Inclusion of migrants and refugees in preparedness and response to biological disasters: case study of the COVID-19 pandemic

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Inclusion of migrants and refugees in preparedness and response to biological disasters: case study of the COVID-19 pandemic

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Chapter 1
Introduction

First identified in December 2019 in China, COVID-19's severity and rapid spread led the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare it a public health emergency of international concern (the highest level of harm) on 30 January 2020.[1] Since then, COVID-19 has quickly reached pandemic status, causing severe damage and adversely impacting public health, economies and societies all around the world.

All crises and disasters reveal the vulnerabilities of the societies in which they occur. Like perhaps no previous crisis, COVID-19 has revealed the specific conditions of vulnerability that different groups of migrants (including labour migrants and their families, refugees and other displaced persons, international students and seafarers) face when confronted with disasters. All over the world, in countries with different migration presence and dynamics, migrants have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.[2]

Risky living and working conditions, and lack of access to appropriate information, have resulted in over-representation of migrants among people testing positive for COVID-19. While this was a major concern with respect to migrants and displaced persons in camps from the early stages, the pandemic has also revealed that migrants in dedicated workers' accommodation in Singapore, the Gulf States, poorer neighbourhoods in Sweden, Canada and the Maldives, meatpacking plants in Germany and the United States of America, and reception centres in Italy,[3] are all similarly affected. Moreover, migrants' limited ability or willingness to access health services has made them more likely to be severely affected by the virus.[4]

1. www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/interactive-timeline.
2. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mrs-60.pdf.
3. https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Asia-Insight/Singapore-coronavirus-clusters-awaken-Asia-to-migrants-plight; www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/covid-19-lockdown-turns-qatars-largest-migrant-camp-into-virtual-prison/; https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/21/sweden-coronavirus-anti-lockdown-immigrants/; www.ices.on.ca/Publications/Atlases-and-Reports/2020/COVID-19-in-Immigrants-Refugees-and-Other-Newcomers-in-Ontario; https://observers.france24.com/en/20200728-maldives-coronavirus-worsens-plight-migrant-workers; www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/05/22/immigrant-workers-have-born-brunt-covid-19-outbreaks-meatpacking-plants/; www.infomigrants.net/en/post/27065/locals-protest-after-migrants-test-positive-for-coronavirus-in-southern-italy.
4. https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/Patients-Not-Passports-Migrants-Access-to-Healthcare-During-the-Coronavirus-Crisis-FINAL.pdf.

Many migrants work in sectors and occupations that have been hit particularly hard by lockdown-induced business closures and the general economic downturn resulting from the pandemic. They are often the first to be let go, and often face the economic impacts of the pandemic without social protection and welfare assistance.[5] They now face renewed exclusion and exploitation as many countries move towards reopening and recovering from the pandemic. Migrants worldwide have become the target of widespread stigmatization and xenophobia, resulting in violence and suffering, and compounding barriers to accessing services and opportunities.[6]

Migration status has also been a key factor shaping the impacts of COVID-19, interplaying with poverty, class and ethnicity. Migrants in irregular situations fell through cracks in the system before the pandemic and have since become particularly vulnerable. At the same time, the pandemic and related unemployment, impoverishment and de-prioritization of migration matters have resulted in uncertainty regarding regular status (or even loss of status) for migrants all over the world, further reducing their entitlement to access services and assistance, and increasing their level of insecurity.

The closure of borders and restrictions to international mobility have affected migrants uniquely hard, resulting in them being stranded in transit or host countries, and unable to move on or return.[7] International and internal migrants have faced legal and logistical challenges on returning home, only to be met with further economic hardship and insecurity – and, on occasion, more scapegoating and stigmatization.

As in any crisis, impacts on migrants, their suffering and hardship are felt across their translocal and transnational networks. Families and communities back home, relying on migrants and their remittances, have suddenly been left without their lifeline, and are often separated across countries and continents, without knowing whether and when migration pathways will be again viable. The drop in remittance transfers has been so marked that it may have macroeconomic consequences for countries that rely heavily on them.[8]

However, COVID-19 has also shown the essential role migrants play in the delivery of services that are key to the functioning and well-being of societies, and for the continuity of activities and businesses that underpin crisis resilience.[9] In many countries, migrants are strongly represented among essential workers in sectors such as health care and medical research, food production and distribution, and logistics and transportation. Their presence and movement are vital to supporting many other sectors that are essential to social and economic recovery worldwide.[10]

Migrants' specific conditions of vulnerability, and the role they play in supporting the well-being of interconnected communities, underpin the need to adopt migrant-inclusive approaches in all interventions to mitigate and control COVID-19, and to

5. www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigrant-workers-us-covid-19-response.
6. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_incidents_of_xenophobia_and_racism_related_to_the_COVID-19_pandemic.
7. https://migration.iom.int/.
8. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33634.
9. www.odi.org/migrant-key-workers-covid-19/.
10. https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic.

address its short- and long-term impacts.[11] Until the specific barriers migrants face in accessing COVID-19 information, testing and treatment are addressed, the overall effectiveness of public health efforts will be diminished. Unless the direct and indirect impacts migrants suffer as a consequence of the pandemic are understood and mitigated, their host and home societies will face more acute impacts and be less able to recover effectively.

The paths national and local authorities choose with respect to migrant-inclusive COVID-19 response-and-recovery efforts will shape societies' levels of risk to future crises. Migrants' vulnerability is closely linked with immigration policies, entitlement to services and opportunities, respect of rights and the levels of xenophobia and discrimination in their host destination. All interventions that include them in (or exclude them from) health care and welfare support, grant them (or refuse them) regularization or flexibility regarding immigration regulations, protect them against (or expose them to) abuses and exploitation, have the potential to counter or reinforce these dynamics. Migrants often faced economic, social and political marginalization before the outbreak. COVID-19 response-and-recovery interventions provide an opportunity to pursue alternative migration management regimes, provision of basic services and protection of basic rights that lead to more just, resilient and sustainable societies.

In the face of these challenges, a variety of governmental and non-governmental actors, at all levels, in migrants' home and host countries, have rolled out interventions to address proximate and root causes of migrants' vulnerability. This working paper takes stock of some of these practices, recognizing that in the face of such a global, dynamic situation, impacts and responses are extremely diffused and continually evolving, and that any assessment will therefore be partial and time-bound.[12]

By gathering and systematizing such practices, the working paper provides a snapshot of the comprehensive approaches needed to address language and cultural barriers, issues of trust, and administrative requirements and abuses that migrants face when accessing services and opportunities that are essential to protect them against the pandemic and recover from its impacts. Among practices at the global level, the paper highlights instances in which migrants have been actively engaged in preparedness, response-and-recovery efforts, based on the recognition of their skills, knowledge and ability to contribute to the well-being of their communities.

The paper provides evidence, recommendations and lessons about good practice that can inform and strengthen responses to COVID-19, a crisis that will continue, for the foreseeable future, to have complex impacts on migrants and migration worldwide. The paper also aims to support broader crisis management and development efforts. The principles of inclusion, participation and engagement of migrants that guide the practices in this publication can complement available approaches to reducing risk for migrants and their communities in any crisis and can be leveraged

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11. https://smw.ch/article/doi/smw.2020.20263.
12. Most of the examples presented in the paper are from members of the EUR-OPA Co-operation Group for the Prevention of, Protection Against, and Organisation of Relief in Major Natural and Technological Disasters. But the paper also uses examples from other countries worldwide where appropriate.

to support migrants' well-being in non-crisis times. In an increasingly globalized, interconnected and mobile world, this will be an essential element of risk reduction and sustainable development.

As the pandemic progresses and governments, local authorities, civil society and the private sector adapt to its impacts, new evidence will be collected and further lessons will be learned and applied to support migrants in crisis more widely and effectively.

Chapter 2
Immigration/citizenship/ residency rights

Immigration status is a fundamental element determining migrants' access to services and opportunities, protection of rights and ultimately vulnerability to hazards and insecurity. The COVID-19 pandemic and related closure of borders and lockdowns have resulted in widespread and significant obstacles for migrants in obtaining or maintaining regular status, drastically affecting their options. As the pandemic overwhelmed essential service provision and government functions in many countries, immigration processes were temporarily suspended, including asylum and refugee relocation programmes,[13] and visa application and renewal programmes,[14] leaving many migrants uncertain about their legal status, and vulnerable to the pandemic's direct and indirect impacts.

Regular migrants, including travellers and businesspeople, and those with work permits and international student visas, have been stranded in many parts of the world due to movement restrictions and border closures imposed by countries to mitigate the spread of the virus. Consequently, many have faced, and in some cases still face, uncertainty regarding their ability to work, study and stay in their host country.

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13. www.infomigrants.net/en/post/23513/refugee-resettlement-suspended-due-to-coronavirus; www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2020/3/29/covid-19-and-the-displaced-addressing-the-threat-of-the-novel-coronavirus-in-humanitarian-emergencies.
14. www.fragomen.com/about/news/immigration-update-coronavirus.

All over the world, migrants in irregular situations have found themselves stranded in their countries of destination or in transit, with limited access to assistance and services, fearing detention and deportation.[15] The pre-pandemic vulnerability of irregular migrants has been exacerbated by the direct and indirect consequences of COVID-19. Many irregular migrants have been reluctant to access health-care services and other forms of basic assistance due to the absence of firewalls between welfare frameworks and immigration systems in many countries,[16] and have been excluded from public welfare benefits and support schemes. Such situations translate into extreme vulnerability for migrants, and also stall and push back Government attempts to control the spread of the virus.[17]

In the early stages of the pandemic, many countries, taking into account the challenges migrants were facing, made provisions for them to more easily obtain or maintain regular status, thereby removing a key obstacle to accessing health care and other forms of assistance. Several countries introduced automatic visa extensions and simplification of renewal procedures for permits or visas issued to migrants within their territory, as uncertainty regarding their ability to leave the country continued.[18] Such measures mainly targeted regular migrants with valid permits or visas who were at risk of becoming irregular during the lockdown, due to overstaying as a result of closure of immigration offices and services and consequent inability to renew visas and permits. Many European countries adopted similar measures, taking into account movement restrictions in place across the globe affecting migrants' ability to travel.[19] National practices involve extension of short-term and long-term visas and permits, and extension of initial visa-free stay.[20]

Automatic extension of long-term and short-term visas, residency permits and initial visa-free stay or presumption of legal stay were adopted by Schengen countries, including Belgium, the Czechia, France, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain, for either a limited period or until the end of the crisis, as prescribed by the respective governments.[21] In Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece and Hungary, automatic extensions were provided for long-term visas and residency permits, and for other categories, upon application.[22] Similar automatic extensions, for specific types of visa, were also granted by Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia and Germany.[23] In Austria, penalties for not submitting necessary

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15. www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2020/7/22/reform-past-due-covid-19-magnifies-need-to-improve-spains-asylum-system; https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mrs-60.pdf.
16. https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/Patients-Not-Passports-Migrants-Access-to-Healthcare-During-the-Coronavirus-Crisis-FINAL.pdf.
17. https://smw.ch/article/doi/smw.2020.20263.
18. www.aa.com.tr/en/latest-on-coronavirus-outbreak/russia-facilitates-foreign-stay-amid-coronavirus-fears/1772279; https://gulfnews.com/living-in-uae/visa-immigration/covid-19-uae-visa-update-expired-visa-holders-get-another-months-grace-period-1.1597133949345.
19. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/handbook-annex-41_en.pdf; www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Info-ressources/Actualites/L-actu-immigration/Information-generale-sur-la-prolongation-des-documents-de-sejour-General-information-on-the-extension-of-residency-documents.
20. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/handbook-annex-41_en.pdf.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.

visa extension applications were waived if application was made impossible because relevant offices were closed by COVID-19.[24] In the Netherlands, individuals on short-term visas unable to leave the country due to COVID-19-related mobility restrictions were allowed to apply for an extension to the Immigration and Naturalization Services (IND) via telephone instead of visiting the office.[25] In Poland, deadlines for application for legalization of stay have also been extended and dates for voluntary return for foreigners in the country have been postponed.[26]

Similar measures have been adopted by countries in other parts of the world. Thailand, in March, first granted an automatic extension of temporary visas for foreigners (mainly tourists) until the end of July, then a further grace period until September for extension on application.[27] Temporary relief was also provided for migrants with border passes, allowing them to maintain their legal status until border points reopened.[28] Payment of fees and submission of documents were also waived under this scheme.[29] In April 2020, South Africa automatically extended temporary residence visas that had expired in the lockdown, shielding migrants from being banned from re-entering the country at a later stage.[30]

With respect to asylum applications, in France the validity of certificates of request for asylum was extended for three months.[31] In Spain, administrative deadlines for asylum application were also extended, as immigration services were suspended during the period. The validity of documents such as expression of will to request international protection, receipts of asylum applications and certificates of applicant status were also automatically extended.[32]

Several governments have undertaken measures to mitigate the uncertainty surrounding student visa programmes. These include short-term post-study work permits that are accessible to students who fulfil certain visa conditions, including taking full-time classes on campus. With many students stranded in their home countries, taking classes online or graduating while being stranded abroad, a great deal of uncertainty arose regarding such work permits.

Another widely adopted practice is the waiver of visa and labour fines, allowing overstaying migrants to return to their countries of origin without having to pay related fees. On occasions, similar amnesty schemes have been extended to undocumented

24. www.bmeia.gv.at/en/travel-stay/entry-and-residence-in-austria/entrance-and-residence/.
25. www.netherlandsandyou.nl/travel-and-residence/visas-for-the-netherlands/qas-short-stay-schengen-visa.
26. https://udsc.gov.pl/en/coronavirus-outbreak-special-solutions-for-foreigners/; www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/poland-extends-visas-and-permits-for-foreigners-for-another-30-days/.
27. www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1953220/foreigners-can-apply-for-visa-extension-after-july-31; www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-thailand/thailand-to-offer-grace-period-for-foreigners-visa-extensions-idUSKCN24I0T8.
28. www.immigration.go.th/en/?p=6838.
29. Ibid.
30. https://taj-strategie.fr/south-africa-covid-19-immigration-update/.
31. www.thelocal.fr/20200318/france-to-automatically-extend-visas-and-residency-cards-due-to-coronavirus-outbreak; www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/Communiques/Duree-de-validite-des-titres-de-sejour.
32. www.accem.es/covid19-informacion-solicitantes-pi/; www.interior.gob.es/web/servicios-al-ciudadano/covid-19/proteccion-internacional.

workers, allowing them to leave the country without facing legal consequences or being banned from re-entering. Several Arab countries waived fines for overstaying, allowing many with expired visas to leave the country. Jordan extended waiver of labour fees and fines to undocumented migrant workers.[33] Bahrain announced an amnesty for irregular workers to December 2020, allowing them to return to their home countries without paying fines.[34] In April, Kuwait granted irregular migrants a one-month amnesty to return home, without imposing a ban on their re-entry.[35] Such amnesties and waivers have been adopted by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries several times in the past, highlighting the recurrence of related situations of need for migrant workers in the region.[36]

Other countries have suspended migrants' deportations in response to COVID-19. Canada's immigration authorities, for instance, granted temporary reprieves from scheduled deportations of migrants and refugees rejected at borders.[37] While this has been largely due to the closure of borders and cancellation of flights, it has also granted some relief to migrants and their families back home, and mitigated the risk of COVID-19 spreading to generally less affected countries of origin.

In some cases, governments provided regularization options to groups of migrants residing within their territory. Such measures can effectively remove barriers that migrants face in accessing health care, welfare assistance and other public services, and may also encourage migrants' trust in the host country authorities.

In Portugal, migrants and asylum seekers were temporarily given full rights as citizens, thereby enabling access to the country's health-care system and welfare benefits.[38] The measure covered all foreign citizens with applications pending before the immigration authorities.[39] This strategy has been touted as a contributing factor to the containment of the coronavirus.[40]

In May, Italy launched a regularization process targeting an estimated 200 000 migrants working in agriculture or as domestic helpers. Regularization was conditional on migrants receiving support from their employers for the process, or being able to demonstrate that they had worked in one of the relevant sectors prior to October 2019; and it was only granted for six months.[41] This provision provides relief and a

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33. www.arabnews.com/node/1665221/middle-east.
34. www.migrant-rights.org/2020/04/bahrain-announces-amnesty-for-irregular-migrants-and-cuts-in-flexi-permit-fees/.
35. www.migrant-rights.org/2020/04/kuwaits-amnesty-provides-a-risky-reprieve-for-some-migrant-workers/.
36. www.solidaritycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Report.Amnesties-in-the-Gulf.ENGLISH.3.28.2019.pdf; www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2020/04/covid19-makes-gulf-countries-abuse-of-migrant-workers-impossible-to-ignore/.
37. www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/cbsa-refugees-immigrants-deportations-1.5501334.
38. https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/30/europe/portugal-migrants-citizenship-rights-coronavirus-intl/index.html.
39. https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/30/europe/portugal-migrants-citizenship-rights-coronavirus-intl/index.html; www.newsweek.com/portugal-protecting-public-health-amid-coronavirus-pandemic-means-protecting-migrant-health-too-1506817.
40. www.newsweek.com/portugal-protecting-public-health-amid-coronavirus-pandemic-means-protecting-migrant-health-too-1506817.
41. www.thenewhumanitarian.org/feature/2020/05/25/Italy-coronavirus-migrant-labour.

pathway for regularization for many workers in irregular situations, and allows them access to the health-care system.[42] However there has also been strong criticism that it only gives relief to a fraction of the irregular migrant force in Italy on which the country depends.[43] Regularization requirements, information barriers and abuses have also resulted in the scheme being less successful than expected.

In Spain, besides relaxing permit renewal rules, the Government lowered individual income requirements for family reunification, essentially encouraging individuals trying to regularize their families. It is specifically beneficial for families already in Spain but unable to become regularized because of their inability to meet the high financial capacity requirement prescribed by the Government for family reunifica-tion.[44] Requirements for asylum seekers to provide up-to-date documentation for aid benefits were suspended, as renewal was made impossible by the lockdown. Asylum seekers who were unable to submit applications due to lockdown were also allowed to apply for benefits.[45]

In all the above cases, it needs to be noted that measures have been limited in scope. For instance, in Portugal welfare benefits were only extended temporarily and excluded undocumented migrants,[46] and in Italy permits were granted for only six months, with the option to convert to the long term only if a work contract is issued by the employer.[47]

Despite the many obstacles to asylum procedures, several countries have proposed relocation schemes for certain vulnerable individuals. Several EU member States have agreed to receive unaccompanied children and families with severely ill children from refugee camps in Greece, under a voluntary relocation scheme aiming to move 1 600 children.[48] Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Portugal[49]

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42. www.martenscentre.eu/news/should-eu-countries-regularise-undocumented-migrants-due-to-the-covid-19-pandemic/.
43. www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/5/30/cynical-critics-slam-italys-amnesty-for-undocumented-migrants.
44. www.elconfidencial.com/espana/2020-06-10/inmigracion-flexibiliza-normas-expulsion-masiva_2630628/; www.ecestaticos.com/file/e5c2b0a25f600eb7fd2d78bda7386cd3/1591739734-renovaciones_permisos.pdf.
45. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/spain-introduces-special-covid-19-integration-measures; http://prensa.mites.gob.es/WebPrensa/noticias/inmigracionemigracion/detalle/3754.
46. Santinho C., Rebelo D. and Cardoso S. (2020), COVID-19, The 'Undercover' Portuguese Asylum System, and Its Jerry-Riggings. Available at: www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2020/06/covid-19.
47. www.infomigrants.net/en/post/24755/helping-the-invisible-italy-s-amnesty-for-undocumented-workers-explained.
48. www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/world/20200402STO76413/meps-call-for-measures-to-prevent-covid19-crisis-in-refugee-camps; www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2020-002407-ASW_EN.html; www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/8/5f07127d4/happiness-faces.html; https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_1291; www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2020-002407-ASW_EN.html.
49. www.infomigrants.net/en/post/26453/18-unaccompanied-minors-from-greek-camps-relocated-to-belgium; www.unhcr.org/neu/40063-un-agencies-welcome-first-24-unaccompanied-asylum-seeking-children-from-greece-to-finland.html; www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/26/forty-nine-migrant-children-moved-safety-france#:~:text=On%20August%2020%2C%20France%20relocated,to%20other%20European%20Union%20countries; www.dw.com/en/germany-takes-in-afghan-syrian-refugee-children-from-greek-camp/a-53172989; www.wort.lu/fr/luxembourg/le-luxembourg-recueillera-12-refugies-mineurs-5e60b274da2cc1784e35798f; https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_1288.

have relocated children under this programme, of which Bulgaria, Croatia, Ireland, Lithuania and Slovenia are also part.[50] Norway[51] and Switzerland[52] have also received or expressed consent to receive unaccompanied minors.

Most of the immigration measures described in this section, including relaxation of procedures or automatic extensions, are concentrated on regular migrants, with the exception of some amnesty schemes that allow irregular migrants to be regularized or more easily returned to countries of origin. In many countries, migrants with irregular status or who are undocumented receive much less Government attention with respect to immigration support and often live in fear of detention and deportation. This has significant consequences in terms of access to health care – which should in turn be a concern for public health systems all over the world – and affects migrants' vulnerability to the pandemic's indirect socioeconomic impacts and their exposure to exploitation and abuses. For instance, a study has highlighted the increased vulnerability of migrants to trafficking during COVID-19 and the exploitative conditions that have arisen due to the pandemic, with border closures, job losses and resultant loss of status.[53]

While governments are the key actors determining migration policies and regimes, NGOs, civil society organizations and philanthropic foundations have played significant roles in influencing decision-making through information and advocacy campaigns and allowing migrants to benefit from relevant opportunities by providing legal aid services.[54] The Centre for Civil and Political Rights has created a mapping tool that gives information on the status of border closures and asylum proceedings across the globe.[55] Several campaigns to release individuals from immigration detention centres were launched during the pandemic,[56] across the globe, with campaigns in several countries bearing fruit.[57]

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50. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_20_1291.
51. Ibid.
52. www.infomigrants.net/en/post/24804/switzerland-takes-in-23-migrant-children-from-greek-island-camps.
53. www.osce.org/files/f/documents/2/a/458434_1.pdf; https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/08/10/as-the-global-economy-melts-down-human-trafficking-is-booming/; https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/default/files/network_statement_forced_returns_-_13_may_2020.pdf.
54. www.iom.int/news/standing-solidarity-migrants-supporting-civil-society-and-other-stakeholders-responding-covid; www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Steve_Irakoze.aspx; https://picum.org/immigration-detention-deportation-legal-practitioners-civil-society-jointly-address-strategic-litigation/.
55. https://datastudio.google.com/reporting/1sHT8quopdfavCvSDk7t-zvqKIS0Ljiu0/page/dHMKB.
56. www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/04/us-suspend-deportations-during-pandemic.
57. www.euronews.com/2020/04/29/countries-suspending-immigration-detention-due-to-coronavirus-let-s-keep-it-that-way-view; https://elpais.com/elpais/2020/04/20/migrados/1587366335_153379.html.

Chapter 3
Health

Effective health response is fundamental to managing and overcoming the pandemic, which has overwhelmed many health-care systems. Providing free and equitable prevention, testing, treatment and care to migrants and refugees is essential. Article 25 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stipulates that "everyone has the right of access to preventive health care and the right to benefit from medical treatment under the conditions established by national laws and practices".[58] Article 28 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families stipulates that:

> Immigrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to receive any medical care that is urgently required for the preservation of their life or the avoidance of irreparable harm to their health on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned. Such emergency medical care shall not be refused them by reason of any irregularity with regard to stay or employment.[59]

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58. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Guidance on infection prevention and control of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in migrant and refugee reception and detention centres in the EU/EEA and the United Kingdom – June 2020, ECDC, Stockholm: www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/COVID-19-guidance-refugee-asylum-seekers-migrants-EU.pdf.
59. www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cmw.aspx.

Access to health care is a key issue for refugees and migrants, who are often particularly vulnerable to infection (due to living in overcrowded housing, reception centres or refugee camps with poor sanitation) and showing severe symptoms (due to limited access to timely and appropriate medical services). This is often a particular issue for specific categories of marginalized migrants. In Turkey, for instance, registered refugees are granted access to a range of free public services, including health care and education, while irregular migrants are often reluctant to seek health services for fear of being detained.[60] Other governments have introduced schemes that encourage migrants to use health facilities and undergo treatment or quarantine without fear. In Qatar, quarantined workers receive full salary during the period of quarantine.[61] Saudi Arabia ordered free coronavirus treatment to all persons, including those in irregular situations,[62] and the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait have offered free tests for expatriates.[63]

In order to mitigate the public health risk associated with exclusion of some population groups from health care, the United Nations Network on Migration has urged that all migrants be included in COVID-19 mitigation efforts, as an integral part of the public health response, and that authorities undertake measures to combat pandemic-linked xenophobia, discrimination and violence against migrants and other minority groups.[64] [65]

A key element of inclusive public health response is responsible, linguistically appropriate and adapted public health information. In the United Kingdom, Doctors of the World, the British Red Cross and other civil society organizations provide an information platform offering COVID-19-related resources in 60 languages.[66] They also translate official COVID-19 guidance produced by the National Health Service, with financial support from the Greater London Authority.[67] In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has made information and communication materials (including audio-visual materials) available in 34 languages, and has developed a specific communication toolkit targeting migrants and refugees.[68] Australia's Department of Health has made available over 1 300 information and communication resources on Covid in 74 languages to reach most of the country's linguistically and culturally diverse residents.[69]

Beyond information and language barriers, migrants and refugees often face more structural challenges to accessing health care, linked with cost, cultural insensitivity of service provision and fears of arrest and deportation. Addressing these obstacles requires more adapted and specific approaches.

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60. Kirisci K. and Erdogan M., Turkey and COVID-19: don't forget refugees, Brookings Institution, Washington D.C.: www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/04/20/turkey-and-covid-19-dont-forget-refugees/.
61. www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/01/04/2020/Workers-in-quarantine-to-get-full-salary,-says-Ministry-of-Labour.
62. www.arabnews.com/node/1650026/saudi-arabia.
63. www.meed.com/latest-news-on-the-pandemics-economic-impact.
64. https://smw.ch/article/doi/smw.2020.20263.
65. www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-provinces-urged-to-scrap-wait-period-for-newcomers-to-access-public/.
66. Doctors of the World, Coronavirus advice: latest government guidance translated into 60 languages: www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/coronavirus-information/#.
67. www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-resources-and-services-your-language.
68. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/communication-toolkit.html.
69. www.health.gov.au/resources/translated?search_api_views_fulltext=covid%2F19.

South Korea and Malaysia sought to overcome such barriers by covering the cost of COVID-19 tests for everyone in the country, and have encouraged migrants with irregular status to come forward for testing by ensuring there are firewalls between the health care and immigration systems.[70] Ireland also moved to provide COVID-19-related health care, including testing, to everyone, regardless of immigration status.[71]

The Maldives set up a clinic for expatriate and migrant workers, where they do not need to present a work permit or other documentation.[72] Mobile health clinics in the United States have been shown to minimize structural barriers to health care by offering culturally and linguistically appropriate support and connecting immigrants with the Unite States health-care system.[73] In Spain, the city of Cartagena, in coordination with the Murcia Region Health Service, has facilitated access to health care for unregistered or undocumented migrants and refugees. This includes verification and extension of health-care coverage for migrants whose permits have expired; providing guidance on obtaining provisional health care; and facilitating access to medicines for people at risk or socially excluded (through an agreement with the Association of Pharmacists).[74] As mentioned above (Section 2), Portugal and Italy have aimed to increase access to health care through regularization processes.[75]

Third-sector organizations play an important role in providing health advice and practical assistance to communities and groups at particular risk from COVID-19. For example, Médecins sans Frontières, which has expanded its humanitarian activities in European countries, set up a temporary clinic in Paris for homeless people to provide advice on the risks and how to manage them; it also set up a 50-bed facility in Brussels where migrants and homeless people can isolate and receive medical care.[76] Caritas Hellas provided migrants and refugees in camps on Chios and Lesbos islands with cleaning items such as soaps and antiseptics, and remote psychosocial services to camp residents and the local population through web conferencing and phone calls. The Italian NGO INTERSOS provides medical screening, support and advice relating to COVID-19 for homeless people, those in informal settlements and agricultural workers.[77]

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70. www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/nts/global-health-security-impact-of-covid-19-can-irregular-migrants-cope/#.XqG8KpozYb7; https://msf-seasia.org/blogs/18851.
71. UN Migration responds to COVID-19: www.youtube.com/watch?v=NROg9_YEkRY IOM Ireland.
72. COVID-19: Special clinic for expatriate workers established at Hulhumale' preschool: https://raajje.mv/72934.
73. https://news.ucr.edu/articles/2020/07/02/mobile-clinics-can-help-address-health-care-needs-latino-farmworkers.
74. Intercultural Cities: COVID-19 special page: www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/covid-19-special-page#, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.
75. da Silva C., Portugal's COVID-19 strategy to treat immigrants like citizens is working, *Newsweek* 18 June 2020: www.newsweek.com/portugal-protecting-public-health-amid-coronavirus-pandemic-means-protecting-migrant-health-too-1506817. Portugal: COVID-19 measure – services ensured for people with pending applications for asylum regularisation, European Council on Refugees and Exiles, Weekly Bulletin, 2 April 2020: www.ecre.org/portugal-covid-19-measure-services-ensured-for-people-with-pending-applications-for-asylum-or-regularisation/.
76. Confinement: une clinique éphémère pour les personnes sans-abri à Paris: www.msf.org/msf-steps-covid-19-response-europe.
77. L'interveno di Intersos: www.intersos.org/emergenza-covid-19/italia/.

In Botkyrka (Sweden), the Church of Sweden offers counselling to those who have lost family to COVID-19.[78] The Diversa/mente Association in Bologna provides a free psychological support service for migrants and volunteers.[79] ETNA (Etnapsicologia analitica) offers psychological support services to migrants and to those who work in reception facilities.[80] Terre des Hommes Italy, whose psychologists are experts in emergencies, shares guidance on good practices for coping, which is available in several languages.[81]

In Singapore, civil society organizations (CSOs) complement assistance from public health-care providers to reach local migrant workers, for instance by providing specialist COVID-19 services and information.[82] Doctors of the World UK has set up a daily helpline for asylum seekers and migrants in irregular situations giving advice on COVID-19, supporting registration with their local doctor, holding remote consultations for urgent problems, receiving prescription medication and arranging access to hospital care.[83] The British Medical Association (the trade union and professional body for United Kingdom doctors) has published a "refugee and asylum seeker patient health toolkit": guidance for health professionals on how to treat patients who are refugees or asylum seekers, their specific health needs and how to overcome barriers to obtaining treatment.[84] Match4Healthcare, a website created by students as an open source project, matches health-care workers and volunteers – both citizens and foreigners living in Germany – to clinics and care homes needing support.[85]

ApartTogether, a collaboration between the World Health Organization, the UN System and research centres, is a global survey available in 37 languages to assess how refugees and migrants experience the public health impact of COVID-19 and how they deal with challenges. The findings will inform policymakers on how to give better support.[86]

The shortage of qualified staff has been a major challenge to managing the COVID-19 crisis, yet all over the world migrants and refugees have been demanding to contribute to public health responses.[87] A number of countries have taken action to enable health professionals with foreign qualifications to help meet the demand for health care.[88] In several European countries, the main approach has been to allow foreign health professionals to work in national health systems – something many were not permitted to do previously. Examples of this are given in Section 6: Labour and employment.

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78. Intercultural Cities: COVID-19 Special page: www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/covid-19-special-page#, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.
79. www.associazionediversamente.org/dmente/2020/04/supporto-psicologico-transculturale-online-per-lemergenza-covid-19/.
80. www.etnopsicologianalitica.com/.
81. https://terredeshommes.it/terre-des-hommes-in-campo-contro-il-coronavirus/.
82. www.healthserve.org.sg/.
83. Doctors of the World UK, Supporting and getting health care to vulnerable migrants during Covid: www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/our-work/coronavirus-response/uk-supporting-and-getting-healthcare-to-vulnerable-migrants-during-covid/.
84. BMA refugee and asylum seeker health resource, British Medical Association, London, 2019: www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/ethics/refugees-overseas-visitors-and-vulnerable-migrants/refugee-and-asylum-seeker-patient-health-toolkit.
85. https://match4healthcare.de/.
86. www.aparttogetherstudy.org/.
87. www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/5/5ebd461d4/coronavirus-spreads-refugee-doctors-want-join-fight.html.
88. OECD 2020. Contribution of migrant doctors and nurses to tackling COVID-19 crisis in OECD countries, OECD, Paris: www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/contribution-of-migrant-doctors-and-nurses-to-tackling-covid-19-crisis-in-oecd-countries-2f7bace2/.

Chapter 4
Housing and shelter

T he home is a first line of defence against COVID-19, by enabling self-isolation and social distancing. For many migrants and refugees, lack of access to decent living conditions has been a key factor of vulnerability to the virus, as they have little option but to stay in unsanitary, overcrowded accommodation. Migrants and refugees have therefore been the recipients of diverse housing and shelter support initiatives during the pandemic. Some have attempted to provide (temporary) accommodation, often using or adapting existing buildings, or to decongest specific structures (such as camps or barracks) in which many migrants reside, in order to improve their living conditions. In many cases, this work has been led by municipal and regional authorities.

Odemira, a municipality in Portugal hosting between 8 000 and 10 000 foreign agricultural workers, undertook to adapt large buildings such as sports halls as temporary housing, each accommodating up to 500 people, to provide migrant workers with dignified accommodation in an attempt to prevent COVID-19 transmission.[89]

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89. Portuguese municipality prepares 500 quarantine places for foreign agricultural workers, 17 March 2020, European Web Site on Integration: Migrant Integration Information and good practices: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/portuguese-municipality-prepares-500-quarantine-places-for-foreign-agricultural-workers; Coronavírus: Odemira tem 500 lugares para quarentena de imigrantes. Público 17 March 2020: www.publico.pt/2020/03/17/sociedade/noticia/coronavirus-odemira-500-lugares-quarentena-imigrantes-1908173.

Moratoriums on rent for dwellings have been issued by city authorities in Barcelona and Lisbon.[90] Groningen established an emergency shelter for foreign nationals arriving in the Netherlands who no longer have access to asylum procedures. Regional authorities secured two hotels in Brussels with a combined capacity of 220 spaces to host migrants without access to official or associative housing services. Caritas Hellas, Caritas Athens and Catholic Relief Services participate in the UNHCR-led ESTIA (Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation) programme, co-funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, which hosts nearly 26 000 asylum seekers across Greece and provides dignified and safe accommodation, together with economic support.[91]

Many other countries have taken specific measures to decongest refugee and transit camps and migration reception or detention centres. Qatar, for instance, mandated improved living conditions for labour migrants in workers' accommodation.[92]

Measures aimed at supporting homeless vulnerable people may also include migrants and refugees. Around 700 000 people in Europe were homeless before the pandemic. In most European Union States, there has been a shortage of screening tests for homeless people, including migrants, who are often unable to self-isolate safely afterwards. Temporary shelters have been set up in gymnasiums, hotels and vacant buildings to confine homeless people presenting COVID-19 symptoms or who have tested positive.[93] In Budapest, the Mayor's office announced in May that it would turn a wing of the city hall (intended as the city's art gallery) into a temporary shelter for 500 homeless people at risk of violence living on the streets.[94] The Mayor of London, working with central government and the Intercontinental Hotels Group, secured 300 hotel rooms for rough sleepers to self-isolate for 12 weeks.[95] Bristol City Council took over 300 homeless people into emergency accommodation, including migrants with "no recourse to public funds" status, which prevents them from accessing State support. Bristol also set up a "One City Taskforce", comprising representatives from local government and civil society, to identify the necessary support and longer-term pathways for everyone in emergency accommodation. Milan, in partnership with

90. Barcelona – Rent Moratorium. Cities for Global Health 2020: www.citiesforglobalhealth.org/initiative/barcelona-rent-moratorium; Câmara Muncipal de Lisboa 2020, document outlining measures to be taken against COVID-19: https://covidnews.eurocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Lisbon-Covid-19-measures.pdf; Council of Europe, 2020, Intercultural Cities: COVID-19 Special page: www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/covid-19-special-page#.

91. Caritas in Greece protects the rights of migrants and refugees facing COVID-19, Reliefweb 16 June 2020: https://reliefweb.int/report/greece/caritas-greece-protects-rights-migrants-and-refugees-facing-covid-19; http://estia.unhcr.gr/en/home/.

92. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33625.

93. Koh D. (2020), "Migrant Workers and COVID-19", in *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 77(9), pp. 634-636: https://oem.bmj.com/content/77/9/634; *Fifth Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe 2020*, Fondation Abbé Pierre and FEANTSA, Paris and Brussels: www.feantsa.org/en/report/2020/07/23/fifth-overview-of-housing-exclusion-in-europe-2020?bcParent=27; https://oem.bmj.com/content/77/9/634.

94. City of Budapest 2020. City Hall providing shelter for homeless people: https://koronavirus.budapest.hu/en/2020/05/04/city-hall-providing-shelter-for-homeless-people/. There are many other examples of cities providing shelter for homeless people and travellers in general, which may include migrants and refugees, although this is not specified.

95. Mayor of London, 21 March 2020, London's rough sleepers to be offered hotel beds to isolate: www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/rough-sleepers-to-be-offered-hotel-beds-to-isolate.

local non-profit organizations coordinated through the Farsi Prossimo Cooperative, provides COVID-19 monitoring shelters to support homeless people and unaccompanied migrant youth.[96] Stuttgart, working with the German Red Cross, created more than 300 places for accommodation in March, targeted particularly at refugees and homeless people.[97] Leeds City Council has provided temporary accommodation to homeless asylum seekers who have no recourse to public funds; measures were also put in place to support victims of domestic violence.[98]

Europe Must Act, a social movement campaigning for a more humane migration policy, aims to relocate refugees from camps in the Aegean Islands to countries in the European Union. It has stimulated over 40 local chapters, launched an open letter to EU leaders signed by 160 grassroots non-profit organizations and 100 000 individuals, and launched #CitiesMustAct, a campaign mobilizing citizens to call on local authorities to pledge to relocate refugees from the islands.[99] Ten European cities, including Amsterdam, Barcelona and Leipzig, pledged shelter to unaccompanied migrant children from the camps.[100]

In order to reduce risk conditions linked with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers staying in overcrowded settlements, many countries have attempted to decongest the locations in which they live. This has led to the relocation of some individuals to alternative sites and/or the closure of settlements in particularly hazardous locations. In Greece, for instance, efforts were made before the September 2020 fire in Moria to move vulnerable migrants out of the camps,[101] both to the mainland and abroad.[102] However, camps in Lesbos, Kos, Chios, Samos and Leros and mainland Greece continued to exceed their capacity,[103] with nearly 100 000 asylum applications pending before the Greek authorities.[104]

In addition, those granted refugee status have been asked to leave the camps and are left to fend for themselves with no socioeconomic protection.[105]

96. www.mayorsmigrationcouncil.org/covid19-1.

97. Stuttgart – shelter for quarantine patients, 28 March 2020. Eurocities live updates COVID-19: https://covidnews.eurocities.eu/2020/03/28/stuttgart-shelter-for-quarantine-patients/.

98. Intercultural Cities: COVID-19 Special page: www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/covid-19-special-page#.

99. Hitchings-Hales J., "A new movement in Europe is demanding that cities welcome refugees amid COVID-19", Global Citizen, 6 May 2020, available at: www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/refugees-covid-19-europe-must-act-citiesmustact/.

100. Rankin J., "Cities lobby EU to offer shelter to migrant children from Greece", The Guardian, 24 February 2020: www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/24/cities-lobby-eu-to-offer-shelter-to-migrant-children-from-greece?fbclid=IwAR1RXEUAx7gwexjqHnj0aDrIDFUYn8VRhqJyoaDFC5-tt1dL3WCcxZn6kZs.

101. www.euronews.com/2020/05/03/greece-transfers-almost-400-migrants-from-lesbos-island-to-mainland.

102. www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/world/20200402STO76413/meps-call-for-measures-to-prevent-covid19-crisis-in-refugee-camps; www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2020-002407-ASW_EN.html; www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/8/5f07127d4/happiness-faces.html; https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_1291; www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2020-002407-ASW_EN.html.

103. www.dailysabah.com/politics/eu-affairs/greece-expels-11000-refugees-from-government-housing-amid-covid-19-pandemic.

104. www.infomigrants.net/en/post/26556/close-to-100-000-asylum-applications-still-pending-in-greece.

105. www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/20/chaos-moria-despair-athens-greece.

In order to address the outbreak of COVID-19 among migrant workers in dormitories, and in addition to a huge testing campaign, the Government of Singapore sought to decongest migrants' accommodation by rapidly making available additional shelters.[106] Similarly, many countries have released migrants from immigration detention centres during the pandemic because of overcrowding: these include Portugal, France, Japan, Indonesia and the Netherlands.[107] Partial or full releases are being witnessed across the globe, from Mexico to Indonesia, from Peru to the United Kingdom and the United States.[108]

Spain was one of the first countries to release detainees from immigration detention centres (Centros de Internamiento para Extranjeros), where individuals are detained prior to deportation.[109] With borders closed, deportation became a more distant possibility, prompting authorities to order the release of detainees. By May 2020, detention centres across Spain were empty.[110] Released migrants were allowed to stay with family members residing in Spain. For others, including undocumented migrants, protection and assistance were provided by the Government in coordination with civil society organizations.[111] However, migrants continued to be detained in the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.[112] [113]

In the United States, a federal judge ordered the release of children from three immigration detention facilities in Texas and Pennsylvania, amid fears of risks to their health and lives.[114] Other US courts have ordered the immediate release of migrants detained under immigration proceedings, taking into account the serious health risks they face in detention facilities.[115] United Kingdom detention centres have been emptied out, too. Residents with United Kingdom addresses were allowed to return to their homes, and others provided with housing and protection.[116] In Japan, migrants requiring medical treatment who had not committed serious crimes were released from immigration detention centres in May.[117]

106. www.economist.com/asia/2020/06/18/singapore-promises-roomier-digs-for-migrant-workers.
107. https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/31/coronavirus-asylum-end-immigration-detention-spain-france-end-of-fortress-europe/.
108. www.euronews.com/2020/04/29/countries-suspending-immigration-detention-due-to-coronavirus-let-s-keep-it-that-way-view; www.globaldetentionproject.org/covid-19-immigration-detention-platform#Mexico.
109. www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20200319/474263064358/interior-abre-puerta-liberar-internos-cie.html.
110. www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/europe/spain; https://elpais.com/espana/2020-05-06/se-vacian-los-centros-de-internamiento-de-extranjeros-por-primera-vez-en-tres-decadas.html.
111. www.elsaltodiario.com/coronavirus/defensoria-del-pueblo-confirma-la-liberacion-de-internas-del-cie; https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/31/coronavirus-asylum-end-immigration-detention-spain-france-end-of-fortress-europe/.
112. https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/31/coronavirus-asylum-end-immigration-detention-spain-france-end-of-fortress-europe/.
113. www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/europe/spain.
114. www.globaldetentionproject.org/covid-19-immigration-detention-platform#Mexico.
115. http://bds.org/wp-content/uploads/Basank-v.-Decker-TRO-Grant.pdf.
116. www.bbc.com/news/uk-52560093.
117. www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/05/01/national/immigration-start-trying-provisional-release-keep-virus-detention/#.Xy1NfSgzZPZ.

International organizations, including the UN Network on Migration, have issued guidelines to inform the work of governments and other stakeholders with detained migrants in times of COVID-19, which stress the need for identifying alternatives to detention during the pandemic.[118] While the actions by authorities have been pointed out as examples of alternatives to detention,[119] the fear of re-commencement of proceedings, execution of expulsion orders and the return to functioning of these centres remains.[120]

118. https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/default/files/docs/un_network_on_migration_wg_atd_policy_brief_covid-19_and_immigration_detention_0.pdf.
119. https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/31/coronavirus-asylum-end-immigration-detention-spain-france-end-of-fortress-europe/.
120. www.publico.es/sociedad/cierre-cie-coronavirus-espejismo-cie-vacios-reabriran-pueda-expulsar-extranjeros.html; www.ouest-france.fr/bretagne/rennes-35000/ille-et-vilaine-la-cimade-denonce-la-reouverture-du-centre-de-retention-6885981.

Chapter 5
Education

Access to education is considered a fundamental human right. The Global Compact for Migration envisages access to inclusive, equitable and quality education for migrant children and youth. However, legal, linguistic, economic and psychosocial challenges severely impact migrant children's access to education and impair their ability to fully utilize the educational facilities available.[121] With the pandemic, these access barriers have widened.

As of September 2020, over 875 million students worldwide had been affected by school closure.[122] Schools and learning centres for migrants and refugees have closed across the globe, including schools at the Za'atari camp in Jordan[123] and Dadaab camp in Kenya,[124] learning centres in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh[125] and Thailand,[126] and also affecting asylum seekers in Central America,[127] forcibly displaced children in west Africa,[128] and migrant children in Greek camps.[129] Access to education of migrant and refugee children was a challenge prior to the pandemic, with a recent UNHCR report stating that school enrolment in 2019 significantly dropped between primary and tertiary levels, with only 3 per cent of refugee children enrolling in tertiary education.[130]

121. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265866/PDF/265866eng.pdf.multi (p. 18); www.iom.int/sites/default/files/press_release/file/access-to-education-for-refugee-children.pdf; https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf (211).
122. https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse.
123. www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2020/4/5e84a3584/syrian-refugees-adapt-life-under-coronavirus-lockdown-jordan-camps.html.
124. www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/4/5e79e2410/live-blog-refugees-covid-19-crisis.html.
125. https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/rohingya-children-bearing-brunt-covid-disruptions-bangladesh-refugee-camps.
126. www.unicef.org/thailand/stories/children-and-teachers-migrant-learning-centres-face-challenges-due-covid-19.
127. www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/5/5eb94dd14/refugee-children-hard-hit-coronavirus-school-closures.html.
128. www.unhcr.org/dach/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2020/06/Concept-note_The-Impact-of-COVID19-on-Refugee-Education_V17_06.pdf.
129. www.infomigrants.net/en/post/23496/greek-islands-migrant-camps-new-restrictions-to-contain-coronavirus.
130. www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/9/5f4cc3064/unhcr-report-coronavirus-dire-threat-refugee-education-half-worlds-refugee.html; www.unhcr.org/5f4f9a2b4.

Countries do undertake efforts to integrate migrant and refugee children into the education system,[131] but several factors stall these efforts. A study by UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF highlights the impact of migration status on the ability of young migrants and refugees to access the educational system, in addition to language barriers and the lack of psychosocial support systems.[132] Several countries explicitly deny migrant children with irregular status access to education.[133] Unaccompanied minors are particularly at risk of missing out on education.[134]

With lockdowns and mobility restrictions resulting in schools closing and classes being delivered online or through television and radio broadcasts, migrants and refugee children have experienced additional barriers to education.[135] The digital divide and lack of access to basic facilities and networks has translated into reduced ability to follow school curricula – especially for children with disabilities.[136] School closure can exacerbate exposure to violence and acute economic impacts for children from marginalized groups, prompting higher rates of dropping out, especially among girls, and higher susceptibility to trafficking, smuggling, and labour and sexual exploitation.[137]

Governments and other entities have been working to ensure that refugee and migrant children have continued access to education throughout the pandemic, experimenting with an array of digital and non-digital solutions. Self-paced learning programmes have been developed, which provide flexibility in accessing curricula and securing access to electricity and internet connectivity.[138]

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131. www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Refugee-children-in-education-in-Europe.-How-to-prevent-a-lost-generation.pdf; www.savethechildren.net/news/over-200000-lone-child-migrants-left-uncertain-fates-europe#:~:text=Some%20210%2C000%20unaccompanied%20children%20sought,Save%20the%20Children%20said%20today.&text=%E2%80%9CThe%20way%20Europe%20has%20treated,hour%20of%20need%20is%20unacceptable.

132. www.iom.int/sites/default/files/press_release/file/access-to-education-for-refugee-children.pdf; www.hrw.org/report/2019/12/03/are-we-not-human/denial-education-rohingya-refugee-children-bangladesh.

133. www.iom.int/sites/default/files/press_release/file/access-to-education-for-refugee-children.pdf.

134. https://reliefweb.int/report/france/france-children-left-limbo-despite-covid-19; www.euronews.com/2020/05/04/as-coronavirus-sweeps-europe-unaccompanied-refugee-children-becoming-more-vulnerable-view; www.dailysabah.com/politics/child-refugees-struggle-to-survive-in-balkans-europe-fails-to-come-up-with-solid-stance/news; www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/02/european-court-orders-france-protect-unaccompanied-migrant-child.

135. https://data.unicef.org/resources/migrant-and-displaced-children-in-the-age-of-covid-19/.

136. https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/educo-calls-increased-support-help-rohingya-children-access-quality-remote; www.epi.org/blog/access-to-online-learning-amid-coronavirus-and-digital-divide/; www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-least-third-worlds-schoolchildren-unable-access-remote-learning-during; www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/digital-divide-philadelphia-immigrant-communities-coronavirus-remote-learning-20200823.html; https://laureatesandleaders.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/A_FAIR_SHARE_FOR_CHILDREN_REPORT_9SEPT2020.pdf; https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/76131.pdf.

137. https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1071062; www.iom.int/sites/default/files/documents/covid-19_analytical_snapshot_17_impacts_on_migrant_children_and_youth_0.pdf; www.globalpartnership.org/blog/displacement-girls-education-and-covid-19.

138. https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2020/07/13/three-innovative-responses-to-covid-19-that-have-removed-barriers-to-learning-for-the-most-marginalised/; https://en.unesco.org/news/supports-education-authorities-lebanon-ensure-continuity-education-inclusion-and-equity.

In Turkey, under an EU-funded project, the Ministry of Education and UNDP have introduced a blended model for learning for Syrian refugees, with a mix of face-to-face and online learning modes. The model, which was introduced in 2019, with online delivery of the curriculum, flexible self-study options, and availability of educators to provide direct support, has become a key element for refugee-inclusive education during the pandemic.[139]

In Jordan, at the Azraq and Za'atari refugee camps, efforts are under way to ensure continuation of studies for students with disabilities, especially speech and hearing-impaired students. Many children have been provided with tablets, containing learning material and disability-friendly apps. Parents have been involved and instructed in how to support children's education at home.[140] Lebanese Alternative Learning, a non-profit organization providing alternate means to education and innovative use of technology to encourage learning, has been providing flexible access to digital content and the curriculum to refugee children.[141]

In the Dadaab refugee complex in Kenya, a community radio station and WhatsApp groups are used by teachers to reach out and contact students directly.[142] Many students are familiar with online connectivity models for supplementing education, including the Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) and Instant Network Schools (INS) programmes.[143] The latter, supported by the Vodafone Foundation, aims to overcome access barriers by using technology to connect students, educators and learning resources and is implemented across 20 schools working with refugee populations. The platform has provided access to education and health resources that are helping refugee communities keep up to date on COVID-19 related information.[144] Where students are unable to access INS, alternative study plans through WhatsApp are being implemented.[145]

In the Kyangwali refugee settlement, Uganda, refugee-led organizations are supporting the continuity of education at home during school closures. COBURWAS International Youth Organization to Transform Africa (CIYOTA), which provides education and nurtures entrepreneurial capacities among refugee youth and children, has partnered with stakeholders to address barriers faced by refugee populations, including limited access to internet and electricity. It has adopted a multi-tier model, including sharing handwritten notes, WhatsApp audio and videos and enabling access to the government's online platforms. CIYOTA further aims to strengthen educational capacities by setting up a system of community-level volunteers, including teachers and graduates to provide a support system and learning environment

139. https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/coronavirus-forces-classroom-learning-go-online-across-world-project-syrian-refugees.
140. https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2020/07/13/three-innovative-responses-to-covid-19-that-have-removed-barriers-to-learning-for-the-most-marginalised/.
141. https://wsa-global.org/winner/r2t-reach-to-teach-tabshoura/; www.linkedin.com/pulse/drosbox-winner-world-summit-awards-2019-patrick-habib/.
142. www.unhcr.org/uk/news/stories/2020/4/5ea28f144/refugee-students-lessons-radio-during-kenya-school-shutdown.html.
143. Ibid.
144. www.vodafone.com/covid19/news/how-vodafone-foundation-continues-to-support-refugee-education.
145. Ibid.

at village level, and by developing an e-learning platform adapted to the refugee contexts and technological limitations.[146]

In Matamoros Tent City, a transit camp at the United States-Mexico border, the Sidewalk School for Children of Asylum Seekers has gone online in response to the pandemic. The school provides classes for children of migrants and asylum seekers living in the camps – an increasingly urgent priority as tightening of immigration policies and closure of borders have left many stranded at the border.[147] The teachers are also asylum seekers who speak Spanish.[148] Many pupils have been supplied with tablets provided by the school and donors, to help with their transition to online learning.[149]

Learning Equality's open source platform, Kolibri, is another innovative technology that helps to overcome internet access issues, especially among vulnerable and marginalized populations. Once the learning content is downloaded, it can be shared offline.[150] The UNHCR and its partners in Uganda have been using this application during the pandemic.[151]

Where internet access is an unsurmountable barrier, teachers have adapted face-to-face classes. In the case of refugee students from the Central African Republic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, schools have limited pupils' attendance in order to adhere to physical distancing rules. Mobile classrooms and the use of protective equipment have allowed the Aula Móvil project to provide education to Venezuelan refugees in La Paz.[152]

In the EU, SIRIUS – Policy Network on Migrant Education is conducting a survey to understand barriers and good practices adopted by schools and educators in ensuring access to education for children with a migration background during the pandemic.[153] Significant efforts have been made to ensure access and continuity of education for international students enrolled in higher education institutes in EU and OECD member States. Admission processes and visa and immigration processes have been revisited to ensure flexibility and priority in processing, and that border closures do not adversely affect students' ability to study.[154] Post-study work visa regulations have also been relaxed in some countries including Australia and the

146. https://mastercardfdn.org/refugee-led-organizations-can-deliver-education-to-refugee-children-during-covid-19-and-beyond/.
147. www.sidewalkschool.org/what-we-do; www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/mexico-border-sidewalk-school-teaching-migrant-children-200414011427764.html.
148. www.wfxrtv.com/news/back-to-school/sidewalk-school-for-migrant-children-welcomes-new-academic-year-despite-pandemic/.
149. Ibid.
150. https://learningequality.org/kolibri/.
151. www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/09/four-ways-refugees-continued-their-education-during-lockdown/.
152. Ibid.; https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/BOL%20factsheet%20-%20June%202020%20FINAL.pdf.
153. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/call-for-participation-sirius-survey-on-covid-19s-effect-on-vulnerable-learners.
154. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/inform-2-impact-of-covid-19-on-international-students-in-eu-and-oecd-member-states.

United Kingdom.[155] [156] [157] For universities, such measures are also a precondition to continue to attract foreign students.[158]

These examples show that many initiatives addressing the educational needs of vulnerable migrants build upon educational models that gave visibility to the educational needs of migrant and refugee children, and learning systems already in existence. However, in situations like the migrant camps in the Greek islands, which even prior to the pandemic were struggling to provide education to the children living there, or among Rohingya refugee children in Cox's Bazaar, conditions have worsened since the pandemic, and charities and international organizations are struggling to sustain and find alternatives for the limited schooling available, if at all.[159] The fires in Moria have worsened the situation in the Greek camps.[160]

155. https://thepienews.com/news/australia-considers-post-study-work-visa-adjustment-for-stranded-students/.
156. https://thepienews.com/news/uk-confirms-post-study-work-stands-if-onshore-by-april-21/.
157. https://thepienews.com/news/institutions-offer-financial-support-to-struggling-students/.
158. http://prensa.mites.gob.es/WebPrensa/noticias/inmigracionemigracion/detalle/3859.
159. www.dw.com/en/world-in-progress-refugee-kids-in-greece-miss-out-on-education/av-54540080; https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1062592; www.unicef.org/press-releases/rohingya-children-bearing-brunt-covid-disruptions-bangladesh-refugee-camps-education.
160. www.ipsnews.net/2020/09/helping-make-education-a-reality-for-the-75-million-children-in-conflict-zones/.

Chapter 6
Labour and employment

All over the world, migrants' ability to work and make a living has been acutely affected by the pandemic and related lockdowns, through closure of business and economic downturn. Many have become unemployed and have little access to financial resources to cope with related economic insecurity, often having concerns regarding the legality of their stay in the country.[161] As a consequence of widespread border closures and travel restrictions, labour markets across the globe have drastically contracted. Migrants have felt these impacts acutely, being among the first to be affected by job losses, stranded in host countries or returning home with no security regarding their future.[162]

To foster international action for the protection of labour migrants during COVID-19, IOM released a set of guidelines for employers and recruiters outlining ethical considerations in recruitment and employment practices, which were made available in multiple languages.[163] In association with the International Chamber of Commerce, IOM has also issued guidelines for the protection of the physical, psychological and socioeconomic well-being of migrants during the pandemic.[164] Similarly, ILO has released guidance documents on the protection of migrant workers.[165]

The pandemic has highlighted the multiple ways in which migrant workers contribute to the economic and social life, and sustainability, of their host societies. Around the world, seasonal farmworkers, often undocumented, qualified professionals, workers in the logistics, construction and social care sectors, and even international students, all play a key role in ensuring the functioning and resilience of societies.[166] As governments have grown increasingly cognisant of the importance of these workers, they have adopted measures to support them, by for instance supporting their immigration (see Section 1) and employment status. Many of these schemes have been mainly motivated by market demands and interest as opposed to humanitarian and human rights considerations. While they have the potential to support migrants' ability to cope with and recover from the impacts of the pandemic, much remains to be done to ensure long-term protection of employment and residency status and dignified working conditions for migrant workers.

161. www.infomigrants.net/en/post/26440/in-germany-the-coronavirus-disproportionately-affects-migrants;Thailand.
162. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/stranded-irregular.pdf; www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/un-agency-foresees-possible-crisis-within-crisis-migrant-workers-head-home; www.thedialogue.org/analysis/covid-19-impacts-migrant-vulnerabilities-and-remittances-to-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/; www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history.
163. https://iris.iom.int/covid-19-crisis-response.
164. www.iom.int/sites/default/files/defaul/2020_icc_guidance_for_migrant_workers_02.pdf.
165. www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/WCMS_748791/lang--en/index.htm.
166. http://ftp.iza.org/pp155.pdf.

In many countries, key economic sectors dependent on the presence of migrant workers have been severely hit by travel restrictions adopted in response to COVID-19. Increased labour demand in these sectors has resulted in countries relaxing travel restrictions for migrants, providing migrants, refugees and asylum seekers with regular work opportunities, and improving working conditions and protection standards at the worksite.

In April, the German Government lifted its travel ban to allow seasonal farmworkers to return, to mitigate the devastating impact of travel bans on the agricultural sector. Increased labour demand in the agriculture sector led to the relaxation of labour laws, allowing asylum seekers and migrants with no work permits or restricted permits to work in the agricultural sector.[167] Italy's regularization scheme (mentioned in Section 1) also specifically targeted workers in the agricultural and social care sectors. Similarly, Greece provided work permits to undocumented migrants to meet labour demands in the agricultural sector.[168]

In the United States, to address labour shortages in farms dependent on Central American (often undocumented) workers,[169] farmworkers were re-categorized as essential workers.[170] The Government relaxed the procedures for the seasonal guest worker visa programme, including waiving requirements for in-person interviews, which eased the movement of workers from Mexico.[171] Undocumented essential workers, including those in the health care and agricultural sectors, were excluded temporarily from the purview of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), as the authority stated it would initiate immigration enforcement only against persons detained on criminal grounds or public safety risks.[172] While this brought about relief from immediate deportation fears,[173] several cases of ICE detention of workers reflect a disconnect between policy and practice.[174]

The pandemic also brought to stark light the exploitative conditions in which seasonal and migrant farmworkers have been functioning for years. Italy,[175] Spain,[176] Germany,[177] Canada[178] and the United States[179] have come under scrutiny regarding this.

167. www.infomigrants.net/en/post/24276/germany-to-allow-asylum-seekers-to-work-in-agriculture-until-october.
168. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/docs/pages/00_eu_31st_emn_bulletin_special_annex_en_0.pdf.
169. www.nytimes.com/2020/04/02/us/coronavirus-undocumented-immigrant-farmworkers-agriculture.html.
170. Ibid.
171. Ibid.
172. www.ice.gov/news/releases/updated-ice-statement-covid-19.
173. www.nytimes.com/2020/04/02/us/coronavirus-undocumented-immigrant-farmworkers-agriculture.html.
174. www.wlrn.org/show/latin-america-report/2020-04-07/undocumented-migrants-if-were-essential-workers-during-covid-19-why-detain-us; https://inthesetimes.com/article/essential-worker-deportation-immigrant-undocumented-daca.
175. www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jul/13/brutal-deaths-of-exploited-migrants-shine-a-spotlight-on-italys-farms.
176. www.infomigrants.net/en/post/26136/strawberry-pickers-plight-exposes-modern-slavery-in-spain; www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26007&LangID=E.
177. www.infomigrants.net/en/post/26355/germany-s-exploited-foreign-workers-amid-coronavirus.
178. www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/20/canada-migrant-farm-workers-coronavirus.
179. www.businessinsider.com/immigrant-farm-workers-deemed-essential-but-feel-expendable-2020-5?r=US&IR=T.

In other countries, agreements were reached between countries of origin and destination that paved the way for automatic renewal of visas and extension of stay during lockdown and beyond. For instance, in Thailand nearly 100 000 workers from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar, whose employment permits expired during the lockdown, were allowed to remain and work in the country until the end of July,[180] and in early August nearly half a million migrant workers, with permits expiring in October 2020, were allowed to continue working there until March 2022, subject to completion of the necessary stipulated processes.[181] However, there are still concerns regarding loss of jobs and conditions of work.[182]

In some countries, specific measures were taken to provide relief to migrant workers. New Zealand provided extensions for employer-assisted temporary work visas and low-income migrant workers who are required to stand down for a year before returning to New Zealand for work. [183]

Several Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries relaxed measures to support the labour market and migrants, through renewal of work permits and extension of residency permits. In the United Arab Emirates, work permits for labourers and support staff, including domestic workers, were automatically renewed and extended, without the need for mandatory medical tests.[184] Bahrain cut fees for renewing and maintaining work permits for three months starting in April, a move that supports employers and prevents individuals from becoming irregular due to unaffordability of renewal.[185] Qatar provided for automatic renewal of residency permits of the workforces stranded abroad due to border closures and unable to return to the country.[186] Saudi Arabia also provided for automatic extension of entry and exit permits for expats stranded abroad, including labourers and domestic workers, and also automatic extension of residency permits for foreigners within the country.[187] Despite these measures, discriminatory actions, unsatisfactory living and working conditions, and mass repatriations have been widely reported in the region during the pandemic.[188]

180. www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/briefingnote/wcms_741920.pdf.
181. www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1962707/govt-to-grant-migrants-longer-stay.
182. www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/briefingnote/wcms_741920.pdf.
183. www.mondaq.com/newzealand/work-visas/964080/new-zealand-immigration-update--major-interim-changes-to-temporary-work-visas; www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/the-government-has-made-short-term-changes-to-nz-temporary-work-visas.
184. https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/justice-safety-and-the-law/handling-the-covid-19-outbreak/supporting-the-labour-market-in-the-private-sector-in-times-of-covid19/renewal-of-work-permits-and-residence-visas-amid-covid-19.
185. www.migrant-rights.org/2020/04/bahrain-announces-amnesty-for-irregular-migrants-and-cuts-in-flexi-permit-fees/.
186. www.wgoqatar.com/2020/04/ministry-workers-in-quarantine-to-get-full-salary/.
187. https://english.alarabiya.net/en/coronavirus/2020/07/15/Coronavirus-Saudi-Arabia-announces-automatic-extension-of-expat-residence-visas.
188. www.ihrb.org/focus-areas/non-discrimination/covid19-migrant-workers-discrimination; www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/6/1/in-the-gulf-migrant-workers-bear-the-brunt-of-the-pandemic/; https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2020/4/8/dont-forget-about-the-gulfs-migrant-workers.

All over the world, migrants, both high-skilled and low-skilled, represent a significant percentage of the workforce deployed to combat the pandemic.[189] During the pandemic, migrant populations have reached out to governments to support the system, specifically the health-care system.[190] Delays in skills recognition and validation of foreign qualifications have prevented many foreign health-care professionals from entering the workforce.[191] Countries took a variety of measures to engage them in key sectors.[192] In many cases, this has been achieved through fast-track recognition of skills and qualifications, and in other cases by directly inducting these individuals into relevant systems for immediate support.[193]

France, Germany, Italy and Spain in particular have allowed migrant doctors to practise in order to fill the increased demand for medical professionals.[194] In Spain the Government prioritized the work authorization, approval of residence permits and skills recognition of 200 foreign doctors and nurses residing in the country, in order to allow them to work in the national health system.[195] The Government also considered hiring some 2 000 Venezuelan doctors already in Spain who were awaiting their qualification recognition.[196] By April 2020, 400 qualification accreditation and 390 work permits had already been granted by the Government.[197]

In Germany, a need for more qualified medical staff to meet the demands of the pandemic surfaced, including for testing, tracing and caring of patients. With nearly 2 300 doctors sick or quarantined, the health authorities appealed to medically

189. https://voxeu.org/article/covid-19-immigrant-workers-europe; www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2020/05/22/less-gratitude-please-how-covid-19-reveals-the-need-for-migration-reform/; www.odi.org/migrant-key-workers-covid-19/; https://time.com/5826166/refugees-coronavirus-healthcare/ www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/4/5e9460f74/refugees-offer-medical-experience-help-tackle-coronavirus-crisis-france.html; https://time.com/5826166/refugees-coronavirus-healthcare/; www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/contribution-of-migrant-doctors-and-nurses-to-tackling-covid-19-crisis-in-oecd-countries-2f7bace2/.

190. www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/25/covid-19-call-for-fast-track-registration-of-refugee-doctors-in-uk.

191. www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/4/5e9460f74/refugees-offer-medical-experience-help-tackle-coronavirus-crisis-france.html; www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/5/5ebd461d4/coronavirus-spreads-refugee-doctors-want-join-fight.html; https://unric.org/en/the-refugees-at-the-heart-of-the-fight-against-covid-19/.

192. www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/4/5e957e9611/council-europe-unhcr-support-member-states-bringing-refugee-health-workers.html.

193. www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/contribution-of-migrant-doctors-and-nurses-to-tackling-covid-19-crisis-in-oecd-countries-2f7bace2/.

194. https://unric.org/en/the-refugees-at-the-heart-of-the-fight-against-covid-19; www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-germany-refugees/refugees-to-the-rescue-germany-taps-migrant-medics-to-battle-virus-idUSKBN21C2IG; www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/contribution-of-migrant-doctors-and-nurses-to-tackling-covid-19-crisis-in-oecd-countries-2f7bace2/.

195. http://prensa.mites.gob.es/WebPrensa/noticias/inmigracionemigracion/detalle/3758.

196. "España abre la puerta a más de 2.000 médicos venezolanos para la lucha contra el coronavirus", El Nacional, 16 March 2020: www.elnacional.com/mundo/espana-abre-la-puerta-a-mas-de-2-000-medicos-venezolanos-para-la-lucha-contra-el-coronavirus/.

197. "El Gobierno incorpora a cerca de 200 profesionales sanitarios extranjeros al Sistema Nacional de Salud", Infosalus, 27 March 2020, www.infosalus.com/actualidad/noticia-gobierno-incorpora-cerca-200-profesionales-sanitarios-extranjeros-sistema-nacional-salud-20200327095434.html; https://english.elpais.com/society/2020-04-15/im-a-radiologist-but-here-im-just-the-house-cleaner.html.

qualified migrants to help tackle the pandemic, including through social media.[198] Some 14 000 Syrian refugee doctors in Germany awaiting their qualification recognition offered their assistance.[199] By early May more than 600 foreign doctors in several federal states, awaiting their German licence to practise, had responded to such calls.[200] Language skills however remain a major hurdle, since professionals must have a good knowledge of German to obtain a licence to practise medicine.

In April 2020, France permitted public health establishments to recruit refugees who are qualified health professionals (doctor, dental surgeon or pharmacist) and have work experience in their country of origin. Under the French Public Health Code, they are required to be supervised by a French qualified professional, and can practise as associate practitioners performing common medical procedures.[201] Further, due to the shortage of staff to validate qualifications, many regions have sent applicants directly to hospitals, with the latter having responsibility to do the relevant background checks.[202]

As seen above, most health-related professions are tightly regulated and need approvals from national health authorities. The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR), launched by the Council of Europe in 2017 to help States assess refugees' qualifications and facilitate their integration, is helping to speed up accreditation and licensing processes by establishing a qualified pool of pre-assessed refugee health practitioners, and by working with partners from National Qualifications Recognition Centres to identify and assess the skills and credentials of refugee health professionals. The EQPR involves recognition centres from 10 countries (Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom) as well as public authorities and the UNHCR. More than 500 refugees have benefited from the programme across Europe so far.[203]

In March, the Irish Medical Council considered how to deploy health professionals trained outside the European Union and European Economic Area to provide "essential support" (for example, as health-care assistants) during the crisis, and made contact with asylum seekers about the opportunities available to them to help in the effort against COVID-19. Applications were to be fast-tracked to support health services.[204]

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198. "Germany calls on migrant medics to help tackle coronavirus", The Guardian, 14 April 2020: www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/14/germany-calls-on-migrant-medics-to-help-tackle-coronavirus.
199. Ibid.
200. www.facebook.com/185347338173082/posts/3576654775708971/?substory_index=0.
201. "Mobilisation citoyenne : les réfugiés diplômés hors UE peuvent contribuer au service public de santé", Délégation interministérielle à l'accueil et à l'intégration des réfugiés, Paris: 14 April 2020: https://accueil-integration-refugies.fr/2020/04/14/les-refugies-peuvent-contribuer-au-service-public-de-sante/.
202. https://time.com/5826166/refugees-coronavirus-healthcare/.
203. "The Council of Europe and UNHCR support Member States in bringing refugee health workers into the COVID-19 response": www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2020/4/5e957e9611/council-europe-unhcr-support-member-states-bringing-refugee-health-workers.html?query=EQPR; www.unhcr.org/fr-fr/news/stories/2020/5/5ec3924f4/covid-19-eqpr-des-sessions-dentretiens-ouvertes-aux-professionnels-de-sante.html.
204. "Coronavirus: Refugee and asylum seeker medics could provide 'essential support'", Irish Times, 20 March 2020: www.irishtimes.com/news/health/coronavirus-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-medics-could-provide-essential-support-1.4208280.

The United Kingdom Government extended work visas for around 2 800 foreign doctors, nurses and paramedics for one year free of charge to tackle the pandemic.[205] In March, qualified refugee doctors appealed to the Government to fast-track their accreditation, to enable them to support pandemic response. Some reported working as taxi drivers or in takeaways because of the long, expensive and onerous accreditation process [206] In April, hundreds of overseas-born medical staff responded to a scheme allowing doctors to join as medical support workers, but there were calls to permit doctors to work as doctors.[207] In May the Government scrapped a health-care surcharge on foreign National Health Service (NHS) and care workers,[208] following public criticism, and introduced faster and cheaper visas for skilled foreign health and social care workers, with effect from January 2021.[209]

Peru, Chile and Argentina also have allowed foreign health professionals in the country to assist efforts to contain the pandemic.[210] In Argentina, Venezuelan doctors were incorporated into the system and hired by municipalities, without the need to undergo validation of qualifications, based on provisions of the law allowing temporary hiring in emergencies.[211] Similarly, in the United States, the Governor of New Jersey signed an executive order removing barriers to foreign qualified health-care professionals from joining the COVID-19 response teams.[212] Migrants are also supporting health-care systems by providing cleaning, food delivery and other services.[213]

Given the likelihood that COVID-19 outbreaks will recur, policymakers will in future need to set up structures and systems that allow more rapid and efficient movement of health workers between countries. This is likely to require strategic planning for future pandemics, including flexible and adaptive methods for recognizing certified skills, vetting professionals, issuing and extending visas, and providing support to health workers.[214]

The living and working conditions of migrant workers also came under scrutiny during the pandemic, with many working environments contributing to the spread of the virus, due to challenges to adhering to government-recommended hygiene and physical distancing measures.

205. www.independent.co.uk/voices/coronavirus-nhs-staff-overseas-charge-work-key-workers-immigration-a9423306.html.

206. www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/25/covid-19-call-for-fast-track-registration-of-refugee-doctors-in-uk?CMP=share_btn_tw.

207. www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/apr/17/refugees-among-hundreds-of-overseas-medics-to-respond-to-nhs-call.

208. www.euronews.com/2020/05/21/uk-increase-of-healthcare-surcharge-for-foreign-workers-deemed-cruel-as-pm-refuses-to-waiv.

209. https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-immigration/britain-offers-fast-track-visas-for-foreign-health-workers-idUKKCN24E1IG.

210. www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/5/5ebd461d4/coronavirus-spreads-refugee-doctors-want-join-fight.html.

211. www.lanacion.com.ar/sociedad/coronavirus-municipios-provincia-buenos-aires-sumaran-medicos-nid2346577.

212. www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562020/20200401b.shtml.

213. https://unric.org/en/the-refugees-at-the-heart-of-the-fight-against-covid-19/.

214. Dempster H. and Smith R. (2020), "Migrant Health Workers are on the COVID-19 frontline. We need more of them", Center for Global Development, 2 April 2020: www.cgdev.org/blog/migrant-health-workers-are-covid-19-frontline-we-need-more-them.

The outbreak of coronavirus in German meatpacking plants and slaughterhouses, for instance, prompted authorities to scrutinize working and living conditions,[215] with calls for reform coming both from the governments of migrants' countries of origin[216] and labour unions in Germany.[217] In an attempt to address these issues, the German Government sought to remove sub-contractors and bring the large migrant workforce directly under the supervision of the meatpacking plants or slaughterhouses where they work. In order to avoid exploitation, digital logging of working hours was implemented,[218] with strict fines for violation of rules.[219] Local authorities were mandated to ensure that the plants adhere to health regulations, including physical distancing norms in workplaces and living quarters.[220] Similar practices were also adopted in the United States and the United Kingdom.[221] However, many migrant workers remained concerned and refused to go back to slaughterhouses and unhygienic living conditions.[222]

In Singapore, cramped and crowded accommodation facilities for labour migrants became COVID-19 hotspots,[223] prompting government action involving extensive testing, isolation and caring for workers in dormitories.[224] The Government also started work to ensure better accommodation facilities for migrant workers.[225] Both long- and short-term plans to provide decent accommodation to workers are underway as a result of the pandemic.[226] Guidelines to ensure safety in labour accommodation were also issued by countries in the GCC.[227]

Despite measures undertaken by governments, concerns remain about living and working conditions, including their impacts on the psychosocial and economic well-being of migrant workers. In specific cases, these have translated into self-harming incidents and suicides among poor migrant workers confined to dormitories, such as in Singapore.[228]

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215. www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/germany-1500-workers-test-positive-for-covid-19-at-meat-processing-plant-company-criticised-for-failure-to-protect-workers/.
216. www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-germany-romania/romanian-minister-calls-for-migrant-labour-rethink-after-slaughterhouse-covid-cases-idUSKBN22V2D8.
217. www.dw.com/de/corona-kabinett-nimmt-fleischindustrie-an-den-haken-sp%C3%A4ter/a-53475291.
218. www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-52738356; www.dw.com/en/germany-agrees-stricter-meat-industry-regulations-following-coronavirus-outbreaks/a-53510078.
219. www.dw.com/en/germany-agrees-stricter-meat-industry-regulations-following-coronavirus-outbreaks/a-53510078.
220. www.hrw.org/news/2020/05/29/germany-protect-meatpacking-workers-better.
221. www.marketwatch.com/story/how-meat-plant-covid-outbreaks-revealed-devastating-workplace-conditions-2020-08-17?link=MW_latest_news.
222. www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-romania-germany/reluctant-to-work-in-infected-german-slaughterhouse-romanian-goes-home-to-raise-goats-idUSKBN2482IB.
223. https://theconversation.com/this-is-why-singapores-coronavirus-cases-are-growing-a-look-inside-the-dismal-living-conditions-of-migrant-workers-136959.
224. www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-06/singapore-s-virus-cases-to-fall-as-worker-dorms-almost-cleared; www.straitstimes.com/singapore/long-and-hard-battle-to-clear-worker-dorms-of-covid-19.
225. www.economist.com/asia/2020/06/18/singapore-promises-roomier-digs-for-migrant-workers.
226. www.gov.sg/article/improved-standards-of-new-dormitories-for-migrant-workers.
227. www.gulf-insider.com/bahrain-covid-19-precautionary-guidelines-for-labour-camps-issued/.
228. www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-singapore-migrants/spate-of-suicides-among-migrant-workers-in-singapore-raises-concern-idUSKCN2510QP.

COVID-19 SYMPTONS

أعراض مرض كوفيد- 19

FEVER	COUGH	SHORTNESS OF BREATH	SORE THROAT	HEADACHE
حمى	سعال	ضيق في التنفس	إلتهاب الحلق	صداع الراس

Chapter 7
Public information and communications

Provision of public health information on COVID-19 and how to deal with it has been a major activity of national and local governments. National, pan-European and international specialist agencies have published a considerable volume of information online about precautions against COVID-19, often in several languages. These include the World Health Organization (WHO) Information Network for Epidemics and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) online guidance,[229] together with outputs from numerous national institutes and health organizations.[230]

Many national and local efforts have been developed and implemented for communities with a culturally and linguistically diverse population. In many countries, national authorities and town and city administrations, as well as non-governmental stakeholders, including migrants and refugees themselves, have produced and disseminated information for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in different languages and through different communication channels and media.

In Spain, the Catalonia Department of Labour, Social Affairs and Families produced information on COVID-19 in several languages, text and audio formats.[231] SetisW, the social interpretation service of Belgium's Wallonia region, which works with immigrant reception institutions, published videos and documents translating government decisions and information on COVID-19 for refugees and migrants, to ensure they understand official safety measures and can take appropriate protective action.[232] It has translated official recommendations into 14 languages, shared via a website and YouTube video clips.[233] The translations are available to those on

229. EPI-WIN: WHO Information Network for Epidemics; www.ecdc.europa.eu/en www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19-pandemic.

230. For example, the National Institute for the Promotion of the Health of Migrant Populations and for the Fighting of Poverty Diseases (INMP) has collected and summarized in several languages the national provisions for combating the spread of COVID-19.

231. Generalitat de Catalunya, Department of Labour, Social Affairs and Families. Informative material [about COVID-19] in other languages. https://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/ca/el_departament/coronavirus-sars-cov-2/materialaltresllengues/.

232. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/social-interpretation-service-in-belgium-translates-covid-19-information-in-14-languages; https://setisw.com/.

233. Albanian, English, Arabic, Armenian, Dari, Spanish, Farsi, Lingala, Urdu, Pashto, Polish, Russian, Somali, Swahili, Chechen and Turkish.

the front line – social workers, employers, police officers and others – who regularly interact with migrants and refugees. In Sweden, county administrative boards have produced films in different languages on behalf of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), for use by social and health communicators working with foreign-born residents and newcomers, to inform them about how to protect themselves against COVID-19 and prevent its spread. The films can be viewed on a website[234] and other organizations can distribute the material on their own channels.

The Mayors Migration Council (MMC) has developed an Inclusive City COVID-19 Response and Recovery page[235] to support local efforts to address COVID-19 and ensure no one is left behind because of their immigration or refugee status. It provides tools and resources for city leaders and the international community, including the latest updates, webinars from city networks and international organizations, key messages for cities, a checklist of policy actions to take, and other resources on COVID-19. It also tracks activities by city authorities and other agencies. Cities reported by the MMC[236] to have been active in providing practical information in multiple languages relating to the virus, its impacts and protective measures against it include Athens (Greece), Brussels (Belgium), Brno (Czechia), Erlangen, Nuremberg, Neumarkt and Stuttgart (Germany) , Vienna (Austria), Turku (Finland), Zurich (Switzerland), Gdansk, Poznan and Lublin (Poland), Oslo and Kristiansand (Norway), Reykjavik (Iceland), Madrid and Cartagena (Spain), Bradford (United Kingdom), Portimão (Portugal), Dublin (Ireland) and Milan (Italy). Information is typically shared through a wide range of methods and media including printed and online documents, podcasts and video clips. In Emilia-Romagna, Italy, municipalities deliver information in multiple languages through posting on municipal websites, video and audio clips, YouTube, brochures and information sheets.[237]

Cities are using imaginative approaches to community engagement and dissemination of information. For example, Stuttgart's website includes video clips produced on their own initiative by refugees, for refugees, in seven languages, explaining hygiene and behavioural measures. Zurich manages a centralized, multilingual and accessible internet platform to ensure immigrant and refugee communities have access to information about the pandemic. The city has also organized telephone hotlines, created WhatsApp channels and published flyers in multiple languages.[238]

The City of Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant and Refugee issues (ACCMR) collects and shares COVID-19 information for community workers and beneficiaries,[239] including updates from the national government; Q&As about COVID-19[240] produced by IOM Greece in seven languages; and "FAQs for migrants – spread the news, not the virus",[241] a podcast series in Arabic, Farsi, English and French produced by Solidarity

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234. www.informationsverige.se/sv/mer-om-sverige/samhalle/nyheter/om-nya-coronaviruset/.
235. www.mayorsmigrationcouncil.org/mmc-covid19.
236. MMC Municipal COVID-19 Resource Guide.
237. https://sociale.regione.emilia-romagna.it/intercultura-magazine.
238. www.stadt-zuerich.ch/gud/de/index/gesundheitsversorgung/public-health/coronavirus-sars-cov-2/otherlanguages.html.
239. www.accmr.gr/en/news/835-coronavirus-info-en.html?art=1.
240. https://greece.iom.int/en/qas-about-covid-19.
241. www.solidaritynow.org/en.

Now in cooperation with pod.gr, the Greek podcast platform. Ioannina (Greece) has paid particular attention to raising awareness about prevention and response to COVID-19 among migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in urban and refugee camp settings. In cooperation with the police, NGOs and migrants' representatives, the city provides targeted information on prevention of COVID-19. Police vehicles disseminate key information daily in recorded messages in the native languages of migrant populations. Local radio also provides information to migrants in their native languages. The city has distributed information materials to employers of migrants.[242]

Communications approaches used by organizations traditionally active in supporting marginalized or excluded groups include social media, YouTube uploads and videos in different languages. For example, UNICEF's COVID-19 portal provides information material and videos in several languages for parents on how to protect their children.[243] The Italian NGO ARCI, which supports mutual aid societies, has published 10 rules for avoiding contagion from coronavirus on its website (in several languages) and, with the support of UNHCR Italy, has launched an information platform on the coronavirus emergency. The humanitarian organization MEDU – Doctors for Human Rights, provides information to combat the spread of COVID-19 in several languages; so do IOM Italia and Save the Children Italia; while Médecins du Monde – Mission Italy provides a telephone number to speak to a doctor in French, English and Italian.[244] Terre des Hommes Italy, whose psychologists are experts in emergencies, shares guidance on good practices for coping, which is available in several languages.[245] The Tamil Association in Reggio Emilia has set up an online portal in Tamil explaining rules, regulations and actions taken by the Government at national and local levels, as well as recording videos on health and social behaviour.[246]

In order to improve the effectiveness of communication efforts, many countries and local authorities have worked to remove barriers to accessing the internet or specific communication channels. As part of its COVID-19 response, Leeds City Council is funding third-sector organizations to help vulnerable migrants access the internet. The organizations have also been given funding to issue phone credit vouchers to asylum seekers. The city's Migration Team runs a weekly virtual/online drop-in to share the latest information about COVID-19, attended by approximately 15 migrant community networkers each week representing community groups from a number of countries; and a Facebook page has been set up to share information.[247] An online information hub for migrant and refugee communities in the Yorkshire and Humber region has been created, translated into more than 40 languages.[248] Information

242. www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/covid-19-special-page#.
243. www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19.
244. www.arci.it/nuovo-coronavirus-le-10-regole-da-seguire-in-tante-lingue/; https://coronavirus.jumamap. com/it_it/; https://italy.iom.int/it/covid-19-brochure-informative; https://mediciperidirittiumani.org/ coronavirus-informazioni-importanti-per-cittadini-italiani-e-stranieri/; www.savethechildren.it/blog-notizie/coronavirus-non-solo-italiano-i-nostri-suggerimenti-diverse-lingue; www.medecinsdumonde. org/fr/actualites/nos-combats/2020/03/17/coronavirus-medecins-du-monde-se-mobilise.
245. https://terredeshommes.it/terre-des-hommes-in-campo-contro-il-coronavirus/.
246. www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/the-city-of-reggio-emilia-struggling-with-the-coronavirus-health-emergency.
247. Guinea, Romania, United Republic of Tanzania, the Sudan, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Somalia, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and France.
248. https://migrantinfohub.org.uk/.

on topics such as asylum, free school meals, English language classes, COVID-19 advice and access to Wi-Fi and computers is shared through the hub to migrants and professionals supporting migrant communities.[249]

Countries in the Gulf have allowed migrants to access long-distance communications options, for example by unlocking Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) platforms and social media. This can not only help reduce isolation and improve access to information, but also reduce the psychosocial impacts they (and their distant family members) suffer as a consequence of the crisis.[250]

Refugee-led organizations have long played an important, although neglected, role in providing basic services and protection to other refugees and host communities in camps and cities around the world. For example, refugee-led organizations in Uganda have raised awareness about COVID-19 and disseminated information on preventive hygiene and sanitation measures in the camps, as well as made and distributed face masks. In other countries around the world, refugees are providing information and training, food distribution, legal and psychosocial support, and transportation for those in need of medical care.[251]

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249. www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/covid-19-special-page#.
250. Human Rights Watch (HRW) 2020, COVID-19: Unblock Voice Over IP Platforms in Gulf web page.
251. Betts A. et al. (2020), "Refugee-led responses in the fight against COVID-19: building lasting participatory models", in Forced Migration Review 64: 2-5; Met A. et al. (2020), "By refugees, for refugees: refugee leadership during COVID-19 and beyond", in Forced Migration Review 64: 5-7: www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/issue64/COVID19.pdf.

Chapter 8
Financial assistance

Financial support and aid also play an important part in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on migrant workers' well-being. In Thailand, the Government announced unemployment benefits for migrant workers, including 60 per cent of salary for up to 90 days.[252] However, preconditions such as requirement of formal registration with the social security system, having a bank account and having contributed to the welfare system for at least six months, made the benefits unavailable for many informal sector workers, and more broadly for undocumented migrants.[253]

Other countries have adopted a variety of temporary measures to provide income support and other forms of financial assistance to migrants and refugees during the pandemic. For example, Ireland has instituted the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP), a social welfare payment for employees and self-employed people who have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 emergency. The PUP is available to all workers in Ireland between the ages of 18 and 66, including regular and irregular migrants.[254] Similarly, in March 2020 Italy introduced a number of income support measures, including allowances, income subsidies and bonuses, for self-employed and seasonal workers (including those working in agriculture and tourism) whose activities are affected by COVID-19. Refugees and asylum seekers and residence document holders can apply.[255] In July, the Scottish Government called on the United Kingdom Government to suspend "no recourse to public funds" restrictions that deny some immigrants financial help during the pandemic.[256]

252. www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-04/30/c_139021908.htm.
253. www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-thailand-migrants/migrants-jobless-and-trapped-under-thai-coronavirus-lockdown-idUSKBN22B1HP; www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/thailands-migrant-workers-struggle-qualify-aid-during-pandemic-0.
254. IOM Ireland: www.youtube.com/watch?v=NROg9_YEkRY; www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/unemployed_people/covid19_pandemic_unemployment_payment.html.
255. https://coronavirus.jumamap.com/en/2020/04/07/info-curaitalia/.
256. www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/immigration-bill-vote-indefinite-detention-boris-johnson-a9594511.html.

In several states of the United States of America, undocumented workers received aid from local bodies, complementing federal support schemes that did not include them. In some cases, assistance was provided by state governments, and in other cases through a coalition of NGO, civil society and philanthropic organizations.[257] The State of California provided cash benefits to undocumented workers, acknowledging the essential nature of their work.[258] In addition to state funding of USD75 million, private actors and charities banded together and raised another USD50 million to support undocumented workers adversely impacted by the pandemic.[259] The fund resulted in USD500 contributions being granted to 150 000 individuals.[260] Celebrities held fundraisers to support migrant workers, particularly farmworkers, facing work shortage or job losses because of the pandemic.[261]

In Italy, the Regional Government of Campania's €604 million support programme for families, businesses and vulnerable groups includes special funding for African communities involved in harvesting who would otherwise be unprotected. In addition, €3.8 million has been allocated to immigrants in informal settlements in certain municipalities to adapt buildings as temporary housing for migrants and provide safe transport services for workers.[262]

The extent of philanthropic support to migrant and refugee communities during the pandemic is unknown, but probably extensive. An example is the United Kingdom's National Lottery Community Fund, which is distributing £45 million to organizations supporting communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19: this includes £5 million to the Barrow Cadbury Trust to assist small and medium-sized organizations supporting migrants and refugees.[263] At local level, the Quartet Community Foundation, which works in the West of England, set up a Coronavirus Fund to support response and recovery. This fund donated to the NGO Bristol Refugee Rights to respond to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in the city of Bristol during the outbreak: the grant covers a range of costs including translation, interpreting and communications.[264] Community organizations and associations have also been active in raising funds at grassroots levels, as part of mutual aid activities (see Section 9).

On occasions, migrants' countries of origin have been promoting cash assistance schemes for their nationals abroad. For instance, Tunisia's Office of Tunisians Abroad (OTE) allocated 900 thousand dinars to help Tunisians stranded abroad, students not receiving a scholarship and irregular migrants.[265]

257. https://cmsny.org/publications/state-local-aid-immigrants-covid-19-pandemic-innovating-inclusion/; www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/covid-19-and-undocumented-workers; www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-01/undocumented-workers-shut-out-from-u-s-aid-run-out-of-options.

258. www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/covid-19-california-give-payments-undocumented-immigrants-200415210239065.html.

259. www.gov.ca.gov/2020/04/15/governor-newsom-announces-new-initiatives-to-support-california-workers-impacted-by-covid-19/.

260. Ibid.; https://covid19.ca.gov/guide-immigrant-californians/.

261. https://in.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-usa-workers-idINL8N2CO7BK.

262. www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/covid-19-special-page#{%2262433518%22:[6]}.

263. https://fundraising.co.uk/2020/07/13/national-lottery-community-fund-to-distribute-45m-to-vulnerable-communities-through-five-partnerships/.

264. https://quartetcf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/05.05.20-C-19-Grants-Approved.pdf.

265. http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/428451587390154689/pdf/Potential-Responses-to-the-COVID-19-Outbreak-in-Support-of-Migrant-Workers-June-19-2020.pdf.

Chapter 9
Material assistance and mutual aid

Information on forms of material assistance is relatively limited and mostly concerns food supplies. Many cities across the world have provided free food to poor and vulnerable households and groups, and to school students. While not the specific target of most of these initiatives, destitute migrants and refugees have often been among their main beneficiaries.

Cartagena (Spain) has supported the families of migrants, especially undocumented ones, by coordinating distribution of food and hygiene products and providing advice on dealing with difficulties (such as payment of rent, loss of work, administrative procedures and deadlines, unemployment). Job offers are compiled and sent to families.[266] In Leeds (United Kingdom) the City Council is coordinating a citywide volunteer scheme in partnership with third-sector organizations, whereby 30 community hubs organize volunteers to take food parcels to the most vulnerable, including asylum seekers and refugees. The scheme receives referrals by phone or online, and food parcels are given out irrespective of immigration status.[267] Lewisham Council in London set up an emergency grant programme to help residents facing financial hardship to cover costs of food and fuel; and the Mayor of Lewisham launched an appeal for donations to Lewisham's foodbank, which raised over £100 000 in just over one month, receiving donations from over 2 400 people.[268]

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266. www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/covid-19-special-page#.
267. Ibid.
268. Ibid.; www.lewishamfoodbankappeal.co.uk/; www.newsshopper.co.uk/news/18396704.lewisham-food-bank-appeal-passes-100k/.

Poland's social assistance programme permits foreigners to receive social assistance on the same terms as Polish citizens: this includes shelter, meals, necessary clothing and a designated benefit, and food aid (provided under the EU Food Aid Operational Programme 2014-20). Citizens from other EU member States, foreigners with long-term residence permits and those with temporary residence permits issued in relation to refugee status, humanitarian reasons or subsidiary protection are all entitled to assistance. Under the Food Aid Operational Programme 2014–2020 (FEAD), foreigners entitled to social assistance can obtain free food products, handed out by non-governmental organizations on the basis of the certificate issued by municipal social services centres.[269]

Mutual aid is a voluntary exchange of resources or services for mutual benefit, where people take responsibility for caring for one another.[270] It is often invisible and difficult to identify or measure because it is local and does not advertise itself. Activities and organization are often informal and non-hierarchical in nature, making accurate assessment of the scale of mutual aid work impossible. This has certainly been the case with activities currently being undertaken in response to the pandemic. Nevertheless, it appears that the pandemic has stimulated an enormous growth in the number of local mutual aid groups. There are more than 1 300 listed in the United Kingdom, for example, most of them set up in response to needs arising from COVID-19. Their activities are wide-ranging: in particular, they include efforts to share information and provide material and emotional support to affected people.[271] A typical example is an initiative coordinated by the local charity Bearwood Action for Refugees (assisted by a local foodbank, church and children's play group) in Birmingham, United Kingdom, where volunteers deliver food and treats parcels to families of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who would normally attend monthly community lunches (before social distancing restrictions were enforced).[272]

It is noteworthy that many mutual aid activities have been undertaken by migrants and refugees themselves. The involvement of migrants and their organizations in these coordination mechanisms (and emergency response more widely) is a key element of inclusive approaches, allowing service provision systems to rely on local networks of well-informed, well-known and trusted individuals within the communities. Representatives and organizations of migrant and refugee groups have been involved in a range of COVID-19 response efforts, from public information provision to screening and tracing services and direct deployment of health workers. Mutual aid groups among at-risk communities have arisen all over the world, and interventions led by migrants and refugees for other members of their communities have been no exception.[273]

269. https://lublin.eu/en/lublin-4-all/coronavirus-info/.
270. Mutual aid 101 toolkit: https://mutualaiddisasterrelief.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NO-LOGOS-Mutual-Aid-101_-Toolkit.pdf.
271. Mutual aid and volunteer groups knowledge base: www.covid-19list.com/knowledge-base/mutual-aid-volunteer-groups.
272. www.itv.com/news/central/2020-03-29/volunteers-deliver-food-and-treat-parcels-to-those-without-friends-or-family-to-rely-on.
273. Betts A., Easton-Calabria E. and Pincock K. (2020), "Refugee-led responses in the fight against COVID-19: building lasting participatory models" in Forced Migration Review 64: 73-76.

In the village of Ter Apel, Netherlands, teams of people living in a local refugee and migrant reception centre have helped out voluntarily at local stores, as appreciation for the nation that took them in and where they have applied for asylum.[274] Barikama, a cooperative started in 2011 by African former fruit pickers near Rome, Italy, to fight against exploitation of farm workers, is providing yoghurt, fruit and vegetables to local families, trying to meet the high demand under lockdown.[275] In Reggio Emilia, Italy, the Nigerian Christian community has donated food products to the Red Cross in order to feed those most in need. Local Islamic Centres have donated €50 000 to health-care services, distributed masks and other health-care materials to health facilities, shopped for groceries and distributed food to elderly people. Chinese community associations have held fundraisers (raising over €70 000) and distributed sanitary materials and protective equipment on a large scale through official organizations and NGOs. Other cultural associations (involving migrants from Senegal, Nigeria, Mali, Ghana, the Philippines) have also raised funds.[276]

Involvement of migrants has also supported the resilience and response capacities of their communities in the face of COVID-19. For example, Prato, Italy, has a large Chinese community, which was quick to close shops, wear masks and spontaneously self-confine when news of coronavirus first appeared. The local Chinese cultural association issued warnings and organized mutual aid activities; the city then adopted these measures.[277] The Pakistan Cultural Society in Botkyrka Municipality (Sweden) has a radio channel to inform its members about the virus, based on infection prevention and control recommendations from Swedish agencies.[278] Forlì Città Aperta, a voluntary association in the city of Forlì, Italy, has committed to inform migrants about measures to be followed during lockdown, carried out fundraising, distributed shopping vouchers and small amounts of money (for example, for telephone top-ups).[279] [280]

In Brussels, hundreds of migrants were left homeless after authorities emptied half of the country's migrant detention centres to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and also closed the reception centre in Brussels that registers new asylum seekers, making it impossible for them to get State support. Local residents helped by feeding and housing migrants to keep them from sleeping on the streets, where they risk arrest. A local voluntary organization, Citoyens Solidaires, distributes food twice-daily at the Brussels-North station. [281] The Citizen Support Platform for Refugees, created in Belgium in 2015, aims to mobilize civic and associative

274. https://apnews.com/fd69797d6af1479c572b02aa75281bf9.
275. www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/01/a-beautiful-thing-the-african-migrants-getting-healthy-food-to-italians.
276. www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/the-city-of-reggio-emilia-struggling-with-the-coronavirus-health-emergency.
277. https://fr.euronews.com/2020/05/03/la-ville-italienne-de-prato-s-est-protegee-du-covid-19-grace-a-sa-communaute-chinoise.
278. www.mayorsmigrationcouncil.org/mmc-covid19.
279. www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/covid-19-special-page#.
280. www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/covid-19-special-page#{%2262433518%22:[8]}.
281. www.nytimes.com/2020/04/28/world/europe/belgium-migrants-coronavirus.html.

energies to change attitudes about migrants and provide a space for meeting and coordinating individual and collective initiatives.[282]

COVID-19 Mutual Aid UK[283] is an umbrella group for local community groups organizing mutual aid, providing resources[284] and connecting people to groups, volunteers and those in need. The local groups mostly focus on creating and distributing leaflets and flyers to let people know about the group; providing a number for local vulnerable people to call for support; running errands and shopping for vulnerable or self-isolating people; and providing emotional support to community members who are self-isolating or finding the pandemic overwhelming. Over 1 000 such local groups have been set up since March 2020.[285] COVID-19 Mutual Aid UK also coordinates care efforts for people who are self-isolating, especially the elderly, persons with disabilities and people with other pre-existing health issues. It offers support to people feeling isolated and anxious throughout the pandemic.

282. www.bxlrefugees.be/qui-sommes-nous.
283. https://covidmutualaid.org/.
284. https://covidmutualaid.org/resources/.
285. www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-51979390.

Chapter 10
Advocacy and coordination

A variety of bodies and organizations, at all levels, have called for migrant-inclusive COVID-19 response-and-recovery efforts. From the early stages of the pandemic, mandated international bodies such as the IOM, UNHCR, OCHA and OHCHR have issued warnings to public health systems on the specific conditions of vulnerability of migrants, refugees and displaced persons in their transit and host locations, and have called for action to address these factors of vulnerability as part of their responses. So have academics, and migrant, refugee and civil society networks.

#RefugeesRise, a global advocacy initiative, brought together refugee leaders from the Asia-Pacific region to mobilize support for their communities in response to the pandemic. Convened by the Asia-Pacific Network of Refugees (APNOR), the initiative included refugee leaders and activists, including doctors, nurses, teachers and aid workers, to give visibility to the perspectives of front-line workers involved in COVID-19 response efforts in different sectors.[286]

The city of Montreal, Canada has lobbied the Government of Quebec to regularize the status of asylum seekers working in the health-care system.[287] Employers in countries and sectors dependent on foreign labour (such as Spain, Italy, New Zealand, Australia and Canada) have advocated flexibility in entry regulations for migrant workers. In addition to supporting immediate resilience objectives, such interventions may help to change public perceptions of migrants and refugees in host locations and communities.

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286. www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/publication/refugeesrise-what-frontline-workers-can-show-us-about-responding-covid-19.
287. www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-asylum-seekers-1.5575905.

Coordination of a range of organizations is a key element of all institutional systems mandated with the management of risks and emergencies. In the face of COVID-19, all countries have relied on some combination of existing or newly established coordination mechanisms and forums bringing together governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in different aspects of the response. Experience from other crises shows that expanding such coordination mechanisms to involve those specifically dealing with migration issues and migrant assistance in non-crisis times is essential to supporting migrant-inclusive responses. This often requires engaging individuals and institutions that are not traditionally part of emergency response systems, but can support information management, communication, preparedness and response work.

Participation by these parties in governmental coordination mechanisms overseeing pandemic response has been essential to fully understanding and analysing the migration implications of COVID-19 efforts. This was the case of New Zealand's Epidemic Response Committee, which scheduled a hearing on immigration matters on 7 May 2020, in view of the proposed approval of a bill proposing amendment to immigration regulations. During the meeting, the committee considered concerns by migration advocates, migrants' rights lawyers and industry leaders with the aim of developing a better informed and more balanced approach to immigration matters in the context of the pandemic.[288]

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288. www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/416096/epidemic-response-committee-discusses-immigration.

Chapter 11
Stigmatization, xenophobia and discrimination

Stigmatization and scapegoating of migrants are common in many crises and have been widespread throughout the pandemic.[289] Countless episodes of xenophobia have been recorded since the early stages of the outbreak targeting Chinese and Asian migrants, then increasingly foreigners in general in countries all over the world.[290] More generally, the pandemic has been weaponized to spread anti-migrant narratives, in many cases targeting migrants coming from areas with limited or no risk of COVID-19 infection or long-term residents.[291] Stigmatization and discrimination have also been directed towards returnees coming back to their home countries and areas.[292]

In a pandemic, stigmatization and xenophobic speech and acts are a public health concern, as they are likely to prevent recipients from seeking timely health care and may discourage them from adopting healthy behaviours.[293] In increasingly mobile societies, efforts to counter migrants' stigmatization should therefore be integral to comprehensive provision of services and assistance. At different stages of the pandemic, the need to act decisively on this issue has been highlighted by all relevant international organizations.[294] These recommendations have been picked up by several governments, including in Spain, where the national government issued a press statement to expressly condemn any manifestation of xenophobia related to COVID-19.

289. White A. R. (2020), "Historical linkages: epidemic threat, economic risk, and xenophobia", The Lancet, 27 March 2020.
290. Kuo L. and Davidson H. (2020), "They see my blue eyes then jump back – China sees a new wave of xenophobia", The Guardian, 29 March 2020; Bauomy J. (2020), "COVID-19 and xenophobia: Why outbreaks are often accompanied by racism", Euronews, 6 March.
291. Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) (2020), COVID-19 Disinformation Briefing No. 1, Briefing Paper, ISD, 27 March 2020.
292. Kindzeka M. E. (2020), COVID-19 spread provokes anti-foreigner, anti-diaspora sentiment in Cameroon, VOA News, 23 March 2020.
293. World Health Organization (WHO) Europe (2020), Interim guidance for refugee and migrant health in relation to COVID-19 in the WHO European Region, WHO Europe, 25 March 2020.
294. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Countering%20Stigma%20in%20C19%20%20Final%2011%20June%202020.pdf.

Key bodies, including the World Health Organization, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention[295] and UNICEF,[296] have developed guidance on how to use key terminology related to COVID-19 in order to minimize the risk of stigma. The United Nations has developed a comprehensive guidance note on countering COVID-19-related hate speech with recommendations targeting member States, the mass media and social media, and civil society organizations.[297] WHO has provided guidance on actively countering disinformation and hate speech, including by spreading key facts, engaging social influencers, amplifying voices, stories and images of those who have recovered from the virus, and ensuring balanced media reporting disseminating evidence-based information.[298]

In order to support relevant public-awareness efforts and counter the stigmatization of migrants, IOM has made available a toolkit for strengthening the design, delivery and evaluation of information campaigns, placing strong emphasis on participatory approaches that increase interaction and involve audiences throughout the information campaign cycle. IOM has also supported targeted communication campaigns, such as in Mexico.[299]

Sharing information on the rationale and implications of migrant-inclusive response measures with the general public, giving visibility to migrants' roles and engagement in their host societies' response efforts, is particularly important to challenging stigma targeting migrants and societal perceptions of migrants' contribution to society. In many countries, including Italy, mainstream media have given visibility to migrant-led response-and-recovery initiatives benefiting their whole communities.[300] In other cases, reporting has focused on citizens' demands for inclusive response measures – as was the case in the many solidarity demonstrations and protests that have taken place across Europe following concerns about migrants' specific vulnerability in the pandemic.[301]

Supporting social cohesion and intercommunal dialogue is a key element of shaping perceptions and supporting more inclusive approaches. Prior to the pandemic, the #TuCausaEsMiCausa campaign facilitated cultural activities, sports events and other social mixing between the local population and Venezuelan migrants in Peru. With the arrival of the virus, the campaign moved to online cooking classes, talent contests and live storytelling of children books.[302]

295. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2020), Reducing stigma.
296. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2020), Quick guide to avoiding coronavirus-related stigma.
297. www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/Guidance%20on%20COVID-19%20related%20Hate%20Speech.pdf.
298. www.who.int/news-room/detail/23-09-2020-managing-the-covid-19-infodemic-promoting-healthy-behaviours-and-mitigating-the-harm-from-misinformation-and-disinformation.
299. www.iom.int/news/iom-launches-social-media-campaign-mexico-prevent-discrimination-during-covid-19-pandemic.
300. Antonelli D. (2020) 'A beautiful thing': The African migrants getting healthy food to Italians, The Guardian, 1 April 2020.
301. www.infomigrants.net/en/post/23906/leave-no-one-behind-protests-for-migrants-in-times-of-coronavirus.
302. https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/66962.

While social media have often been used to spread misinformation and hate, they have also provided an effective platform to counter stigmatization and display solidarity. The #iamnotavirus campaign, launched by two Asian-American friends to tackle stereotypes surrounding their communities in the pandemic, has gone viral. Similar campaigns have taken off in France (#Jenesuispasunvirus), Austria, Italy, Germany and Spain.[303] Seven refugees living in Italy managed UNHCR Italy's Instagram account for a week, starting from 28 March, spreading messages of responsibility and solidarity.[304] TikTok users have been vocal in pointing to abuses and exploitation targeting migrants affected by the pandemic and the 2020 California fires.[305]

In New York, #WashTheHate campaign collects and publishes stories of racism against the community and raises awareness of its inevitable harm to society.[306] The campaign contains videos uploaded by users, washing their hands, while narrating instances of racism during the pandemic; it also has an option to share anonymous stories.[307] Similarly, the "Fight the virus, fight the bias" campaign aims to tackle harmful stereotypes and racially motivated acts of harassment and abuse.[308]

In New Zealand, the Human Rights Commission launched the "Give Nothing to Racism" campaign, which included the release of videos entitled "Racism is no Joke", featuring a prominent Filipino-New Zealander comedian. The campaign was launched in response to the increased number of race-related complaints that were received through the COVID-19 line established by the Government.[309]

In Winnipeg, Canada, Immigration Partnership Winnipeg has launched a campaign "Manitobans: COVID-19 Doesn't Discriminate. Nor Should You" with the tag #DontdiscriminateMB.[310] To further emphasize the importance of migrants and refugees in the community, the campaign has started a photo campaign with front-line workers holding a white paper, indicating the essential work they are contributing to under the tag #EssentialinMB.[311]

In Australia, the activist group GetUp! launched the campaign #IWillEatWithYou, to support and encourage eating and shopping at Chinese and Asian restaurants and grocery shops that were under the threat of closing down permanently because of COVID-19 misinformation.[312]

Alliance F, a Swiss women's rights organization, developed an online mechanism to track instances of hate speech against women of different backgrounds and organize

303. www.iamnotavirus.info/.
304. www.infomigrants.net/en/post/23771/refugees-express-solidarity-with-italians-in-times-of-coronavirus.
305. www.vice.com/en_us/article/4ay8b3/tiktok-teens-are-exposing-brutal-conditions-for-migrant-farmworkers.
306. www.dw.com/en/campaign-aims-to-washthehate-of-coronavirus-racism/a-53309233.
307. www.washthehate.com/.
308. www.warc.com/newsandopinion/news/fight-the-virus-fight-the-bias-tackles-racism-against-asian-americans/43898.
309. www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/human-rights-commission-launches-new-campaign-after-asian-discrimination-reports-during-covid-19-pandemic.
310. www.ipwinnipeg.org/dontdiscriminatemb.
311. www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/anti-racism-campaign-manitoba-covid-19-1.5565833.
312. www.getup.org.au/campaigns/racial-justice/iwilleatwithyou/iwilleatwithyou?t=4NYYmTX6o.

and evaluate the effectiveness of targeted messages in response. Volunteer communities have been involved at every stage of the development and implementation of the tool.[313]

The City of Barcelona started a Catalan-language campaign to counter xenophobia, using the hashtag #StopRacisme, supported by "Emergencia Contra El Racismo", a web-based NGO platform through which the public can report instances of racism.[314] At the forefront of the campaign are six activists bringing insights from different communities, including activists for migrant rights, Roma rights and women's rights.[315]

Despite all these efforts to counter racist rhetoric against migrant communities, increased cases of xenophobia have been reported during the pandemic, including in Europe.[316] Racist campaigns, denial of access to basic services, unprotected working conditions and barriers to a life of dignity due to systemic racism, have all remained starkly evident, and in many cases have become even more widespread and urgent since the onset of COVID-19.[317]

313. www.iom.int/sites/default/files/documents/countering_xenophobia_and_stigma_130720.pdf.
314. https://en.unesco.org/news/stopracism-barcelonas-anti-racism-campaign-midst-covid19.
315. Ibid.
316. www.enar-eu.org/COVID-19-impact-on-racialised-communities-interactive-EU-wide-map.
317. Ibid.

Chapter 12
Repatriation and reintegration

T he widespread restrictions to internal and international movements that States have adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have acutely affected migrants, trapping them in host countries and in transit, with little access to local options for self-sufficiency and assistance.[318] In the face of the actual and potential well-being impacts of this situation for increasingly destitute migrant workers and their family members, travellers and tourists, and international students, as well as victims of trafficking and detained migrants, States all over the world have implemented a variety of efforts to repatriate their nationals stranded abroad. While exact figures are difficult to obtain, it is likely that millions of people, documented and undocumented migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, have been stranded as a result of the pandemic, and hundreds of thousands have received return assistance. International population movements present increasingly complex challenges for institutions mandated with the protection and assistance (including for return) of citizens abroad.[319]

As a consequence, government-chartered or organized flights have transported stranded individuals from and to all regions, including as part of large-scale efforts aiming to systematically return citizens stuck abroad. Many stranded migrant workers have been brought home through repatriation missions, by governments of several countries including the Russian Federation, Egypt, Azerbaijan and Nigeria, with other countries, including India, Viet Nam and the Philippines undertaking large-scale repatriation missions.[320] In some instances, return programmes have been organized through ad hoc cooperation schemes between countries, who have reciprocally agreed to return citizens, as in the case of the Russian Federation and Azerbaijan.[321]

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318. https://migration.iom.int/.
319. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/stranded-irregular.pdf.
320. https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/India-Philippines-rescue-stranded-Middle-East-laborers; https://vietnamnews.vn/politics-laws/770711/21000-vietnamese-citizens-brought-home-since-beginning-of-pandemic.html; www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/over-5-lakh-indians-repatriated-under-vande-bharat-mission-since-may-7-govt/story-YUqZk8hLsw80V4d8yVZp8N.html.
321. https://menafn.com/1100066268/Azerbaijans-MFA-discloses-number-of-people-crossing-Russian-Azerbaijani-border-UPDATE.

Initiatives by national human rights bodies,[322] [323] individuals' efforts and ad hoc cooperation schemes set up with private-sector bodies, such as employers and recruiters of citizens abroad,[324] have all also facilitated the return of stranded migrants. In the case of Nepal, the intervention of the Supreme Court was needed to ensure the Government provided funding for repatriation.[325]

Many of these programmes have prioritized specific categories of individuals, including those with pre-existing medical conditions or other circumstances making them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, or those facing potential issues related to their legal status. Other return programmes have provided assistance conditional on the condition that people pay their airfare, which has not always been possible for migrants.

In the case of countries sharing a land border, returns have been facilitated through the temporary reopening of borders; for example, on the Myanmar-Thailand border early in the pandemic, and between Zimbabwe and South Africa, Chile and Peru, and Russian Federation and Azerbaijan at later stages. Combined with screening and quarantine, these measures have been instrumental in overcoming obstacles to return for thousands of migrants around the world. On occasions, however, returns have overwhelmed the return country's management capacity, leading to fears of a spread of COVID-19, especially when returnees come from countries with high levels of infection, as in the case of Iran and Afghanistan.

Countries are also faced with increased numbers of stranded and returning migrants. In Indonesia, the Government has assisted internal migrant workers to return to their hometowns,[326] while in India there has been considerable criticism regarding the treatment of internal migrant workers during the pandemic.[327]

Many who have returned home face uncertain futures. Dwindling remittances and inability to go back to workplaces have become problematic.[328] Many countries have recognized the need for ensuring the socioeconomic security of returning migrant

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322. https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/05/14/rights-body-forms-task-force-to-assist-government-in-protecting-and-repatriating-migrant-workers; https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/roap_covid_response_sitrep_16.pdf.

323. www.khaleejtimes.com/business/local/indian-company-plans-20-chartered-flights-to-repatriate-2000-plus-workers; www.timesnownews.com/business-economy/companies/article/after-tcs-and-infosys-wipro-flies-back-over-500-employees-from-us-uk-in-special-chartered-flights/622209.

324. https://focustaiwan.tw/society/202006070007; www.cooperativa.cl/noticias/sociedad/salud/coronavirus/comenzo-repatriacion-de-casi-200-colombianos-varados-en-santiago/2020-06-22/061923.html; www.arecoa.com/destinos/2020/07/14/dominicanos-los-primeros-beneficiados-nuevo-plan-vuelos-humanitarios-chile/; https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/international-business/many-maharashtrian-families-stranded-in-dubai-to-return-home/articleshow/77275342.cms; www.khaleejtimes.com/coronavirus-pandemic/live-blog-200-pakistanis-to-fly-home-thanks-to-galadari-brothers.

325. https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/06/17/supreme-court-orders-government-to-use-welfare-fund-to-repatriate-nepali-workers-stranded-abroad; https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/06/1065662.

326. https://en.antaranews.com/news/151406/government-ensures-migrant-workers-return-to-their-hometowns-safely.

327. www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25926&LangID=E.

328. https://weblog.iom.int/remittances-and-beyond-covid-19-impacts-all-forms-migrant-contributions-development.

workers and facilitating their return.[329] For example, Sri Lanka is prioritizing vulnerable migrants for immediate support,[330] and India aims to increase rural jobs under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) for internal migrant workers.[331] In the Philippines, financial aid has been announced for returning Filipino workers who have lost their jobs overseas,[332] and in Bangladesh efforts are being made by the Government in association with the ILO to pave the way for skills recognition and upskilling, to give returnees better chances of finding jobs.[333] Managing returns, including related protection and assistance concerns for returning migrants, has on occasions been addressed through the establishment of dedicated institutions. In Nepal, a task force has been formed to assist the Government with the repatriation of its citizens,[334] and Bangladesh has established a working committee on "welfare and reintegration of returnee Bangladeshi workers from different countries due to the coronavirus pandemic" to address longer-term well-being concerns of returning nationals.[335]

Ethiopia, Mozambique and the Gambia have set up large-scale assistance and reintegration programmes for their returnees, including services such as local transportation and health care as well as livelihood assistance – and involving them directly in COVID-19 awareness raising and mitigation actions (such as the production of masks and PPE).[336]

Civil society organizations and trade unions have highlighted the conditions of migrant workers and advocated better conditions of work.[337] The Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD has mapped trade union and civil society responses to COVID-19 in OECD countries.[338] The European Trade Union Confederation released a report on the migrant workforce (including undocumented migrants) that has been overlooked during the crisis.[339] According to the report, immigration advice centres in Germany are providing migrants with necessary information, including by establishing a hotline to assist those who have or are facing layoffs from their jobs and also setting out their rights during the pandemic.[340] Trade unions are also

329. https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/reintegration-of-returnee-migrant-workers-stressed/.
330. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/roap_covid_response_sitrep_16.pdf.
331. www.deccanherald.com/state/top-karnataka-stories/with-migration-on-govt-gives-fillip-to-rural-jobs-scheme-833556.html; www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/45-annual-funds-for-jobs-ration-spent-in-4-months/story-1Od9ZPkmswGiRner7QuaeM.html.
332. https://rappler.com/nation/dole-approves-thousands-applications-ofw-aid.
333. http://unb.com.bd/category/Bangladesh/ilo-govt-discuss-needs-of-migrant-workers-with-in-demand-skills-but-no-certification/56794.
334. https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/05/14/rights-body-forms-task-force-to-assist-government-in-protecting-and-repatriating-migrant-workers.
335. https://displacement.iom.int/system/tdf/reports/iom_roap_sitrep_covid-19_10_0.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=8762.
336. www.un.org/africarenewal/news/coronavirus/gambian-returnees-produce-protective-equipment-covid-19-frontline-border-officials; www.iom.int/news/mozambican-workers-returning-south-africa-engaged-check-covid-19s-spread.
337. www.epsu.org/sites/default/files/article/files/Overlooked%2C%20migrant%20workers%20in%20the%20COVID19%20crisis_2.pdf.
338. https://tuac.org/news/covid19-crisis-mapping-out-trade-union-and-social-partners-responses/.
339. www.epsu.org/article/overlooked-migrant-workers-covid-19-crisis.
340. Ibid.; www.bema.berlin/site/assets/files/1244/4_corona_englisch-1.pdf; www.faire-mobilitaet.de/informationen/++co++5d213068-69a7-11ea-93e9-52540088cada.

campaigning for better protection for foreign workers, for instance in Italy,[341] Spain[342] and France.[343] While aid has been granted to trade unions, exclusion of undocumented migrant workers has been evident.[344]

341. www.cgil.it/coronavirus-cgil-cisl-e-uil-tutelare-anche-cittadini-stranieri-chiediamo-avvio-confronto/.
342. www.ccoo.es/noticia:472802--CCOO_pide_agilidad_y_altura_de_miras_al_Gobierno_en_materia_de_extranjeria_durante_la_crisis_del_COVID19&opc_id=8c53f4de8f8f09d2e54f19daf8d8ed95; www.ugt.es/ugt-demanda-medidas-específicas-para-proteger-mas-la-poblacion-de-nacionalidad-extranjera-y-el.
343. www.unsa.org/Migrants-et-demandeurs-d-asile-quelles-solutions-pendant-la-crise-sanitaire-en.html; www.cgt.fr/comm-de-presse/coronavirus-travailleurs-et-travailleuses-migrants-en-premiere-ligne.
344. https://tuac.org/news/covid19-crisis-mapping-out-trade-union-and-social-partners-responses/.

Chapter 13
Recommendations

General recommendations

► This report demonstrates a very wide range of examples of good policies and practices that have been developed and applied by a variety of stakeholders to support migrants and refugees during the COVID-19 crisis. These should be continued and developed further, drawing on current experiences and learning to meet future challenges posed by the pandemic.

► Governments and other duty bearers should adopt a holistic view of the challenges facing migrants and refugees and adopt more comprehensive strategies to address these challenges. This will require cross-cutting approaches that go beyond direct provision of health care and other basic services to address underlying factors of vulnerability, marginalization and exclusion, through interventions that promote their regular status and foster trust between migrants and authorities.

► Evidence of migrants' specific vulnerability to the direct and indirect effects of the pandemic is overwhelming. However, it remains difficult to measure and systematically analyse such vulnerability, as data disaggregated by migration status are only rarely available. While strengthening relevant data collection presents practical challenges, as well as obvious risks for the migrants, it is a precondition to fully understanding and addressing the specific risk conditions that migrants face.

► Coping with the impacts of the pandemic, maintaining service provision, developing recovery pathways and increasing resilience require multisectoral, multistakeholder and all-of-society approaches. These should also seek to mobilize the capacities of migrants, their groups and organizations to the fullest extent possible.

► The immediate response needs created by the pandemic are substantial and widespread, challenging the capacities of formal institutions and civil society entities. Nevertheless, it is important that stakeholders look beyond current, time-bound interventions to consider long-term, equitable pathways to recovery. Sustained, inclusive efforts will be essential to addressing long-term, indirect impacts of the pandemic in a way that results in more cohesive and resilient societies.

► Policies and interventions should be driven primarily by the needs and rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, who should have a voice to engage with policymakers and service providers in understanding their needs and identifying good practices and opportunities for mitigating the impacts of the pandemic. Particular effort should be made to extend assistance to the most marginalized and excluded groups and individuals, such as undocumented migrants, who are often overlooked.

► Lessons learned from this pandemic, and relevant approaches and practices, should inform action to address the barriers migrants face in their day-to-day lives, and to reduce their vulnerability to upcoming crises of all kinds.

Specific recommendations relating to themes covered in this report

Immigration rights

In crises such as the pandemic, countries cannot afford to undertake exclusionary policies, which in the present scenario would entail significant public health risks.

Countries across the globe have adopted flexible procedures, fine waivers and automatic extension guarantees, alleviating uncertainty among migrants already in regular situations within these countries.

However, government efforts towards migrants in irregular situations have been less consistent, resulting in these groups often being overlooked, except in the few cases where labour market demands required their regularization. On the other hand, governments – especially those that had displayed awareness of migrants' conditions of marginalization and included them in policy decisions before the pandemic – have made efforts to reassure and address migrant concerns and establish processes taking their specific vulnerabilities into consideration. Engaging with migrants, engendering trust and reducing fear of detention and deportation are essential to address the barriers that underpin migrants' vulnerability.

Enforcing immigration regulations, including in particular detaining and deporting migrants, can reduce migrants' access to basic services, including health care. In addition to violating their human rights, this becomes a public health concern during pandemics and epidemics. Building firewalls between basic service provision (in particular health care) and immigration enforcement is essential to addressing these specific and systemic risks.

Health

Effective health response is fundamental to managing and overcoming the pandemic, which has overwhelmed many health-care systems. Health care is a particularly urgent issue for refugees and migrants, many of whom live in overcrowded housing, reception centres or camps with poor sanitation, lack resources to protect themselves, are forced to adopt unsanitary behaviours and face discrimination in accessing service providers. They also face significant challenges in accessing health care, including

cost, language and cultural barriers, and fears of arrest and deportation. All these factors make them highly vulnerable to COVID-19, as shown by evidence from countries around the world.

COVID-19-related health care should be available to everyone, regardless of immigration status. All migrants and refugees should be granted non-discriminatory access to preventive measures, testing, treatment and care. Public health information and health care should be provided inclusively, in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. Economic barriers to accessing health care can be overcome by covering the cost of COVID-19 tests, treatment and care. Migrants, in particular those in irregular situations, should be encouraged to come forward for testing and treatment by informing them of their rights to receive services, protecting them from abuses by employers, recruiters and other individuals, and setting up effective firewalls between health-care provision and immigration enforcement.

Migrants and refugees should be included in mitigation efforts, as an integral part of the public health response. In order to overcome shortages of medical staff and manage the impacts of the pandemic, foreign health professionals (including migrants and refugees) can be recruited to work in national health systems or given facilitated or extended work visas.

Involving relevant third-sector organizations in health-care delivery is essential to providing relevant services, including information and care, in a migrant-inclusive manner. Civil society organizations have complemented efforts by public health institutions by setting up temporary or mobile clinics and isolation facilities and providing counselling and other psychosocial services.

Housing

The home is a first line of defence against COVID-19, by enabling self-isolation and physical distancing. However, migrants, refugees and other homeless people often live in conditions that make them unable to adequately protect themselves and put them at significant risk. Making dignified short-term shelter and long-term housing solutions available to all people, including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, is essential to effectively managing the pandemic.

Migrants and refugees have been the recipients of a variety of temporary housing arrangements, often led by municipal and sub-national authorities. These typically have included using or adapting a variety of existing buildings for temporary accommodation or to host people presenting COVID-19 symptoms or who have tested positive; for example, using vacant public housing, hotels, exhibition centres and sports halls. Other measures that can support migrants and asylum seekers in obtaining secure housing include moratoriums on rent for dwellings and providing access to social security, unemployment allowances and health care.

Specific investments aimed at improving living conditions by decongesting and enhancing existing accommodation have also been essential to guarantee the health and well-being of migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees in a variety of accommodation.

Education

Access to education is a fundamental right and must be guaranteed to all children. Education for migrant children must be guaranteed, irrespective of their migration status. The success of different education systems in including migrants following the pandemic and related lockdowns has been highly dependent on their pre-crisis characteristics. Where education for vulnerable migrants and refugees was guaranteed prior to the pandemic, most struggles during the pandemic have been linked to ensuring continuity of access and bridging the digital divide. Where the provision of education to vulnerable migrants was not identified as a priority issue, the pandemic has instead further accentuated barriers and obstacles.

The pandemic has also allowed development and experiments with innovative technology and strategies to engage with children who would otherwise be excluded from regular school systems. These approaches must be built upon to strengthen and innovate access to education for children on the move throughout the pandemic and in its aftermath.

Labour and employment

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed how migrant workers, both skilled and unskilled, are essential to the resilience of their host communities. Their contribution to combating the pandemic, mitigating its economic impacts and guaranteeing the continuity of key sectors and the viability of societies as a whole has been undeniable. This has led many countries to adopt regularization schemes or fast-track the accreditation of migrants, especially in sectors such as health care, food production, logistics and social care.

Regularization schemes and open pathways for regular migration must be sustained to protect migrant and host communities. Such measures must be designed to address the specific conditions and needs of the many migrants who have contributed to their host communities, often for years, while being undocumented or living and working in risky situations. The set of measures taken in response to labour market demand related to COVID-19 must become a first step towards providing pathways for regular migration and dignified working and living conditions for migrant workers. A system for safe and orderly movement of essential workers must be envisaged, not just in a crisis but as a norm, for the benefit of migrants and their families, as well as host and home societies.

The pandemic has revealed that migrants possess diverse, significant skills and capacities. However, time-consuming, lengthy and costly procedures for the accreditation of their qualifications result in many migrants being underemployed or unemployed. Leveraging the full extent of migrants' resources is key to the well-being and resilience of their communities, as shown by the many ways in which migrants have been at the front line of addressing the impacts of the pandemic. Fast-track procedures and flexibility of accreditation procedures can be implemented in the aftermath of the pandemic to build more sustainable and just societies. Schemes such as EQPR must be widely adopted, as a way to benefit both the migrants and their host communities.

Public information and communications

Provision of public health information on the COVID-19 crisis has been a major area of work for national and local governments, as well as civil society organizations. It is one of the foundations of public health efforts to mitigate the pandemic, and as such needs to be inclusive of migrants and refugees. Ensuring that all members of a given community understand safety measures and can take appropriate action to protect themselves and others is essential to everybody's safety.

National authorities, town and city administrations, and NGOs and international agencies have been very active in producing, translating and disseminating adapted, appropriate information in the different languages spoken by their residents and beneficiaries. Such information has also been disseminated through different media and communications channels, including physical and online documents, video and audio clips, and podcasts. Granting migrants access to online resources and digital devices has been a key element of public information responses in diverse geographical contexts.

Successfully communicating with migrant groups, however, also requires conveying information through individuals and institutions that migrants trust. This is vital for ensuring compliance with recommended measures and behaviours. To this end, the role of individuals with a migrant background, their groups and key community organizations has been essential – for instance as community representatives involved in awareness raising on COVID-19 and in activities to disseminate information on hygiene and sanitation, food distribution, legal and psychosocial support, and access to medical care.

Financial assistance

Countries have adopted a variety of temporary measures to provide income support and other forms of financial assistance to migrants and refugees during the pandemic. These include social welfare payments for people who have lost their employment and other income support measures such as allowances, income subsidies and bonuses, and programmes for families, businesses and vulnerable groups.

Ensuring that migrants have access to such schemes will enable them to cope with the short- and long-term, direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic. It is essential to specifically extend these forms of support to workers in irregular status, who most often contribute to welfare systems without being assisted in return. Inclusive financial assistance has to rely on multistakeholder approaches, whereby existing government schemes are complemented by efforts by other institutional bodies, including through funds of local authorities, solidarity schemes by community-based organizations and community representatives, and donations from philanthropic institutions.

Material assistance and mutual aid

Information on forms of material assistance is relatively limited. Local governments in particular have provided free food and basic hygiene products to poor and vulnerable households and groups (including migrants and refugees, and on occasion

international students). In many cases coordination with civil society organizations, community members and organizations is key to setting up systems that effectively reach out to and assist all population groups. Many local organizations have provided advice on issues such as dealing with rent payments, unemployment and bureaucratic procedures.

Mutual aid measures and mechanisms are very difficult to identify or measure because their activities and organization tend to be local, informal and non-hierarchical. More should be done to provide visibility to existing initiatives and networks.

Advocacy

In many cases, migrant-inclusive assistance measures, whether related to the provision of health care or other basic services, immigration matters, decongestion of shelters and camps, closure of detention facilities or relocation of refugees, have been supported by substantial advocacy efforts. Advocating migrants' rights, needs and capacities in the context of COVID-19 has been a key element of the work of institutions in migrants' countries of origin, migrant representatives and groups, civil society organizations, international organizations and even employers and other private-sector bodies.

Lesson learning will be essential to supporting migrant-inclusive approaches in the communities and societies built in the aftermath of the pandemic. Gathering and disseminating evidence of migrants' contributions and role in supporting interconnected societies could be key to future advocacy efforts for the protection of migrants' rights in crisis and non-crisis times.

Stigmatization

Countering xenophobia, including stigmatization and scapegoating of migrants and refugees, has been a public health concern in the context of COVID-19. It is also essential to removing the obstacles migrants face in accessing related services and opportunities. As migrants' movement, presence and even specific conditions of vulnerability to the pandemic are weaponized by xenophobic parties and groups all over the world, it is essential to promote a better informed and more inclusive discourse.

Building positive, evidence-based and sound narratives that fully account for migrants' suffering and positive contributions to their communities and societies is a central element of these efforts. This requires giving migrants themselves a voice, and their stories and perspective adequate visibility – including (and perhaps especially) through the channels that allow xenophobic stances and rumours to spread, particularly social media.

Governments also need to ensure that xenophobic acts are adequately identified, condemned and pursued, even during challenging times when efforts not strictly related to the management of the pandemic might be deprioritized.

Returns and repatriation

While international evacuation and returns generally remain an option of last resort for migrants affected by a crisis, they have been necessary for hundreds of thousands of people following COVID-19 and related lockdowns and economic downturn. Effective evacuation operations have often relied on the collaboration between governments and those in the private sector (recruiters and employers, airlines). In the case of COVID-19, however, returns have also necessitated an additional level of coordination among border authorities of home, host and transit countries to provide for the safe passage of evacuees. Such co-ordination mechanisms have often been extended to include health authorities in host and home countries, to guarantee screening, testing and quarantining procedures.

In the face of continued uncertainty concerning the global migration situation and generalized economic downturn, planning for the comprehensive reintegration of returnees becomes particularly important – including longer-term housing, land and livelihood support. Such efforts need to be informed by a comprehensive understanding of the situation of migrants' families and communities in the places of return, including the effects they have suffered and options and priorities for recovery and long-term well-being.

Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees constitute a significant and growing proportion of the population of countries in Europe. While the COVID-19 pandemic rages around the world, there is an indisputable moral case for an inclusive approach that guarantees these groups equal rights with the rest of the population with regard to care and support in crises of all kinds. This publication is intended to give national governments and their counterparts at regional and local levels, civil society organizations, relevant offices in the public and private sectors, and communities, a better understanding of how to support migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in biological disasters and pandemics.

Created in 1987, the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) is a platform for cooperation between European and Southern Mediterranean countries in the field of major natural and technological disasters. Its field of action covers the knowledge of hazards, risk prevention, risk management, post-crisis analysis and rehabilitation. It has to date 24 member States.

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ENG

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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