructed for the mid-term evaluation (internal document). The fourth pillar reflects the partnership model. The updated 2024 ToC includes an adjusted fourth thematic pillar on critical infrastructure.

5 IFC, ILO, UNHCR, UNICEF, the World Bank (2018); MFA, internal Prospects documentation.

6 For more information, see: United Nations (no date), The New Way of Working, (accessed December 2025).

7 United Nations (no date).

Through this evaluation, IOB aims to provide insight into the partnership's results and draw lessons for how the Netherlands can improve its response to forced displacement. This evaluation focuses primarily on reviewing the nexus approach as implemented by Prospects, as well as the partnership model, which are considered key conditions for a more (cost-)effective programme. The evaluation reviews the Prospects partnership as implemented between 2019 and 2024, which includes phase 1 (2019-2023) and the beginning of phase 2 (2024-2027). It covers about 80% of the Dutch budget for support to hosting refugees in the region for phase 1.[8] The total budget for phase 1 amounted to EUR 587.8 million. The budget for phase 2 was about EUR 800 million.

1.2 Evaluation questions

The evaluation focuses on the following central question:

What results has Prospects delivered for forcibly displaced persons and their host communities, and to what extent has the nexus approach, as implemented by the partnership, increased the (cost-) effectiveness of the programme?

More specifically, the evaluation intends to provide answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent has Prospects increased access to education and learning, employment and livelihood opportunities, and protection and social inclusion? And how has this contributed to improved self-reliance and resilience for forcibly displaced persons and host communities? (effectiveness)
2. To what extent has Prospects factored in and adapted to different contexts in the host countries and responded adequately to the needs of forcibly displaced persons and host communities? (relevance)
3. To what extent has the nexus approach, as implemented by the partnership, increased the (cost-) effectiveness of interventions? (effectiveness, cost-effectiveness)
4. What has been the added value of the partnership model for the implementation of Prospects' nexus approach? (effectiveness, cost-effectiveness)
5. How is the nexus approach, as implemented by Prospects, likely to be sustained? (sustainability)

1.3 Scope

The evaluation focuses on the period 2019-2024, excluding the inception phase (2018). During this phase, relatively small budgets (seed funding) were allocated to partners to prepare for the partnership and bridge the transition from previous funding to the new partnership framework.[9] IOB decided to include 2024, in addition to the first phase (2019-2023), as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had given some organisations budget-neutral extensions until mid- or end-2024 due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.[10]

As the second phase of Prospects was still ongoing during the time of this evaluation – data collection took place in 2025 – IOB was able to incorporate insights from that year. This includes the use and application of lessons learned from phase 1, the most recent adaptations and innovations, but also the impact of recent developments on Prospects, such as the fall of the Syrian regime at the end of 2024 and global funding cuts, including the closure of USAID in 2025. However, this evaluation does not address the results of new strategies or adaptations introduced in phase 2, such as the additional thematic pillar on critical infrastructure, revised approaches within existing pillars, or results from global-level events in 2025. The cut-off date for data collection was September 2025. Since then, many developments have occurred in the local, regional and geopolitical contexts, most notably the crisis in the MENA region and the war against Iran in spring 2026, both of which had a significant impact on Lebanon. While these developments strongly affect programming in the countries concerned, they have not been included or addressed in this evaluation.

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8 Algemene Rekenkamer (2024b), '*Verantwoordingsonderzoek Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (XVII) – Rapport bij het jaarverslag 2023*', The Hague, Algemene Rekenkamer, May 2024.

9 The inception phase has been covered in the IOB (2024) evaluation '*Between Prospects and Precarity*', and the internal mid-term evaluation of Prospects.

10 Another reason is that some partners use financial years in their reports that differ from calendar years.

Lastly, in line with the ToR, this evaluation assesses the coherence of the programming among Prospects partners. However, to maintain a manageable scope, it does not examine external coherence between Prospects and other programmatic interventions funded by the Netherlands in the eight countries.

1.4 Methodology

For the first part of the evaluation's central question – what results has Prospects delivered? – IOB compared monitoring and financial data reported by the partners with insights from internal documents, literature, external reviews, websites, visits to refugee camps and host communities, and interviews and focus groups with various actors. These included stakeholders outside the partnership, such as local governments, implementing partners, beneficiaries, other development agencies, researchers and external experts from NGOs.[11] Additionally, we applied contribution analysis and process tracing in two country studies: Jordan and Kenya. In these countries, the study explored impact-level results by identifying – sometimes anecdotal – signs of change and tracing how these relate to reported outcomes in the three thematic areas.

Contribution analysis was also applied to answer the second part of the evaluation's central question: To what extent does the nexus approach lead to a more effective and efficient programme? This approach helped us to establish whether and how the Prospects partnership has promoted a nexus approach to forced displacement, and whether, how and why its implementation has contributed to better results for beneficiaries. The analysis also considers elements of the partnership model and different country contexts as factors that may enable or constrain results.

The evaluators have conducted deep dives into the partnership's experiences in two countries: Jordan and Kenya. These countries represent two different regional contexts (the Horn of Africa and the Middle East) and provide settings in which all five partners were active. However, these experiences are not necessarily representative of Prospects' work in all eight countries. For example, other countries face internal conflict and significant internal displacement. For that reason, the evaluation emphasises country-specific factors as enablers or barriers to results. In both countries, focus groups and short interviews provided insight into the experiences of beneficiaries; however, these beneficiaries were not randomly selected and therefore are not necessarily representative. Infographic 1.1 on the next page provides an overview of all data sources.

In addition to the two country studies, the evaluation also examines three types of interventions that cut across the three themes:[12] mental healthcare and psychosocial support, meaningful youth participation and digital innovation. These intervention case studies provide further insight into whether and how the nexus approach contributed to achieving results.

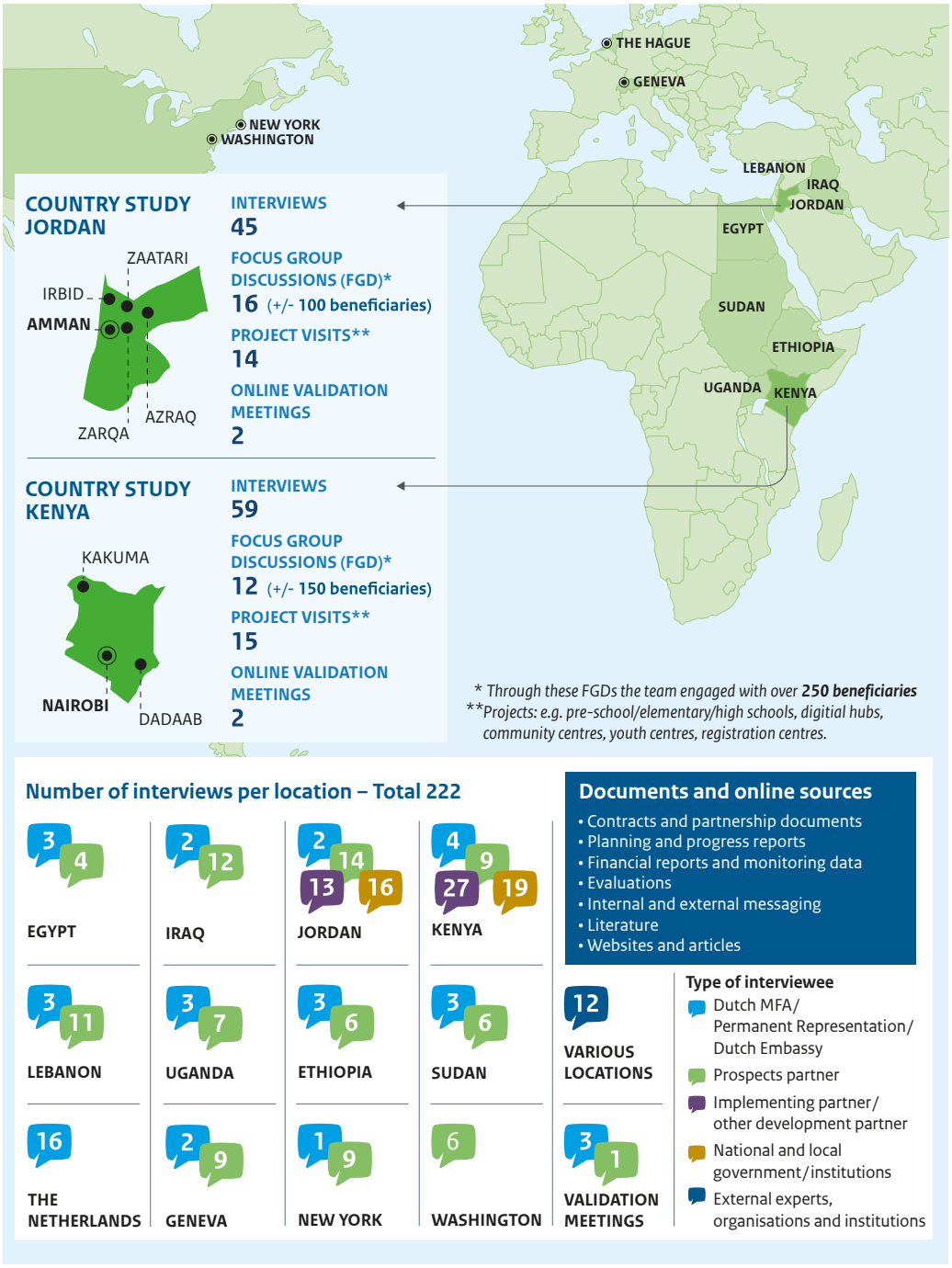
1.5 Reading guide

This evaluation consists of six chapters. Following this introduction, chapter 2 describes the development of the Prospects partnership in response to the forced displacement crisis and the subsequent global developments in approaches to forced displacement and in Dutch foreign policy. It describes the partner and country selection, the partnership's theory of change, its governance structure, and the resources and actors. Chapter 3 describes the main results across the three thematic areas and policy inclusion, as well as the impact of efforts to strengthen resilience and self-reliance (addressing question 1). Chapter 4 then examines the added value of the partnership, including whether and how improved cooperation between partners contributed to achieving results (addressing questions 2 and 4). Chapter 5 assesses the extent to which the nexus approach has changed programming in the targeted countries, and how this has taken place (addressing questions 3 and 5). The conclusions and recommendations are presented in chapter 6.

[11] The ToR of this evaluation refers to a survey among Prospects partners, their contractual partners and embassies. The two country studies, however, demonstrated that contractual partners had limited knowledge of the programme, making a survey less appropriate as a data collection method. Instead, IOB conducted additional interviews.

[12] Initially, this evaluation was intended to include five intervention case studies, but due to time constraints, this number was reduced to three.

Infographic 1.1 *Overview of sources*

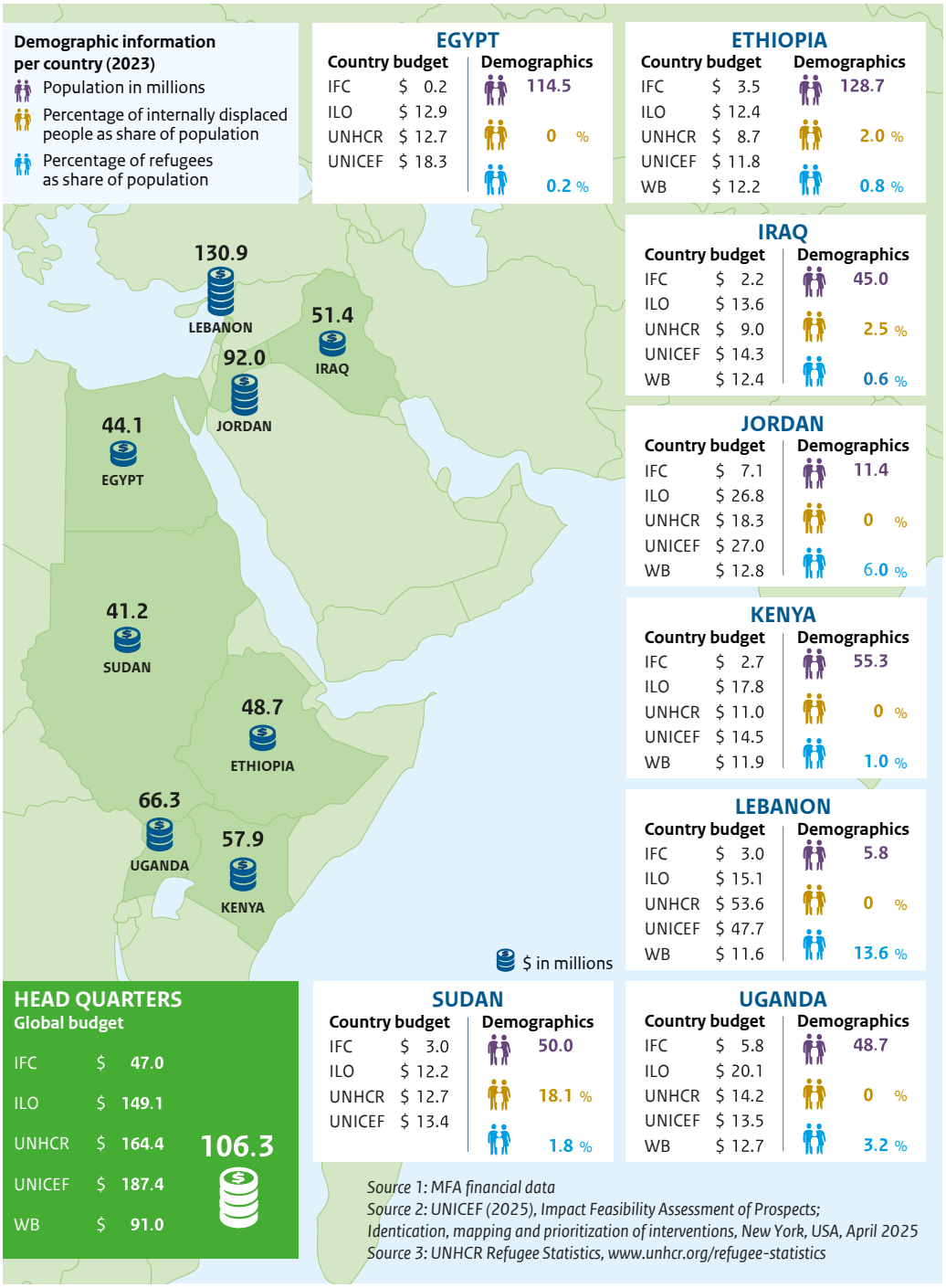


Chapter 2

The Prospects partnership

This chapter describes the context in which Prospects was developed and introduces the five partners, the eight countries and the partnership's theory of change. It also provides an overview of the budget and its allocation among partners, countries and thematic pillars. Infographic 2.1 below presents an overview of the Prospects countries: their demographics, the partners involved and the programme's budget division.

Infographic 2.1 *Prospects partners and finance per country*



Source 1: MFA financial data
Source 2: UNICEF (2025), Impact Feasibility Assessment of Prospects; Identication, mapping and prioritization of interventions, New York, USA, April 2025
Source 3: UNHCR Refugee Statistics, www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics

2.1 Context

Prospects should be seen in relation to several developments at the global level, the national (policy) level in the Netherlands and contextual developments in the eight targeted countries.

Global developments

As explained in chapter 1, Prospects was developed in response to the rising number of FDPs worldwide, many of whom were hosted in countries with limited resources. This spurred international policy dialogue on a new approach to forced displacement.

The humanitarian-development nexus and the New Way of Working both emerged from the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. At this summit, various UN organisations (including UNHCR and UNICEF) signed a commitment to action regarding the New Way of Working, which was also endorsed by the World Bank.[13] The signatories committed to working towards collective outcomes over multi-year time frames, based on their respective comparative advantages. Furthermore, the partnership approach aimed to support the leadership and capacities of national and local actors, including governments. The call for a nexus approach and a New Way of Working aligned with ongoing changes within the UN system following the 2006 High-Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence. This sought to improve the effectiveness and coherence of and between UN agencies by 'delivering as one UN'.[14] Its ambition was to leverage the comparative advantages of the various UN agencies working in development, humanitarian assistance and the environment, while eliminating unnecessary duplication and competition.[15]

Another relevant international consensus document is the (non-binding) New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2016.[16] This declaration set out a vision for a more predictable and comprehensive response, known as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.[17] This framework calls for greater support for refugees and host countries, a whole-of-society approach, long-term planning from the start of an emergency, the integration of refugees in national plans, and inclusion. Through 2017 and 2018, these principles were implemented across several countries. The 2017 World Bank publication 'Toward a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced and Their Hosts' captured the spirit of the global conversation at that time, and sets out how the World Bank developed new ways to strengthen its response to fragility, conflict and violence.[18] The publication argued that, rather than viewing the nexus approach as sequential, humanitarian and development actors should engage in complementary efforts throughout the entire period of forced displacement for greater impact. Lessons learned from these initiatives informed the Global Compact on Refugees (2018),[19] which enabled development actors to play a more prominent role in addressing protracted refugee situations and underlined the need for increased assistance to host countries through (innovative) financial and in-kind contributions. The compact also recognised that averting and resolving large refugee situations requires improved cooperation between governmental, humanitarian and peace actors, while reaffirming the importance of government leadership.

13 World Humanitarian Summit (2016), '*Commitments to Action*', August 2016.
14 Secretary-General's High-Level Panel (2006), *Delivering as One. Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel*, United Nations, New York, November 2006.
15 For assumptions regarding the advantages of 'Delivering as One' for the government, international development partners, national development partners and for the UN, see: UN-HABITAT (2014), *The UN Delivering as One Approach Briefing Note*.
16 United Nations General Assembly (2016), *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly- New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*, United Nations, New York, October 2016.
17 UNHCR (2025b), *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework*, (accessed December 2025).
18 World Bank Group (2017), 'Forcibly Displaced – Toward a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts', Washington, DC, World Bank Group, 10.1596/978–1-4648–0938–5, 2017.
19 United Nations (2018b), '*Global Compact on Refugees*', United Nations, New York, December 2018.

Dutch developments

Since 2014, 'refugee reception in the region' (*opvang in de regio*) has been a priority within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' broader migration policy.[20] In 2016, the MFA introduced a dedicated budget, separate from the humanitarian aid budget, to support countries in the Middle East, North Africa and the Horn of Africa hosting large numbers of refugees from their region.[21] This responded to rising numbers of people arriving in Europe from across the Mediterranean or overland through Southeast Europe, particularly in relation to the Syrian crisis. From 2016 onwards, investments in education, employment and social protection became key elements of Dutch support for hosting refugees in areas near their countries of origin.

Through this approach, the Netherlands adopted a development-oriented approach to responding to forced displacement. In doing so, it aligned itself with the nexus approach, which called for structural changes in the aid system by linking relief and development efforts to address the needs of vulnerable people and offer prospects beyond their basic needs. This is also reflected in broader policies such as the Comprehensive agenda on migration (2018) and the policy note 'Investing in global prospects' (2018). The latter includes the ambition to improve the protection of refugees and displaced persons in host countries in the region of origin, by investing in long-term perspectives for internally displaced persons and host communities through education, employment and protection.

In the MFA policy on Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation,[22] Prospects funding falls under article 4, Peacebuilding, Stability and Humanitarian Support, and more precisely under article 4.2: Refugee Reception in the Region and Migration Partnerships. In the period 2019-2023 (Prospects phase 1), the overall budget of article 4 was EUR 4,451 million, of which almost 55% was dedicated to humanitarian and emergency support (EUR 2,447 million). The Prospects funding accounts for just over 13% of the total budget of article 4.[23]

2.2 Partners and countries

In 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to the need to implement the nexus and the New Way of Working by engaging with established international organisations and establishing the Prospects partnership, in which the MFA assumed not only the role of donor, but also that of an active partner, involved throughout implementation. This approach was driven by the need to manage a growing budget effectively and efficiently with relatively limited staff capacity. At the same time, the Netherlands saw itself as a pioneer in advancing a development-oriented approach to forced displacement facilitated by the New Way of Working.[24] The Prospects partnership is distinctive due to its significant budget, the practical operationalisation of newly established international approaches, the innovative combination of UN partners and international financial institutions (IFIs) in responding to forced displacement and the Netherlands' role as a partner, rather than a traditional donor in a donor-implementing partner relationship.

20 Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2014), '*Migratiebeleid*', KST 30573-129, December 2014.
21 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, internal financial data.
22 Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation policy.
23 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, internal financial data.
24 IOB (2024).

Partner selection

Initially, the Ministry began consulting with the World Bank on a programme for receiving refugees in the region. The Netherlands considered the Bank a frontrunner in adopting a development approach to forced displacement, particularly as it was refining its policy on fragility, conflict and violence.[25] The ILO, IFC and UNICEF were involved in the early discussions that eventually led to the formation of the Prospects partnership, as their areas of expertise aligned well with the programme's intended thematic focus on refugee reception in the region. The MFA also favoured working with larger multilateral organisations that combine a high absorption capacity with fewer administrative burdens, as they work through framework contracts. UNHCR was not initially included as it was deemed important not to work exclusively with humanitarian actors, since the programme intended to move away from reliance on the humanitarian system in protracted refugee situations. However, the minister of Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade only approved the partnership on the explicit condition that UNHCR, an organisation mandated to protect refugees, would be involved as a partner. In June 2019, the MFA established bilateral contracts with the five partners. Due to administrative requirements, it was not possible to sign partnership contracts, which means there are no legally binding partnership documents. The partnership conditions were established in documents developed during the initial partnership period and have progressed since then.

Country selection

The Prospects partnership targets eight countries that were focus countries in the MFA's development cooperation policy at the time Prospects was developed, which was a major criterion for Prospects' country selection. The countries have a long history of hosting refugees[26] and are still confronted with large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons. At least half of the Prospects countries have recently been affected by developments in regional or internal conflicts, particularly in relation to Syria. This has affected the presence of IDPs and refugees, as well as related government policies.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of some relevant characteristics. In total, the 8 countries host more than 6 million refugees and over 12 million internally displaced persons (2023 data). High numbers of internally displaced persons are recorded in three countries: Ethiopia, Iraq and Sudan. The share of refugees in the total population ranges from less than 1% (in 4 of the 8 countries, including Kenya) to more than 13% in Lebanon. In Jordan, 6% of the population is registered as refugees. Between 2018 and 2023, the number of refugees reported in Kenya (+28%), Uganda (+35%), Ethiopia (+8.5%), and Iraq (+1.2%) increased. In contrast, the number of registered refugees in Jordan decreased by 4.3%. Poverty rates also vary between the eight countries: (extreme) poverty is more common in the Horn of Africa (including Kenya), while Jordan has the lowest percentage of (extremely) poor people of all eight countries. Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan are considered middle-income countries, and, as such, have no access to the development instruments intended for lower-income countries.[27]

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25 In 2016, the World Bank introduced a dedicated instrument to support refugee responses: the IDA Window for Host Communities and Refugees, under the IDA-18 replenishments. In 2017, the World Bank published a report on development approaches to forced displacement, reaffirming its commitment to responses in which humanitarian and development communities work together. IDA (2016), '*Special Theme: Fragility, Conflict and Violence*', World Bank Group, May 2016.

26 Seven of the eight Prospects countries were among the 25 largest refugee-hosting destinations between 1960 and 2020, see: Migration Policy Institute (2020), *Largest Refugee and Asylum Seeker Populations by Country of Destination, 1960-2020*, (accessed December 2025).

27 Including the World Bank's IDA and, consequently, the IDA Window for Refugees and Host Communities, for which the other countries are eligible.

Table 2.1 *Socio-demographic characteristics of the eight Prospects countries*[28]

	Egypt	Ethiopia	Iraq	Jordan	Kenya	Lebanon	Sudan	Uganda
Population in millions (2023)	114.5	128.7	45.0	11.4	55.3	5.8	50.0	48.7
Refugees in thousands (2023)[A]	240	980	286	684	539	788	922	1,577
Internally displaced persons in thousands (2023)	0	2,561	1,124	0	0	0	9,052	0
% of Refugees as share of population	0.21	0.76	0.64	6.00	0.97	13.59	1.84	3.24
% of Internally displaced persons as share of population	0.00	1.99	2.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.10	0.00
% change refugees (2018-2023)	-2.53	8.48	1.22	-4.37	27.93	-16.97	-14.45	35.33
% change internally displaced persons (2018-2023)	0.00	-2.08	-37.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	385.60	0.00
% of population living on less than USD 2.15 a day (extreme poverty)	1.47	26.98	0.09	0.04	36.15	0.00	15.26	42.12
% of population multi-dimensionally poor[B]	4.89	68.77	8.64	0.43	37.48	N/A	52.33	57.18

[A] This figure refers only to refugees registered by UNHCR.

[B] Multi-dimensional poverty describes a deprivation of multiple basic rights (UNICEF).

2.3 Theory of Change

The operationalisation of Prospects' approach and its partnership model were initially described in three documents: the Global Vision Note, the Basic Framework (which outlines the partnership principles) and the Global Logic Model.[29] These principles and strategies were further refined during the first years of the partnership's implementation. When Prospects was launched in 2018, the governance structure, a Theory of Change (ToC) and contextualised country plans still needed to be developed. It took until the mid-term evaluation in 2022 for a Theory of Change to be (re)constructed: not by the policy department but by the evaluation team.[30] In 2023, the MFA updated this policy theory in consultation with the other Prospects partners to guide the second phase (2024-2027).[31] Lessons learned in phase 1 and contextual changes guided this ToC. In 2025, a third adaptation of the Theory of Change was made in response to the contextual changes in Syria, including strategies for returnees. All versions provide insight into the programme's aims and underlying assumptions.

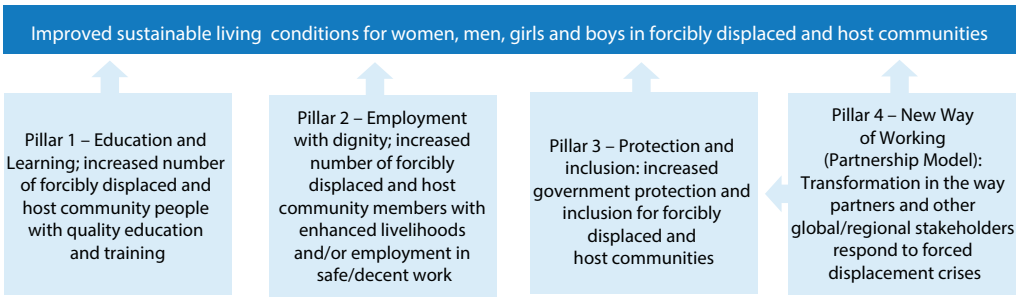
[28] UNICEF (2025a), '*Impact Feasibility Assessment of Prospects – Identification, mapping and prioritization of interventions*', New York, USA, UNICEF, June 2025; UNHCR (2025d), Refugee Data Finder, (accessed December 2025).

[29] MFA, internal Prospects documentation.

[30] MFA, internal Prospects mid-term evaluation.

[31] Both ToCs can be found in the annex of the Terms of Reference for this evaluation, IOB (2025), '*Terms of Reference – Evaluation of the Prospects partnership 2019-2024*', The Hague, IOB, February 2025.

Figure 2.1 *Fragment of the Theory of Change reconstructed for the mid-term evaluation (2022)*



Aims and pillars

At the highest level of impact in the 2022 ToC, Prospects aimed to contribute to more sustainable living conditions for women, men, girls and boys in forcibly displaced and host communities (see figure 2.1).

The phase 1 ToC defined four pillars to achieve these aims (see figure 2.1). The first three pillars covered the thematic areas addressed by the programme: education and learning; employment with dignity; and protection and inclusion. The fourth pillar reflected the partnership model (New Way of Working), which was seen as a vehicle for implementing the three thematic pillars more effectively and efficiently.

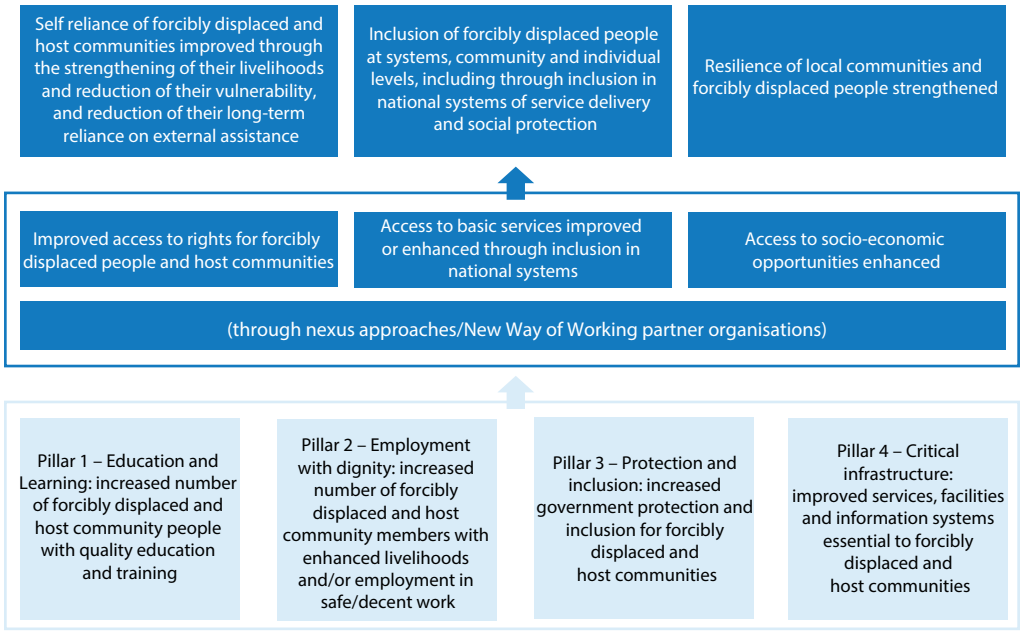
- Pillar 1 focused on improving the quality of and participation in education and training, as well as supporting school-to-work transitions.
- Pillar 2 aimed to enhance inclusive livelihood and employment opportunities with safe and decent conditions.
- Pillar 3 aimed to strengthen the legal conditions, protection and social protection of forcibly displaced persons and host communities through improved and inclusive governmental structures.
- Pillar 4 represented the partnership model of the five organisations in Prospects. According to the principles of the New Way of Working, it reflected how Prospects sought to put these principles into practice and support a transformation in response to the forced displacement crisis.

The 2023 ToC specified three intermediate outcomes that were expected to contribute to the overarching goal of sustainable living conditions: self-reliance among FDPs, inclusion and resilience of FDPs and host communities (see figure 2.2).[32]

In the updated ToC for Prospects phase 2, a fourth thematic pillar was added at the minister's request, focusing on critical infrastructure, including WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and housing. Another difference in the phase 2 ToC was the specific reference to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, whereas the peace component had not been explicitly mentioned in phase 1.

[32] See glossary in annex 4 for the definitions of self-reliance and resilience.

Figure 2.2 *Fragment of the Theory of Change for Prospects phase 2 (2024-2027)*



The partnership model

In the updated ToC for the second phase of financing, the partnership model (fourth pillar) was repositioned as an overarching layer referred to as 'system change'. A key assumption underlying the partnership is that collaboration between humanitarian and development actors would generate additional impact at the system level compared to an approach in which each organisation operated independently.[33]

Cross-cutting issues

Cross-cutting themes that were more implicit in the phase 1 Theory of Change[34] (although often included in the Multi-Annual Country Plans and the partners' programming principles) are explicitly included in the phase 2 ToC. These include gender and diversity-sensitive programming,[35] meaningful refugee participation, meaningful youth participation, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and climate/environment sensitive programming.

Assumptions

Both Theories of Change refer to several assumptions. In the Terms of Reference for this evaluation, IOB has identified the key assumptions to be tested, based on various policy and programme documents.[36] The most relevant assumptions in relation to the key questions are validated in this report and discussed in the main conclusions.

33 MFA, internal Prospects documentation.
34 In phase 1, some cross-cutting issues were mentioned in internal appraisal documents, the Prospects vision document and the MACPs. Also, some of these cross-cutting themes are embedded in the partners' programming principles.
35 MFA, internal Prospects documentation. Diversity-sensitive programming refers to disability inclusion.
36 IOB (2025).

2.4 Actors, governance and resources

Actors

The Prospects partners are the World Bank, IFC, ILO, UNHCR and UNICEF. Table 2.2 provides an overview of the roles, activities and country presence of the five Prospects partners. Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (donor/partner),[37] the Department for Migration, Displacement and Asylum (MOA)[38] is responsible for developing, coordinating, monitoring and steering the Prospects programme, and for using its insights and results in global policy dialogue. The MOA coordinates the programme in consultation with regional and thematic departments,[39] the Permanent Representations and Dutch embassies in the eight Prospects countries. The Permanent Representations in Geneva and New York are important stakeholders in the global diplomatic and advocacy arena. Dutch embassies are engaged in formulating the strategic direction and processes at the country and regional levels.

At the country level, Prospects cooperates with governments, civil society organisations, other UN agencies, private sector companies, international and local NGOs, and beneficiaries. ILO, UNICEF and UNHCR work with implementing partners that manage and carry out activities on the ground, including NGOs, refugee-led organisations and community-based organisations. Prospects partners participate in national and sub-national technical working groups and coordination mechanisms with other development and humanitarian partners, as well as with national- and district-level government ministries and agencies.

Table 2.2 *Overview of the Prospects partners and their role, activities and country presence in phase 1 of Prospects*

Partner	General aim/mission	Role within Prospects	Key activities within Prospects	Country presence
	IFC aims to improve the lives of people in developing countries by investing in private sector growth and seeks to stimulate private sector investments in challenging contexts and among underserved target groups.	To bring private sector solutions to refugees and host communities in underserved contexts of fragility and conflict. IFC brings expertise and experience in promoting private sector development by providing financing instruments and advisory services that can catalyse private investment, create employment opportunities, entrepreneurial activities and more efficient service delivery.	To provide blended concessional financing through innovative financial instruments to support private sector investment in FDPs and host communities; to mobilise private capital; to create jobs; to provide economic empowerment for FDPs; and to demonstrate the viability of this emerging and vulnerable market segment.	All Prospects countries, with the exception of Sudan as World Bank groups suspended operations in Sudan due to the coup d'état.

[37] When we talk about (Prospects) partners in this evaluation, we are referring to the five partners and not to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[38] Prior to 2026, this department did not exist, and the Prospects team was part of the Department for Stability and Humanitarian Aid (DSH). In this document, we will use the abbreviation MOA, also when referring to the former DSH.

[39] This includes the regional departments for North Africa and the Middle East (DAM) and Africa (DAF), the department for multilateral organisations and human rights (DMM), and thematic departments for Social Development (DSO), Sustainable Economic Growth (DDE) and the Task Force for Women's Rights and Gender Equality (TFVG). The Department of Financial and Economic Affairs (FEZ) is responsible for the financial contractual arrangements and budget approvals.

Partner	General aim/mission	Role within Prospects	Key activities within Prospects	Country presence
	ILO aims to promote internationally recognised human and labour rights, decent work, social justice and social protection. ILO is a tripartite organisation, bringing together governments, employers' organisations and workers' representatives to develop labour standards and policies through social dialogue. ILO focuses on all groups of working age.	To contribute expertise in enabling environments for socio-economic growth, decent work, a strengthened labour market, and improved working conditions and labour rights. To contribute expertise in technical and vocational training and the recognition of prior learning. Compared to the other partners, ILO had more limited experience in forced displacement settings prior to Prospects.[A]	To support access to decent work opportunities and technical and vocational training. To conduct labour market assessments to better target skills training for refugees. To convene social dialogue processes, bringing worker, employer and government representatives to the same table to discuss laws, policies and practices governing forcibly displaced persons' access to decent work. To support governments, workers' and employers' organisations in creating an enabling environment for enterprise development, productivity, formalisation and decent work.	All Prospects countries.
	UNHCR aims to save lives, protect rights, and build better futures for people forced to flee their homes due to conflict and war.	To contribute expertise in coordinating refugee protection. To work towards durable solutions and refugee resilience. For the other partners to build on UNHCR's field presence, networks and community of partners and working relations with refugee authorities. To facilitate synergies among the partners and establish innovative programming.	To provide basic quality education. To share expertise on working with refugees across all Prospects pillars. To engage in policy dialogue with host countries on laws and policies affecting asylum and service delivery across all Prospects pillars. UNHCR is the lead partner in the protection pillar, with a strong focus on refugee registration.	All Prospects countries.
	UNICEF aims to protect the rights of every child by providing access to quality education, health and nutrition services; protecting children from violence and abuse; ensuring clean water and sanitation; and keeping children safe from climate change and disease in both humanitarian and development settings. UNICEF works with and for children, young people, their families and communities.	To contribute expertise in fragile, emergency and development settings. For the other partners to build on UNICEF's on-the-ground presence and role as a partner with governments and civil society in child-focused policy areas.	To provide education, including work-based learning and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). To provide child protection, including strengthening community-based responses to child protection cases. To provide service delivery, advocacy on inclusion in social protection systems, and capacity building to strengthen national and regional capacities in education and child protection.	All Prospects countries.

Partner	General aim/mission	Role within Prospects	Key activities within Prospects	Country presence
	The World Bank aims to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity on a liveable planet. The World Bank works closely with national authorities and supports government-led development programmes.	To contribute expertise in a development approach to forced displacement, addressing the long-term economic and social dimensions of displacement, including jobs, services, infrastructure and host community resilience. Contribute operational and analytical capacity in the areas of education, livelihoods, private sector development, social protection and service delivery. To work directly with governments on policy reforms and system-level solutions, helping integrate refugees into national systems (education, health, SP, labour markets).	To provide advisory support for policy development and contribute to changes in response to forced displacement at the systemic level, including by working with and through governments at the national level. To provide diagnostic analytics to support the above. To provide diagnostics and analytics to support evidence-based responses to forced displacement. Co-financing larger operations to add forced displacement-focused components, thus leveraging Prospects' funding within its broader portfolio.	Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. The World Bank was not active through Prospects in Sudan and Egypt.[B]

A In 2016, the ILO published guiding principles on the access of FDPs to the labour market, which the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) identified as a key reference for efforts relating to jobs and livelihoods for refugees. In the same year, ILO made a pledge under the GCR framework, committing to a stronger focus on FDPs. See: ILO (2016), '*Guiding principles – Access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market*', ILO, Geneva, November 2016; ILO (2025b), *The ILO and the Global Compact on Refugees*, (accessed December 2025).

B The World Bank did not engage in Egypt through Prospects because of their perceived limited potential for meaningful engagement with the government through Prospects. Currently in phase 2, they are reconsidering engaging in Egypt, though policy dialogue regarding forced displacement remains sensitive.

Sources: IFC, ILO, UNHCR, UNICEF, The World Bank (2018); IFC (no date), Who We Are | International Finance Corporation (IFC), (accessed January 2026); ILO (2026), About the ILO | International Labour Organization, (accessed January 2026); UNHCR (2026), About UNHCR | UNHCR, (accessed January 2026); UNICEF (no date), What we do | UNICEF, (accessed January 2026); World Bank Group (2026), Who We Are, (accessed January 2026); World Bank, IFC, ILO, UNICEF, UNHCR, Kingdom of the Netherlands (2025), Prospects in action – Vision, milestones and impact, (accessed February 2026).

Governance

During the 'seed-funding phase' and the beginning of the first phase, the five partners and the MFA developed various partnership documents,[40] in which they agreed on governance and partnership principles. These vision documents outline the programme's ambitions and governance structures at the global, regional and country levels, as well as the linkages between these levels. Infographic 4.1 in the next chapter illustrates the governance structure and the respective programme documents.

At the global level, the five agencies provide administrative and technical support to the programme from their headquarters, as well as communication support. Furthermore, activities at the country and regional levels are complemented by partnership activities at the global level, primarily focused on knowledge activities, monitoring and evaluation, and advocacy. Global and regional activities include the development of innovative projects, internal coordination, (technical) support for ongoing activities at the country level, preparation and dissemination of (joint) studies, advocacy in international fora,

40 Such as the earlier mentioned Global Vision Note, Basic Framework and Global Logic Model.

and monitoring, evaluation and (cross-country) learning. At the global level, it was also expected that the partnership would contribute to the generation of enhanced data and evidence to inform decision-making and policy, and effectively disseminate the partnership's lessons to other donors and stakeholders.

Furthermore, the global and regional offices help ensure consistency across partners' country-level interventions. The highest level of organisation and coordination within the partnership is the Global Steering Committee, which comprises at least one representative from each of the five partners and the MFA. The Committee was responsible for developing the Multi-Annual Global and Regional Plan. At the country level, the partnership is structured around country teams comprising all in-country partners and the Dutch embassy. Each country team had to develop a Country Vision Note and a Multi-Annual Country Plan (MACP), setting out the activities they intended to implement during the first phase, including narratives, theories of change and budgets. In phase 2, there are examples of nation-level adaptations of the global ToC.

Resources

The budget for the first phase (2019-2023), which was fully funded by the Netherlands, was USD 603 million. This amount excludes seed funding of around USD 36 million, which was provided in 2018 to support activities in the inception phase and to establish the partnership through global-level and country-level analyses and assessments, strategic workshops and the development of country vision notes. In addition to the (fixed) committed budget per partner,[41] Prospects set aside a separate budget of USD 90.3 million at the outset of the programme to drive transformation and jointness and enable innovative programming: the Prospects Opportunity Fund (OF). All partners could tap into this budget to more effectively and quickly achieve the programme's transformational ambitions by responding to opportunities and challenges that arose during implementation and by taking advantage of opportunities for joint programming.[42] Proposals for the fund had to be innovative and aligned with the Global Logic Framework, and be submitted by at least two partners.[43] Between 2020 and 2023, two calls for proposals led to the approval of 14 proposals. As with the programme funds, Opportunity Fund agreements were signed bilaterally with the participating partners.

Figures 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 provide information on the distribution of budgets among partners, countries and pillars. UNICEF, UNHCR and ILO received relatively large shares of the phase 1 budget and the Opportunity Fund. A relatively large share of the budget was allocated to activities in Lebanon, followed by Jordan, Uganda and Kenya. A substantial share of the budget (almost USD 87 million) went to global activities, which included administrative and technical support, activities contributing to the Multi-Annual Global and Regional Plan,[44] and collaborative activities financed through the Opportunity Fund and implemented in multiple countries.[45] All partners except IFC received additional funding through the Opportunity Fund. In addition to the phase 1 budget, IFC received additional support for blended finance.

The distribution across pillars differs by country. In Uganda and Egypt, for example, a relatively large share of the budget was spent on education and training (pillar 1), whereas in Jordan, a larger share was allocated to activities for the two other pillars. In Kenya, the share of funding allocated to activities promoting employment with dignity (pillar 2) was relatively low compared to other countries.

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41 The budget allocated to each partner covers activities implemented at the global level (for example global advocacy, strategy development, communication and research), as well as at the regional and country levels (for example implementation of pilot projects in a selected number of countries).

42 MFA, internal Prospects documentation.

43 Other criteria mentioned in the activity appraisal document include that the proposals 'show true partnership spirit', have an innovative character, 'foster transition from a purely humanitarian approach to a more development-oriented approach', and are needs-based, evidence-based, and that beneficiaries and governments are engaged or consulted.

44 ILO, UNICEF and UNHCR have fixed rates for indirect costs. In Prospects phase 1, indirect costs were: ILO-13%, IFC-5%, UNHCR-7% and UNICEF-8%. The World Bank does not include a rate for indirect costs. Source: MFA, internal sources: Impact and Sophia.

45 In phase 1, three global-regional Opportunity funds were granted on child protection, meaningful youth participation and inclusion/protection in the gig economy.

Figure 2.3 *Distribution of phase 1 budget without seed funding (left) and the Opportunity Fund and IFC's blended finance (right) among the five partners (in USD million)*[46]

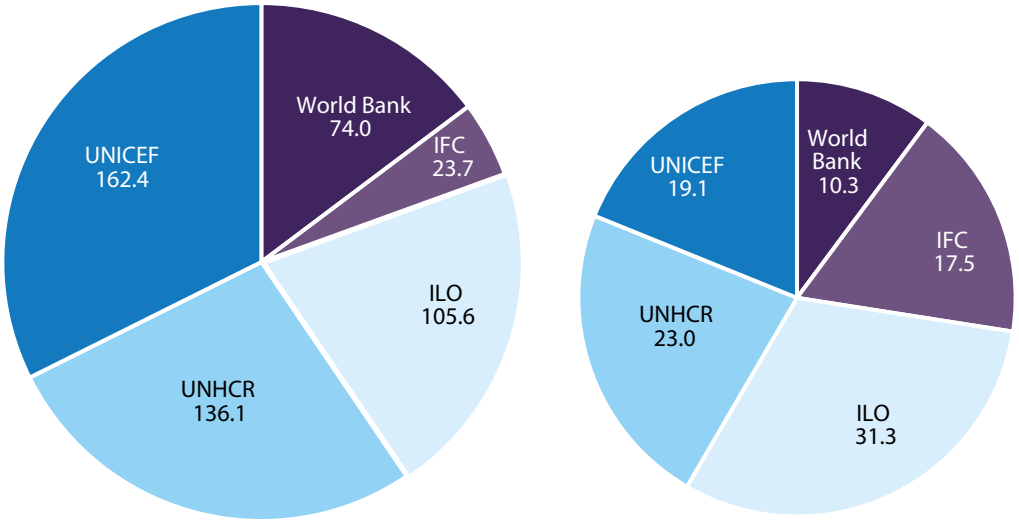
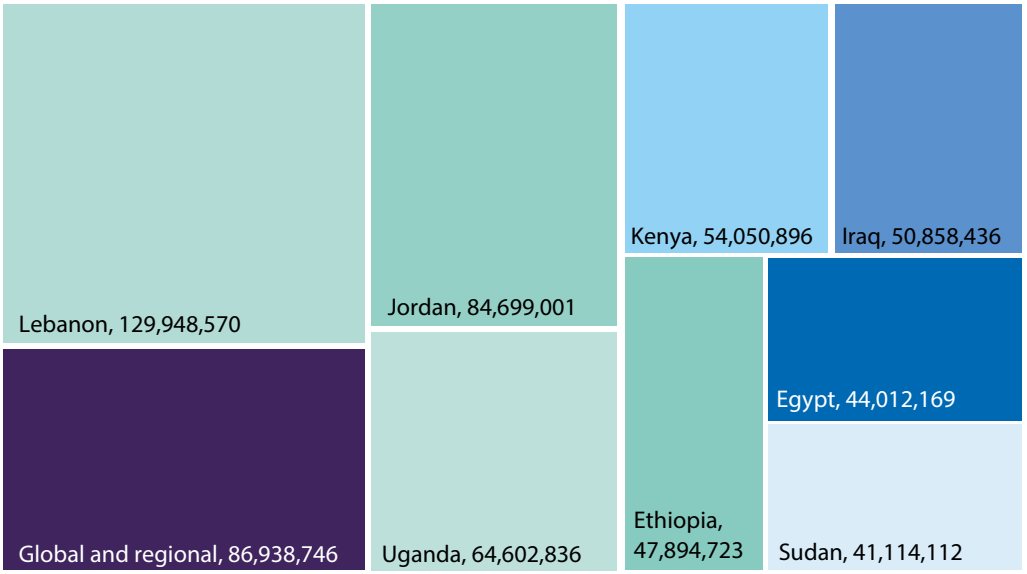


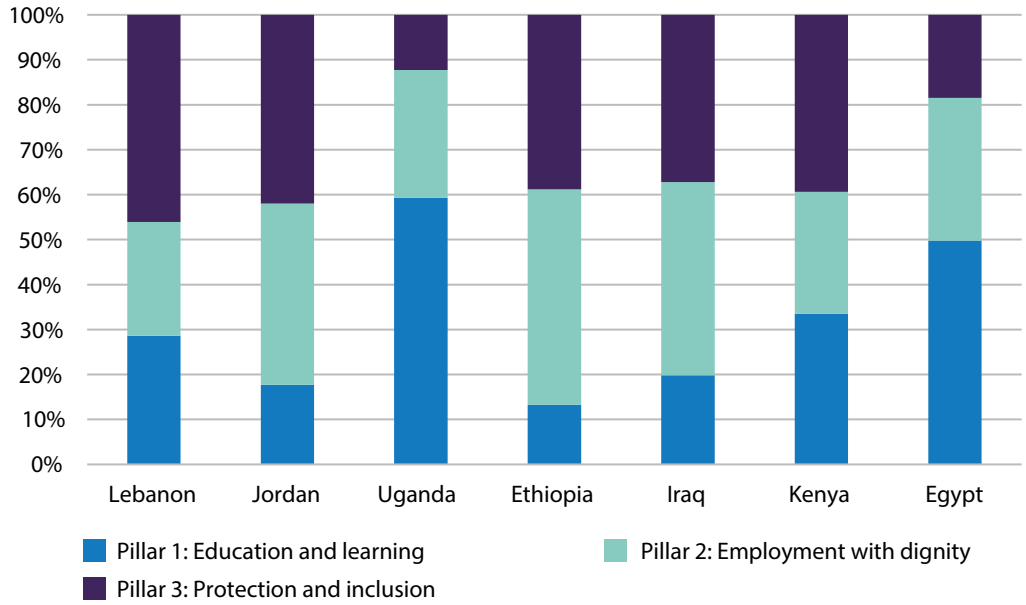
Figure 2.4 *Distribution of combined phase 1 and Opportunity Fund budget across the eight countries and global activities (in USD)*[47]



46 MFA, internal financial data. IFC received its budget from the Opportunity Fund for blended finance. IFC did not receive any allocations from the Opportunity Fund, but it was involved in Opportunity Fund projects as an advisory partner.

47 MFA, internal financial data.

Figure 2.5 *Distribution of budget per pillar for different countries*[48]



2.5 Contextualising Prospects as part of broader humanitarian and development efforts

The resources mentioned above relate directly to the work of Prospects. However, Prospects is only one of many humanitarian and development programmes that contribute to more sustainable living conditions for FDPs and vulnerable host communities. Other donors with a similar focus include the European Union, Germany, Japan, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Denmark, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the World Bank has a dedicated financing mechanism within the International Development Association (IDA) – the Window for Host Communities and Refugees (WHR) – that supports medium- to long-term development opportunities for both refugees and host communities in eligible countries.[49] Although the combination of UN agencies and IFIs is innovative, collaboration between UNHCR and the World Bank already existed through mechanisms such as the IDA WHR and the Global Concessional Financing Facility. Overall, the share of ODA dedicated to refugee situations in LICs and MICs declined from 5.8% to 5% between 2020 and 2023.[50] In recent years, many donors have further reduced their financial support, and the closure of USAID in 2025 has had a major impact on available funding.

Between 2020 and 2023, Jordan, Lebanon, Uganda and Ethiopia were among the largest recipients of ODA for refugee situations. Jordan received approximately USD 4.2 billion, followed by Lebanon with USD 3.8 billion. Uganda (hosting refugees from South Sudan and the DRC) received USD 1.7 billion, while Ethiopia (hosting refugees from Eritrea, Somalia and South Sudan) received USD 1.2 billion. Iraq, Sudan and Kenya received USD 760 million, USD 630 million and USD 560 million, respectively, while Egypt received only USD 140 million. For comparative purposes, Prospects reported disbursements of around USD 500 million for the whole programme for 2020-2023.[51]

48 MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation. No data is available for Sudan.
49 IDA (2025), *Window for Host Communities and Refugees*, (accessed December 2025).
50 Boral-Rolland E. and Hurwitz A. (2025), 'Development Finance for Refugee Situations: Volumes and trends, 2022-2023', OECD Development Perspectives, No. 46, UNCHR, Geneva/OECD Publishing, Paris, November 2025.
51 Based on OECD internal dataset related to Development Finance for Refugee Situations.

These funding streams are further differentiated into humanitarian, development and peace-related allocations. The share allocated to development is highest in Jordan (56%), Uganda (46%) and Lebanon (43%), while humanitarian funding accounts for the largest share in Ethiopia (76%), followed by Sudan (71%), Kenya (67%) and Iraq (58%). The share allocated to peace-related activities ranges from 5% to 9% across all countries. The differences in focus and funding streams also reflect some of the socio-demographic characteristics presented in Table 2.1 for the eight countries, in particular the share of refugees and IDPs and the various dimensions of poverty.

Prospects has been the Netherlands' main programme supporting refugee responses in the region.[52] Its contribution complements other international responses,[53] some of which are also supported by the Netherlands, including the GCFF, 3RP and the RDPP[54] in Jordan and Lebanon.

All development partners mentioned subscribe to the international frameworks for coordination in relation to refugees (such as the CRRF and the GCR),[55] channel their support through multilateral organisations, and support the integration of humanitarian and development efforts. There remain, however, differences in approach, for example regarding the emphasis on a more prominent role for local partners and the private sector, or a focus on specific themes or target groups.[56]

52 In addition to supporting refugee responses in the region, these countries received humanitarian support through DSH/HH.

53 Several initiatives can count on joint funding from development partners, such as the Syria Refugee Response and Resilience Plan and the Ethiopia Country Refugee Response Plan, as well as similar (regional) programmes in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.

54 GCFF: Global Concessional Financing Facility; 3RP: Syria Refugee Response and Resilience Plan (3RP); and RDPP: Regional Development Protection Programme.

55 The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (2016) and Global Compact on Refugees (2018).

56 Hilhorst, T., Jung, A. and Vezolli, S. (2024), '*Factsheet opvang in de regio: Een vergelijkende studie*', October 2024.

Chapter 3

Results of Prospects

This chapter provides an overview of Prospects' main results and coverage. It also reflects on the strategies implemented in each thematic pillar to achieve these results. Section 3.1 describes the activities and strategies Prospects implemented to contribute to change. Section 3.2 discusses data on the number of people reached directly through educational, employment and protection services. Section 3.3 analyses whether and how the programme has succeeded in including FDPs in national and sub-national policies. Section 3.4 assesses whether and how the partnership has contributed to strengthening the resilience and self-reliance of FDPs and their host communities. Finally, section 3.5 presents the findings on the ambition to benefit both FDPs and host communities through a 'balanced approach'.

3.1 Prospects' strategies and activities

Prospects employed a diverse and comprehensive set of interventions to simultaneously support host countries in enhancing their capacity to respond to forced displacement and directly provided support and services to forcibly displaced persons and host communities. The main strategies included policy advocacy and dialogue, system strengthening, direct service delivery and working in the enabling environment.[57] This overview is based on internal sources, including the MACPs, financial and narrative plans and reports, and partners' reports and websites, and was confirmed through the country studies.

To increase engagement in quality education, Prospects partners invested in increasing enrolment, completion and transition rates in primary, secondary and tertiary education, including TVET and non-formal education. In addition, the programme focused on increasing the quality of education. Activities included curriculum development, teacher training, and investments in infrastructure and scholastic materials, including menstrual hygiene materials for female students. Prospects also implemented community awareness campaigns to promote enrolment in education and prevent dropouts, particularly among girls, and advocated for inclusive education policies, and diploma and skills recognition systems.

To enhance livelihoods and access to safe and decent work, Prospects focused on improving the transition from education to work, improving labour markets, enhancing business environments and financial inclusion, and improving access to work. Prospects also invested in inclusive, safe and decent labour laws, policies and conditions. Activities included work-based learning, support for beneficiaries to establish or strengthen micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), strengthening value chains, improving access to credit and loans, improving financial literacy and employment-intensive investments in the gig economy. Furthermore, Prospects advocated for inclusive, safe and decent employment policies and supported labour organisations and unions.

To increase protection and social protection, Prospects invested in strengthening the legal, policy, and regulatory environment, increasing government capacities and supporting the development of information systems. Activities included advocacy, research and analytics, capacity building for government staff, and support for infrastructure and digital systems. In parallel, Prospects partners (sometimes with governments, sometimes independently) provided access to registration and documentation, to services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), child protection and MHPSS services, as well as cash assistance.

[57] Working on the enabling environment refers to addressing factors that either constrain or enable the achievement of a particular objective or change. This may include working on aspects such as legal and policy frameworks, institutional strengthening, and capacity building for all actors involved, as well as on societal and cultural factors, including behavioural change, that may influence the acceptance of change among stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries.

3.2 People reached by Prospects

The Prospects dashboard confirms that services delivered by the partners reached substantial numbers of beneficiaries in the eight countries (see table 3.1). Partners reported that more than 1.5 million children were enrolled in primary or secondary education, while more than 1 million refugees and asylum seekers benefited from civil status registration. Almost half a million people benefited from social protection services.[58] Although monitoring data has not been externally validated, it is fair to assume that Prospects has reached several million people.

Table 3.1 *Number of people reached by Prospects in stage 1 (2019-2023) on key indicators*[59]

Pillar	Indicator	Number of people reached
Education and learning	Beneficiaries who completed skills training	559,780
	Children/youths who completed primary or secondary education	977,423
	Children enrolled in primary or secondary education	1,567,245
	Teachers, facilitators and TVET trainers who successfully completed skills training	107,137
	People enrolled in formal or non-formal post-secondary skills training, including RPL and TVET	131,517
Employment with dignity	Job seekers who used employment services	232,702
	People assisted with work permits and/or business registrations	97,791
	People assisted with self-employment/businesses opportunities	199,617
	Number of paid jobs or employment opportunities supported	55,538
Protection and inclusion	Beneficiaries supported with partner-led social protection benefits	195,624
	Refugees and asylum seekers who benefited from civil status registration	1,037,598
	FDPs who benefited from case management services (sexual and gender-based violence, child labour, etc.)	482,300

Source: Kingdom of the Netherlands (no date), 'Dashboard - Prospects Partnership Phase 1 results'.

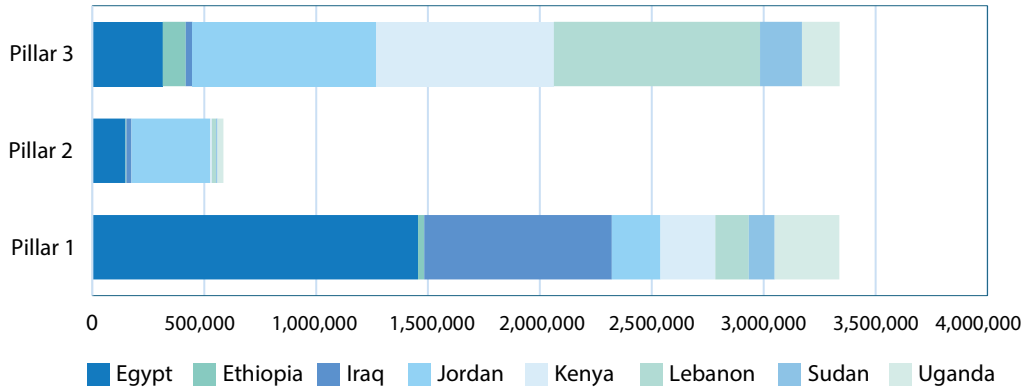
Overall, employment services reached fewer people than educational and protection services. According to partner reporting, while educational and protection services directly reached more than three million people, employment services reached only half a million (see figure 3.1). The reach of work/employment indicators was therefore lower than that of the education and learning and the protection and inclusion pillars. This was in line with expectations at the start of the programme. Changes in the labour market and regulatory frameworks require longer time frames, and employment is a major challenge in all Prospects countries, impacting the results in this pillar. Another constraining factor was restrictions on freedom of movement. Governments in countries such as Kenya and Uganda imposed strict movement restrictions due to security concerns and fears related to violent and extremist groups around refugee-hosting areas and camps.[60]

58 In table 3.1, listed as case management services.
59 Kingdom of the Netherlands (no date), '*Dashboard - Prospects Partnership Phase 1 results*'.
60 IOB, internal working document, Kenya field visit; Interview.

The number of people reached by different types of services varies by country, reflecting differences in context and programme design. Each country developed a contextualised MACP, tailored to country-specific needs and aligned with existing programmes and responses. Geographic conditions also influenced the ease or difficulty of accessing people, as did refugee movements. Egypt, for example, faced a large and unexpected influx of Sudanese refugees in 2024 as a result of the civil war. The same conflict also reduced Prospects' ability to reach beneficiaries in Sudan. In Uganda, the large influx of refugees led to a near doubling in the number of forcibly displaced persons and host communities benefiting from national protection services in 2024-2025, in this case supported by UNHCR.[61] Lower numbers were reported in Ethiopia due to the delayed approval of its MACP and the disruptive conflict in the Tigray region.[62]

An important factor affecting overall reach was that partners used Prospects funding to leverage, scale up or complement existing interventions with additional strategies or components. UNICEF, for example, used part of its Prospects funding to scale or complement its ongoing education activities, enabling the rapid and effective use of funds in its evidence-based practices. At the same time, funding was also used to establish entirely new activities, launch interventions in new geographical areas and pilot innovations. Figure 3.1 presents an overview of the number of beneficiaries reached by pillar for the Prospects countries.

Figure 3.1 *Number of people reached by pillar in Prospects countries*



Source: Prospects Dashboard.

61 Prospects Dashboard.
62 Prosects Partners, internal Prospects documentation; Interview.

Table 3.2 *Number of people reached by Prospects partners on key indicators per country in stage 1 (2019-2023)*

Pillar	Indicator	Egypt	Ethiopia	Iraq	Jordan	Kenya	Lebanon	Sudan	Uganda
Pillar 1: Education and learning	Teachers/TVET trainers who completed skills training	13,199	275	3,779	82,073	1,757	N.D.	2,480	3,574
	People enrolled in (non)formal post-secondary skills trainings, incl. RPL and TVET	19,080	345	5,950	83,965	1,607	10,257	4,822	5,491
	Beneficiaries completed skills training	461,695	311	4,568	49,677	2,338	21,933	0	19,258
	Children/youth completed (non)formal education for prim./sec. education	436,954	18,658	321,528	N.D.	39,650	54,640	49,398	56,595
	Children/youth enrolled (non)formal education for prim./sec. education	524,262	7,748	503,520	1,080	205,120	62,646	59,541	203,328
Pillar 2: Employment with dignity	Job seekers using employment services	516	N.D.	15,068	210,252	239	692	N.D.	5,935
	People with work permits and/or business registrations	N.D.	N.D.	N.D.	97,791	N.D.	N.D.	N.D.	N.D.
	People assisted with self-employment/business opportunities	146,179	1,378	3,536	24,120	3,432	5,891	4,405	10,676
	Number of paid jobs or employment opportunities supported	1,980	1,392	5,205	19,516	3,202	12,121	2,158	9,964
Pillar 3: Protection and inclusion	FDP with partner-led social protection benefits	N.D.	509	N.D.	10,887	410	116,362	67,456	N.D.
	Refugees and asylum seekers benefiting from civil status registration	N.D.	51,338	183	N.D.	767,294	8,158	58,623	152,002
	FDPs with case management services (SGBV, child labour, etc.)	245,342	50,695	29,749	50,701	26,143	2,897	60,820	15,953

Source: Prospects Dashboard. ND = No data recorded.

Considerations in reach

The monitoring data presented in the dashboard do not provide a full overview of the total number of people reached by Prospects, and the dashboard data also have limitations in terms of accuracy.

First, while the monitoring system includes indicators reflecting the number of people reached directly through activities, it also includes indicators that examine other aspects of direct and indirect reach. For example, the programme supported more than 4,000 cooperatives and (small) enterprises that provide both employment and products/services for forcibly displaced persons and host communities, benefiting not only those directly involved but also their households and wider communities. Furthermore, partners reported more than 60 contributions to policy changes relating to the inclusion and (social) protection of FDPs, with the potential to reach millions of people. As a result, the monitoring data do not allow for consistent comparison between these different types of indicators in terms of reach.

Second, Prospects engaged in system-strengthening activities that are not all captured in the dashboard, such as awareness-raising within FDP and host communities. Similarly, contributions to increased access resulting from strengthened government capacities and systems are often not systematically tracked and are therefore not reflected in the dashboard. As a result, these kinds of activities and their outcomes remain somewhat underrepresented in Prospects' quantitative monitoring data. They are, however, described in the qualitative reporting.

Finally, indicators were sometimes interpreted and measured differently. Despite guidance from the MFA on how indicators should be applied, partners sometimes interpreted them differently, and in some cases, individual partners applied them differently across countries. In Egypt, for example, partners reported the total number of people reached by services supported by multiple donors, rather than only those reached through Prospects. In other instances where activities were funded by multiple donors, Prospects' contribution to the overall reach was estimated based on its share of funding. As a result, Egypt reported more than two million beneficiaries, more than any other country.

Box 3.1 System strengthening: examples from the Kenya Country study

Through system strengthening, the programme supported thematic ministries to strengthen the quality of and access to their services. In Kenya, the government was supported in national education curriculum reforms, with teacher training and infrastructure support for refugee and national schools to implement the new curriculum, including classroom equipment for STEM. To support the government in reaching remote communities with justice, the programme provided infrastructure for the court, including buildings and computers, while the government oversaw staffing.

3.3 Inclusion of FDPs in national and sub-national policies

Results

The monitoring data on policy change vary widely by country and pillar. According to the data, Prospects supported the adoption of 21 policies, plans and laws addressing decent and inclusive employment and business development for FDPs and host communities, as well as 44 policies, plans and laws aimed at improving access to (social) protection for FDPs and their host communities. Not all have (yet) led to changes at the beneficiary level. This indicator includes amendments to such policies, plans, or laws at both the national and sub-national levels. Most of the policies, plans, and laws related to employment and livelihoods (13) were reported in Jordan, followed by Ethiopia and Uganda (4 each). No results on this indicator were reported in five of the eight countries. Most of the policies, plans and laws regarding (social) protection (15) were reported in Ethiopia. Seven of the eight country teams reported results on this indicator, with Iraq being the exception. In Egypt, only one result was reported. According to partners' progress reports, many of these policy processes are still ongoing, often slowed down by bureaucracy, a lack of institutional capacity or political developments. As a result, not all policy changes reported by partners have not or not yet been translated into concrete changes for beneficiaries.

The ability to influence policy development proved to depend heavily on political conditions in the eight countries. The political climate was relatively favourable in Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya and Uganda, providing opportunities for partners to promote greater ownership of refugee responses by national and sub-national governments. In Kenya, for example, Prospects contributed to efforts to integrate refugees into the national identity registration system and social security fund. Partners also succeeded in encouraging the government to apply national child protection procedures in the refugee camps.[63] In this way, Kenya moved to some extent away from parallel structures, whereby separate systems and services existed for FDPs. In Egypt and Iraq, by contrast, the political climate was less conducive to inclusive refugee policies, limiting Prospects' ability to contribute to policy change. In Sudan, the outbreak of civil war in 2023 led partners to discontinue efforts aimed at influencing policy at the national level.

The country studies demonstrated both that Prospects' interventions contributed meaningfully to policy change and how these contributions materialised. By systematically[64] analysing four policy trajectories in Jordan and Kenya, we identified several types of contributions to FDP-inclusive policies. The findings show that Prospects partners employed a mix of policy-influencing modalities. These included agenda setting and coalition framing, technical drafting, legal and data support, financial leverage and demonstrating potential benefits through pilot interventions. Although partners' roles varied across policy trajectories, the complementarity of their mandates and expertise in promoting inclusive policies was evident. For example, in Jordan, the ILO and UNHCR made notable contributions to the adoption of a by-law that brought informal farm workers (including many Syrian refugees) under labour law, significantly improving their working conditions (including social security and other secondary conditions) (see box 3.2). In Kenya, all five partners supported the alignment of the Kenya Refugee Act with international commitments, such as the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. Significant contributions were made by the World Bank, IFC and UNHCR.[65] (see box 3.2 and box 3.3)

For most outcomes related to policy changes, Prospects proved to be a necessary actor, but not sufficient on its own. Other bilateral development partners, such as FCDO,[66] the European Union, Norway, USAID, Canada and Germany provided critical funding, policy influence and complementary programming. Other multilateral agencies also played a role, alongside other programmes implemented by Prospects partners. Domestic actors, such as ministry departments, employer federations, trade unions and civil society organisations, were also instrumental. Together, these actors formed dense policy networks that coordinated and streamlined these processes.[67]

Prospects partners also collaborated with government agencies and civil society organisations to support FDPs and host communities to benefit in practice from protection policies. For example, in Kenya, refugees are granted legal protection under national law, but in practice they often face barriers to fully exercising their rights, including delays in obtaining work permits, fragmented licensing procedures and the exclusion of refugee identity documents from national databases. UNHCR supported the Refugee Consortium of Kenya in ensuring refugees' access to justice and legal assistance.[68] In Dadaab, Prospects supported the government in extending justice services to remote communities by providing infrastructural support to the courts, including buildings and computer equipment, and by training police officers and criminal court staff to prioritise child protection cases. To ensure that people were aware of their rights and understood how to access and navigate the justice system, community volunteers, refugee-led organisations (RLOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) were supported in organising awareness campaigns on SGBV, violence against children, female genital mutilation and gender equality. The study also showed how UNICEF and UNHCR successfully collaborated and made use of each other's networks on child protection by integrating counselling and referral systems into education systems to increase the detection of violations and access to justice.[69]

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63 IOB, internal working document, Kenya field visit.

64 Through process tracing. The evaluators distinguished four modalities to influence policies: 1) agenda setting and coalition framing; 2) technical drafting, legal and data support; 3) financial leverage; and 4) demonstrating and piloting.

65 UNHCR's contribution was made between 2017 and 2019, before to the start of Prospects in Kenya.

66 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office of the United Kingdom.

67 IOB, internal working document Jordan and Kenya field visit.

68 IOB, internal working document, Kenya field visit.

69 IOB, internal working document, Kenya field visit.

Box 3.2 Jordan's Agriculture Workers By-law, 2021 (amendment to the Labour Law)

Jordan's Agricultural Workers Regulation No. 19 of 2021 brought the country's 300,000 largely informal farm workers – including many Syrian refugees – under the protection of labour legislation. The regulation introduced protections for written contracts, the minimum wage, social security enrolment, occupational safety and health standards, labour inspections and dispute settlement mechanisms. This by-law extended the scope of the Labour Law to agriculture, authorising the Ministry of Labour to inspect farms and issue implementing instructions.[70]

Prospects made significant contributions to this process by supporting sector-specific evidence,[71] which led to an inclusive drafting process and ultimately contributed to the legal adoption of the by-law.[72] Following its adoption, Prospects supported awareness-raising activities on the new regulation and helped strengthen labour inspection capacity.[73] To demonstrate the viability of the by-law, Prospects financed agricultural guidance and employment units and agricultural cooperatives to host 12,501 formal job placements under the new rules and to match workers to formal jobs. The by-law also contributed to observable behavioural change, reflected in the increase of formal placements. At the same time, implementation challenges remain. Capacity gaps in labour inspection and enforcement mechanisms, particularly in rural areas, continue to hinder the full realisation of the protections provided under the by-law.

Box 3.3 Kenya's Refugee Act 2021

Kenya's Refugee Act 2021 replaced the 2006 law and established an updated, rights-based framework for the country's estimated one million refugees and asylum seekers. The Act aligned Kenya's refugee legislation more closely with its international commitments. It clarified eligibility criteria for refugee status, established the Department of Refugee Services and related appeals bodies, and extended the possibility of issuing secure identity documents to refugees to streamline registration and case management. The Act also enabled county authorities to incorporate refugee settlements into local development plans, while guaranteeing refugees the right to work, run businesses, own property and move freely within designated areas.

Respondents indicated that the review process started before the launch of Prospects, including lengthy stakeholder negotiations and policy engagement by UNHCR and the Dutch-chaired Refugee Donor Group. Prospects supported the legal drafting of the Act and organised stakeholder validation workshops and sessions with the Attorney General. The World Bank/IDA provided a Development Policy Loan, which is quick-disbursing budget support linked to a programme of policy reform. Following the Act's adoption, the World Bank and IFC conducted a study that informed the operational regulations. The Act would probably not have passed Parliament in 2021 without the technical support and financial leverage provided by Prospects partners. It should be noted, however, that the financial leverage associated with World Bank funding was not linked to Prospects funding.

70 Ministry of Labour Jordan (2021), '*Regulation of Agricultural Workers*', Regulation No. (19) of 2021, Issued pursuant to Paragraph (B) of Article (3) of the Labour Law No. (8), 2021.
71 MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.
72 MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation; interview.
73 MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.

Challenges and enablers

The partners' longstanding and trusted relationships with national governments proved to be important assets for a constructive and equal dialogue. Through their embeddedness in the countries, the partners were able to gain the trust of governments and support policy change through a combination of advocacy, dialogue, capacity building and funding. The diversity of the partners' mandates facilitated engagement with different ministries. ILO, UNHCR and UNICEF made effective use of strong sectoral ties, while the World Bank advised governments on a wide range of policies.

Dutch embassies sometimes played an enabling role in advocating policy change. Partners indicated that the Netherlands helped by opening high-level political doors and placing Prospects prominently on the political agenda, as Dutch embassies are often recognised as political dialogue partners in ways that Prospects partners are not. One example of this diplomatic leverage was the Dutch Ambassador's visit to Dadaab, a refugee complex in Kenya, which helped generate support for the programme among the local government, implementing partners and beneficiaries. Partners specifically mentioned this important enabling role of Dutch embassies in Jordan, Kenya and Uganda.

Governments sought to protect domestic labour markets and feared political backlash if refugees were granted access to them, making it challenging to include FDPs in employment and business policies. High unemployment rates contributed significantly to these concerns. This dynamic was evident, for example, in Jordan, where the political climate became more restrictive towards refugees during the programme's implementation. In general, governments were often more willing to support the inclusion of children in education and protection policies than to promote the economic inclusion of adults. At the same time, the Jordan study found that political resistance and negative public narratives surrounding FDPs sometimes contrasted with the collaborative approach adopted behind the scenes. For instance, fee waivers for flexible work permits for Syrian nationals were approved by the Government of Jordan following advocacy, diagnostics, technical drafting and implementation support, and concrete examples and business cases supported by Prospects partners. Fee waivers were in place from 2020 to 2024. Although they have been discontinued, the flexible permit system remains in place, despite political narratives emphasising the protection of domestic labour markets from FDP participation.[74] According to respondents, governments valued both support for systemic change at the national level and humanitarian support for FDPs, which together created space for policy dialogue and the implementation of parallel support structures for FDPs.

In the country studies, government representatives and partners stressed that the reduction in international financial support to governments at the institutional level is likely to affect their capacity to implement policies and responses to forced displacement. Limited institutional capacity was frequently cited as a reason for delays in policy development and implementation. Combined with high (and often increasing) unemployment rates, austerity measures may further reduce governments' willingness to include FDPs in policies.

Overall, policy advocacy was widely acknowledged to be highly fragile. Positive policy changes and advances in policy development – potentially leading to greater inclusion of FDPs – were often subject to change or even reversal. Gains achieved through years of investment could be threatened or even undone rapidly by political shifts or contextual changes.

74 IOB, internal working document, Jordan field visit.

3.4 Strengthened resilience and self-reliance at the beneficiary level

Self-reliance

The country studies of Jordan and Kenya provide several examples of how Prospects contributed to the self-reliance of FDPs and members of host communities. Respondents in both countries indicated that Prospects supported them in developing entrepreneurial skills aligned with market needs and in sustaining themselves through their businesses. Community centres facilitated access to information, services and business partners, while digital hubs enabled people to earn income online, thus overcoming legal employment barriers (see box 3.4). Entrepreneurs, particularly in Kenya, reported business expansion and improved profitability, which they linked to Prospects interventions. Partners also reported productivity gains resulting from livelihood schemes and observed an expanding market base in and around refugee settlements.

Interviews and focus groups with refugees indicated that Prospects contributed to improved self-reliance. Refugees said that they expected and/or experienced that the programme's educational and business components would help them obtain, maintain or increase income from employment or start small businesses. Prospects supported them, for example, by developing skills, improving financial literacy, opening a bank account and getting a work permit. During focus group discussions and interviews in Jordan and Kenya, the evaluators identified several examples of refugee households becoming less dependent on external assistance, with respondents attributing these improvements to Prospects interventions.[75] At the same time, interviews also highlighted that refugees generally experienced lower gains than members of host communities, as the latter faced fewer legal barriers and had better access to national and support systems. Mid-term evaluations conducted by ILO likewise confirmed that Prospects' contribution to self-reliance in participating countries remained modest.

The evaluation identified several examples of how Prospects supported conditions for self-reliance. One example is through advocacy aimed at improving the enabling environment for employment. In Dadaab, for example, women explained that day-care facilities supported by Prospects enabled them to invest in skills and employability. In Kenya, Prospects supported access to commercial loans and personal savings mechanisms rather than relying solely on grants. Through Employment Intensive Investment Schemes implemented by ILO, FDPs and people from host communities in Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda obtained temporary employment opportunities that nevertheless provided valuable skills and certification. Another example was the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programme implemented by ILO in collaboration with ministries of education in countries both within and beyond Prospects. Partners emphasised that cross-border recognition of diplomas helps FDPs continue their education or access employment opportunities in the event of resettlement or return.

Despite these efforts, self-reliance remains limited, particularly among FDPs. The country studies show that Prospects has helped strengthen people's self-reliance, though to a limited extent: aid dependency has decreased for some beneficiaries, but remained a persistent issue. As explained in section 3.1, employment-related interventions reach a relatively small share of the population compared with other types of interventions.[76] In addition, many of the gains achieved remained fragile and continued to depend on external support. This was widely recognised by partners and Dutch embassies in the various Prospects countries.

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75 ILO (2023), '*Partnership for Improving Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities (ILO/PROSPECTS) - Midterm cluster evaluation*', ILO, August 2023.

76 In Kenya, the vast majority of people in Turkana West and Dadaab still live below the poverty line. In Jordan, UNHCR's 2023 Vulnerability Assessment Framework found that only about 2%–5% of Syrian refugee households met basic self-reliance thresholds, meaning they were able to cover their basic needs without resorting to negative coping mechanisms.

Resilience

Prospects helped to increase people's resilience. In both country studies, various young refugees and members of host communities indicated that interventions had helped them remain motivated, become more independent and cope better with changes in life. Young people explained that diversified sources of income made them less financially dependent on their parents and enabled them to make more independent life choices. Various women participating in the country studies reported that improved livelihoods and better access to health and social services contributed to their families' health and well-being. Parents and students alike described the education as crucial for self-development and future opportunities. They emphasised that the gains in knowledge and skills would remain valuable for life and could provide opportunities in the event of resettlement or return.

Life skills training and psychosocial support contributed to these results. In Kenya, for example, trauma survivors reported becoming better able to cope with stress and economic hardship. Children, students, parents and teachers also described how schools and other community interventions boosted confidence, increased enjoyment at school, and strengthened their social skills, while others felt encouraged to re-enter education. Similar findings emerged from the Jordan country study and from qualitative reporting in other countries, where life skills training and MHPSS were frequently identified as important contributing factors.[77]

The programme also helped to strengthen community resilience. This was achieved, for example, by bringing together peer groups that reinforced social networks and social capital while reducing isolation. Partners helped to establish community centres, urban spaces and youth spaces, as well as mixed schools and cooperatives that strengthened social relations between FDPs and host communities (also referred to as 'peaceful co-existence'). Academic literature also points to a link between stronger social cohesion and improved livelihood resilience among FDPs and host communities.[78] This was reflected in the country studies, but also in the ILO study, which described how the Employment Intensive Investment Programme approach helped to boost community resilience in several countries,[79] and in the UNICEF Prospects Powered Solutions report.[80] In Uganda, for example, UNHCR and ILO delivered mental healthcare and psychosocial support to both FDPs and members of host communities. This Opportunity Fund project contributed to local ownership and helped strengthen community resilience (see box 4.1). Prospects also supported refugees to develop their own solutions and coping mechanisms. Examples from the project visits in Dadaab included refugee-driven digital hubs, refugee-managed water distribution systems that both reduced vandalism and generated income, and community-based organisations engaged in conflict resolution and in enabling access to legal aid and support. Notwithstanding the progress made in strengthening resilience at the individual and community levels, these gains remained fragile and continued to be challenged by the volatile political and economic context, while poverty remained a continuous source of stress.[81]

77 UNHCR, internal Prospects documentation; UNICEF, internal Prospects documentation; IOB, internal working document, Jordan field visit.

78 Dantje Sina, Alice Yan Chang-Richards, Suzanne Wilkinson and Regan Potangaroa, 'A Conceptual Framework for Measuring Livelihood Resilience: Relocation Experience from Aceh, Indonesia,' World Development 117 (May 2019): 253–265, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2019.01.003.

79 ILO (2025a), '*Responding to forced displacement – Lessons from the International Labour Organization's engagement in the PROSPECTS programme*', Geneva, ILO, 2025.

80 UNICEF (2024), '*Prospects-powered Solutions – Testing and scaling new approaches to forced displacement*', UNICEF, April 2024.

81 IOB, internal working document, Jordan and Kenya field visit.

Box 3.4 Intervention case study 1: Digital solutions

Dutch and Prospects policies: In 2019, the Netherlands published the 'Digital Agenda for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation', prioritising digital opportunities in education, employment and entrepreneurship. The policy paper 'Do what we do best (2022)' further emphasised the potential of digital transformation to connect people and to achieve the SDGs more rapidly. The underlying rationale is that stronger digital connectivity can help people organise themselves more effectively and improve their employment prospects. In a similar vein, Prospects partners emphasised the importance of connecting refugees and host communities to the digital economy while simultaneously strengthening their social inclusion. These commitments were reflected at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum[82] and the UN Roadmap for Digital Cooperation (2020).[83]

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformation processes in many countries, with direct impacts on both education and the labour market. Building on these developments, Prospects has been testing the potential of digital innovation to strengthen synergies and possibilities for scaling between the education and employment pillars, while also reaching vulnerable groups in complex environments, such as forced displacement settings.

Activities and results in Prospects: In Lebanon, Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia and Iraq, partners worked together through the Opportunity Fund on digital approaches across thematic pillars to improve digital livelihood opportunities for both FDPs and host communities.[84] In Lebanon, the World Bank, UNICEF and IFC jointly supported the launch of the online 'NammiSkills' platform[85] through the Opportunity Fund, providing young people with access to digital skills training. Similarly, in Egypt, ILO, UNHCR and UNICEF supported young refugees, asylum seekers and Egyptian youth in finding job opportunities in the digital economy. Examples of supported activities included coding, transcription and data entry, tagging work, graphic design, digital marketing, e-commerce, programming and data analysis. The project improved market connectivity for MSMEs and the quality of income-generating activities, including digital remote work (online jobs) and ICT-related jobs. In Kenya, joint digital skills pilots by UNHCR, IFC, and ILO in Kakuma contributed to more efficient job placement processes while integrating protection and labour safeguards.[86] Although the digital economy offers opportunities in e-commerce and freelancing, its overall impact remains difficult to measure. Some refugee households have been able to generate income and reduce dependence on external food assistance. However, poor infrastructure and connectivity issues, particularly in rural areas, continue to limit market access, while legal restrictions often remain in place. It is also important to recognise that digital employment can create protection-related risks, especially in relation to freelancing and the gig economy. During the project visit to the digital hub in Dadaab, Prospects partners demonstrated how young people are trained to work safely in digital jobs.

Supporting the transition from learning to earning is central to Prospects' approach. A UNICEF study[87] highlighted both the potential and main challenges of digitally powered learning to earning for FDPs, particularly for young people, adolescent girls and young women. Based on 17 interventions – including joint experiences of Prospects partners – the report underscored the importance of factors such as content,[88] accessibility and cost, and gender differences in digital learning. It also pointed to the still-limited evidence base regarding the link between learning and earning. Potential advantages of digital innovation include the ease of scaling and dissemination, the possibility to adapt content to the local context, the potential to overcome mobility restrictions,

82 For more information, see: Global Refugee Forum | The Global Compact on Refugees | UNHCR|.
83 For more information, see: Roadmap for Digital Cooperation.
84 For more information, see, for example: UNHCR (2023b), '*Improving Digital Livelihood Opportunities for Refugees – Using community-based workshops to co-create solutions*', UNHCR, November 2023, Using community-based workshops to co-create solutions. This study provides a wide range of examples.
85 For more information, see: Nammiskills.
86 IOB, internal working document, Kenya field visit.
87 Kosbar, Y., Nicolai, S. and Sarwar, M.B. (2023), London, ODI, July 2023.
88 The lack of relevant Arabic content is a barrier for many people.

and the ability to mitigate some of the negative effects of displacement on literacy and language skills. Female participants in the digital hubs in Dadaab explained that digital work enabled them to work from home while simultaneously managing childcare and household responsibilities, thereby also helping them navigate social and cultural norms that limited women's mobility in public spaces.
Overall, Prospects provides several lessons on how digital innovation can contribute to scaling up educational and learning interventions, in providing access to employment and services, and enhancing the protection and inclusion of vulnerable groups.

3.5 Balanced approach and inclusion of vulnerable groups

Balanced approach

Prospects partners applied a balanced approach to reach both FDPs and members of host communities, combining service delivery to both groups as much as possible. In most countries, activities targeted both host communities and refugees, whereas the interventions in Iraq and Ethiopia focused primarily on host communities and internally displaced persons. Governments influenced these choices. In Iraq, for example, interviewees explained that the government explicitly requested a focus on IDPs rather than FDPs. In addition to combining service delivery and advocating FDP-inclusive policies (which by definition benefit both groups), some partners used quotas to ensure that interventions reached both populations.[89] In certain cases, however, activities were specifically targeted at FDPs, such as refugee registration services.

Dashboard data confirm that activities reached both target groups, although not always to the same extent. These differences can be explained by variations in country context and by the design of multi-annual country plans, which responded to country-specific needs and opportunities for intervention. In Jordan, for example, the government requires that at least 70% of allocated funding benefit Jordanian citizens. Differences were also observed within countries, as illustrated by the Kenya country study. In Kakuma, local institutions, including a new municipality, local banks and dedicated county budgets, facilitated the development of services for both groups. In Dadaab, by contrast, the physical distance between refugee camps and host-community settlements limited such opportunities,[90] leading partners to focus more specifically on refugees.

Feelings of being left behind or treated worse than refugees continued to exist among host community members. This was confirmed by interviews with host community members and implementing partners in both country studies and was also acknowledged by Prospects partners. One explanation is that support to host communities is often less tangible and less visible. For example, support to national education or legal systems also benefits host communities, but this is less immediately visible than humanitarian assistance provided directly to FDPs in camp settings, such as shelter, food or water.[91] Another explanation is that governments sometimes deliberately strengthen narratives suggesting that refugees receive preferential treatment, partly for political reasons and partly to put pressure on donors to increase support for host communities. As embassy representatives noted, however, despite the narrative, governments were generally willing to support and collaborate in the programme, also because Prospects intended to contribute to strengthening national government systems.

89 IOB, internal working document, Jordan and Kenya field visit.
90 Apart from distance, the security situation was also mentioned.
91 This type of humanitarian support is often not part of Prospects (phase 1).

Contributing to social cohesion

Several sources provide evidence that Prospects' balanced approach contributed to social cohesion between FDPs and host communities. Prospects partners and implementing partners in Jordan and Kenya reported smoother collaboration between refugees and host communities since 2023, as well as decreased social tensions in schools. One example was ILO's pilot use of a guide in Kenya, Ethiopia, Jordan and Uganda aimed at strengthening the role of TVET practitioners as active promoters of social cohesion when working with mixed groups. In addition, a UNICEF paper pointed to increased social cohesion in mixed Family Clubs in Egypt and in SPEED Schools[92] for both IDPs and host communities in Ethiopia.[93] The country studies found indications that the approach fostered lower levels of tension, particularly when shared benefits or economic incentives were visible (see box 3.5). Experiences in Jordan and Kenya showed that shared markets and mixed cooperatives facilitated interaction and collaboration between FDPs and members of host communities. In Jordan, respondents indicated that local centres/urban spaces, youth programmes and courses/trainings for both groups enhanced relations between young Syrians and Jordanians. Interviewees representing two ministries indicated that these initiatives helped to address stigma, reduce social tensions and mitigate some of the pressures associated with declining aid levels.

Box 3.5 Example of how a balanced approach contributes to social cohesion

A good example is UNHCR's Ecorama Hub in Irbid (Jordan), which provides training sessions and workshops to help both refugees and Jordanians develop skills, enhance employment opportunities, and promote entrepreneurship. According to beneficiaries, Youth Centres contribute to mutual understanding and friendships between refugees and members of host communities. They provide a safe space for both groups, where they can attend courses, play music, make art, enjoy sports and organise activities. In Kakuma (Kenya), respondents link shared boreholes, realised with the support of Prospects, to calmer camp-host relations: they have stopped water-point quarrels. Another example is the community-based approach to mental healthcare and psychosocial support (in various countries by UNICEF and UNHCR), which trains members of host communities and refugees to provide care and support to one another when no specialised care is available.

Data collection in Kenya showed that shared markets and mixed cooperatives in Kakuma, in contrast to the separated markets in Dadaab, due to stricter encampment rules, can facilitate social interaction and collaboration between FDPs and host communities.[94]

In Jordan, the community-based counselling and awareness-raising initiatives of the Ministry of Social Development supported through Prospects were considered important – despite their relatively limited reach – in reducing stigma, fostering coping mechanisms, and promoting social cohesion across refugee and host populations facing economic hardship. In addition, school-community practices (including better parent–school communication and peer integration) were reported by beneficiaries to have strengthened social ties.

92 SPEED Schools provide accelerated learning for out-of-school children in contexts of forced displacement.
93 UNICEF (2024), '*Prospects-powered Solutions – Testing and scaling new approaches to forced displacement*', UNICEF, April 2024.
94 IOB, internal working document, Kenya field visit.

These findings are consistent with the UNICEF Powered Solutions study, which concluded that supporting social safety nets for protection, education and employment outcomes contributed to social cohesion and community resilience.[95] Similar findings emerged from the ILO Tracer study in Ethiopia, in which most respondents reported improved intergroup relationships due to Prospects.[96] Although respondents noted that isolated disputes over resources, hiring and aid distribution still occurred and occasionally became violent, these examples show that the programme implemented activities aimed at conflict prevention and peaceful co-existence at the local level.[97]

Contributing to gender equality and disability inclusion

The dashboard shows that, across all countries, slightly more women and girls were reached through education, while reach in employment and (social) protection was relatively balanced between genders.[98] Prospects set out to reach specific marginalised groups, particularly women and people with disabilities. This was operationalised in the Global Vision Note, which stated that all activities should pay specific attention to the gender dimensions of forced displacement.[99] At the same time, partners already had their own tools and strategies in place to promote gender equality. The MFA recognised this as a strength and expected partners to strengthen each other's capacities and further develop their strategies under Prospects. This objective was pursued through two opportunity fund programmes, which focused on strengthening women's and girls' empowerment.[100] However, these ambitions were not translated into concrete strategies within the programme's overarching vision documents and therefore depended largely on how partner and country teams operationalised them. This was identified as a constraint for gender-responsive programming.

Partners employ a diverse set of activities, such as gender-sensitive pedagogy, mentorship for adolescent girls and community-based behavioural change campaigns, to address socio-cultural norms, gender equality and social exclusion at the community level and in schools. Country teams adopted targeted approaches in their MACPs to reach girls, women and other vulnerable groups and to address the specific barriers they faced. This included offering activities in women-only groups, addressing gender-specific issues such as female genital mutilation and menstrual hygiene, and addressing socio-cultural barriers to participation in activities and social life.

A concrete example from Jordan is how cultural barriers to girls' and women's education were addressed. To build trust among parents and encourage them to allow their daughters to attend TVET institutions with mixed-gender populations, parents were invited to visit the institutions, and the classrooms were visible from the outside. Examples from Kenya case studies showed how schools organise summer courses to mitigate the risks for girls to be married off or subjected to female genital mutilation during the school holidays. External factors supporting gender equality included favourable legislative frameworks and increasingly committed authorities. At the same time, several external factors constrained the breadth and depth of the desired outcomes, including reduced support from development partners, inadequate infrastructure, and harmful social and gender norms.

95 UNICEF (2024).
96 ILO, internal Prospects documentation.
97 Prospects, in phase 1, did not aim to address the structural drivers of conflict and displacement. The HDP-Nexus is included in the ToC for phase 2.
98 In phase 1, the partners disaggregated gender data in their reporting, and in phase 2, this was extended to include people with disabilities in the disaggregation.
99 MFA, internal Prospects documentation. In the ToC narrative for the second phase of Prospects, the focus on gender and disability is articulated more strongly: all programming under Prospects aims to address inequalities in the lived experience of displacement and to support women and girls through gender-sensitive and, whenever possible, gender-transformative outcomes. In addition, all programming under Prospects aims to remove barriers faced by persons with disabilities through disability-sensitive interventions across sectors.
100 Egypt: Opportunity Fund on girl empowerment by the World Bank, ILO, UNHCR and UNICEF, and in Sudan: Women in agricultural value chains (ILO and UNHCR).

The country studies demonstrated various approaches to disability inclusion, particularly in education programmes. For example, the Hajati programme in Jordan provided cash transfers to parents with children with disabilities, which many parents used for transport, food and special equipment. In Dadaab, children with disabilities were supported with transport to school. Prospects also advocated for disability-inclusive education and social protection policies. Most interventions focused primarily on physical disabilities rather than intellectual disabilities or neurodivergence. However, the mental health and psychosocial support programmes addressed mental health problems (see box 3.4).

Despite broad access, partners noted ongoing concerns regarding the equal inclusion of women and people with disabilities.[101] Women and people with disabilities continued to face systemic barriers that limit full participation. Ensuring the consistency and scale of inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches remained challenging,[102] and further efforts were considered necessary to address systemic barriers.[103] Several respondents emphasised that the need for stronger gender-sensitive approaches in forced displacement settings and for deeper gender-responsive programme design, as identified in the mid-term review, remained valid.

[101] ILO (2023).
[102] IOB, internal working document, Kenya field visit.
[103] ILO, internal Prospects documentation.

Chapter 4

Partnership model: improved collaboration

In phase 1, the partnership model was the fourth pillar in the ToC with the objective of achieving a 'transformation in the way partners and other global/regional stakeholders respond to forced displacement crises'. This chapter answers the evaluation questions on the added value of the partnership model by discussing: the selection of partners in view of the programme's objectives (4.1), the functioning of governance structures and collaboration in practice (4.2), the partnership ambitions (4.3) and the added value of the partnership approach (4.4).

4.1 Prospects partners vis-à-vis the programme's ambitions

On an overarching level, the selection of partners aligned well with the objectives and the ToC of Prospects in terms of thematic coverage, the combination of short-term service delivery and working towards long term solutions, and engagement in policy dialogue. There were, however, limitations due to the geographical presence of partners, the private sector's limited presence and limited appetite to invest in the selected Prospects areas. As a result, not all planned activities and elements of the ToC could be implemented in all countries. Prospects aimed to facilitate the involvement of new development partners in refugee programming in the selected countries. Not all partners were present at the start of the programme, and throughout phase 1, not all partners were active in every country. For example, the World Bank was not active in Sudan through Prospects and, following the military coup in 2022 in Sudan, the World Bank and IFC suspended all ongoing activities, following the instructions of their respective boards.[104] Although the World Bank has since resumed operations in Sudan, this has not taken place within the framework of Prospects. The Sudan country team noted that the absence of the World Bank was a missing link in the programme, as it could have supported reconstruction and infrastructure activities that would have contributed to the sustainability of interventions in other pillars.

The suitability of the Prospects partners in relation to both the selected Prospects countries and the programme's Theory of Change was challenged by several partners, the MFA and respondents from organisations outside the Prospects partnership. Most of the Prospects countries did not necessarily have a conducive environment for the initial approach to involve the private sector in forced displacement settings. IFC, in particular, had been expected to deliver the majority of the partnership's private sector agenda. Under favourable circumstances in Kenya, this led to successful implementation,[105] but in the other Prospects countries, private sector engagement in forced displacement settings proved considerably more difficult. As a relatively new actor in the field of fragility, conflict and violence (FCV) and forced displacement in these countries,[106] IFC had limited embeddedness in this field in Uganda and Egypt, which also contributed to a longer start-up period for Prospects.[107] Where IFC could not operate, ILO filled part of the gap, though not at the scale IFC could have reached under more enabling circumstances. The approaches of the two organisations also differed. IFC worked primarily through investments and advisory services to financial institutions, which in turn provided financing to MSMEs, whereas ILO generally worked directly with MSMEs and can provide grants as part enterprise development approaches.

[104] MFA, internal Prospects documentation. Interviews.

[105] See Chapter 5 for more details.

[106] In the IDA19 cycle, which began in 2020, the World Bank Group moved from a focus on post-conflict reconstruction to addressing challenges across the full spectrum of fragility and included a World Bank Group Strategy for FCV (2020-2025). This strategy recognised that the private sector lies at the centre of a sustainable development model in those settings, with IFC significantly scaling up their efforts in this regard. See: World Bank Group (2020), '*Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020-2025*', World Bank Group, Washington, February 2020.

[107] In a 2019 IFC study on generating private investments in fragile and conflict-affected areas, IFC noted that much can still be learned in this regard, stating that other development institutions could help improve outcomes by exploring ways to assist the private sector in addressing the needs of displaced populations. See: IFC (2019), 'Generating private investments in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Areas', IFC, Washington, D.C, 2019.

Civil society organisations not engaged in Prospects argued that UNHCR and UNICEF represented FDPs and host communities only to a limited extent. While these UN organisations often work through implementing partners such as (I)NGOs, community-based organisations, and refugee-led organisations, respondents considered these organisations to be much closer to beneficiaries and better able to understand their needs. Implementing partners and external experts noted that although Prospects partners used their networks to stay informed about needs on the ground, direct involvement of IPs at a more strategic partnership level could have strengthened representation of beneficiary groups within the partnership. The relevance of UNHCR in Iraq and Lebanon was questioned by external experts and the MFA, as the restrictive policy context governing refugee reception was said to limit UNHCR's ability to deliver protection activities. External experts further noted that declining funding levels had forced UNHCR to reprioritise its expenditures. The sudden reduction in support for refugees, combined with limited information on the reasons for the funding decrease and the priorities set, was said by both experts and local staff to influence the level of trust in UNHCR from FDPs.

Respondents also mentioned several organisations that could potentially have strengthened the fit between the partnership and the programme's ToC. Several partners noted that Prospects might have benefited from including additional thematic areas, such as health and food security, as the programme's success depended on these basic humanitarian needs. At the same time, respondents recognised the need for the MFA to make choices and keep the partnership manageable. Some Prospects partners and MFA staff questioned whether involving locally embedded microfinance institutions might have been a more direct way of improving access to finance.[108] In Iraq, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was cited as a missing link due to the large numbers of IDPs and returnees in the country, while in Egypt, IOM was cited due to the strong national focus on migrants and migration to Europe.

Partners appreciated each other's efforts and recognised their comparative advantages in relation to Prospects' objectives. UNHCR's role in refugee registration was considered essential, as it facilitated access to other forms of support and services, thereby enabling the work of other partners. In the eight countries, relatively new partners piggybacked on the long-term presence and embeddedness of some partners (their networks as well as contextual experience and expertise). ILO staff explained, for example, that they were able to use the refugee networks of other partners, facilitating their engagement with Ministries of Labour on issues relating to refugees' right to decent work. Simultaneously, these other partners benefited from ILO's networks with their tripartite constituency, who had not traditionally been involved in forced displacement responses prior to ILO's engagement. In Kenya, the World Bank and UNHCR collaborated closely on building an evidence base on the socioeconomic needs and challenges of FDPs and their host communities.[109] Partners were also able to use each other's data on refugees, their knowledge on refugee engagement and their networks within communities of forcibly displaced persons. IFC said it benefited from partners' broader policy engagement outside IFC's sector-specific mandate.

Nevertheless, there were areas of overlap among mandates, particularly in skills development and the transition from education to work. Several respondents noted an overlap in the mandates of UNICEF and the ILO, as both organisations work on skills development for FDPs and host community members aged 15-24. Overlap was also observed between TVET and other activities in pillar 1, regarding education and transition to work. The Kenya case study showed that the country team addressed overlaps in mandates, and in Jordan, UNICEF and ILO collaborated on the job search clubs. In some other countries, however, respondents noted that overlapping mandates occasionally resulted in duplication of efforts and frustration among partners. In addition to overlapping mandates, respondents also identified tensions between ILO and IFC in approaches towards MSME support. According to IFC, ILO's provision of seed funding to MSMEs risked distorting the market. More broadly, IFC questioned the sustainability of development interventions based on grants or free support.

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[108] Based on phase 1 learnings, UNHCR and ILO started an MFI-supporting facility, in addition to IFC's role in private sector investments.

[109] This research was part of the Kenya Analytical Program on Forced Displacement of the World Bank, and was carried out in collaboration with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, an important partner of the World Bank. Sources: World Bank Group (2025b), 'Kenya Analytical Program on Forced Displacement', (accessed December 2025).; MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.

4.2 Governance structures: collaboration in practice

Due to spending pressures within the MFA at the start of the programme and the experimental nature of Prospects, governance structures had to be adapted repeatedly, leading to inefficiencies and frustrations. A commonly used analogy among partners and MFA staff for the development of the programme and its governance structure was that they had to 'build the plane while flying it'. Following the Syria crisis, significant additional funding for refugee response programming became available within the MFA before a fully developed results framework, clear management arrangements and sufficient staffing capacity had been established.[110] Furthermore, in line with the experimental nature of Prospects, the governance structure was designed to be flexible, with broad guidelines to be operationalised and contextualised by the country teams and the Global Steering Committee. This led to a degree of 'trial and error', with several adaptations to governance structures during phase 1. Shifting structures and unclear requirements created frustration among partners and some embassy staff, and were also perceived as inefficient. However, partners also commended the MFA for its willingness to learn, listen and adapt structures based on their critical feedback. A simplified overview of the Prospects governance structure and the partnership's underlying strategic documents is presented below in infographic 4.1.

An important underlying assumption was that a well-designed and clearly structured partnership – supported by clear processes, programmes and milestones – would be necessary to achieve the intended transformation. In practice, the lack of clarity and programme design in the initial phases limited progress towards this intended transformation.

The flexibility in financial and narrative reporting, in line with the MFA's 'less, better, more flexible' approach,[111] had implications for the available data on results and for accountability, particularly regarding the relationship between costs and benefits. Existing framework agreements with the partners were complemented by additional bilateral arrangements, while many programme structures and requirements were agreed on at the Steering Committee level. To minimise the administrative burden for both partners and the MFA, the bilateral reporting requirements remained quite flexible, with limited financial monitoring and reporting obligations and considerable freedom for partners to structure narrative reporting.[112] This approach was considered feasible give the level of trust in the Prospects partners.

According to partners and the MFA, the initial expectations regarding the level of joint working were overly ambitious, while some collaborative structures proved excessively demanding and time-consuming. The partnership introduced several mechanisms for joint planning, implementation and learning, which strengthened collaboration across the board. These included country team meetings; the MACPs, jointly developed and annually updated by country teams; the Opportunity Fund (OF), which encouraged joint innovation and programming; and the MEL sessions introduced in Prospects' second phase, which replaced bilateral reporting and fostered joint reflection and a better understanding of partners' activities and approaches.[113] Partners indicated that, in particular, country team meetings and MEL requirements, combined with institutional approval processes, required considerable staff investment at the country and headquarters levels. Overall, the UN organisations reflected more positively on the MEL sessions than the IFIs. Also, the approval processes for programmatic changes and for the Opportunity Funds were highly labour-intensive. Despite positive adjustments to more lenient processes, the collaborative structures remained time-consuming.

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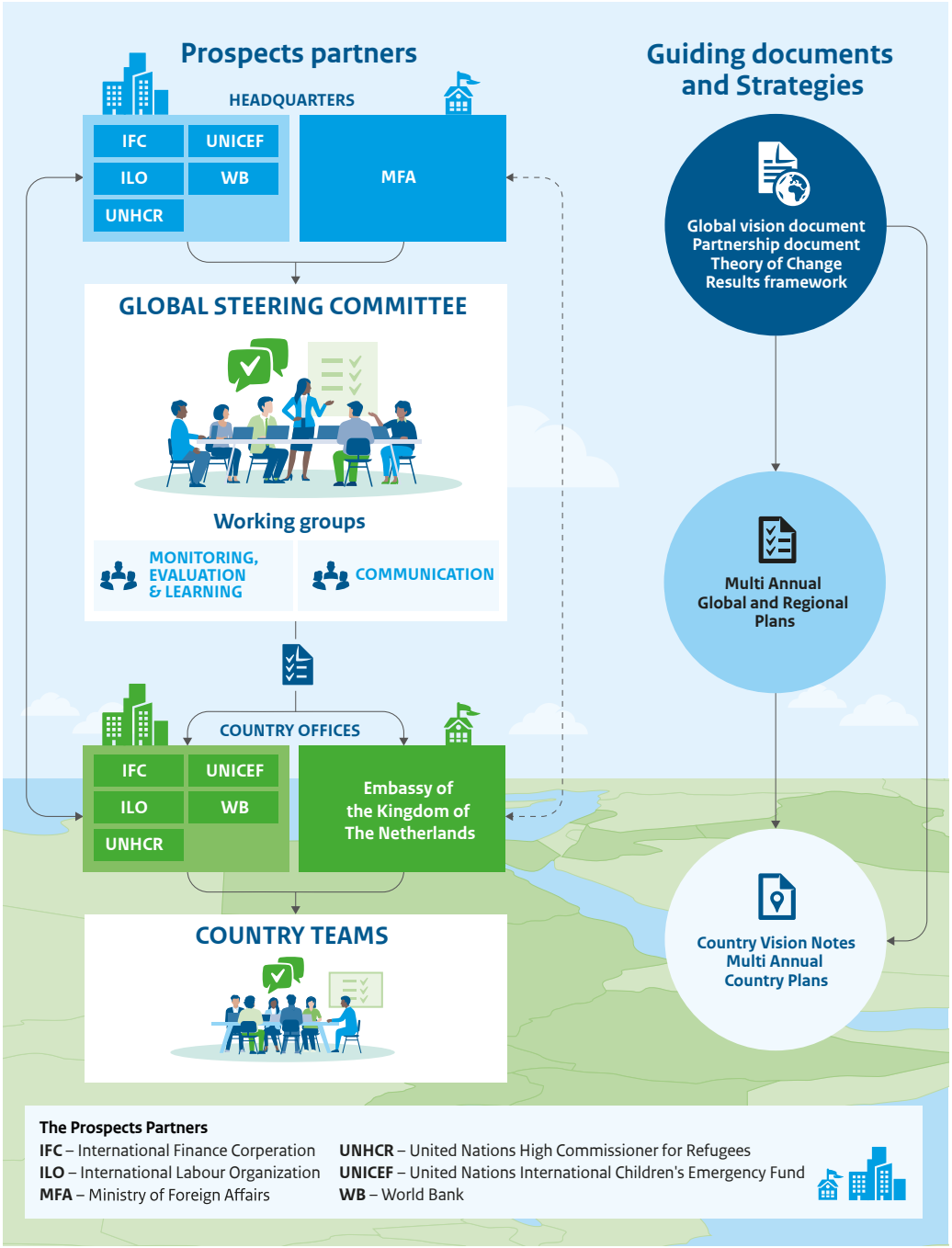
110 IOB (2024).

111 This approach, in Dutch known as the minder-beter-flexibeler agenda, aims to decrease fragmentation in the Dutch development cooperation portfolio, invest in scaling up effective programmes and working with trustworthy partners, and provide more flexible funding. This approach is also characterised by a lower emphasis on reporting on indicators and a greater focus on learning. See: IOB (2019), '*Strategieën voor partners: balanceren tussen complementariteit en autonomie*', IOB, The Hague, August 2019, Algemene Rekenkamer (2024a), '*Brief: Aandachtspunten bij de ontwerpbegroting 2025 begrotingshoofdstuk XVII Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking*', Algemene Rekenkamer, The Hague, September 2024.

112 By reducing these monitoring and reporting requirements, the administrative burden was decreased for the partners, but also for MFA staff, who only had a limited reviewing and managing burden. These reductions in overhead were expected to contribute to the efficiency.

113 These structures are explained in more detail later in this chapter.

Infographic 4.1 *Prospects governance structure and strategic documents*



The partners' different operational models influenced their ability and ambition to invest in collaborative structures. The flexible governance arrangements at the country level required partners to collectively determine how country teams would operate, and approaches differed between countries. These differences were partly shaped by organisational characteristics. The World Bank and IFC, for example, operated differently from the UN agencies, which generally relied more heavily on technical teams. This affected, among other things, the frequency of meetings partners were willing and able to attend. Whereas ILO worked with dedicated Prospects project teams, IFC relied on focal points responsible for multiple countries, for example a single focal point covering Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. UNICEF and UNHCR, the organisations with the largest field presence, worked with focal points and Prospects staff who dedicated part of their time to Prospects while remaining engaged in broader programming activities aligned with their technical expertise. Overall, county teams found a balance regarding the frequency and format of meetings, including through the use of virtual meetings and/or pillar- or theme-based subgroup meetings.

Joint planning

The partners' knowledge and expertise ensured that the MACPs were relevant to the needs of the FDPs and their host communities. The partners' embeddedness in the countries was an enabling factor, as it contributed to the knowledge base used to develop the MACPs. The MACPs are based on joint context analyses and needs assessments by the partners. The country programmes are contextualised and flexible, enabling them to respond to changes. This is reflected in the differences between the MACPs and the contextual descriptions, activity plans and budgets that were part of them. Annual updates to the MACPs further demonstrate how partners reflected on contextual factors affecting implementation and adjusted programming where necessary to maintain relevance.

In phase 1, some partners felt constrained by a restrictive or insufficiently adaptable programme structure; in phase 2, however, greater flexibility was introduced to better accommodate organisational differences. In some countries, not all partners were present from the beginning, as was the case in Sudan for example. While UNHCR and UNICEF were already present on the ground in locations affected by forced displacement, ILO was still in the process of establishing its country office. The locations where the partners would work under Prospects were therefore selected primarily through consultations between UNICEF, UNHCR and the embassy. By the time ILO was ready to engage, this required them to work in locations that were not necessarily the most suitable for their line of work, requiring them to invest in market assessments and network-building. The partners referred to this as a lesson learned, and in phase 2 greater flexibility was introduced, allowing the geographical focus to be expanded, also in response to contextual developments.

For the World Bank and IFC, the Prospects' planning timelines were not always well aligned with their operational processes. The World Bank and IFC needed more time to prepare and implement activities, as committing and disbursing Prospects funds to individual activities took time due to internal operational and quality assurance procedures. However, certain activities fit more easily within the MACPs' planning processes, such as analytical work. Adjustments were therefore made within the planning process, allowing the IFIs to propose activities provisionally or add activities at a later stage.

Joint analyses, implementation and innovation

During the first two years of the programme, the collaboration among the Prospects partners in the country programmes did not reach the level envisioned by the MFA. At that stage, partners largely continued to operate according to their usual organisational ways of working . Once partners got to know each other and their ways of working better, the level of collaboration increased, particularly in joint planning and analysis. In addition, partners increasingly shared diagnostics and data they had gathered individually with others, for instance, to use collectively in policy dialogue and policy development. This strengthened strategic coordination and also resulted in better alignment of programming. The assumption that the partnership would contribute to greater coherence in identifying priority activities can therefore be validated.

The Opportunity Fund, with its requirement for joint proposals, further advanced joint implementation and innovation, increasing collaboration on the ground. The intervention case study on MHPSS in box 4.1 provides an example of joint programming and implementation through an Opportunity Fund.

Overall, partners reflected positively on the Opportunity Fund's role in fostering jointness in programming; at the same time, they highlighted the high transaction costs of obtaining MFA approval for proposals. The IFIs were particularly critical of the instrument's usefulness and added value. This applied at both the country and global/regional levels, where they could also apply for OFs. These transaction costs were cited as a particular obstacle for IFIs, which had less coordination capacity within Prospects than UN agencies. Furthermore, the World Bank experienced difficulties in aligning its operational procedures with the Opportunity Fund processes, making participation overly complex relative to the expected benefits. Although the World Bank ultimately engaged in several approved OF initiatives, in some countries IFC limited its involvement to a technical role during proposal development and did not apply for funding, while in other countries the World Bank refrained from applying altogether. One partner also noted that the OF increased competition between partners, as they had to apply for the additional funding. In phase 2, MFA addressed criticism of the demanding process by allowing more time for proposal development and merging funding rounds. In phase 2, MFA also explicitly encouraged the inclusion of other UN partners outside the formal Prospects partnership if these organisations were considered best placed to operate in a specific context.[114] In response to the fall of the Assad regime in Syria and the anticipated increase in returns to Syria, the Opportunity Fund introduced a new focus on durable solutions,[115] thereby enabling funding for activities that support voluntary return and complementary pathways.

Box 4.1 Intervention case study 2: Mental healthcare and psychosocial support

Dutch policy: People in humanitarian settings, such as forced displacement settings, often face a range of stressors that can cause mental health issues. These include traumatic experiences related to conflict, poverty, discrimination and exclusion by host communities.[116] In the period 2019-2024, the Netherlands committed to intensifying its focus on providing MHPSS to refugees as part of its humanitarian and development policy. This is first mentioned in the 2018 policy note[117] and further reinforced in the 2022 policy note,[118] which explicitly linked the promotion of MHPSS to reducing dependence on humanitarian aid and strengthening self-reliance and resilience. This link was also made in the MFA's Global Health Strategy (2023-2030), which states that mental health and psychosocial well-being are vital for self-reliance and overall well-being. Internal diplomatic messages from 2019-2024 mention the Netherlands' efforts on MHPSS, focusing on integrating MHPSS into national primary healthcare and into development and humanitarian activities.

Prospects policy: None of the initial Prospects documents intended to shape the partnership explicitly mentioned MHPSS.[119] The Global Vision Document did, however, acknowledge the specific vulnerabilities faced by FDPs and their host communities, including psychological trauma, while the indicator framework included an indicator on the number of people receiving MHPSS services (3.2b). The ToC narrative for Prospects phase 2 explicitly identified MHPSS as one of the cross-cutting interventions aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of displacement, and enhancing resilience at the personal and community levels, and between FDPs and host communities by promoting social cohesion.[120]

[114] Due to administrative limitations, it was not possible to expand this to include other types of organisations, such as INGOs or CSOs.

[115] Durable solutions are permanent measures that enable forcibly displaced persons to rebuild their lives. These solutions are 1) voluntary repatriation or return; 2) resettlement; and 3) integration within host communities. See: UNHCR (2026d), *Solutions*, (accessed February 2026).

[116] World Health Organization (2025), *Refugee and migrant mental health*, (accessed October 2025).

[117] Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2018), '*Investeren in Perspectief – Goed voor de wereld, goed voor Nederland*', The Hague, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 2018. This policy brief was the basis for the establishment of Prospects and defined the programme's objectives.

[118] Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2022), '*Doen waar Nederland goed in is – Strategie voor Buitenlandse Handel & Ontwikkelingssamenwerking*', The Hague, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 2022.

[119] MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.

[120] MFA, internal Prospects documentation.

Box 4.1 Intervention case study 2 - CONTINUED

Activities and results in Prospects: In all countries, the main approach to MHPSS focused on integrating support into formal and non-formal education settings by providing services and training teachers and social workers in psychosocial support, child protection, case management and referral mechanisms. These activities mainly targeted children, while also including some activities aimed at mothers and teachers. Another strategy for MHPSS involved counselling sessions held in multi-purpose community centres accessible to both host communities and FDPs. Through these interventions, the partners reported that in total 102,000 people received MHPSS services, while 37,000 frontline providers and other stakeholders were trained on protection and social protection issues during phase 1.[121] UNICEF and UNHCR have internal MHPSS approaches, use community-based protection approaches and, since 2020, have followed the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) MHPSS minimum service package (MSP).[122] These approaches were broadly reflected in the MHPSS interventions implemented across all eight Prospects countries.

OF – improving MHPSS and developing livelihood skills: The Opportunity Fund initiative implemented in Uganda by UNHCR and ILO is a good example of an innovative intervention in which partners combined their comparative advantages to deliver MHPSS in a holistic way for FDPs and host communities. The agencies jointly conducted assessments within local communities to determine the needs for services to be provided in the centres. This process contributed to local ownership and promoted social cohesion by involving both FDPs and host communities. The activity focused on building the multi-purpose centres, using ILO's EIIP, which included training local contractors and suppliers from refugee and host community-owned businesses and creating short- and medium-term employment. One of the key drivers of psychological distress was found to be related to economic hardship. As a result, a substantial share of the services provided in the centres focused on post-MHPSS livelihood support and skills development. The MHPSS-related activities applied UNHCR's community-based approaches, which included services for individuals and training frontline workers from the community to provide PSS, thereby working on both individual and community-level resilience. ILO and UNHCR also signed a data-sharing agreement to better target the MHPSS clients for skills development opportunities and improve linkages between services at the local and district levels. Lessons learned and experiences from Uganda were subsequently shared with the country team in Sudan, showing the potential for scaling up this piloted approach and the first efforts to do so.

Joint policy work

Despite positive examples of joint policy dialogue and advocacy for inclusive policies, partners identified missed opportunities and instances of parallel engagement. The country team did not always align policy messages clearly or discuss the division of roles among the partners, including the embassy.[123] Partners did not consistently share information on planned engagements with government counterparts or on the content of policy discussions. Several respondents described situations in which partners were informed about policy processes only at a stage when meaningful contribution was no longer possible. Prospects operated within a landscape characterised by numerous existing policy dialogue processes and coordination structures, which both fed into and overlapped with the programme. In phase 2, joint country-level policy matrices were introduced to provide a clearer overview of country contexts, key policy challenges and opportunities, and to align with broader efforts in each country. The extent to which these matrices were used differed across countries, and it is too early to assess their effect. Consequently, while the assumption that Prospects would provide a

[121] UNICEF (2024).

[122] UNICEF and UNHCR were both involved in the development and the coordination of the field demonstration, the MHPSS MSP. It outlines activities that are the highest priority for meeting the immediate needs of people affected by the emergency, based on existing guidelines, evidence and expert consensus. It is expected to lead to better coordinated, equitable, effective and efficient responses. See: Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (2022), '*The Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Minimum Service Package*', IASC, Geneva, 2022.

[123] IOB, internal working document, Jordan and Kenya field visit; Interview.

platform for collective dialogue with host governments and other stakeholders could be validated to some extent in phase 1, the programme did not yet fully realise this potential. The adjustments made in phase 2 are likely to further validate this assumption.

Joint learning

In phase 1, structures did not promote joint learning and strategic alignment, resulting in missed opportunities for collective reflection and joint strategising on contextual developments and shared outcomes. However, this changed in phase 2. In the first years of the programme, each partner was required to submit annual bilateral reports, a practice that, according to partners and the MFA, undermined true jointness, as reports reflected individual progress across Prospects countries rather than collective achievement. This omission was also flagged in the mid-term evaluation.[124] In response to this, the bilateral reporting structure was changed with the introduction of the annual MEL sessions.[125]

The five bilateral reports were replaced by a joint outcome document for each country and a single outcome document at the global-regional level. This implied a shift from individual agency accountability towards shared accountability, and from the presentation of results to a focus on joint learning, strategic reflection and joint planning. It is too early to say whether this shift has indeed resulted in stronger mutual accountability among partners.

Prospects contributed to institutional learning within partner organisations regarding work in forced displacement settings and the scaling up of Prospects-like approaches within individual agencies. This was especially the case for ILO and IFC, for whom working in forced displacement settings was relatively new. In a 2019 study on generating private investment in fragile and conflict-affected areas, IFC noted that much more could still be learned in this regard.[126] Respondents from IFC headquarters confirmed that Prospects had functioned as a business case helping the organisation operationalise its approach in FCV and displacement settings. This strengthened IFC's internal advocacy and its external positioning within the World Bank Group's FCV strategy.[127] The focus on forcibly displaced persons (FDPs) is now being mainstreamed more broadly within IFC, with respondents reporting ongoing work to integrate FDPs into their indicators.

Similarly, ILO respondents explained that prior to Prospects, the organisation had relatively limited experience working directly in forced displacement settings and engaging with FDPs.[128] Through Prospects, however, new approaches became institutionalised within the organisation. According to respondents, ILO's participation in Prospects has also led to its recognition as a valuable player in the field of nexus approaches to forced displacement. According to respondents from ILO, experiences gained through Prospects subsequently enabled participation in several other partnerships with similar objectives and approaches. The lessons learned from Prospects also informed the renewed Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and UNICEF (2023).

The World Bank has also been able to leverage some of the Prospects funding within its broader portfolio. Respondents explained that Prospects enabled the Bank to pilot new activities that could then be scaled up more broadly in its work.[129] Respondents from the World Bank stated that Prospects enabled them to fill gaps in the analytical work that informed their broader portfolio, policy dialogue, and technical advisory role in shaping responses to forces displacement together with governments and partners.

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[124] MFA, internal Prospects mid-term evaluation.

[125] These annual two-to-three-day sessions bring partners together to reflect on the past year, plan for the year ahead and prepare a joint outcome document.

[126] IFC (2019).

[127] As an example, IFC combined Prospects funding with other funding streams used for the IDA Private Sector Window, enabling 30% of the USD 300 million available through that window to be directed towards FDPs and host communities.

[128] In 2016, ILO published guiding principles on access to labour markets for FDPs, which the GCR identified as an important framework for efforts related to jobs and livelihoods for refugees. They also made formal commitments under the GCR in 2016, thereby strengthening their institutional focus on FDPs. See: ILO (2016); ILO (2025b).

[129] MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation; Interviews.

The role of the MFA in the partnership

The level of engagement of the MFA, as a donor and partner, strongly influenced the degree of jointness at the country level and required more staff than anticipated. Although the partnership model with large international agencies facilitated contract management for the MFA, it required additional investments to manage and further develop this large and complex partnership.[130] The allocation of additional staff to embassies and the policy department brought staffing levels more in line with programme needs. While Prospects is a centrally managed programme, the MFA decided to fund one full-time equivalent[131] position at each embassy in all Prospects countries, with the exception of Iraq, to ensure in-country involvement and support from the Dutch side. Overall, the partners at the country level reported appreciating the active engagement, facilitation, and/or coordination by the embassies during the country team meetings, particularly given the differing mandates, institutional interests and perspectives. Both case studies pointed to the key role that embassies played as convenors, with respondents indicating that effective country team coordination often depended heavily on embassy involvement.

At the same time, embassy staff and partners also pointed to the limited capacity of the Prospects team in The Hague to engage in strategic discussions with the country teams or to provide them with general support and information. They stated that, even though the team was often keen to support country teams, it appeared to be overstretched by the workload.

The added value of the embassies within the country teams varied considerably depending on staff availability and personal interests. Embassy roles ranged from relatively passive observers and intermediaries between headquarters and country level to active participants in monitoring missions and policy dialogue with the host governments. It was broadly recognised by respondents from all stakeholder groups that the level of engagement depended on individual personalities, as well as on staffing limitations in hardship postings such as Iraq,[132] where the embassy in Baghdad acknowledged that its involvement had necessarily remained more distant.[133] By contrast, in Kenya, at the beginning of phase 1, the embassy had a dedicated local staff member who actively engaged with the country team by chairing the meetings, engaging in monitoring meetings, and linking discussions between Kenya and The Hague. Simultaneously, the embassy also had an active role in the national policy dialogue, with the ambassador chairing the Refugee Donor Group. This gave the Netherlands 'a seat at the table' with Kenya's Minister and Commissioner for Refugees, enabling high-level policy engagement.[134] Prospects partners at the country level noted that one of the effects of the recent budget cuts by USAID and other development partners is that the Netherlands is considered an (even more) important and reliable donor within the forced displacement landscape, thereby increasing its visibility and leverage in the policy dialogue.

The need to clarify MFA's roles as both a partner and a donor, particularly between headquarters and embassies, requires ongoing attention. The division of roles in the MFA between The Hague and the embassies has become clearer in most countries. However, some confusion remains, including among the partners at the country level. One recommendation of the mid-term evaluation was that the Netherlands should further distinguish between its donor role, linked primarily to programming and funding decisions, and its partnership role, particularly in relation to policy dialogue. Partners noted that the lines of communication between the MOA and embassies were not always clear, and

[130] IOB (2024).

[131] The embassies decided how this full-time equivalent position would be divided between expatriate and national staff.

[132] The embassy in Baghdad works with a rotation system in which two staff members jointly fulfil one position, alternating every four weeks. As a result, although two individuals served as Prospects' focal points, they never worked at the same time. In addition, neither staff member worked exclusively on Prospects; instead, they managed several other programmes alongside it, unlike other embassies, which generally had at least one dedicated Prospects focal point.

[133] During phase 1 in Iraq, an external programme coordinator was hired and stationed at the Resident Coordinator's Office. This coordinator was more aware of ongoing activities, dynamics and plans within the country team than the embassy itself. This model was abandoned in 2025 and replaced with a rotating secretariat function among partners, combined with increased embassy involvement.

[134] The ambassador's engagement in Prospects or Prospects-related issues not only gave the programme more visibility, but it also increased the leverage in policy dialogue with the Kenyan government. Other donors recalled that when the Netherlands chaired the group, it authored common advocacy points that still shape today's dialogue on Shirika implementation. Source: IOB, internal working document, Kenya field visit.

at times, information from both levels did not align. Partners and embassies described a tendency for headquarters to steer processes more actively than desired, whereas country-level actors preferred headquarters to adopt a more listening-oriented role, recognising that embassies and country teams generally possessed the strongest understanding of the national context. Some embassies shared frustrations about their lack of decision-making authority and their limited involvement in designing the programme, because MOA is the formal budget holder, while the responsibility for the partnership is shared, an issue also flagged by MFA staff in The Hague.

The Prospects team within the MFA could make better use of the knowledge held by, and coordinate more effectively with other thematic and political departments. In particular, the department responsible for multilateral collaboration and human rights (DMM) could support the team through its network in situations involving challenges or institutional constraints with the Prospects partners. Furthermore, the thematic and political departments could also benefit from the knowledge generated through Prospects in their respective geographical or thematic areas, and vice versa, and the alignment in communication with the partners in various fora could be improved. Despite the existence of a regular meeting structure, according to several policy officers, these meetings either did not take place consistently or focused primarily on information exchange rather than strategic discussion.

The aim of preventing onward migration through programmes focused on refugee reception in the region is not explicitly mentioned in the MFA's policy documents, nor is this objective included within Prospects itself. However, during interviews, particularly in Iraq and Egypt, as well as in less formal discussions and political narratives, respondents indicated that this link was implied. Embassies in Iraq and Egypt also suggested that there are opportunities to strengthen policy dialogue in relation to other MOA programming, in particular the migration partnerships.[135]

At the global level, Prospects strengthened the Netherlands' position on forced displacement. Internal and external stakeholders referred to Prospects as a flagship programme and recognised the MFA as an important player in this domain. This is confirmed by a 2024 OECD study, which reports that donors have made significant progress in integrating long-term development thinking into refugee responses and specifically highlighted the Netherlands alongside two other bilateral donors, Germany and Japan. Dutch engagement at the global level is also reflected in participation in international fora, such as the Global Refugee Forum.[136] Although the Netherlands was recognised as an important player, perceptions of its influence varied among respondents. Several MFA internal respondents nuanced the degree to which global actors were familiar with Prospects and argued that the Netherlands could further strengthen its international visibility. Respondents also emphasised that the relative importance of Prospects within the broader portfolio of participating agencies should be kept in perspective.

Collaborative structures beyond Prospects

The Prospects partnership and the Resident Coordinator's Office have mutually strengthened each other's coordination efforts, but the risk of creating parallel systems should be closely monitored. Although some respondents pointed to the risk that Prospects could create systems parallel to the One UN Approach and to development partners' working groups on migration or refugees, many UN partners indicated that the Resident Coordinator's Office and Prospects have mutually strengthened each other. The Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), for example, is responsible for coordinating UN organisations to enable them to deliver 'as One UN'. As the Netherlands is a strong supporter of the One UN agenda and a significant contributor to the RCO structure, some respondents expressed concern that Prospects risked creating coordination structures parallel to the One UN system, potentially duplicating and complicating existing coordination efforts and discussions. At the same time, embassy respondents noted that the RCO did not always have sufficient authority to drive effective coordination among UN organisations, whereas Prospects benefited from a stronger donor-driven incentive for collaboration. In Kenya,

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[135] Egypt and Iraq are included in the Migration Partnerships of the MFA. In 2026, IOB will publish an evaluation on this partnership.

[136] The Netherlands sat in high-level panels, organised events, together with Australia, took the State lead in the coalition on meaningful refugee participation, and made major commitments, including a major financial pledge alongside five other European states. UNHCR (2024b), '*Outcomes of the Global Refugee Forum 2023*', UNHCR, March 2024.

for example, the Prospects Country Team meetings were regarded as a necessary complement to the broader Refugee Donor Group and enabled partners to plug into Kenya's wider refugee-development architecture rather than, operating alongside it. Embassies emphasised the importance of continuing to engage and coordinate with the RCO to facilitate broader coordination with UN organisations beyond the Prospects partnership.

According to the MFA, Prospects has inspired and led to the development of similar programmes elsewhere. The evaluation identified numerous comparable initiatives, but could not determine the extent of Prospects' influence given the range of other contributing factors. Alongside and prior to Prospects, the partners were already cooperating in programmes and coordinating through the various donor structures. Examples include the Joint Data Center established by the World Bank and UNHCR in 2020 and the ILO-UNHCR partnership in 2016. A partnership programme as such was not unique, although the combination of UN agencies and IFIs in a forced displacement programme was.

In the country case studies, development partners generally spoke positively about Prospects and described it as an inspiring example of how to operationalise the nexus approach, even if they were not always familiar with its internal structures and processes. According to internal MFA sources, Prospects inspired other donors to set up similar programmes, such as EU funding under the NDICI special measures for an integrated programme involving ILO,[137] IOM and UNHCR in Lebanon and Syria,[138] as well as the 2023 UNHCR-IFC joint initiative on creating markets in forced displacement settings, funded by the MFA, Denmark and the United States. However, the programme was not known to DMM; nor was it mentioned by the Prospects partners themselves; and, in external sources on the UNHCR-IFC joint initiative, the evaluation found no references to Prospects. Indeed, some MFA respondents stated that the influence of Prospects might be overstated.

4.3 Prospects' collaborative ambitions

The MFA's initial ambitions for collaborative programming were overly ambitious and unrealistic, and, at the outset, transaction costs were substantial while the benefits of collaboration could not be clearly identified. The mid-term review confirmed this imbalance, a finding acknowledged by both partners and the MFA. Although adjustments in the first phase of the programme were meant to provide more structure to the partnership and set clear ambitions, they were still perceived as demanding. Now, at the start of phase 2, with intensified collaboration, the ambitions are said to be more aligned with reality. What several partners initially described as an 'arranged marriage' gradually evolved into increased coordination and alignment, helping to reduce duplication within country programmes.

Partnership ambitions were adjusted during phase 1, while structured collaboration at the country level became progressively stronger, albeit through different modalities for UN agencies and IFIs. The relatively light partnership requirements originally envisaged during the design and seed-funding phase of Prospects gradually became more demanding over time. MFA staff had to balance the partners' wishes to keep them engaged and enthusiastic, while also facing administrative requirements related to accountability on the Ministry's side.[139] In the run-up to the formalisation of the contracts, when the level of ambition and the corresponding mechanisms and requirements became more concrete, the World Bank argued against the heavier structure but ultimately did not succeed. By phase 2, structured collaboration had become considerably more established, although coordination in the partnership has continued to operate through two different modalities for the UN partners and the IFIs. UNHCR, UNICEF and ILO meet regularly, while participation in meetings occurs on a needs basis; therefore, alignment with IFC and the World Bank remains more ad hoc, as they operate under different internal requirements. This pattern was echoed in most of the other countries where all partners were active.

[137] The inclusion of ILO followed from advice from the embassy in Lebanon.

[138] Interestingly, this programme has only one contract, whereas in Prospects each partner has a bilateral contract.

[139] As the partner organisations also vary considerably in terms of size, this means that the importance and size of Prospects within each of their portfolios differ strongly. For ILO, Prospects was a big programme, while for the World Bank, it was very small. This also has consequences for the level of transaction costs they consider worthwhile compared to what the programme brings them.

The Jordan case study found that during the partnership's first years (2019-2021), the five partners largely operated on parallel tracks. Nonetheless, existing informal ties proved crucial in enabling the partnership to function. The partners explained that goodwill and trust-based relationships helped, to some extent, to keep collaboration moving in the early stages and created a shared space for stronger personal relations. A similar pattern emerged in Kenya, where the country team gradually evolved into a more cohesive team that met regularly under the facilitation of the embassy and increasingly engaged in frank consultations as partners came to recognise each other's comparative advantages.

This helped reduce duplication, while MEL sessions and a shared dashboard contributed to stronger coordination and sequencing of activities. An example of joint complementary delivery in Kenya is the shared child protection case management system, which was adapted for refugee settings through Prospects funding and technical support from UNHCR and UNICEF.[140] These shared data systems inform more coordinated programming across agencies and support evidence-based programming.[141]

Influencing factors for an efficient and effective partnership

The extent to which heads of agencies and ambassadors supported the partnership influenced levels of commitment to collaborative ambitions within both partner organisations and embassies. Senior leadership had considerable influence over strategic choices, and their belief in the approach shaped investments in staff and efforts to transform their approach to forced displacement. Convincing agency heads was identified as important to ensure internal backing for focal persons to invest time in partnership and coordination activities, despite the high transaction costs. Several ambassadors explained that they invested heavily in building high-level relationships, for example by organising strategic events and ensuring continuity of support for Prospects, even when agency leadership changed. Partners also noted that in some countries, ambassadors became more involved in how the country team works. At the same time, when ambassadors held strong views on the programme, this influenced how country teams operated, and in some cases, ambassadors tried to steer programming priorities. As the intention was for partners in the cifcountry teams to contribute their expertise, evidence-based analysis and contextual knowledge, ambassador influence risks reducing the programme's efficiency through protracted negotiations.

High staff turnover, both at the MFA and partner organisations, disrupted continuity and institutional memory and required repeated investment in building relations and trust. This turnover largely resulted from rotational staffing systems, under which employees changed positions every few years.[142] In particular, the complex and innovative nature of Prospects required substantial time investment to familiarise new staff members with the programme. Some partners and embassies stated that the handover of information to new staff was often insufficient, which slowed down the country team and influenced the way of working and the collaborative spirit built over time.

The global acceleration of funding cuts to humanitarian and development cooperation has had a dual impact on Prospects: it creates operational challenges while simultaneously reinforcing the relevance of development approaches. Declining levels of humanitarian funding have increased pressure to identify more efficient and sustainable approaches rather than continuing short-term humanitarian responses indefinitely. Respondents widely agreed that these developments further underline the relevance of the nexus approach and the partnership model in Prospects. While Prospects funding has not been reduced, the programme was impacted by these changes in the funding landscape. In some countries, for example, UNHCR lost up to 80% of the funding available for its core programming. This has implications for Prospects, as UNHCR is not a project-based organisation and Prospects-funded activities, including the deployment of staff, rely on co-funding from other sources, and this funding has declined abruptly. UNHCR interviewees noted that engagement in collaborative work is often considered a 'stretch' activity and therefore risks being discontinued. Due to funding gaps, such activities

[140] This system is used by government social workers, but pilots in both camps in Kenya allow child protection volunteers to upload case files directly into this national system.
[141] IOB, internal working document, Kenya field visit.
[142] For example, the MFA has a system in which staff rotates every 4-7 years, but for hardship posts such as Iraq, this can be more frequently.

are sometimes perceived as less urgent than other needs, strongly limiting UNHCR's engagement in innovative projects. At the same time, budget cuts have reduced staff capacity, limiting the time available to invest in partner relationships and country team engagements. However, these same budget cuts have also forced partners to rely more on each other's comparative advantages. For UNHCR, this situation demands both reprioritisation and, paradoxically, greater collaboration with development partners. In Jordan, for example, UNHCR has been able to transfer some of its livelihood work to ILO, ensuring continuity of service delivery.[143]

4.4 Added value of the partnership approach

The main assumption supporting the partnership model was that it would enable the implementation of the nexus approach to forced displacement. According to the partnership vision note, agreed upon with all partners, this would be achieved if the partnership:

- Provided a platform for mutual learning, including bridging thematic areas and strengthening dialogue with host governments and other stakeholders.
- Demonstrated the benefits of innovative approaches capable of enhancing impact on the ground, thereby encouraging the development and testing of such approaches to forced displacement.

In most countries, this assumption has been validated. There is broad consensus among respondents that investments in country team and Global Steering Committee relationships have led to more frank and open discussions and greater awareness of each other's comparative advantages and ways of working. This contributed to better and more natural coordination among partners and less duplication. Nevertheless, some partner mandates, approaches and institutional ways of working overlap or conflict, and these tensions are not always explicitly discussed in the country team or Global Steering Committee. While Prospects alone cannot resolve these structural constraints, they do hamper the progress towards the partnership ambitions set out in the Global Vision Document.

Since the start of the programme, and despite the ongoing need for investment, partners and the MFA report significant improvements in the balance between costs and benefits of the partnership. The flexible setup of Prospects at the country level enables bottom-up programming and allows adjustments in response to contextual changes and lessons learned, both in terms of programming and governance. While these adjustments are broadly appreciated, they carry high transaction costs. The meeting structure and the MEL sessions in particular require significant human resources.

Although partners recognise the growing added value of the partnership approach, many working at the country level indicate that without the sustained pressure from The Hague and the embassies, there would have been significantly less collaboration in the programme. Collaboration continues to require significant investment from the partners, which is seen as justifiable only when donors explicitly request and invest in it.

Prospects enabled the partners to test innovative approaches that are being scaled within the partnerships, for example by sharing evidence and lessons learned with other countries. The evaluation validated this second key assumption underlying the programme. Scaling has also happened beyond Prospects. While many partnerships predated Prospects, the application of the New Way of Working (NWoW) in forced displacement, bringing together humanitarian and development partners from the UN and IFIs, is now being replicated in programmes with similar objectives, involving other donors, other countries and other partner combinations.

An obstacle to further progress is that many of the requirements and governance structures align more naturally with the approaches of the humanitarian or UN organisations than with the IFIs. This is reflected in the IFIs' more critical assessment of the cost-benefit balance, which – though improved – remains a point of concern and a potential risk to their long-term buy-in.

[143] IOB, internal working document, Jordan field visit.

Chapter 5

The humanitarian-development nexus: Improved programming

This chapter reviews whether and how the five Prospects partners jointly contributed to bridging the gap between humanitarian assistance and development approaches to improve sustainable living conditions for forcibly displaced persons and host communities. The chapter reflects on the following nexus elements and their contribution to improved programming, as described in the ToR: strengthening long-term solutions by combining humanitarian and development interventions (section 5.1); strengthening private sector investments (5.2); fostering synergies and leveraging comparative advantages through a multi-sectoral and intersectoral approach (5.3); and promoting the whole-of-society approach and stakeholder involvement (5.4).

5.1 Combining humanitarian and development interventions

The aim of the Prospects programme was to support a gradual shift from a humanitarian approach to a development approach in addressing forced displacement. It aimed to transform the way governments, the private sector and other stakeholders respond to forced displacement crises.[144] This would support FDPs in coping with prolonged displacement, enabling them to contribute to their host communities and preparing them for their return.[145] It would also strengthen the resilience of host communities through inclusive socio-economic development.

Humanitarian approaches remain essential in forced displacement settings

Evaluation findings demonstrate some shifts towards long-term solutions, although humanitarian safety nets remain essential. The Kenya case study shows an ambitious and innovative shift from traditional, siloed aid approaches to more integrated, long-term solutions for forcibly displaced persons and host communities. By embedding refugee services within government systems to ensure sustainability and by strengthening self-reliance through increased access to private capital, Prospects contributed to a shift from short-term humanitarian support to long-term solutions. In Jordan, the partnership enabled a shift from short-term relief to longer-term institutional reforms by leveraging existing policy frameworks and providing multi-year funding. Interventions that promoted refugee certification in national TVET systems, legal access to agricultural work permits, and integration into social insurance schemes move away from temporary relief and reliance on humanitarian support towards more development-oriented approaches for communities affected by forced displacement.

Nevertheless, both country studies show that humanitarian support remains necessary, as confirmed by partners and embassies in the other countries. Respondents emphasised that fostering integration processes requires further institutionalisation, financial investment and political support, especially with respect to refugees' self-reliance and freedom of movement. Even where reforms have been embedded successfully, they remain vulnerable to policy reversals, and selective government ownership and implementation gaps continue to threaten long-term impact. Financial sustainability remains fragile, given continued donor dependence and, particularly in Jordan, limited private sector investment. The decrease in available donor funding[146] could further undermine the ability to deliver comprehensive programming, and reduced humanitarian funding weakens the crucial pillar underpinning Prospects' other developmental pillars.

[144] MFA, internal Prospects documentation.
[145] MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.
[146] See section 2.5.

Shifting perspectives on the nexus within the partnership

Despite shifting and varied perspectives on the envisioned transition in forced displacement settings, internal and external stakeholders praised Prospects' ambition to translate the somewhat abstract humanitarian-development approach into practice. Prospects partners differed in their views on what they considered realistic in the envisioned transition of responses to forced displacement and how this should be achieved. Partners and the MFA explained that at the start of Prospects, the intended transformation was often understood as a linear process from humanitarian programming to development programming. Over time, however, they have become more critical of this ambition, noting its limitations and potential risks. Some respondents described it as overly optimistic, arguing that humanitarian needs are likely to remain high in most contexts for the foreseeable future, while local governments often lack the capacity to address them adequately. Although Prospects funding is classified as 100% development funding within the MFA, and despite the programme's flexibility in responding to emerging humanitarian needs through adaptations to the MACPs, some respondents felt that the programme had shifted too far towards a development-oriented approach. They expressed concern that the increased focus on beneficiaries' economic development may insufficiently account for, and allocate resources to, more immediate humanitarian needs. This concern is in line with criticism from humanitarian organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières, which warn of the risk of diluting humanitarian responses, especially where funding for nexus approaches coincides with or results in a reduction in unearmarked humanitarian funding.

At the same time, some respondents expressed the opposite view, namely disappointment that the programme did not adopt a stronger developmental focus and relied too heavily on direct humanitarian support. Hilhorst et al. (2024) emphasise the importance of having clear insight into the balance between funding for humanitarian and developmental activities and understanding which elements directly benefit FDPs and which benefit host communities. Currently, Prospects' financial and monitoring data do not provide insight into this balance. Despite differing perspectives and expectations regarding the transformative approach in Prospects, respondents from all countries, including beneficiaries in the case studies, confirmed that the approach meets the needs of the FDPs and their host communities.

Over time, the initial ambition to move from parallel service delivery towards the inclusion of refugees in national systems shifted to the recognition that, under certain conditions, parallel systems may still be more appropriate and effective, particularly where governments lack the capacity or willingness to implement specific services. Target groups may also have differing needs and therefore benefit from more targeted programming. UNICEF's impact feasibility assessment also noted this, showing for example, that displaced beneficiaries in Iraq remained significantly worse off and more vulnerable to poverty than non-displaced households.[147] Furthermore, partners recognised that host governments sometimes feared that establishing inclusive national systems might prompt development partners to withdraw their support, thereby encouraging the continuation of parallel systems.

There was considerable variation in the extent to which contexts were conducive to the humanitarian-development transformation, but the MFA and its partners agreed that a combination of transformations of humanitarian-development interventions is needed, in line with international consensus. Country selection in Prospects was based on existing focus countries of the MFA's Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid Department (DSH), meaning that selection aligned with the broader policy on peacebuilding, stability and humanitarian support.[148] These countries did not necessarily provide the most conducive context for a programme such as Prospects, which was known from the start, but it was assumed that a transition from humanitarian approaches in protracted displacement situations could be made. In practice, however, this transition remained challenging, particularly in the livelihood and employment pillar. Some partners questioned whether, in countries affected by conflict, such as Ethiopia, Sudan and Lebanon, the triple nexus (humanitarian-development-peace nexus) would have been more appropriate.

[147] UNICEF (2025b), '*Impact Feasibility Assessment of Prospects – Rapid review on what works*', New York, USA, UNICEF, June 2025.

[148] The country selection was, therefore, a political decision, also in line with the broader policy of the MFA.

There was broad agreement that the protection pillar in Prospects is a crucial foundation for developmental strategies in education and employment by addressing safety, security and legal protection issues. For example, without civic registration (including birth registration in host communities), access to government services and support remains limited, as does the ability of humanitarian and development agencies to reach FDPs effectively. UNICEF and ILO illustrated the need for a combined humanitarian and development approach through the concept of the refugee journey: a kind of life-cycle approach in which different humanitarian or development partners each play a role tailored to specific stages of displacement.[149] This way of thinking enables agencies to cater to the specific needs of FDPs in the different stages of their journey.

Long-term perspectives: refugees on the move in often adverse environments

During the five years of implementation, the geopolitical and regional landscapes changed drastically, affecting Prospects' strategies, geographical focus areas and the stakeholders the partners work with. Among the eight countries, at least half were recently affected again by internal conflict, while all experienced considerable fluctuations in the flow of refugees from Syria, Sudan and a range of other countries in the region. These developments, together with the related government responses, often affected programme reach and the sustainability of results, underlining the multiple challenges for the nexus approach. In Sudan, for example, policy engagement with the national government was discontinued, and the geographical focus of Prospects had to be adjusted due to conflict in the regions where the programme operated.[150]

The study by Hilhorst et al. (2024), which reviewed policies and programmes on 'refugee reception in the region' (*opvang in de regio*) implemented by six countries, including the Netherlands, Germany and France, emphasised that these programmes are not intended as permanent solutions. MFA policy officers explained that the aim is to provide FDPs with opportunities to participate in and contribute to the communities in which they are temporarily settled, while minimising disruption to both refugees and host communities. From that perspective, the idea behind many donor cooperation programmes has been to provide (temporary) support for refugees to facilitate a beneficial 'transition', until more sustainable outcomes can be achieved, such as voluntary return, relocation to third countries or effective local integration.[151]

Despite this assumption of temporary settlement, often none of the durable solutions are in reach, and the presence of forcibly displaced persons frequently becomes semi-permanent or permanent. According to Opono, referring also to studies of Long[152] and UNHCR,[153] 1% or fewer of the refugees are resettled, while only 0.96% of the world's 35.3 million refugees officially returned to their countries of origin by 2022, 'which means over 98% of refugees are still living in and/or trapped in protracted situations in the first country of asylum'.[154]

Within Prospects, inclusion, self-reliance and resilience are defined as outcome-level objectives. The MFA and its partners nevertheless describe these objectives as temporary solutions that should ultimately lead to or support durable solutions. The link between Prospects and durable solutions is also increasingly made in the Dutch political narrative and in various interviews with MFA staff and partners, reinforcing the impression that Prospects is expected to contribute to achieving durable solutions. While the phase 1 programme documents did not explicitly address this, it became more pronounced in phase 2, particularly after the fall of the Assad regime in Syria. MOA underlined that the current priority is to

[149] ILO (2025), pp. 5 and 6; Interviews.
[150] See also section 4.1.
[151] Hilhorst, T., Jung, A. and Vezolli, S. (2024).
[152] Long, K. (2011), '*Permanent crises? Unlocking the protracted displacement of refugees and internally displaced persons*', Oxford Department of International Development, Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford, October 2011.
[153] UNHCR, (2023a), '*Global trends – Forced displacement in 2022*', UNHCR, Copenhagen, June 2023.
[154] Opono, S., Ahimbisibwe, F. and Twinamasiko., S. '*The Absence of Durable Solutions, the Presence of Local Solutions in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case Study of Uganda's Approach to Hosting Refugees*'. JCEEAS – *Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies*, Volume 4, Number 3-4, 2024. (p. 215).

minimise disruption to refugees' lives by implementing activities relevant to their lives, both in their host country and, in the case of return, in Syria. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to determine what share of the overall refugee population has been supported in achieving one of the durable solutions.

For host governments, the external support from both Prospects and other partners in addressing the protracted presence of relatively large refugee populations remains generally welcome. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, voluntary return has become a more realistic option, and host governments are eager to promote it, but several stakeholders warn of the potential risks it poses. In several cases, governments became more restrictive over time due to contextual developments or political backlash against refugee protection or integration. Some host governments threatened to close their borders, shut camps and send refugees back to their countries of origin. Following the fall of the Assad regime, host countries in the region reportedly shifted their focus from longer-term support to promoting return, recognising that this option has become more realistic.[155] The Prospects programme responded to this new context by broadening its strategies to include support for voluntary return. Respondents viewed this adaptability positively, noting that it not only enables the programme to respond to major contextual developments, but also aligns with host government objectives, thereby helping to preserve political space in these countries for protection-related activities. While UNHCR also supports refugees in their voluntary return through Prospects, it does not actively promote it, recognising that many Syrians may still face protection and security risks.[156]

At the same time, internal and external respondents highlighted risks associated with this transactional approach, which could lead to involuntary return under pressure from host governments. Various respondents questioned the extent to which return can be perceived as voluntary, when deteriorating living conditions in host countries leave refugees feeling they are choosing between two undesirable options, thereby placing the principle of non-refoulement[157] under pressure. The Jordan country study noted, for example, that key informants associated certain policy shifts with attempts to encourage Syrians to return to Syria. Refugees confirmed this and added that the reduced support, combined with legal and institutional barriers, had worsened their living conditions to the extent that they felt they had little alternative but to return to Syria. External experts, partners and MFA staff broadly agreed on the importance of ensuring that conditions for safe and dignified return are met before engaging in the widespread support and/or promotion of return.[158]

In addition, while the returns to Syria have increased significantly, with UNHCR reporting that one million Syrians had returned to the country by September 2025 since the fall of the Assad regime,[159] experts also noted that willingness to return differs across beneficiary groups and depends on a range of factors. Interviews with beneficiaries in Jordan, for example, revealed varying perspectives among men, women and children on whether return to Syria was regarded as a viable and preferred option.

This political trend requires a careful balancing of activities (including more explicit support for host communities to preserve protection space for refugees) and joint advocacy with other partners in the dialogue with governments. For countries such as Lebanon, which hosts the highest share of refugees and has both a relatively weak and fragmented government[160] and a rather complex, often overlapping aid architecture, this dialogue process has been far from straightforward.[161]

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155 IOB, internal working document, Jordan field visit; MFA, internal Prospects documentation; Interview.

156 UNHCR (2025a), '*UNHCR Operational Framework: Voluntary Return of Syrian Refugees and IDPs*', UNHCR, 2025; UNHCR (2024a), '*Position on returns to the Syrian Arab Republic*', UNHCR, December 2024.

157 Under international human rights law, the principle of non-refoulement guarantees that no one should be returned to a country where they would face torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and other irreparable harm. This principle applies to all migrants at all times, irrespective of migration status. See: United Nations (2018), '*Technical note: The principle of non-refoulement under international human rights law (2018)*', United Nations, July 2018.

158 MFA, internal Prospects documentation; Interviews.

159 UNHCR (2025e), *Press release: A million Syrians have returned home, but more support is needed so millions more can follow*, (accessed February 2025).

160 Chatham House (2021), *Where is the 'state' in Iraq and Lebanon?*, (accessed December 2025).

161 MFA, internal Prospects documentation.

5.2 Strengthening employment opportunities for FDPs and host communities through private sector investment

In the start-up phase of Prospects, the private sector was identified as an important but underutilised and underrepresented player in FDP settings.[162] The inclusion of the WB and IFC in the partnership aimed to stimulate private sector investments in challenging geographic areas and among underserved groups.[163] Prospects aimed to catalyse private sector investments and more efficient financial service provision to increase entrepreneurial activities and employment opportunities. The evidence, however, is mixed.

Limited opportunities for private sector investments

Prospects mobilised some businesses, investors and industry bodies to support refugee inclusion, but coverage has been modest and uneven. It also proved challenging to increase access to finance for refugees and host communities. Broadening private sector engagement in forced displacement settings was a relatively new goal, and creating interest among financial institutions to improve access to loans for enterprises or start-ups in forced displacement settings proved challenging.[164] To reach economy-wide impact, sustained policy dialogue is needed on permit regimes, collateral requirements and credit histories,[165] alongside stronger engagement with employer federations and more systematic evidence on cost-effectiveness. IFC is experienced in providing loans on a much larger scale and based on criteria that do not fully align with the needs and requirements of the forced displacement settings in most of the selected countries. While IFC also has experience in targeting smaller clients, delivering a programmatic approach with multiple clients was only realised in Jordan and Lebanon. In countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan, the policy environment for FDP employment, let alone for establishing formal businesses, is restrictive. Due to these constraints and persistent business risks, private sector actors remain hesitant to invest in these settings, a challenge that was already flagged for IFC in the Activity Appraisal Document.

Progress in applying innovative financial models is patchy. In fact, Kenya is the only country which demonstrated a clearly visible impact on larger-scale private sector development in forced displacement settings in phase 1. In the Kakuma area, Prospects supported four main instruments for private sector engagement.[166] The Kakuma Kalobeyei Challenge Fund (KKCF) is a strong example of increased private sector engagement and private sector development in a refugee settlement. It is IFC's first refugee and host community-focused programme in sub-Saharan Africa.

The KKCF has not only helped shift the narrative around private sector engagement in refugee settings but also demonstrated tangible results, such as job creation and enterprise development. [167,168] The bank-backed grants and municipal business services translated into steady wage jobs and growing SMEs.

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[162] MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.

[163] MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.

[164] This is in line with the findings of the evaluation of the World Bank Group (2020).

[165] The Kenya country study noted that subsidised grant competitions can discourage SMEs from seeking credit, as they may wait for future grant rounds rather than building a credit history. That is why ongoing efforts are needed to scale up engagement and address remaining structural constraints in both Kakuma and Dadaab.

[166] These four mechanisms were: 1) the Kakuma Kalobeyei Challenge Fund, offering competitive grants to co-finance refugee- and host-owned SMEs, 2) the Biashara Centre, a one-stop shop with backing from the county government and KCB Bank for licensing, tax and loan referral services, 3) a risk-sharing facility with Equity Bank to enable FDPs and host community members in Kakuma to open bank accounts and access loans, and 4) an MoU with the Turkana Chamber of Commerce to place graduates in apprenticeships. These mechanisms were developed in partnership with Switzerland, Germany, the United Kingdom and the European Union.

[167] There is a business case for small-scale private sector engagement in refugee settings, particularly where systemic barriers (e.g. documentation) can be addressed. Refugees are willing to pay for services, which strengthens the case for targeted investment.

[168] According to interviews with IFC staff, KKCF grantees have been 'doubling turnover – something we never saw under grant-only livelihood pilots'. Equity Bank staff highlights that the Equity-backed loans are more effective than previous cash-for-work opportunities.

However, most beneficiaries are from host communities, and the number of refugees able to use these systems remains relatively small. The intended replication of the fund elsewhere (for instance, in Dadaab) has not yet materialised.

Jordan presents another example of a challenging context for private sector engagement. IFC developed an advisory project concept note with Jordan's second-largest microfinance institution (MFI) to support the company in digitalisation, product development, risk management and strategic business planning. This project aimed to enable the MFI to expand its outreach sustainably and responsibly to underserved segments of the Jordanian market. Unfortunately, the MFI was unable to secure the required government clearance; as a result, the project was put on hold and then dropped. In addition to the restrictive regulatory ceilings and a conservative banking sector, MFIs usually need to prove that the investment will create specific jobs for refugees before a deal can proceed. These constraints dampen investor enthusiasm and slow the pace of scaling up.[169] As a result of the challenging conditions, partners shifted emphasis to blended finance and micro-enterprise support, enabling growth to continue without large grant envelopes.[170]

In Jordan and Lebanon, young entrepreneurs[171] were supported through IFC's Start Mashreq programme and provided with training and skills to set up private businesses. Some graduates of the programme in Jordan were supported by private investors, although these did not include refugee youth. In Jordan, the Ardi programme of the Ministry of Agriculture and the World Bank combined climate mapping, water-harvesting advice and new loan products to move smallholder farmers towards commercial finance rather than grant dependence.[172]

IFC, WB and ILO implemented a variety of activities to create a more enabling investment climate. However, Prospects' interventions did not lead to large-scale private sector investment. Access to loans increased, albeit at a limited scale in most countries. Financial service providers and business development services were trained to provide financial services to FDPs and host communities, while individuals and host communities were trained in financial literacy and linked to these providers. Analytics and research conducted by the WB and IFC provided evidence on the benefits of including FDPs in labour markets and generated concrete insights into promising markets. The Kenya study also showed how market and needs assessments helped to tailor activities to the needs of end beneficiaries. Beneficiaries noted, for example, the expansion of menstrual health services or the provision of day care to address barriers preventing women from engaging in livelihood activities. However, there is no indication that these studies have contributed to increased private sector investment.

Beyond the restrictive political context, the internal regulations and procedures of IFC and the World Bank – and those of their potential clients – sometimes limited the ability to facilitate investments in financially risky environments. This aligns with the World Bank's own evaluation of its Fragility, Conflict and Violence strategy, which concluded that despite corporate commitments, 'IFC struggled to scale up investments due to a lack of bankable projects, high-risk environments, and limited adaptation of their business models.'[173] Various MFA staff referred to conflicting donor demands, where IFC, among others, is expected to maintain its triple-A credit rating – which discourages risky investments – while simultaneously requiring them to work in higher-risk environments. In line with these requirements, IFC also applies high levels of due diligence before projects can be approved by senior management – standards that are often not met – thereby increasing overall investment costs.

Based on the first phase, it is clear that the challenge of mobilising private sector investment into forced displacement settings persists, particularly because the approaches with which IFC has experience do not align well with the realities of forced displacement in the selected countries, as mentioned in chapter 4. Criticism has been voiced by partners and MFA staff regarding IFC's ability to reach the (most vulnerable) refugee populations. On the other hand, its advisory work, analytics and market assessments were highly appreciated by partners and MFA staff, although this evaluation found

169 IFC, internal Prospects documentation; Interviews.
170 MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.
171 Prospects Dashboard. In Jordan 1330 and in Lebanon 926.
172 ARDI is the Agriculture Resilience, Value Chain Development, and Innovation programme for Jordan, which aims to strengthen climate resilience and the enabling environment for agricultural development in selected value chains.
173 World Bank Group (2025a), '*An Evaluation of the World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020-25*', World Bank Group, Washington, November 2025.

only limited concrete results at the beneficiary level in the first phase. Based on these insights, IFC's role shifted somewhat in the second phase, for example through greater emphasis on blended finance and cooperation with other partners, and acknowledgement that the development approach used by IFC takes longer to generate results than those of the other partners. This evaluation does not provide insight into the effects of these adaptations.

5.3 Synergies through a comprehensive approach

Prospects brought humanitarian and development interventions together by including three thematic pillars in one programme. The Theory of Change envisions that by comprehensively addressing barriers, needs and opportunities across the pillars, the impact at the beneficiary level would increase. The partnership was expected to identify areas in which the partners could effectively collaborate on joint endeavours to maximise impact on the ground. Collaboration indeed increased steadily during phase 1 at the implementation, beneficiary, and policy and strategic levels.

Towards increased collaborative programming

Prospects initially enabled partners to continue, improve or scale up collaborative programmes that already existed before Prospects started, but by the end of phase 1, increased programmatic synergies had become visible in partner reports. An example of collaborative planning is the i-Upshift programme from ILO and UNICEF, in which UNICEF's Upshift programme, aimed at strengthening essential skills for social innovation, is complemented with ILO's business and entrepreneurship training. These improved interventions were scaled up within and beyond Prospects and supported young people's transition from education to employment. As described in chapter 4, alignment and collaboration in programming started off slowly but steadily increased during the first phase of the programme. Identifying collaborative opportunities required knowledge about each other's mandates, strategies, activities and geographical areas, and this took time.

Partners managed to cooperate on various levels (global, national and local) during various phases of implementation (from planning to implementation) and within and between pillars. In some countries, partners reported setting up more than 10 joint activities (Kenya and Jordan), whereas in others, collaboration remained more limited (Ethiopia and Iraq). While many good examples exist, there are also examples of the opposite. Partners explained that opportunities were still being missed and provided examples of siloed programming. Furthermore, the evaluation found that implementing partners often had limited knowledge of the programme and were primarily focused on their own performance indicators. As the implementing partners executing the programme on the ground had only limited awareness of the collaborative ambitions, this likely contributed to missed opportunities.

Strengthened beneficiary support through collaborative programming

In line with the country studies, the evaluation distinguishes four categories of collaborative programming: 1) joint advocacy work, 2) joint needs assessments and situational analyses, 3) complementary design and delivery for the same target group, and 4) joint strategic alignment or sequencing.[174] In particular, synergies in categories 3 and 4 increase the likelihood that beneficiaries are reached through multiple interventions that reinforce each other.

For strategic alignment at the beneficiary level to be effective, activities related to service delivery need to be implemented in the same geographical area. This geographical fit is apparent in the confined setting of the Dadaab refugee settlement in Kenya. Within the restricted and secured area of the settlement, UN agencies and (I)NGOs partners live and work in a confined space, which strengthens personal and professional relationships and facilitates collaboration.

[174] Annex 5 provides an overview of examples within these categories for Kenya and Jordan.

Dadaab provides an example of complementary design and delivery of services related to SGBV and a child protection support system, as provided by UNICEF and UNHCR. It includes interventions ranging from case detection to court proceedings and everything in between, and these services are connected through an elaborate referral and documentation system integrated with national systems, such as the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS+). A survivor of violence, for example, can seek support at community centres or workers, who can refer the person (and family) for psychosocial support and legal proceedings. At the same time, the survivor can be supported in becoming part of an income-generating activity with other survivors, increasing her network and independence in the case of a violent relationship. Interventions can address both the direct needs of the individual and those of people in the immediate environment, such as children or spouses, and often target both forcibly displaced persons and host communities. The Kenya study noted that these examples show that Prospects increased government protection and the inclusion of FDPs in community-based local and/or national protection systems.

Other examples include the variety of learning-to-earning programmes, in which education programmes are linked to job-seeking support, such as job search clubs, life skills training, and potential internships or employer placements. Youth unemployment is often high, and after graduation, students are supported in finding jobs through job-search clubs that teach them how to write CVs and respond to job applications. The support includes life skills training to address the specific problems and barriers young refugees face. An example is the UNICEF-ILO collaboration in Uganda, where UNICEF trained refugees in the hospitality sector and ILO enabled internships for these students in high-end hotels in Uganda. Refugee students were not only supported through training, but the internships also increased their access to formal employment opportunities, strengthened their confidence and self-esteem, and enabled refugees to travel and work outside refugee-hosting areas.

Furthermore, there were many examples of the inclusion of MHPSS activities in formal and informal education and in community structures, often combined with livelihood activities. See, for instance, Intervention case study 2 (box 4.1). This validates the assumption that cooperation between partners enabled the integration of MHPSS interventions into community structures, health and education.

WASH activities were also often integrated into formal and informal education, which enabled girls to attend school during menstruation, increasing the likelihood that they would complete their education. Solely providing access to education would not have this effect, as girls are vulnerable to dropping out of school due to menstrual absence. Other examples are the variety of learning-to-earning programmes. Some less obvious connections were also made, such as the link between MHPSS and employment interventions, as described in Intervention case study 2 in chapter 4. An example of strategic alignment and sequencing comes from Jordan: In 2021, UNHCR launched small, camp-based counselling sessions to help Syrian refugees understand how to convert informal work into legal employment.

Faced with high demand, UNHCR invited the ILO's labour inspection team to take over the technical content and expand the sessions to urban community centres; the ILO added modules on occupational safety rules and formal-sector job matching. In 2024, the ILO embedded the model within its national labour inspector training and aligned it with the Estidama++ social insurance subsidy,[175] so that the same curriculum now reaches refugees and Jordanian informal workers nationwide.[176]

Working more closely together also allows partners to better understand their mutual complementarity in supporting different stages of the 'refugee journey' (see 5.1) and to step in when other partners' activities are affected by logistical issues or lack of funding. Overall, partners worried nonetheless that severe budget cuts would shift the focus back towards more immediate needs and the survival of individual agencies, while investments in coordination (staff hours, travel, etc.) might increasingly be viewed as a luxury rather than a necessity.

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[175] The Estidama++ Fund supports informal workers by aligning with international labour standards, providing subsidies and rewards, and enhancing social security inclusion for vulnerable workers. It was initially funded in 2022 through an Opportunity Fund and is currently also funded by the Kingdom of Norway and the United Kingdom Social Security Corporation on behalf of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. For more information, see: Estidama++ Fund – Extension of Coverage and Formalization in Jordan.

[176] IOB, internal working document, Jordan field visit.

5.4 'Whole-of-society approach' and stakeholder involvement

The Prospects country vision notes mention that programmes are expected to be demand-driven, reflect the situation on the ground ('bottom-up'), and that the partnership will implement activities based on country ownership and in adherence to the policies of host governments and communities. Forcibly displaced persons and host communities will be better supported if a wide range of partners is involved.[177] This vision aligns with the whole-of-society approach advocated by the CRRF and the New York Declaration (2016), which commits stakeholders to 'even stronger partnerships between host governments, including line ministries, UN agencies, development actors, the private sector, NGOs, financial institutions, and civil society'.[178] The whole-of-society approach is not explicitly mentioned in Prospects documentation, but it has been analysed as one of the nexus elements in this evaluation, as it is an important concept in the leading international commitments and ambitions that Prospects aimed to operationalise and adhere to. Furthermore, while localisation has been a policy ambition of the Netherlands for several years, the development of the Prospects localisation strategy only began in 2024, making it too early to assess its success. However, the evaluation assessed the extent to which stakeholders and beneficiaries have been involved in the programming cycle, as this is assumed to strengthen the bottom-up approach.[179]

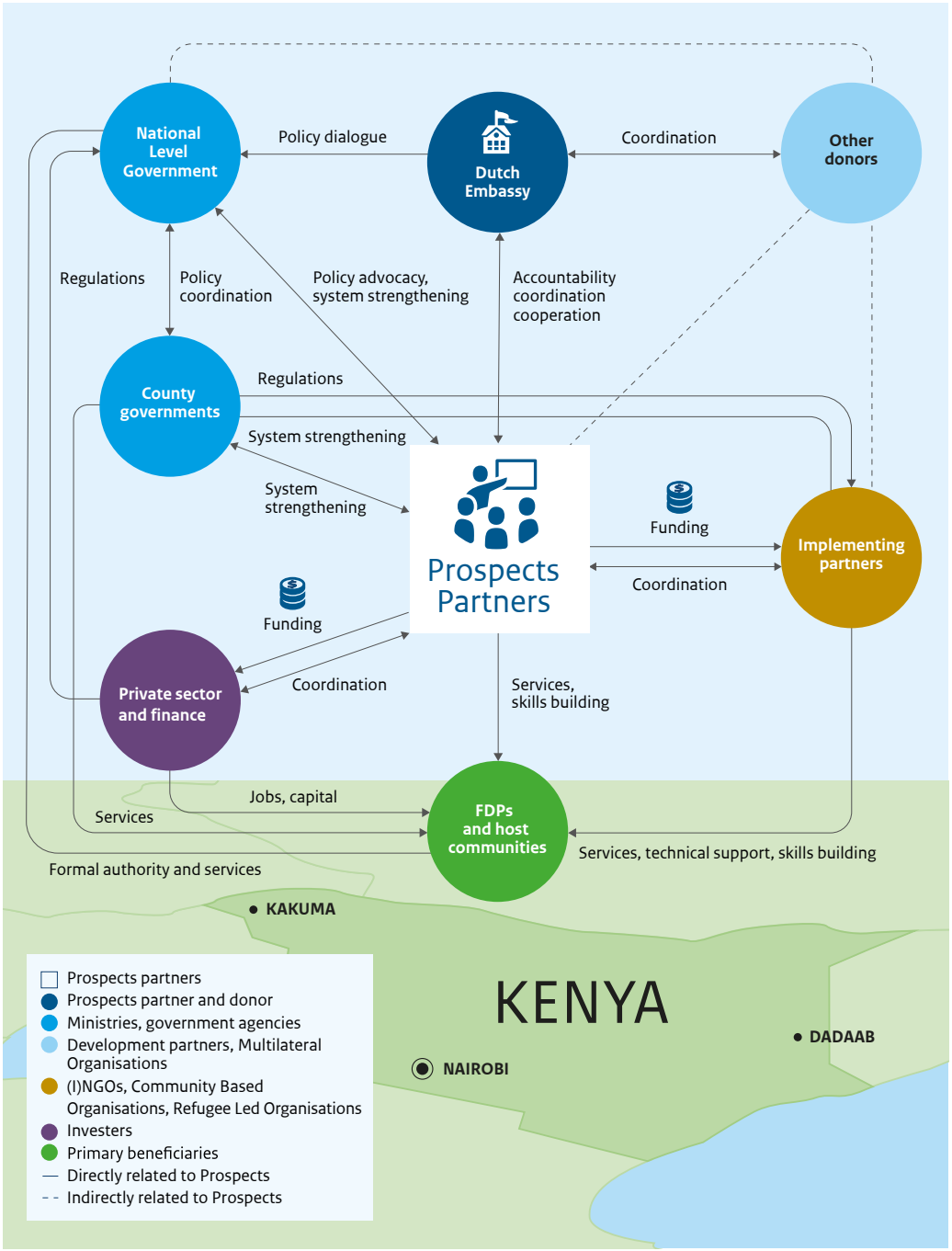
A strong focus on government ownership at the national level

In all Prospects countries, Prospects partners work with a wide range of stakeholders, including government actors (national and local departments and agencies, and courts), contractual partners (often (I)NGOs), development partners, civil society organisations (including employers' organisations and unions), refugee-led organisations, youth-led organisations, and community-based organisations and structures. As an example, Infographic 5.1 presents the stakeholder field for the Prospects programme in Kenya. It should be noted that this is a simplified illustration which is not comprehensive. For clarity purposes some stakeholders are grouped together. Similarly, the relationship between stakeholders is boiled down to the essentials to keep the infographic manageable.

The partnership meets the whole-of-society standard only to some extent: national actors, CSOs and community voices inform individual projects, but a systematic mechanism to embed them in strategic decision-making is missing. Critical voices from the MFA, partners and external stakeholders point out that while Prospects has pushed for greater inclusivity, decision-making structures within the agencies and security constraints still limit full whole-of-society inclusion. Respondents from the MFA consider the existing funding agreements with UN agencies as a limiting factor in their ability to push for more meaningful engagement of national and local organisations. This finding is in line with the mid-term review, which concluded that Prospects neglected a whole-of-society approach and recommended that Prospects partners share Prospects' thinking and goals with authorities, civil society organisations, including implementing partners, and, not least, refugees and IDPs themselves. Despite this recommendation, implementing partners, local organisations and youth groups still report being inadequately informed and involved in decision-making. This particularly affects the extent to which programming in the countries can be considered bottom-up and may limit stakeholder ownership.

[177] For more information, see: Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.
[178] UNHCR (2026b), *Global CRRF Poster September 2018*, (accessed February 2026).
[179] IOB (2025).

Infographic 5.1 *Partners and their stakeholders in Prospects Kenya*



National government level

In all countries except Sudan, the national government is the main stakeholder in the Prospects programme. The fact that host governments hold formal authority over refugee governance and policies is an important reason for this,[180] as is the intended alignment of Prospects with government policies. The Kenya and Jordan country studies show that in the early phase of Prospects, coordination with government actors – particularly at the national level – was limited and/or fragmented, with each partner often working independently. Towards the end of phase 1 and in phase 2, partners adopted a more coordinated and structured approach. There is evidence of government participation in joint review meetings, monitoring visits and of increasingly taking on responsibilities in areas such as refugee education, child protection and social services.

By anchoring projects in existing plans and involving ministries and municipalities in design, budgeting and implementation, Prospects has enhanced government ownership. Ownership was strengthened by designing interventions around ministry-led initiatives or existing priorities. Prospects responded to national plans and sectoral needs, while ministries and departments were supported in taking greater responsibility for interventions previously handled by UN agencies. This shift has been supported through capacity building and technical assistance. Strengthening institutions also enabled the transfer of ownership to government actors. In both countries, government stakeholders at the national level responded positively to how Prospects contributes to national priorities and supports governments in implementing them. It should be noted, however, that in Jordan, Prospects was not well known among government stakeholders, contrary to findings from the Kenya case study, where ministerial departments were aware of the support provided by Prospects.

Although government ownership has increased, internal and external stakeholders noted that governments are generally comfortable with the UN supporting the refugee response through parallel systems. The Jordan case study noted, for example, that the Jordanian government was initially alarmed by early messaging that Prospects was moving from humanitarian to development approaches, as officials feared refugee support would shift to national budgets. Although nexus programmes, including Prospects, have been adopted by donors to align humanitarian and development streams, political sensitivity persists, as was confirmed by respondents in other countries.[181] At the same time, in Jordan, some government officials felt bypassed when engagement was late or transactional. One official familiar with the Prospects programme, for instance, reported being sidelined in procurement processes, indicating that Prospects partners pursued their own priorities. Various government officials called for greater transparency on budgets and overheads and also requested a shift towards bilateral support. The embassy confirmed that the Jordanian government regularly raises this request. Contrary to the findings from the Jordan case study, in Kenya, Prospects was very well known among government stakeholders. Ministerial departments were aware of the support provided by the programme.

Sub-national level

The Kenya – and to a more limited extent Jordan – case studies show that Prospects established partnerships with sub-national governments, enabling engagement in policy development and implementation at the county level, albeit on a moderate scale and with limited impact. While there are encouraging signs of increased collaboration and joint ownership, these are impacted by external factors. In Kenya, implementation of national laws and policies at the county level is constrained by staff shortages, permit bottlenecks and recurrent costs not covered by national or county budgets. Even where counties are increasingly engaged in implementation and planning, some still feel that consultation by the national government is limited or symbolic. This also impacts their ability to steer and implement Prospects-related activities. Interviewees noted that further efforts are needed to ensure that participation translates into lasting institutional alignment and recommended additional technical assistance and more flexible funding directly to county administrations. This would facilitate capacity building and ultimately more sustainable refugee-hosting services at the county level.

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[180] In Jordan, generally, every project must be routed through the Jordan Response Plan, giving the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation a formal gate-keeping role.

[181] IOB, internal working document, Jordan field visit.

County representatives expressed concern about top-down approaches when national governments include projects in existing plans and recommend involving municipalities in design, budgeting and implementation. In Jordan, where most refugees reside in urban areas, municipalities are important sub-national stakeholders, in addition to the governorates of the refugee camps. However, they have less formal authority than the Kenyan sub-national governments, as their responsibility is to engage in planning, service provision, and coordination with refugee-hosting communities. Feelings of being sidelined were also raised by sub-national government actors, although examples of jointly designed interventions with municipalities were also shared, such as the previously mentioned Ecorama initiative.

Implementing partners

The depth and consistency of involvement and perceived ownership among implementing partners in Prospects vary and the flexibility and reliability of the Netherlands' funding are not transferred to them. ILO, UNHCR and UNICEF fund (I)NGOs and CSOs to implement parts of the programme, selected for their technical expertise and presence on the ground. They also work with the private sector where relevant. National NGOs, workers' organisations and trade unions are often closely involved in negotiations with governments, while Prospects partners include civil society actors in national case management platforms and technical committees. Implementing partners receive technical support, capacity building and learning activities. However, the case studies identified many examples in which these implementing partners were treated primarily as subcontractors and involvement in Prospects was project-specific rather than programme-wide. They may receive technical briefs from these Prospects partners but are not included in strategic steering or financial decision-making. Implementing partners also shared examples of heavy monitoring and reporting requirements, as well as short-term financing for activities, which affect programming consistency and lead to organisational challenges, such as ensuring continuity in project-dedicated staffing. The evaluation found examples where funds to implementing partners were cut, without them having insight into the reasons behind it, let alone a voice in the decision-making processes.

The flexible, multi-year and predictable funding that the MFA provides to the Prospects partners is often not transferred to implementing partners, even though this would be beneficial for increasing the localisation of activities and thereby ensuring sustainability. Decisions on how and through whom partners implement activities, however, are beyond the scope of contractual agreements between the MFA and the partners. While this issue is discussed at higher governance levels, including governing boards and shareholder meetings, the current setup limits the extent to which the MFA can influence and advocate for further localisation in the programmes implemented by these organisations.

Community-based organisations (CBOs), refugee-led organisations (RLOs), youth-led organisations (YLOs) and beneficiaries

While Prospects took steps to give refugees and host communities a voice in programming, participation fell short of meaningful involvement in decision-making: it was at times episodic and not always institutionalised. Prospects partners, often through their implementing partners, mobilise local actors such as civil society organisations, youth networks, refugee-led organisations and youth-led organisations, whose voices they seek to include in programming in line with the ambition to work bottom-up. This takes place mainly through project-level focus groups, community facilitators, regular visits and feedback surveys. Implementing partners put in place instruments and tools to give refugees and host communities a voice, and in some cases local organisations and groups become responsible for running interventions or voicing the needs, wishes and concerns of the communities they represent. The Intervention case study in box 5.1 on meaningful youth participation provides more detailed information on how this is implemented in Prospects.

The evaluation found that refugees and youth are consulted on a project-by-project basis rather than continuously. Some young people in the country studies shared the perception that major decisions remain with UN agencies, and that their participation is limited mostly to information sharing. This aligns with the ILO lessons-learned study, which concluded that while Prospects partners have contributed to a more inclusive programme design, participation is still perceived as tokenistic by some youth and smaller NGOs, with headquarters and UN-dominated decision-making as barriers to full civil society and beneficiary participation. This contradicts the ambition to work bottom-up, although experts also noted that meaningful participation is essential for understanding the direct needs of different beneficiary groups, including vulnerable groups such as women and people with disabilities.

The mid-term evaluation already concluded that efforts related to the whole-of-society approach had been neglected. While the findings of this evaluation are partly in line with that conclusion, IOB did identify signs of improvement and evidence that lessons learned are being applied. In phase 2, localisation has been explicitly added as a cross-cutting issue in the updated 2023 ToC. The focus on the meaningful inclusion of civil society partners, refugee-led organisations and youth-led organisations has been more prominent, and the outcome documents from the annual MEL sessions contain reflections on meaningful youth and refugee participation. This evaluation does not provide insight into the results of these adaptations.

Box 5.1 Intervention case study 3: Meaningful youth participation

Dutch and Prospects policies

Over the past decade, youth have been an important target group within Dutch development policy.[182] In 2022, the focus on youth as a target group was complemented by a youth participation strategy,[183] the Youth at Heart strategy.[184] One of the three principles of this strategy was to involve young people at all levels of decision-making processes that affect their lives. A practical implication of this approach was the ambition to partner with young people as leaders and experts at all levels of decision-making, to create safe spaces and inclusive platforms for young people to inform policies and practices, to address structural and legal barriers and negative perceptions that prevent young people from participating in decision-making processes, and to invest in youth-led initiatives and programmes that work to promote and ensure more accountable, responsive and inclusive governance at local and national levels.

None of the initial Prospects documents that shaped the partnership mentioned explicit strategies to strengthen meaningful youth participation (MYP).[185] The indicator framework does include one indicator on MYP (1c), which demonstrates agreement on the importance of MYP as a strategy. Through the 2019 UN youth strategy, UN agencies already had experience with MYP, although the relevance of MYP differs across their mandates, as do their focus and expertise. Within Prospects, UNICEF presents itself as the expert and accelerator of MYP, followed by ILO.

Activities and results

The global-level Opportunity Fund (OF) on MYP enabled agencies to expand their roles in MYP in forced displacement settings. The global OF on MYP was implemented by ILO, UNHCR, and UNICEF, combining global-level MYP strategies with support for the country team to shift how they worked with and for young people and to strengthen inter-agency collaboration on this agenda. Global-level activities included the development of a Youth Workstream within Prospects, the development of MYP toolkits, guides and resources, and capacity-building sessions for Prospects staff, implementing partners and other stakeholders, such as youth and refugee-led organisations.

At the country level, particularly UNICEF and ILO implemented a variety of MYP strategies across the pillars, including partnerships with YLOs; the establishment of competitive grants for YLOs; involving young people in programme tools and methods; engaging young people in research (U-Report and Photovoice); and connecting youth representatives with local and national governments, employers' and workers' organisations, and knowledge institutes. The dashboard shows that between 2019 and 2025, almost 270,000 young people were meaningfully engaged in the programme. Country-level results were achieved mainly within the individual agencies' portfolios. Collectively, however, the partnership did not establish youth engagement structures to advise, steer or co-decide on Prospects' strategies and plans, except in Ethiopia, where UNICEF, ILO and UNHCR conducted consultations with young people on youth engagement, participation and empowerment. A youth network committee was established to serve as a platform to provide input into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Opportunity Fund on MYP. The youth network committee was supported by a youth leadership academy, which was also established as part of the OF.

[182] Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2018).
[183] Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2022).
[184] For more information see: https://www.youthatheart.nl/.
[185] MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.

Prospects monitoring provides particularly valuable insights into the positive effects of MYP at the individual level, through beneficiaries' testimonies of increased self-esteem, knowledge and skills, and activism. There is little insight into how MYP has contributed, beyond these individual gains, to more collective and shared decision-making and steering of programme activities.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and recommendations

Prospects was launched in 2019 by the Netherlands, in partnership with five multilateral organisations, as an ambitious and innovative initiative to improve the prospects of forcibly displaced persons and vulnerable host communities. The programme has been implemented in eight countries in the MENA region and the Horn of Africa through a humanitarian-development nexus approach to forced displacement. Prospects aims to improve the situation of refugees and host communities by increasing access to education and learning, employment and livelihood opportunities, and protection and social inclusion. The Theory of Change underlying Prospects assumes that comprehensively addressing barriers, needs and opportunities across these pillars will increase impact at the beneficiary level.

6.1 Conclusions

The main research question this evaluation aims to answer is:

What results has Prospects delivered for forcibly displaced persons and their host communities, and to what extent has the nexus approach, as implemented by the partnership, increased the (cost)-effectiveness of the programme?

Main conclusion

In terms of results, Prospects reached a considerable share of the refugee and IDP population in the MENA region and the Horn of Africa through its work on education, protection and, to a lesser extent, employment and livelihood opportunities. However, due to contextual differences, results varied considerably between countries and regions. Scaling up efforts within the employment and livelihood opportunities pillar proved challenging, and Prospects achieved only limited results in attracting large-scale private sector investment and modestly increasing refugees' access to finance and financial services.

Prospects contributed to more inclusive policies and legislation in the areas of education, employment and livelihood opportunities, and supported their implementation by strengthening national-level systems. Although the intended policy changes are a critical condition for long-term solutions, they depend on governments' willingness and capacity and are influenced by factors largely beyond Prospects' control. As a result, volatile contexts meant that approved inclusive policies and regulations remained vulnerable to change.

Prospects contributed to increased self-reliance and resilience of FDPs and their host communities. However, these gains remain partial and fragile, reflecting structural constraints in the enabling environments, as well as the longer time frames required to strengthen labour market systems and policy outcomes. Overall, support for people with amplified vulnerabilities, such as women and people with disabilities, requires further strengthening.

The evaluation found that Prospects enabled partners to better align activities and to build on each other's strengths, and demonstrated increased collaboration and joint implementation over time. This has contributed to a strategic and contextualised combination of humanitarian and development approaches in Prospects, addressing short-term needs while also supporting longer-term perspectives and enabling more comprehensive support for beneficiaries. Developing the partnership, especially in the initial stages, required significant time and resources, but over time the collaboration has delivered added value in improving beneficiaries' living conditions. The foundations established during phase 1 of Prospects are expected to enable greater scale in phase 2.

This evaluation was able to draw conclusions regarding efficiency and the added value of the partnership and nexus approach, which are considered important conditions for cost-effectiveness. However, due to methodological choices and limitations in the financial and monitoring data, it was not possible to draw overall conclusions regarding the extent to which Prospects increased cost-effectiveness.

Prospects supports host country governments in responding to forced displacement (*opvang in de regio*). In this, partners promote development approaches and the inclusion of refugees at the national level. The extent to which host governments implement this agenda depends on their willingness and capacity. This varies strongly, depending on shifting domestic priorities and geopolitical developments and crises. It also depends on the level of support provided by development partners to enable their response.

While Prospects has contributed to strengthening host countries' capacity to respond to forced displacement, support for governments did not automatically lead to sustainable solutions. Governments may prioritise short-term strategies, focus primarily on host-community needs, or pursue other objectives within the programme support. The willingness of host governments is largely beyond Prospects' control, and volatile environments make host countries' priorities even more unpredictable. This particularly impacts the effectiveness of inclusion efforts.

Research sub-questions and conclusions

The conclusions and sub-conclusions outlined below are grouped according to the five evaluation questions. For each question, a conclusion is provided, supported by several sub-conclusions.

1. To what extent has Prospects increased access to education and learning, employment and livelihood opportunities, and protection and social inclusion? And how has this contributed to improved self-reliance and resilience for forcibly displaced persons and host communities?

Prospects contributed to increased resilience and, albeit to a lesser extent, self-reliance among FDPs and host communities through its contribution to increased access to education, employment and livelihood opportunities, and protection, as well as through its support for more inclusive policies. Compared with host communities, however, refugees generally experienced lower gains in employment and livelihood opportunities, and self-reliance. Due to the volatile context, these results are fragile and vulnerable to change.

Sub-conclusion 1.1 – Prospects offered substantial coverage, but it varied strongly between countries and pillars

Prospects contributed to increased access to education and learning, employment and livelihood opportunities, and protection and inclusion services. Coverage in the employment and livelihood opportunities pillar was more limited than in the other pillars, and activities in this area did not necessarily lead to the intended results.

Around eight million people have been supported directly by Prospects, particularly through education and protection. Coverage and results, however, varied widely between countries due to differing contexts. The assumption that the registration of refugees, and thus the protection pillar, is a crucial condition for access to services in host countries was validated. Registration proved to be an essential foundation for development-oriented strategies in education and employment, enabling effectiveness in those areas. Without civic registration, for example, access to government services and support remains limited, while humanitarian and development actors are less able to reach FDPs.

Coverage within the employment pillar was more modest compared with the other pillars, and activities in this area did not necessarily yield the intended results. While it was assumed that cooperation among the five Prospects partners would help create the right conditions for employment for both refugees and host communities, this assumption could only be validated to a limited extent. This reflects both the challenges of the enabling environment and the longer time frames required to strengthen labour-market systems and achieve decent work outcomes. Prospects strengthened individual skills and enabling conditions for livelihoods, income-generating activities and access to work for forcibly displaced populations and host communities. It also invested in decent jobs to prevent unsafe working conditions and exploitative practices. However, access to jobs depends on many factors, such as regulatory frameworks and labour-market conditions. High unemployment rates in all Prospects countries proved to be a major constraint affecting results within this pillar. Furthermore, Prospects implemented various innovative interventions to facilitate direct or digital access to employment and to improve the inclusion of vulnerable target groups, but challenges remain in scaling up these approaches and increasing access to long-term employment, particularly due to legal barriers affecting FDPs.

Sub-conclusion 1.2 – Progress towards more inclusive policies was fragile

Prospects contributed to more inclusive policies and legislation and supported their implementation by strengthening national systems. The policy space for refugee integration nevertheless remains limited due to governments' reluctance, while policies are vulnerable to change.

In its work on education, employment and livelihood opportunities, and protection, Prospects contributed to more inclusive policies for FDPs. However, many of the policy changes supported by Prospects are still in the process of approval or implementation, and not all policy changes have yet translated into changes at the beneficiary level. Some positive policy changes have also been reversed, such as the free waivers for work permits for Syrian refugees in Jordan. Although these policy changes are a critical condition for long-term solutions, they depend on governments' willingness and capacity and are influenced by contextual developments beyond Prospects' control. The evaluation confirmed the assumption that policies could be influenced to a certain extent through constructive and equal dialogue. In addition to equal dialogue, capacity building and national system strengthening proved to be important enablers of policy change and implementation. Partners also indicated that the embassies played an important enabling role in policy dialogue by opening high-level political doors, as they are recognised as political partners for dialogue, in contrast to the Prospects partners, who are often perceived primarily as implementing partners.

Results vary considerably between countries due to political volatility and related shifts in refugee and IDP movements, as well as differences in country-specific programming. In Sudan, for example, the outbreak of conflict effectively halted political dialogue with the national government, in line with MFA instructions. Overall, respondents identified missed opportunities within country teams regarding joint policy advocacy and dialogue, indicating that this area still requires improvement.

One of the assumptions underlying Prospects was that not all host countries would be willing to support the resilience and self-reliance of FDPs. Government reluctance was especially evident regarding inclusive policies and livelihood activities. This often reflected political concerns, stemming from fears that refugees would permanently settle in their countries or from security concerns related to refugees in certain countries. Including host communities as a target group within Prospects helped, to some extent, to expand the policy space for further refugee integration. Similarly, it increased the acceptance by host governments of several cases in which Prospects continued to provide parallel support to FDPs. Nevertheless, the influence of Prospects on government attitudes remained limited. As a result, gains in refugee inclusion remain limited and fragile, while several countries have again adopted more restrictive approaches towards refugees.

Sub-conclusion 1.3 – Self-reliance and resilience increased, but the impact is partial and volatile

The country studies identified various examples that demonstrate how distinct or combined interventions across the three pillars contributed to improved self-reliance and resilience among FDPs and host communities. Signs of increased self-reliance were observed, for example, through newly established MSMEs and start-ups that enabled families to increase yields or income and become less dependent on external support. Nevertheless, aid dependency – an important indicator of self-reliance – remains a persistent challenge that Prospects can only influence to a limited extent. Overall, refugees tended to experience lower gains in self-reliance than members of host communities, as the latter face fewer legal barriers and generally have better access to national support systems.

Resilience, on the other hand, was shown by refugees who were part of local structures, strengthening participation and social integration; education positively affected the confidence and social skills of children and young people; and young people maintained a positive outlook on the future despite difficult circumstances. The country studies also demonstrated how young people became more independent of their parents through livelihood programmes, and how women with improved livelihoods and better access to services were able to maintain their families' well-being more effectively. MHPSS, as a cross-cutting intervention targeting both FDPs and host communities, supported resilience at the individual and community levels. Finally, resilience was also strengthened through the simultaneous inclusion of both groups, which contributed to greater interaction and more peaceful coexistence between them.

Given the scale of needs and the large numbers of people affected, the impact of Prospects on self-reliance and resilience remains partial and vulnerable to political instability and broader contextual changes. Support provided through education, employment and protection may also benefit FDPs in situations of voluntary return, repatriation or resettlement, and not only in situations of forced displacement. Individual-level gains – such as acquired knowledge and skills – are more likely to be sustained over time.

2. To what extent has Prospects factored in and adapted to different contexts in the host countries and responded adequately to the needs of forcibly displaced persons and host communities?

The MFA's initial ambitions were not always sufficiently attuned to local realities in the selected countries, but country-specific contextualisation and collaboration with national governments ensured better alignment during implementation. Overall, the programme responded adequately and in a balanced way to the needs of host communities and FDPs, but it has been less successful in responding to the specific needs of women and girls and people with disabilities, and in meaningfully engaging stakeholders beyond national government actors.

Sub-conclusion 2.1 – The programme gradually but adequately adjusted to local realities

The MFA's initial ambition to implement the entire ToC – notably the large-scale private sector investment component – was not always sufficiently attuned to local realities in the countries selected. Similarly, inclusive policies were often not in line with the national contexts. Over time, the ambitions were adjusted to better align with contextual realities.

During the design phase and the early years of implementation, the MFA drove its ambitions and vision regarding the nexus approach and operationalised these in ways that were not always sufficiently attuned to local realities. Country selection was based on political considerations and the MFA's existing country portfolio, despite initial pushback from some embassies and partners who questioned the programme's relevance in the country. Ambitions regarding refugee inclusion often did not align with political contexts in host countries nor with the policies of host governments. The ToC developed at headquarters was applied across all eight countries, using the same five partners. This meant bringing together partners with different levels of historical presence and expertise in the region, as well as different mandates and ways of working that were not always attuned to the specific fragility contexts in the selected countries. Combined with contextual factors, such as limited private sector development in refugee-hosting areas and restrictive refugee policies, this constrained the extent to which the partners could fulfil their intended roles and demonstrate their relevance and added value in certain country programmes. Although Prospects adapted its country programming to different countries and evolving contexts over time, it continues to face government reluctance to include refugees. Governments remain unwilling or hesitant to take over parallel programmes from UN organisations.

The programme nevertheless adapted to continuously changing environments through flexible and agile processes, which were considered a key condition for programme relevance. This was reflected in the fact that each country team developed country-specific programming and retained flexibility to adapt during implementation. The Opportunity Fund also enabled innovative, agile interventions to address emerging needs. Combined with the MFA's long-term funding commitments, this enabled Prospects to respond relatively effectively to geopolitical and regional developments. In Sudan, for example, the programme relocated from the western to the eastern region, while budgets were reallocated between countries. The fall of the Assad regime in Syria also led to an adaptation of the programme's ToC during the second phase, including a greater focus on supporting the voluntary return of Syrian returnees. Overall, the Opportunity Fund proved to be a useful mechanism for additional funding that enabled joint interventions to address upcoming challenges and respond to contextual developments.

Sub-conclusion 2.2 – Structural engagement with national stakeholders, far less so with local stakeholders

Collaboration with national governments was generally strong, as most country programmes were grounded in national strategies, ensuring structural collaboration. Meaningful engagement with sub-national governments and local civil society organisations, however, remained fragmented and insufficiently unstructured.

Collaboration with national governments was strong in most Prospects countries, particularly regarding practical support and systems strengthening. This facilitated implementation and contributed to government ownership of refugee responses. However, both country studies found that engagement with sub-national government has been less structural. Furthermore, although the mid-term review already underlined the importance of increasing space for local civil society and civic engagement, progress in this area remained limited. International, national and local implementing partners working with UN organisations were largely treated as contractual partners responsible for implementation, without meaningful and structural engagement at the strategic level or in programme decision-making. Overall, the flexibility which Prospects partners receive from the MFA is not transferred to their partners.

Prospects partners have systems and strategies to give beneficiaries a voice, including through engagement with and capacity-strengthening of community-based organisations, youth-led organisations and refugee-led organisations. While feedback mechanisms are in place, including with beneficiaries, participation generally did not reach the level of involvement in decision-making processes needed for these groups to substantially influence policy formulation and implementation.

Sub-conclusion 2.3 – Prospects interventions were relevant to FDPs and host communities

The thematic focus of Prospects was relevant to the needs of refugees, and the partners were well equipped to address these needs. Prospects responded adequately and in a balanced way to the needs of FDPs and host communities through context-specific country programmes grounded in needs assessments and evidence-based practices.

Each country programme was contextualised and based on needs assessments, research and analytical work. The partners brought relevant knowledge, well-established approaches and experience, all of which contributed to aligning programmes with beneficiary needs. In particular, the World Bank, UNICEF and UNHCR had long-standing presences in most countries, and their embeddedness and alignment with government priorities strengthened programme relevance. In countries where ILO already had a presence prior to Prospects, its longstanding relationships with tripartite partners also contributed to ensuring programme relevance.

Overall, Prospects implemented a balanced approach in reaching FDPs and host communities. Combined service delivery to both groups was generally the norm whenever possible, although local conditions and specific government requirements sometimes constrained the ability to maintain this balance. Including host communities as a target group proved important in ensuring continued support for FDPs, as perceptions among host communities of being left behind remain persistent and can be easily politicised, negatively affecting interventions. Sustained political dialogue also proved important in enabling more structural measures aimed at refugee protection and inclusion.

Sub-conclusion 2.4 – A fair gender balance was achieved, but the impact for specific target groups was limited by insufficient attention to their specific needs

Overall, monitoring data show a fair balance in the reach among men, women and children through Prospects activities. The programme was nevertheless less successful in reaching people with disabilities and in addressing gender-related barriers that limited access to services or the ability to use newly applied skills.

In line with its ambition, the overall gender balance in Prospects has been fair. Although there are strong examples of strategies that address structural barriers to gender equality, there are also examples where women's participation in programme activities – or their ability to apply acquired knowledge and skills in practice – continued to be constrained by cultural norms, values and by practical barriers. Support for people with disabilities remained uneven and fragmented. Partners indicated that this issue will receive greater attention during the second phase of the programme, where disability inclusion has been explicitly incorporated as a cross-cutting theme.

3. To what extent has the nexus approach, as implemented by the partnership, increased the (cost-) effectiveness of interventions?

The evaluation found several examples where combined humanitarian and development interventions provided comprehensive support to host communities and FDPs beyond immediate relief, thereby increasing effectiveness at the beneficiary level. Solutions nevertheless often remained temporary or semi-permanent due to factors beyond Prospects' control. The evaluation does not draw overall conclusions regarding the (increased) cost-effectiveness of Prospects due to methodological choices and limitations in the financial and monitoring data.

Sub-conclusion 3.1 – Programme support went beyond immediate relief, but solutions remained temporary or semi-permanent

The combined implementation of humanitarian and development interventions enabled Prospects to address short-term needs on the ground while simultaneously working towards an enabling environment for more sustainable results. The intended transition from humanitarian to development approaches nevertheless proved challenging, affecting the extent to which long-term solutions could be addressed and achieved.

It was assumed that, collectively, these five partners could contribute more effectively to bridging the gap between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation than through individual programmes. This assumption could be validated to a certain extent. Alignment and cooperation between humanitarian and development partners improved over time and enabled them to build on each other's strengths. Joint efforts focused on analysis, planning, implementation and innovation, and learning and strategic alignment. Interventions implemented by individual partners became increasingly interconnected, enabling beneficiaries to receive support from multiple angles. This increasingly enabled partners to provide more comprehensive support to refugees throughout different stages of their displacement journeys and to move beyond immediate relief. The combined implementation of humanitarian and development interventions also generated synergistic effects at the beneficiary level, validating a crucial assumption underlying the Prospects partnership. Examples include learning-to-earning trajectories in which (humanitarian) education support was linked to employment interventions.

So far, however, Prospects has primarily supported temporary or semi-permanent solutions. Changes in the geopolitical and regional landscape, along with shifting policies by host countries regarding refugee rights, often complicated the intended transition from humanitarian towards more development-oriented approaches. While host governments generally welcome support in managing the long-term presence of FDPs, tensions persisted between support for voluntary return and the need to maintain space for refugee protection in host countries. In addition, structural and institutional solutions require longer implementation time frames. Effective development interventions also depend on a minimum level of humanitarian needs being met. Global funding cuts affecting both humanitarian and development assistance therefore represent a critical risk factor. Overall, the transition from humanitarian to development-oriented approaches proved neither straightforward nor linear, and humanitarian support often remained necessary.

Sub-conclusion 3.2 - Private sector investment remained limited, despite some innovative approaches

Prospects achieved only limited results in attracting large-scale private sector investment and modestly increased access to finance and financial services, despite introducing innovative approaches through its nexus and partnership model.

The partnership bringing together these five partners was expected to contribute to innovative and effective solutions. The inclusion of IFIs, particularly IFC, to broaden private sector engagement in forced displacement settings, support economic activity and reduce aid dependency, in line with international ambitions, was itself a major innovation. Overall, however, Prospects succeeded in attracting substantial private sector investment only in Kenya, largely through IFC's ongoing efforts. In other countries, except for Jordan and Lebanon, Prospects was able to increase access to finance and financial services for community entrepreneurs and business owners, but the scale of these achievements remained modest. Programme strategies were constrained by labour-market developments and restrictive policy environments.

Over time, IFC increasingly engaged in more fragile settings and addressed institutional barriers to investment. Nevertheless, its mandate and internal procedures continued to limit investment in high-risk environments, while the focus on refugees in interventions remained limited. At the same time, positive examples, such as those observed in Kenya, and smaller-scale examples of beneficiaries developing market-oriented businesses, convinced the MFA of the potential of the strategy of private sector inclusion. As a result, this approach was continued in the second phase.

Prospects also enabled the development and implementation of other innovative solutions by bringing together partners with complementary expertise. For example, in Kenya, digital skills programmes and cooperatives for digital workers, including refugees, enabled participation in online international employment opportunities. Another example is the scholarships refugees received in Jordan to access private TVET institutions with strong ties to the private sector, thereby ensuring access to high-quality education aligned with labour-market demand.

4. What has been the added value of the partnership model for the implementation of Prospects' nexus approach?

The partnership enabled better alignment and coordination between partners. Partners indicated that the balance between transaction costs and benefits improved compared to the substantial initial investments in time and resources. However, it was not possible to quantify this change.

Sub-conclusion 4.1 - Partnership coordination gradually strengthened, although with high initial transaction costs

The Prospects partnership improved alignment and coordination within and between humanitarian and development interventions implemented by the partners involved. Towards phase 2, the balance between the costs and the benefits of the partnership became more favourable.

During the first years of Prospects, investments in building the partnership and the related financial and organisational transaction costs were relatively high compared with the advantages achieved through collaboration. The MFA's ambition to strengthen collaborative programming, and the way this was operationalised through the governance structure, created a considerable workload. Substantial differences between partners in terms of mandates, ways of working and field presence further complicated coordination and cooperation at country level. Towards the end of phase 1, however, ongoing adaptations to governance structures within Prospects positively influenced the perceived balance between the benefits and the costs of the partnership. An important assumption underlying Prospects was that the partnership model would also lead to more efficient responses. Although conditions for efficiency in the governance structure improved over time, transaction costs remained relatively high.

Strengthened collaboration between the three UN agencies and the two IFIs led to increased use of each other's research, analytics and methods, and contributed to joint analysis and strategising, as well as joint advocacy and implementation. This validates the assumption that strategic cooperation and joint planning enabled better alignment of interventions through the use of complementary knowledge and expertise. There were also examples of reduced duplication and the shared use of offices and transport. At the country level, however, partners indicated that collaboration was far from automatic and that donor support had been an important driver. Despite partially overlapping mandates and (ongoing) competition for funding between agencies, the partnership model clearly added value in aligning humanitarian and development approaches.

The 2022 mid-term review identified a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities among the partners, particularly between the MFA and the embassies. This remained a point of attention. The same applied to staff capacity and continuity within both the partner organisations and the MFA, at headquarters and field level alike, as well as to limited knowledge transfer between rotating staff members. Furthermore, internal collaboration between MOA with other relevant departments (DMM, DDE, DSO and IGG) remained limited, as did exchange between programmes with related features, such as MIPA and Compass, and interaction with other embassy portfolios and sectors.

Sub-conclusion 4.2 – Limited insight into the links between financial flows and activities

Limited detail in the agreements regarding monitoring, reporting and communication resulted in insufficient insight into financial flows and limited visibility, particularly at the country level, for Prospects and the Netherlands as a donor.

The Prospects partnership and its funding modalities are based on long-term cooperation and trust between the MFA and Prospects partners and therefore provide considerable flexibility for programming, implementation and reporting. Although the existing framework agreements with most partners are complemented with specific monitoring and reporting arrangements for Prospects, these provide only limited insight into how financial flows relate to specific activities and strategies. Furthermore, although Prospects invested heavily in monitoring systems, the lack of uniformity in the use of indicators hinders reliable insights into the results of the programme. Limited contractual arrangements also reduced the visibility of Prospects and the Netherlands as a donor at the country level.

5. How is the nexus approach as implemented by Prospects likely to be sustained?

Prospects contributed to advancing the humanitarian-development nexus approach by further refining nexus implementation, increasing buy-in at the headquarters level within partner organisations and generating programmatic insights relevant to international policy dialogue on forced displacement settings.

Sub-conclusion 5.1 - Prospects contributed to further developing the nexus in forced displacement

Together with other global initiatives working on the nexus, Prospects contributed to further refining and implementing the nexus approach. In doing so, the Netherlands fulfilled its commitment to invest in the continued development of this approach, in line with its international commitments. This was achieved by strengthening relationships between UN agencies and IFI partners and supporting the integration of humanitarian and development approaches within partner organisations, and expanding work on forced displacement within the mandates of IFC and ILO. Lessons learned from Prospects contributed to the World Bank's fragility, conflict and violence strategy, while the programme also stimulated institutional changes within IFC regarding private sector inclusion in refugee settings. For ILO, working in settings with FDPs was relatively new, and Prospects support strengthened the organisation's capacity, expertise and strategies in this area.

At the global level, Prospects partners published a range of valuable and insightful reports and studies covering multiple aspects of the nexus approach, which also helped generate donor interest in sustaining essential interventions. Through substantial support and innovative design, Prospects has enabled the Netherlands to position itself as an important actor in the global refugee response arena. In some countries, such as Uganda, Kenya and Jordan, embassies are regarded as key actors in refugee responses, and the Netherlands is perceived as a trustworthy partner in this regard. In other countries, however, the absence of a clear communication strategy resulted in limited visibility for the Prospects programme and the Netherlands as a donor. This reduced the extent to which investments could be leveraged by embassies in political dialogue with host governments in support of broader Dutch interests and programming priorities.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, IOB has formulated recommendations for : 1) the remaining period of phase 2, 2) policies and programmes on refugee response in the region, and 3) programmes using a partnership approach.

1. Recommendations for the remaining period of Prospects phase 2

1a: To increase results in the employment/livelihood pillar:
- Prioritise testing and gradual scaling up of best practices from existing projects over the development of new pilots, for example by strengthening the inclusion of microfinance institutions to improve access to finance.
- Strengthen the policy dialogue to improve the enabling environment for livelihood and employment opportunities, particularly for forcibly displaced persons.
- Focus on strengthening knowledge and improving access to formal and informal markets through digitalisation and stronger legal frameworks. In this regard, continue emphasising the 'right to work', legal protection against workplace vulnerabilities – including in the informal sector – and other measures that support local-market development, such as financial inclusion (e.g. mobile wallets) and relevant skills building.
- Strengthen investments in targeted support and address barriers affecting specific groups, particularly women and people with disabilities.

1b: To improve monitoring, evaluation and learning:
- Ensure uniformity in the measurement of indicators in the dashboard. Make links to (shared) monitoring systems, such as the Country Response Plans, explicit, allowing for a more comprehensive overview of donor support and Prospects' contribution.
- Ensure all partners conduct external end evaluations and carry out a synthesis evaluation at the end of phase 2.
- In particular for partners: make strong use of regional functions within partner agencies to facilitate cross-agency and cross-regional learning and exchange.
- Institutionalise the participation of implementing partners, including RLOs and YLOs where relevant, during the MEL sessions.

1c: Tailor the communication strategy to better reflect the scale and the global, regional and country dimensions of the partnership. Clearly define how and where donor visibility at the country level adds value and capture this in clear agreements with UN partners. Underline that Prospects' efforts contribute not only to refugee responses, but also to broader long-term reforms.

2. Recommendations for current and future refugee response programmes in the region

Given the contextual changes in the MENA region, the inclusion of voluntary return in Prospects phase 2, and the restructuring of the DSH-MOA department, IOB formulates the following ministry-wide recommendations:

2a: If continuation of the policy is confirmed, IOB recommends continuing the system of long-term funding for refugee response programmes to enhance the focus on durable solutions and the long-term processes required to improve the living conditions of vulnerable populations.

2b: In the policy theory for the new department (MOA), clarify whether and how the refugee response programmes relate to the MFA's objectives regarding regional stability and the prevention of onward migration to third countries.

2c: Develop an assessment framework that clarifies and operationalises political priorities, assesses risks related to the principle of nonrefoulment, and guides investments in refugee response programmes in relation to durable solutions: resettlement, integration and voluntary return, including reconstruction in countries of origin. Set realistic short- and medium-term objectives.
- Consider the minimum conditions required for each of these solutions, the approaches required and the associated risks. Contextualise this assessment framework at the country and regional levels.

- Given the reluctance and limited capacity of national governments to include refugees in their national policies and take over responsibilities from external partners, review when and under what conditions parallel systems for service delivery may continue to add value for refugees.
- In support of voluntary return through Prospects or other (future) programmes, define measures to prevent the instrumentalisation of Dutch support by national governments for political purposes. Assess and mitigate risks related to the principle of non-refoulement and potential tensions between the political priorities of host governments and human rights and protection-based approaches. Ensure that implementing partners can continue to deliver services and implement programming for FDPs in the host countries despite support for voluntary returns. If the MFA decides to support voluntary return, it should first ensure that conditions for safe and dignified return are in place.

2d: Strengthen coherence and learning with other MFA refugee and migrant programmes. Explore how the combined implementation of refugee response and migration partnership programmes can strengthen political dialogue on migration issues and improve refugee responses. Where localised refugee response programmes and Prospects operate in the same countries, ensure coherence at the country level and enable a structural exchange to align with the overall programming.

2e: In the event of a new refugee response programme or Prospects phase 3, reassess partner selection and include criteria on partners' proven experience, in-country embeddedness and mandate relevance for working in fragile settings in the selected countries. Allow flexibility for partner diversity between countries. Take into consideration that the role a partner can play and the ways a partner is perceived differ per country. Engage embassies and DMM early in decision-making regarding country and partner selection.

2f: In line with the MFA's localisation agenda, broaden and strengthen stakeholder engagement:
- Ensure engagement with sub-national governments and invest in their capacity to implement national and county-level plans and to engage in policy development at the national level.
- Enhance the role of local organisations and implementing partners, including RLOs and CBOs, by embedding structural participation mechanisms within programme governance structures to increase ownership.
- Ensure that the flexibility provided by the MFA to partners is also extended to their implementing and local partners.

2g: Take into account the diversity of needs and barriers affecting host communities and FDPs, as well as the structural barriers affecting women and other marginalised groups.

2h: Broaden the support base for Prospects to facilitate scaling-up. Leverage other financial resources, including from non-traditional donors and private sector actors, in particular within the region itself. Together with other development partners, invest in conducive and flexible structures for multi-donor programmes. As MFA, share lessons learned from Prospects regarding the practicalities of a nexus approach in a forced displacement programme with other donors involved in developing new programmes.

3. Recommendations for future partnership programmes

If the Ministry decides to set up new partnership programmes with UN partners and/or IFIs, IOB formulates the following ministry-wide recommendations, based on lessons learned from the Prospects partnership:

3a: Structurally involve embassies and relevant regional and thematic departments in decision-making regarding country and partner selection to ensure contextual alignment. In the case of UN agencies, include DMM and Permanent Representations to build on existing structures, expertise and up-to-date information.

3b: Ensure sufficient preparation time for new partnerships and related governance structures by involving relevant regional and thematic departments and embassies.

3c: Assess and address barriers for collaborative programming resulting from internal processes and institutional structures to facilitate greater flexibility and collaborative programming. Assess and discuss the scope for additional conditions in existing partnership agreements required for effective partnerships and programmes, and ensure that these are reflected in programme contracts. Where relevant, include the localisation agenda as mentioned in 2f, as well as more detailed reporting on financial allocations.

3d: In case of innovative approaches or modalities, start with a small number of countries to maintain focus and test structures and approaches before scaling up.

3e: In line with the Prospects approach, invest in sufficient capacity for the implementation of large-scale partnership programmes at the embassies and in The Hague (MFA):
- At the MFA for coordination, technical support, monitoring and global-level policy dialogue;
- At the embassies for country-level coordination, liaison between the MFA and partners, and ensuring the added value of embassies within the partnership, for example in policy dialogue. This can also support the strategic positioning and leveraging of programmes in line with the MFA's broader policy objectives.

To conclude, this evaluation offers **four reflections** to consider in the context of future programming focused on refugee reception in the region, humanitarian-development programming or large-scale partnerships.
- Reflection 1: Communicate clearly that durable solutions for large groups of FDPs are unlikely to be achieved within short time frames, that refugee response programmes may not necessarily lead to durable solutions for FDPs and that investments in semi-permanent solutions for refugees are likely to remain necessary. Emphasise that support provided through education, technical skills and well-being interventions can still benefit beneficiaries in the long term, including in cases of voluntary return, integration or resettlement. Also, communicate clearly that several factors influencing results – for instance, regarding employment or inclusion – fall outside the sphere of influence of the MFA and its implementing partners. Explicit reflection on both ambitions and limitations within the Theory of Change can help establish more realistic short- and medium-term objectives and improve the clarity and quality of the ToC.
- Reflection 2: Recognise that working in partnership with multiple UN agencies within large-scale programmes makes it more difficult to obtain detailed insights into results, financial flows and cost-benefit relationships. Establishing highly complex monitoring systems requires major investments from partners and may still not fully resolve monitoring challenges.
- Reflection 3: Large-scale partnership programmes may require less administrative capacity than managing multiple smaller ones and are therefore considered more efficient. However, they still require sufficient capacity in The Hague and at the embassies to fulfil the role of strategic partner and to monitor and steer programmes effectively. Current staff cutbacks (*taakstelling*) therefore represent a genuine risk to sufficient staff capacity and the efficient and effective steering of such programmes.
- Reflection 4: Programmes such as Prospects are aligned with the Less-Better-Flexible approach, but large-scale programmes implemented through multilateral organisations limit the extent to which localisation objectives can be fully achieved.

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Annex 2 - References

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Other

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Annex 3 - Evaluation team and quality control

This evaluation was carried out by a team of IOB evaluators, consisting of Ruth van Zorge, Miyabi Babasaki, Alexander Otgaar, Stephanie Bouman and Jan Willem le Grand. Bas Limonard was involved in setting up the Terms of Reference. The country studies and field visits were conducted in cooperation with MDF/ECDPM: Michelle de Rijck, Anna Knoll and Narcisa Panaite. The local consultants with whom IOB has collaborated are Benard Bidieny, Alexis Bosire, Hassan Haji and Eva Rast for Kenya; and Raya Khrais, Safaa M. al-Mashaqbeh, Tasnim Sha'ath and Enas Bkayrat for Jordan.

The quality control was conducted through both an internal sounding board and an external reference group. Both groups have provided input during different stages of the evaluation, such as feedback on the draft Terms of Reference and the draft report, as well as advice on specific elements of the evaluation. The internal sounding board consisted of Marian Noppert, Rens Willems, Zeineb Romdhane and Wendela Haringhuizen (chair). Several departments within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were represented in the external reference group: (former) policy officers of the Stability and Humanitarian Aid Department (DSH), currently the Department for Migration, Displacement and Asylum (MOA): Warner ten Kate, Hanno van Gemund, Govert Visser and Ana Uzelac; policy officers of the regional departments Camilla Veerman (MENA region) and Hilleen Smeets (Sub-Saharan Africa); and policy officers at the Dutch embassies in Baghdad and Ethiopia representing the MENA and Horn of Africa region: Anneleen Hulshof and Tiest Sondaal. The external experts of the reference group were Ted Freeman, independent evaluation consultant and expert in complex multi-partner (UN) programme evaluations; Michael Ebele, humanitarian programming expert at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); and Simona Vezzoli, migration specialist at the Institute for Social Studies. The IOB team is grateful to the members for their time, expertise, thoughts and suggestions.

IOB would also like to thank the members of the Prospects Global Steering Committee for their time and effort in providing the team with underlying documents, data, and relevant contacts.

The report was adopted by the Director of IOB in April 2026. Responsibility for this report rests solely with IOB.

Annex 4 - Glossary of frequently used terminology in Prospects

This glossary provides an overview of some of the frequently used concepts and terms within the Prospects partnership. It is based on the appraisal memoranda from phase 1, the Letter to Parliament and the Global Vision document that was agreed on by all involved partners.

Forcibly displaced persons

'Forced displacement occurs when individuals and communities have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of events or situations such as armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights abuses, natural or man-made disasters, and/or development projects. It both includes situations where people have fled as well as situations where people have been forcibly removed from their homes, evicted or relocated to another place not of their choosing, whether by State or non-State actors. The defining factor is the absence of will or consent.'[186] Within Prospects, FDPs include refugees and internally displaced persons.[187]

Humanitarian-development nexus

The humanitarian-development nexus refers to an approach based on the idea that while humanitarian aid is critical for FDPs, it is insufficient in long-lasting crises. Humanitarian aid then needs to be complemented by a development approach focused on the medium- and long-term dimensions of a crisis. Within Prospects, economic opportunities and access to jobs and (social) protection services are seen as key to successfully managing longer-lasting forced displacement crises for FDPs and host communities.[188]

Inclusion

In the Prospects partnership, inclusion refers to the inclusion of FDPs regarding access to education and employment opportunities, as well as protection and social protection policies of national governments. In the case of education and child protection, this implies a transition from parallel service delivery for forcibly displaced children to the inclusion of these groups within national systems, with increased national capacity to provide access for children on the move within countries and across borders. Another aspect of Prospects' works is enhancing the enabling environment for the socio-economic inclusion of FDPs.[189]

Partnership approach / New Way of Working

The partnership approach and the New Way of Working are used interchangeably. This approach encourages humanitarian and development actors to move beyond the traditional silos of humanitarian assistance and development by working together and using their comparative advantages to achieve collective outcomes. Within Prospects, this partnership approach is expected to lead to synergies that strengthen strategic coordination, ensure coherence in identifying priority activities and create opportunities for complementarity across individual programmes. Partners are expected to collaborate at the global and country levels: collecting, analysing, and sharing information on what does and does not work. This approach is expected to eventually lead to a transformation of how Prospects partners and other stakeholders respond to the forced displacement crisis. Among the partners and the Dutch MFA, there is consensus that jointly steering towards overarching ambitions is more effective than individually.

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[186] UNHCR (2007), '*Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons: Part V: Protection Risks: Prevention, Mitigation and Response. Action Sheet 1 - Forced and Unlawful Displacement Provisional Release*', UNHCR, 2007, p.164.

[187] MFA, internal Prospects documentation.

[188] MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.

[189] MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.

Protection

Within Prospects, pillar 3 focuses on both social and legal protection. Overall, this refers to the protection of vulnerable groups such as children from violence, abuse and exploitation, especially by enabling access to services in national systems. As for child protection specifically, Prospects focuses on increasing national capacity to provide forcibly displaced children with access to inclusive child protection systems that prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect, both within countries and across borders. Legal protection refers to ensuring refugees have adequate legal status and documentation. This is pursued through activities that include policy advocacy, capacity building for national authorities and protection monitoring. [190]

Self-reliance

Self-reliance is defined through three interconnected dimensions: improved livelihoods (higher income), reduced vulnerability, and reduced long-term reliance on external assistance.[191]

Resilience

For the purpose of this evaluation and in line with the country studies, IOB uses the 3RP conceptual framework, which distinguishes resilience at the individual, community and national levels. To identify signs of resilience, the field studies used the 3RP conceptual framework to guide analysis and reflection. This framework is the guiding document of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) (2023) linked to the Syria crisis: 'Resilience-building refers to strengthening "the ability of individuals, households, communities, and societies to withstand shocks and stresses, recover from such stresses; and work with national and local government institutions to achieve transformational change for sustainability of human development in the face of future shocks."'

Social protection

Within Prospects, social protection refers to access to the delivery of assistance through national welfare systems, such as cash assistance, or inclusion in national welfare systems, for example insurance schemes. At the same time, Prospects aims to help recipients move from dependence on assistance towards self-sufficiency.[192]

Transformation / transformative approach

The transformation that the Prospects partnership aims for is a shift in the approach to forced displacement from a humanitarian to a development-oriented approach. The five partners seek to support this transformation by focusing on the nexus between education, protection and employment. The partnership also aims to help transform the way governments and other stakeholders, including the private sector, respond to forced displacement crises. Within Prospects, a country- and region-focused approach has been complemented by a set of global activities aimed at achieving transformative impact.[193]

190 MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.
191 MFA, internal Prospects documentation.
192 MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.
193 MFA and Prospects partners, internal Prospects documentation.

Annex 5 - Contribution to local policies in Kenya and Jordan

Table A5.1 *Mechanisms to enhance inclusive policies*

Mechanism	Roles of partners
M1) **Agenda setting and coalition framing:** Activities that place an issue on the formal government agenda and align a coalition of support around it. Typical tactics include strategic framing, advocacy campaigns and high-level diplomacy, aimed at synchronising efforts when a policy window for reform opens.	All. WB and IFC particularly engaged in research, assessments and analytics.
M2) **Technical drafting, legal and data support:** The expert work of converting political intent into legally sound, implementable instruments. It covers legislative drafting, regulatory writing, costed plans, impact analyses and data studies that provide decision-makers with text and evidence robust enough to withstand cabinet, parliamentary and judicial scrutiny.	UNICEF, UNHCR and ILO providing technical support, or providing HR capacity.
M3) **Financial leverage:** Use of conditional or incentivised financing, such as budget-support loans, development-policy operations or earmarked grants, to encourage or accelerate reform. By tying disbursements to the adoption or implementation of specific measures, financiers create time-bound fiscal incentives that raise a reform's priority and signal long-term resource commitment.*	WB, UNHCR and UNICEF providing financial support for implementation.
M4) **Demonstration and piloting:** Small-scale pilots or demonstration projects testing a new policy model in real-world settings. Successful pilots generate credible evidence of feasibility, reduce perceived risk and build stakeholder confidence, often turning proof-of-concept results into a persuasive argument for nationwide adoption.	UNHCR, UNICEF and ILO implementing pilots and research, all partners providing evidence from pilots.

* *World Bank (2026b), Development Policy Financing (DPF), (accessed March 2026).*

Table A5.2 *Kenya: Assessed policies and Prospects' contribution to these policies*

Contributions
Kenya's National Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy Framework creates a single, nationwide system for certifying skills and knowledge acquired informally or non-formally. It brings RPL certificates under the Kenya National Qualifications Framework, ensuring they carry the same weight as regular TVET or academic awards. The framework issues detailed guidelines for accrediting assessment centres,* and following assessment, candidates receive certificates that count towards further training or direct employment. This formalisation of previously undocumented expertise aims to expand opportunities for decent work and economic inclusion. **Prospects' contribution:** *Technical capacity (M2) and demonstration (M4) alone were sufficient; little agenda-setting or financial leverage was required.*
Kenya's Refugee Act 2021 replaces the 2006 law and establishes an updated, rights-based framework for the country's estimated one million refugees and asylum seekers. The Act aligns Kenya's legislation with international standards. The Act clarifies who qualifies as a refugee, establishes the Department of Refugee Services and related appeals bodies, and authorises the issuance of secure identity documents to refugees to streamline registration and case management. It also enables county authorities to integrate refugee settlements into local development plans, while guaranteeing refugees the right to work, run businesses, own property and move freely within those areas. **Prospects' contribution:** *The Act would probably not have cleared Parliament in 2021 without the technical input and financial leverage of Prospects partners. However, the financial leverage comes from other World Bank funding rather than directly from Prospects funding.*
Kenya's Shirika Plan 2025 is the government's multi-year roadmap for turning the country's two longstanding refugee camps, Dadaab and Kakuma-Kalobeyei, into fully fledged, mixed municipalities where refugees and host communities can live, work and access public services side by side. The plan aims to upgrade the camps from isolated settlements into recognised urban centres. **Prospects' contribution:** *Prospects partners were involved in four causal mechanisms: demonstration and piloting based on earlier KISEDP/GISEDP experiences, coalition framing, support for technical policy development, and financial leverage.*
KISEDP and GISEDP country-integrated plans. The Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISEDP) is a 15-year, county-led roadmap for Turkana West (Kakuma-Kalobeyei) that seeks to shift from short-term aid to long-term development. Eight interconnected components – health, education, water and sanitation, protection, spatial planning, agriculture/livestock, energy and private-sector/ entrepreneurship – guide public and private investment. The Garissa Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (GISEDP) adopts the same area-based model for Dadaab's refugee-hosting sub-counties. **Prospects' contribution:** *Prospects' technical work accelerated the scaling and standardisation of these approaches. Demonstration effects and county political demand were decisive.*

* *For more information on the guidelines for Implementation of RPL Policy 2024 see:* https://knqa.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Guidelines-For-Implementation-of-RPL-Policy-2024.pdf.

Table A5.3 *Jordan: Assessed policies and Prospects' contribution to these policies*

Contributions
Inclusive Education Policy 2020 and strategic plan. The policy commits the Ministry of Education to a 10-year transition (2020-2030) to make all schools accessible to every child, including refugees and learners with disabilities. **Prospects' contribution:** *Prospects provided a combination of legal and policy expertise (M2), on-the-ground demonstration (M4) and diplomatic leverage (M1). Prospects partners – especially UNICEF – played a pivotal role in shaping the Inclusive Education Strategy (2020-2030) by seconding experts, funding workshops and piloting inclusive school models. These efforts complemented broader advocacy and coalition-building initiatives by other actors, such as UNESCO and USAID. However, bureaucratic barriers and restrictive enrolment rules continue to exclude many refugee children, especially non-Syrians and those outside donor-supported pilots. This limits the extent of change achieved in refugee inclusion.*
Flexible work permit model for Syrians. Since the signing of the 2016 Jordan compact, the Government of Jordan has exempted Syrians from work permit fees for non-Jordanian workers and introduced flexible work permits that are not tied to a single employer in the agricultural, construction and logistics sectors. In 2017, the Zaatari Office for Employment was established to facilitate refugees in the camp in obtaining work permits and working outside the camp. In December 2020, the 'Instruction 1/2020' formally codified the flexible work permit regulations. Subsequent Cabinet fee-waiver decisions determined the cost of obtaining or renewing the permit. **Prospects' contribution:** *Early legal and policy groundwork by ILO and UNHCR, followed by Prospects-supported outreach, employment centres and coordinated advocacy efforts, helped institutionalise flexible permits and fee waivers. Other actors, such as the EU and the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions, also contributed to this policy change. However, the 2024 suspension of the permit fee waiver undermined progress, pushing refugees back into informal employment and exposing the limits of Prospects' influence over this policy area.*
Jordan's Agricultural Workers Regulation (Agriculture By-law). This law brought the country's 300,000 (largely informal) farm workers – including many Syrian refugees – under the protection of labour law, including written contracts, minimum wage, social security enrolment, occupational safety and health standards, labour inspection and dispute settlement. This by-law extended the labour law to agriculture, authorising the Ministry of Labour to inspect farms and issue implementing instructions. **Prospects' contribution:** *ILO's technical drafting support prior to Prospects, combined with Prospects-funded tripartite negotiations, enabled the extension of labour protections to informal agricultural workers, including refugees. However, implementation capacity gaps in labour inspections and enforcement mechanisms, especially in rural areas, hinder the full realisation of the by-law's protections.*
Automatic social security enrolment and Estidama⁺ subsidy (2021-2024). The National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) 2019-2025 articulates the Government of Jordan's priority to expand the protection framework for those threatened by poverty, thereby promoting dignified living conditions, decent work environments and access to social services. The Social Security Law applies to all formal workers recognised under the Labour Law and makes no distinction based on nationality, status or gender, enabling the inclusion of refugees and migrant workers. Its goal is to address the challenges that people face due to short-term contracts and irregular incomes, especially for women and informal workers. **Prospects' contribution:** *Prospects was instrumental in a diverse set of causal mechanisms. Analytical work quantified costs, and tripartite consensus-building supported the creation of a subsidy fund that politically embedded the reforms. Mass enrolment proved the feasibility and contributed to the sustainability dialogue. Prospects provided seed funding for the SSC fund, ILO conducted the cost modelling, and World Bank fiscal analysis enabled SSC to pilot and scale Estidama++, with outreach targeting refugees and low-wage workers. These contributions were complemented by support from other donors and institutions, such as FCDO and the Kingdom of Norway.*

Annex 6 - Longlist of stakeholders and beneficiaries consulted

Organisation	Role
MFA – DSH	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFA – DAF	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFA – DAM	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFA – DMM	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Permanent Representation Geneva	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Permanent Representation New York	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Dutch Embassy – Egypt	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Dutch Embassy – Ethiopia	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Dutch Embassy – Iraq	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Dutch Embassy – Jordan	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Dutch Embassy – Lebanon	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Dutch Embassy – Kenya	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Dutch Embassy – Sudan	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Dutch Embassy – Uganda	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
ILO – HQ	Prospects Partner
ILO – Egypt	Prospects Partner
ILO – Ethiopia	Prospects Partner
ILO – Iraq	Prospects Partner
ILO – Jordan (Amman, Irbid, Zaatari, Zarqa)	Prospects Partner
ILO – Lebanon	Prospects Partner
ILO – Kenya (Nairobi)	Prospects Partner
ILO – Sudan	Prospects Partner
ILO – Uganda	Prospects Partner
UNICEF – HQ	Prospects Partner
UNICEF – Egypt	Prospects Partner
UNICEF – Ethiopia	Prospects Partner
UNICEF – Iraq	Prospects Partner
UNICEF – Jordan (Amman)	Prospects Partner
UNICEF – Lebanon	Prospects Partner
UNICEF – Kenya (Nairobi, Dadaab, Kakuma)	Prospects Partner
UNICEF – Sudan	Prospects Partner
UNICEF – Uganda	Prospects Partner
UNHCR – HQ	Prospects Partner
UNHCR – Egypt	Prospects Partner
UNHCR – Ethiopia	Prospects Partner
UNHCR – Iraq	Prospects Partner
UNHCR – Jordan (Amman, Irbid, Zaatari)	Prospects Partner
UNHCR – Lebanon	Prospects Partner
UNHCR – Kenya (Nairobi, Dadaab, Kakuma)	Prospects Partner
UNHCR – Sudan	Prospects Partner
UNHCR – Uganda	Prospects Partner
IFC – HQ	Prospects Partner
IFC – Egypt	Prospects Partner
IFC – Ethiopia	Prospects Partner
IFC – Iraq	Prospects Partner

Organisation	Role
IFC – Jordan (Amman)	Prospects Partner
IFC – Lebanon	Prospects Partner
IFC – Kenya (Nairobi)	Prospects Partner
IFC – Uganda	Prospects Partner
WB – HQ	Prospects Partner
WB – Ethiopia	Prospects Partner
WB – Iraq	Prospects Partner
WB – Jordan (Amman)	Prospects Partner
WB – Lebanon	Prospects Partner
WB – Kenya (Nairobi)	Prospects Partner
WB – Uganda	Prospects Partner
Jordan – Ministry of Agriculture	Local government authorities/institutes
Jordan – Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship	Local government authorities/institutes
Jordan – Ministry of Education (Amman, Zaatari)	Local government authorities/institutes
Jordan – Ministry of Health	Local government authorities/institutes
Jordan – Ministry of Interior	Local government authorities/institutes
Jordan – Ministry of Labour	Local government authorities/institutes
Jordan – Ministry of Social Development	Local government authorities/institutes
Jordan – Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation	Local government authorities/institutes
Jordan – Ministry of Youth	Local government authorities/institutes
Jordan – Municipality of Irbid	Local government authorities/institutes
Jordan – National Aid Fund	Local government authorities/institutes
Jordan – Social Security Cooperation	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – Dadaab Ministry of Education	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – Dadaab Municipality WASH	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – Department of Refugee Services	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – Garissa Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – Kenya Forestry Research Institute	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – National Board of Statistics	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – National Employment Authority / Career Guidance Institute	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – National Qualification Authority	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – National Social Protection Secretariat	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – National Social Security Fund	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – Refugee Consortium of Kenya (Dadaab, Kakuma)	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya - Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – School of TVET	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – State Department of MSME	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – Turkana Chamber of Commerce	Local government authorities/institutes
Kenya – Turkana County Government	Local government authorities/institutes
Jordan – Business Development Centre	Implementing or other development partner
Jordan – European Union Delegation	Implementing or other development partner
Jordan – Flat6Labs / StartMashreq	Implementing or other development partner
Jordan – Generations for Peace	Implementing or other development partner
Jordan – Ureed	Implementing or other development partner
Jordan – Institute for Family Health	Implementing or other development partner
Jordan – Jordan River Foundation (Amman, Zarqa)	Implementing or other development partner
Jordan – King Hussein Foundation	Implementing or other development partner

Organisation	Role
Jordan – Mercy Corps	Implementing or other development partner
Jordan – Noor Hussain Foundation	Implementing or other development partner
Jordan – Norwegian Refugee Council	Implementing or other development partner
Jordan – UK Embassy	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Biashara Centre	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Dadaab Collective Freelance Agency	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Danish Embassy	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Danish Refugee Council	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Equity Bank	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – European Union	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Film Aid Kenya	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – GALDO green jobs	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Gender Based Violence Court	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – GLAP Enterprises	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Investing in Children and their Societies	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Kalwasco water utility	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Learning Lions	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Longitude Capital LTD	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Lutheran World Federation (Nairobi, Dadaab)	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Norwegian Refugee Council (Nairobi, Dadaab)	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Save the Children	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – SITE Enterprise Promotion	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Swiss Embassy	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Terre des Hommes	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – US Embassy	Implementing or other development partner
Kenya – Windle Trust	Implementing or other development partner
Jordan – ARDI beneficiary Plant Labs	Beneficiaries
Jordan – BDC beneficiaries	Beneficiaries
Jordan – Furniture Factory	Beneficiaries
Jordan – Hajati Programme	Beneficiaries
Jordan – Mshaqbeh boys	Beneficiaries
Jordan – Reading Recovery Programme	Beneficiaries
Jordan – Scrap platform	Beneficiaries
Jordan – SSC Estidama beneficiaries	Beneficiaries
Jordan – Staff, students and parents of supported schools	Beneficiaries
Jordan – Youth Centre beneficiaries	Beneficiaries
Kenya – Biashara Centre beneficiaries	Beneficiaries
Kenya – Child-friendly space volunteers	Beneficiaries
Kenya – Equator primary public school	Beneficiaries
Kenya – Film Aid alumni, learners mentorship programme, students	Beneficiaries
Kenya – Foster Parents	Beneficiaries
Kenya – Gender-based violence survivors	Beneficiaries
Kenya – GLAP Enterprise beneficiaries	Beneficiaries
Kenya – Kasha Camal Milk Group	Beneficiaries
Kenya – KKCF beneficiaries	Beneficiaries

Organisation	Role
Kenya – Learners pursuing STEM subjects in junior secondary schools	Beneficiaries
Kenya – National Employment Authority beneficiaries	Beneficiaries
Kenya – Undugu primary school teachers	Beneficiaries
Consultants on development approaches to forced displacement	Other/external experts
Médecins Sans Frontières	Other/external experts
Professors in conflict studies, humanitarian aid, migration, and reconstruction	Other/external experts
Resident Coordinator Office	Other/external experts
War Child	Other/external experts

Photography

Front: ©UNICEF Ethiopia | Education programmes in Ehtiopia's Somali Region - A group of Somali refugee girls changing their shoes to play volleyball at Melkadida primary school for host community and refugee children.

Chapter 1: ©Axel Fassio/CIFOR-ICRAF | Kakuma refugee camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement landscape, Kenya - Market in Kakuma refugee settlement, Turkana County, Kenya.

Chapter 2: ©Dominic Chavez/International Finance Corporation | Refugees learn a new skill set as they take classes in the Pluming Department at Don Bosco Technical Institute in Kakuma Refugee Camp

Chapter 3: ©The Lutheran World Federation | Shambe Primary School, in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya.

Chapter 4: ©AVSI Foundation | Prospects ILO - Uganda: Rural Employment Services Project.

Chapter 5:©ILO/Ezzeldeen Al Natour | Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training entrepreneurs Jordan.

Chapter 6: ©Guillaume Megevandl/ILO | Jordan informal employment.

Annex: ©United Nations Photo | Refugee & IDP camps from above - An aerial view of Za'atri refugee camp, host to tens of thousands of Syrians displaced by conflict, near Mafraq, Jordan.

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