



Advancing Alternative Migration Governance



# Migration Aspirations and Development Interventions in Compounding Crisis'

Deliverable 6.5

Katie Kuschminder & Iman Rajabzadeh

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## Abstract

This report synthesizes the conclusions of WP6 in the ADMIGOV project focusing on development interventions and refugees and other migrants migration aspirations. The primary questions guiding the research were: *Under what conditions are migration decision making processes influenced by development interventions? To what extent do different migration decision making factors shape migration decisions?* The selected countries for analysis were chosen as large refugee hosting environments (Ethiopia, Lebanon, Turkey), being a core transit country towards the European Union (EU) (Mali) and for having regular migration of nationals (Ethiopia and Mali). The consolidated results highlight four key findings. First, there is a wide diversity of access to development interventions across the study countries. Second, migration aspirations are higher among refugee populations in most contexts. Third, COVID-19 is not cited as a major influence in changing migration aspirations, in Turkey refugees stated it post-poned their plans, but did not change them. Finally, the research shows that the study countries were all facing compounding crisis' that went beyond COVID-19, stressing the need for further research and understanding of the impacts of compounding crisis on refugees and other migrants. The final section of the report presents policy recommendations.

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## 1. Introduction

This final report of ADMIGOV WP6 is a synthesis of the findings on development interventions and migrants aspirations as they have been explored in Ethiopia, Lebanon, Mali and Turkey. Work package 6 in the ADMIGOV project focuses on development interventions targeted at both refugees in host countries and country nationals. The selected countries for analysis were chosen as large refugee hosting environments (Ethiopia, Lebanon, Turkey), being a core transit country towards the European Union (EU) (Mali) and for having regular migration of nationals (Ethiopia and Mali). This report highlights the most important conclusions and policy recommendations from the work completed in each of the country reports detailed below:

WP6 Deliverables	Authors
D6.1 <i>Migration and Development: Measuring migration aspirations and the impact of refugee assistance in Turkey</i>	Ayşen Üstübcü, Eda Kirişçiöğlü, Ezgi Elç, Koc University
D6.2 <i>Examining the migration development nexus in Kayes Region, Mali</i>	Johannes Claes, Anna Schmauder, Fransje Molenaar, Clingendael Institute
D6.3 Migration and Development: Eritrean Refugees' and Ethiopian Nationals' Migration Aspirations in Ethiopia	Katie Kuschminder, Iman Rajabzadeh, Asmelash Haile Tsegay, Asmamaw Legass, and Mohammed Assen, Maastricht University and Addis Ababa University
D6.4 <i>Migration and Development of Displaced Syrians in Lebanon.</i>	Gabriella Trovato, Nayla Al-Akl and Dana Ali, American University of Beirut

This report is organized into four sections following this brief introduction. The next section provides an overview of the conceptual framework that has guided the research. This is followed by an overview of the methodology used in each country. The main section of the report summarizes key findings from the work package. The report concludes by offering policy recommendations.

## 2. Conceptual Framework and Ambition

WP6 contributes to the overall ADMIGOV project by focusing on the role of development interventions in migrants decision making. We broadly include potential migrants, refugees, irregular migrant and return migrants as respondents in the work package. The objective of the research has been to explore

In WP6 the ADMIGOV team sought to address the following two research questions:

1. **Under what conditions are migration decision making processes influenced by development interventions?**
2. **To what extent do different migration decision making factors shape migration decisions?**

We have defined **development interventions** from a human development perspective that is multidimensional and aimed at capabilities enhancement. A development intervention is a “result-oriented action aimed at improving people’s quality of life. The agents initiating the development intervention can be insiders or outsiders, civil society institutions, governments, individuals or small groups” (Conradie and Robeyns, 2013). Interventions are actions that are being implemented.

**Migrant Decision Making Processes** refers to the full complexity of factors that influence individuals’ mobility decisions in all directions including internal migration, onwards international migration, and return migration. **Migration aspirations** are viewed along a continuum (Carling, 2019) and we consider aspirations in three stages: 1) a consideration to move to another country; and 2) having a concrete plan to

migrate. We also consider if aspirations have changed from prior to the COVID 19 epidemic in each country to the time of interview.

Finally, **Migrant Decision-making factors** refer to the multiple factors that shape migrants decision-making for when, where, and how to move are multiple and complex. These factors are influenced by conditions in the country of origin, perceived conditions in the country of intended destination, reception and incorporation conditions in the current country of stay or residence, access to information and social networks, economic resources and capabilities of the individual, aspirations of the individual, human smugglers, and policy interventions. Migrants' decision-making factors may change at different points in time and in different stages of the journey. They can be influenced by changing situations and chance opportunities (see Gladkova and Mazzucato, 2015). Migrants' decision-making factors refer to the multiple factors influencing the dynamic processes of mobility.

We examine in each country case the relationship between development assistance received by the respondents and migration aspirations. The relationship between these two variables is inclusive within the existing migration literature and as will be demonstrated the results from this research provides further evidence of the complexity of this relationship.

### **3. Methodological adjustments due to Covid-19**

The initial research design of mapping development interventions in each location, then determining precise sites for data collection, and finally conducting in person surveys, clearly became unfeasible due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Resultantly, each location team had to adjust their methodology to work within the local context and restrictions in each location.

Table 1 provides a resulting overview of the methodology used in each country context.

	<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>Mali</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
<b>Recruitment</b>	Existing Listing with Telephone Numbers	Facilitated by Danish Refugee Council Lebanon, based on listing of residents in informal tented settlements	Interlocutors and respondent driven sampling	Facebook and Interlocutors
<b>Questionnaire Method</b>	Phone Interview	WhatsApp or Phone Interview	WhatsApp or Phone Interview	On-line Survey, Phone Interview, or in-person survey
<b>Questionnaire</b>	Standardized and country specific questions	Standardized and country specific questions	Standardized and country specific questions	Standardized and country specific questions
<b>Follow-up Interviews</b>	Phone or in-person if possible	Phone or in-person if possible	Phone or in-person if possible	Virtual or in-person if possible

**Table 1: Summary Overview of Methods per Country**

Table 2 provides an overview of the survey data collection, wherein a total of **2698 questionnaires were completed, of which 1897 with refugees and other migrants, and 801 with nationals**. The original research design planned for 300 surveys with each type of migrant group for a total of 2100 respondents. The resulting number of surveys was considerably higher than planned in both Turkey and Ethiopia.

Mali			Turkey		Lebanon	Ethiopia	
Malian residents	Malian returnees	Non-Malians	Refugees (Syrian)	Refugees (Afghan)	Refugees (Syrian)	Ethiopian	Refugees (Eritrean)
239	128	217	550	414	185	434	531

**Table 2: Overview of Survey Data Collection**



Table 3 provides an overview of the qualitative interviews conducted. In total, **168 qualitative interviews were conducted, of which 138 with refugees and other migrants and 20 with nationals.** The original research design planned for 30 qualitative interviews with each respondent group for a total of 210 qualitative interviews.

Mali			Turkey		Lebanan	Ethiopia	
Malian residents	Malian returnees	Non-Malians	Refugees (Syrian)	Refugees (Afghan)	Refugees (Syrian)	Ethiopian	Refugees (Eritrean)
9	21	15	25	20	30		48

**Table 3: Overview of Qualitative Interviews**

Considering the multiple challenges of conducting research during the COVID-19 pandemic and additional crisis's such as the war in Ethiopia and the Beirut Port explosion in Lebanon. The resulting samples in each country have been adequate for an analysis of each case.

Regrettably, although consistent questions were used in each country context the diverse sampling methodologies mean that the results are not comparable across the country contexts. This report thus provides a synthesis of the high level findings from the work-package and is not intended as a comparative report of the findings across the case studies.

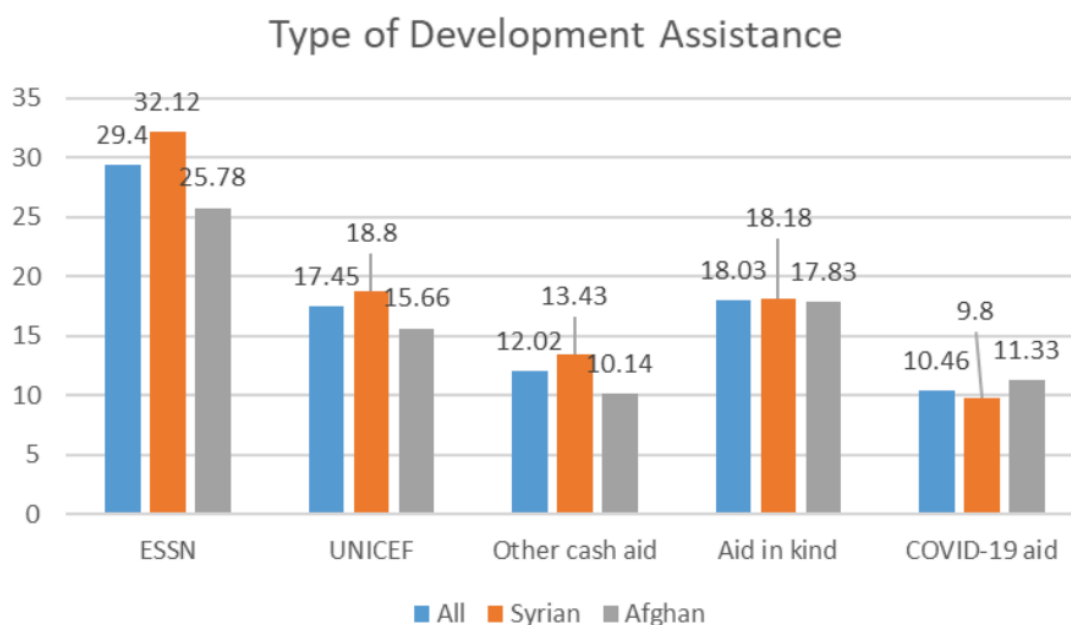
#### **4. Main findings**

Four main findings are highlighted in this report. First, the diversity of access to development assistance across the case countries. Second, the migration aspirations of respondents and the resulting correlations between migration aspirations and receiving development assistance. The following two additional findings reflect the changing global environment during the fieldwork, first, the role of the COVID-19 pandemic, and second, the role of compounding crisis. The selected case study countries were not just experiencing the COVID-19 pandemics, but other crisis's were occurring in the countries creating a situation of compounding crisis. Each of these findings are explored further in this section.

## Diversity of access to development assistance

All countries selected in this work package as case studies have been the focus countries of significant investment and funding from the EU and the individual member states. There is no accurate overview of total investment to each country in relation to migration initiatives. In this study our main objective was to explore funding through EU projects.

Turkey has received the largest investment of the countries of study with over €1.7 billion from the EU Trust Fund Facility for Refugee Integration in Turkey. The programmes to assist refugees in Turkey are the most advanced amongst the case countries and programming has targeted the most vulnerable. The sample in the survey was fairly balanced including vulnerable and non-vulnerable refugees. Resultingly, 50 percent of respondents had ever received access to a form of development assistance in Turkey, of which 54 percent of Syrians had ever received access, compared to 44 percent of Afghans.



**Figure 1: Type of Development Assistance Received by Turkey Respondents.**

(Reproduced from: Ustübcü, Kirişçioğlu, and Elçi, 2021, p. 47)

The most common form of development assistance received by respondents in Turkey was the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN). The ESSN is an emergency cash-transfer programme aimed at the most vulnerable refugees in Turkey. The cash transfer amount is quite low and is meant to maintain basic food security. Slightly less than half of respondents (48%) reported that their quality of life improved after receiving the ESSN (Ustübici, Kirişcioğlu, and Elçi, 2021).

The second most common type of development assistance received by refugees in Turkey was the UNICEF cash-transfer for education, followed by aid in-kind. Aid in-kind is considered as receiving in-kind goods such as appliances from other members of the community, most commonly reported as other refugees or charities. Aid in-kind is thus not a part of EU funding schemes.

Despite the comparatively higher prevalence of development assistance in Turkey, respondents reported in the qualitative interviews that the assistance has very little impact on their lives.

*“For instance, Khalim, a 51 year old Syrian male living in Adana since 2014, indicates that he is not satisfied with his living conditions despite receiving ESSN aid for himself plus five members of his family. When they first came to Turkey, Khalim was working in odd jobs but he could not work for the last couple of years due to his health issues. As a result, his 16-year-old son had to drop out of school and started to work in a tailor shop to generate income for the family. They live in an old apartment’s basement floor which is very humid and lacks many necessary home appliances. ESSN aid helps Khalim’s family to pay rent for their accommodations plus the bills and they can cover their monthly expenditures by the ESSN aid. For the other expenditures such as food, they are dependent on Khalim’s son’s daily wages” (Ustübici, Kirişcioğlu, and Elçi, 2021, p.58).*

Furthermore, distribution in Turkey is unequal according to nationality and Afghan respondents felt that Syrians were heavily favoured for development assistance. The significant differences in protection policies and support between Syrians and Afghans or Syrians and non-Syrian refugees has been well documented in Turkey (see for example Kuschminder et al., 2019; Ustübici, 2019).

In Lebanon, Syrian refugees were surveyed in informal tented settlements wherein they were largely dependent on NGOs. Eighty-nine percent of respondents had ever received development assistance, which was most commonly food aid that was essential for the respondents survival, followed by education cash transfers. Of the qualitative interview respondents, sixty percent of respondents reported that the assistance received did not improve their quality of life as it was not enough and they could barely afford food. For example, one respondent stated: “It didn’t change my quality of life. I feel like their support is not enough because everything is expensive now” (Trovato, Al-Akl, and Ali, 2021, p. 33).

In Mali, Malian residents were the most likely to have received some form of development assistance at 49 percent, compared to Malian returnees at 45 percent. Migrants in Mali were unlikely to have ever received assistance in Mali at 8 percent. Most qualitative interview respondents acknowledged that the development assistance does have a positive impact, however it is not enough to sustainably support them and is a crisis response. One respondent stated: *“this aid was certainly useful at one point, but it cannot change my way of life, let alone that of the communities, it was little”*.

Finally, in Ethiopia, only 3.5 percent of Ethiopians and 13.5 percent of Eritreans interviewed had received development assistance. Eritreans had most commonly received assistance when in refugee camps in the Tigray region. For example one respondent stated:

*“At the camp, I received some assistance of basic necessity such as 10kg of wheat grain, 2 kg rice, 1litter food oil, 1 piece of soap, a blanket and mattress, and 80 ETB for urgent expenses. Every person registered as a refugee at the camp received all these items per month. However, this was not enough to satisfy monthly requirements.”*

At the time of the research, however, most Eritreans were no longer in refugee camps and few respondents currently received any form of development assistance.

The above reflects a global focus on supporting Syrian refugees at the time of research, wherein Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Turkey were the most likely to be the recipients of development assistance. Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia, by contrast, had far less likelihood of receiving development assistance and migrants in Mali had an even lower likelihood.

This study has not aimed to assess the effectiveness or reach of development assistance, but to explore the relationship between development assistance and migration aspirations. At the same time, the lack of access to development assistance for those refugees and other migrants in Ethiopia and Mali is a central point as clearly there can be no relationship between receiving assistance and the migration aspiration if there is no opportunity to access assistance.

The quality of assistance is also noteworthy and an important area of investigation for future research. In the case countries, there is significant differences between assistance provided to Syrian refugees in Turkey and Lebanon, as detailed in the country reports.

### **Migration Aspirations**

All respondents were asked if at this time they planned to migrate onwards, stay in the current country, or, where relevant, to return to their country of origin. The results show that refugees and other migrants are the most likely to plan to migrate onwards with Afghans in Turkey (64%), migrants in Mali (61%), Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia (53%), and Syrian refugees in Lebanon all having more than half of respondents seeking to migrate onwards. Migrants in Mali were the most likely to consider return at 14%, whereas Syrian, Afghan, and Eritrean refugees were highly unlikely to plan to return. It is noteworthy that in Turkey, Syrian and Afghan refugees were asked ideally, if they had the opportunity, where they would like to live, and 11% of Syrian respondents said Syria and 8% of Afghans said Afghanistan. This shows a higher preference for return if conditions allowed it.

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No or Don't Know</b>	<b>Return</b>
<b>Eritreans (Ethiopia)</b>	53%	37%	0
<b>Ethiopians (Ethiopia)</b>	1.9%	98%	-
<b>Syrians (Lebanon)</b>	52%	46%	2%
<b>Malians (Mali)</b>	35%	65%	-
<b>Malian Returnees (Mali)</b>	38%	61%	-
<b>Non-Malians (Mali)</b>	61%	15%	14%
<b>Syrians (Turkey)</b>	34%	63%	3%
<b>Afghans (Turkey)</b>	64%	33%	3%

**Table 4: Migration Aspirations**

The number of Ethiopians aspiring to migrate was extremely low at 2%. This differs considerably from research in Ethiopia that targets in areas of high emigration (see for example: IOM, 2022), which suggests that migration rates are much higher in communities (14-58%). Given the size and population of Ethiopia, these results are unsurprising as emigration differs widely across the country. In Mali, the percentage of Malians aspiring to migrate is much higher at 35-38% of nationals desiring to migrate. Again, the differences in sampling methodologies likely impact these figures.

The relationship between migrant decision making processes and development interventions varied across each case, stressing the importance of understanding unique country contexts and migrant groups in such an analysis.

Table 5 shows that the only group for which receiving development assistance had a positive impact on migration plans is Syrian refugees in Turkey. This is attributed to the fact that despite the assistance, living conditions continue to be poor for Syrian refugees in Turkey (see Ustübeci, Kirişcioğlu, and Elçi, 2021).

	<b>Regression Results</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<b>Ethiopia- Eritrean Refugees</b>	Negative Relationship	Eritrean refugees receiving development assistance in Ethiopia are less likely to plan to migrate.
<b>Lebanon- Syrian Refugees</b>	No Significance	Development assistance is not significant in the decision making for onwards migration of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. Alternatively, given the high proportion of Syrian refugees receiving assistance (89%) there is a small sample to test this relationship and a larger survey would be necessary with refugees in different situations.
<b>Mali- Migrants</b>	No Significance	Development assistance is not significant in the decision making for onwards migration of migrants in Mali. Alternatively, given the low proportion of migrants receiving assistance (8%) and the small sample size, a larger survey would be necessary to have conclusive results.
<b>Mali- Malians</b>	Negative Relationship	Maliens receiving development assistance in Mali are less likely to plan to migrate.
<b>Turkey- Syrian Refugees</b>	Positive Relationship	Syrians refugees receiving development assistance are more likely to plan to migrate onwards
<b>Turkey- Afghan Refugees</b>	No Significance	Development assistance is not significant in the decision making for onwards migration of Afghan refugees in Turkey

**Table 5: Summary of Regression Results**

Reasons for migration aspirations include not only the expected living conditions, employment conditions, education rights and legal status, but also violence and discrimination. For example one respondent stated:

*"I aspire to move onwards to provide a better and safer future for my children. Here in Turkey, every other day, we are facing racism. We, as Syrians, experience conflicts and abuse from Turkish people. I can't even file a case if I get robbed. We are also facing cyberbullying by Turks who are telling us*

*[Syrians] to go to Syria and to fight against the enemies instead of Turkish soldiers in Syria (Adnan, Syria, Male, 31, Adana, 07.03.2020)" (Ustübici, Kirişçioğlu, and Elçi, 2021, p.38).*

This highlights the multiplicity of factors facing refugees in Turkey that drive onwards decision making beyond development interventions.

For Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia and Malians in Mali, the relationship between receiving development assistance and plans to migrate onwards is negative. In Ethiopia, we attribute this to the fact that such a small percentage of Eritrean refugees are receiving assistance, and those that do are the most vulnerable whom perhaps could not migrate onwards.

In Mali, the relationship is contradictory to expectation and the existing literature (see Claes et al., 2021). It is cautioned by the authors that the results should not be overly emphasized and more investigation is necessary. Qualitative respondents in Mali highlighted this contradiction. On the one hand one respondent stated:

*"Yes, of course the assistance has changed my will to migrate, because it has allowed me to have a stable job; I don't want to meet the difficulties that you find on the migration route anymore. With the assistance, I was able to meet some of my family's needs, which was the basic reason for my migration. So with the aid, I earn a little and this little helps me to live with dignity here" (Claes, Schmauder, and Molenaar, 2021, p.46).*

While another stated:

*"No, not at all, and what's more, I have this desire to emigrate and nothing and no one is going to make me change my mind. I had to go to the other side to discover another world, something I have never regretted. Now I'm going to continue on another horizon to have other business opportunities" (Claes, Schmauder, and Molenaar, 2021, p.45).*

The contradiction from these respondents highlights the individual nature of decision making.

Although there is a rich literature examining the relationship between aspirations and development, this research has aimed to examine this relationship in the context of refugee hosting, compounding crisis and the role of EU funding aimed at decreasing migration movements to Europe. The results demonstrate that there is no clear



relationship in these contexts between the role of development interventions and migration aspirations.

## **COVID-19**

The research in all countries occurred in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and we sought to investigate how the COVID-19 pandemic interacted with migration aspirations. In Ethiopia and Turkey, the data collection had not yet started and the research tools could be modified to include questions on COVID-19. In Mali the survey was already started prior to the pandemic and thus it was only possible to add COVID-19 related questions to the qualitative interviews. In Lebanon, although we were unable to ask direct questions regarding COVID-19, it was found in the research to have a significant impact on refugees lives.

In Lebanon, there were strict curfews imposed due to COVID-19. Similarly to results in Turkey and Ethiopia below, COVID-19 resulted in job losses for Syrian refugees. Unemployment was cited as a key reason for aspiring to migrate and COVID-19 was cited as a key obstacle in finding employment by the respondents.

In Turkey, Afghan refugees (51%) were more likely to report changing or postponing their migration plans due to COVID-19 than Syrian refugees (32%). The vast majority of respondents in both refugees groups reported being negatively financially impacted by COVID-19 (89%). Turkey had a long lock-down due to COVID-19 and many people lost their jobs or had no work during this period.

In Ethiopia, although the sample size is very small, the number of Ethiopians reporting that they planned to migrate to another country prior to the start of COVID-19, compared to the time of interview in 2021, halved. For Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia there was largely no change. However, the majority of both Eritrea refugees and Ethiopians considered COVID-19 to have had an important impact on their life. In Ethiopia, employment dropped during COVID-19 and although it regained, many people were left in more vulnerable positions after the pandemic (Ambel et al, 2021).

In Mali, non- Malian respondents in the qualitative interviews reported very different responses to COVID-19. Some respondents wanted to temporarily return to their

home countries. For example: *“During this period of the COVID pandemic, which has crippled the world economy, I just want to return home to my relatives and better prepare my trip to the European continent.”* This is however, only a temporary return desire and respondents clearly want to continue their overall migration aspiration to reach their intended destinations. Other respondents stated that COVID-19 was not a deterrent from their migration aspirations as they had already faced so many other challenges.

### **Compounding Crisis’**

In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, in most of our case countries other crisis’ were simultaneously occurring, creating an environment of compounded crisis in each location. Evidence has now aptly demonstrated that “the COVID-19 crisis has significantly exposed existing fragilities and exacerbated inequalities at every level” (UNDP, 2020). In Ethiopia this is the current civil war and several environmental crisis of locusts and drought. Mali has been the most stable in a comparative perspective of the countries in terms of not having a new crisis emerge, however, is still classified by the World Bank as a medium-intensity conflict country where long-standing conflict has continued for several years. Lebanon has been at the forefront of the Syria crisis since 2011 and since 2019 has faced a severe economic crisis placing the country on the brink of collapse and being a key case example of compounded crisis. Finally, Turkey has also been at the forefront of the Syrian crisis, the Afghan refugee ongoing crisis, and has faced its own economic and political crisis’ in recent years. Resultantly, each country faces compounding crisis of conflict, refugee hosting or being a transit country for irregular migration, and economic challenges.

It is therefore unsurprising that the COVID-19 pandemic itself was not the most formidable crisis affecting the lives of respondents, although the collateral impacts due to COVID-19 were identified including inflation and job loss. In Ethiopia, inflation was identified by both refugees and Ethiopians as the most important factor influencing their life at the moment. Inflation in Ethiopia is a result of both COVID-19 and the war. In both Turkey and Ethiopia, job loss was reported as a critical factor influencing respondents, and more so for refugees than Eritreans.

The results reflect and bring attention to the increased complexity of global issues and for further research to explore and understand linkages between compounding crisis and migration. As the number of displaced people reaches the highest level ever recorded, the continuing conflicts are protracted and unresolved for refugee populations that continue to aspire to migrate onwards from host countries.

## 5. Policy recommendations

Our main findings in WP6 have led to three core policy recommendations across the case studies.

- **Refugees** – Following from the findings of the ADMIGOV project in WP6, this work package provides further evidence of the daily struggles of refugees in Ethiopia, Lebanon, and Turkey. There is a continued pressing need for more daily assistance and long-term solutions. Refugees aspiring to migrate from these countries do so due to poor conditions, which are not mitigated by assistance received. Assistance received by refugees in Turkey and Lebanon provides a bare minimum to prevent starvation.
  - The criteria to receive cash assistance for refugees should be extended to include more refugees that are also vulnerable.
  - The cash stipend must be adjusted to reflect current devaluations and cost of living so that consumption remains steady.
- **Return** – Relating to ADMIGOV work package 2 on Exit, return is a central concern amongst refugee populations in Ethiopia, Lebanon, and Turkey. All refugees were asked if they aspired to return, and there were very low aspirations for return across these groups. This reflects the protracted nature of these crisis and the need for permanent solutions.
  - International funders, the EU, as well as national authorities should not encourage refugees into voluntary return programs without fully informing the potential returnees of the associated risks. The right to non-refoulement must be respected amongst refugees.

- ***Development Funding and Migration Aspirations*** – In line with the *Mid-term Evaluation of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa 2015-2019* (Disch et al., 2020) the EU should be highly cautious in expecting development interventions from the EUTF to prevent migration aspirations to the EU. Development funding from the EU should be targeted to development needs. The ability of these instruments to impact migration aspirations is questionable.

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