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Policy for Improving Human Well-being and Strengthening Capabilities of Displaced and Mobile Populations in Egypt

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Abstract

Objectives: Egypt has recently faced a significant migration surge due to conflicts in neighboring areas, highlighting the complex dynamics of migration. Gaps persist in addressing the needs of displaced populations, which are exacerbated by socioeconomic and environmental risks, thereby intensifying long-term vulnerabilities. This study focuses on enhancing the well-being of displaced and mobile populations in Egypt, providing evidence-based recommendations to improve their welfare and capabilities.

Methodology: This study employed qualitative document analysis to examine the existing literature and policy documents relevant to displaced populations in Egypt. A systematic approach was adopted to conduct a comprehensive assessment of current policies, challenges, and best practices.

Findings: The findings indicate that displaced populations in Egypt mainly reside in urban areas, including Greater Cairo and Alexandria. Displaced populations, including refugees and migrants, possess untapped labour that can bolster local economies. The proposed policy framework tackles the critical challenges faced by displaced populations in Egypt, including access to healthcare, economic inclusion, and social cohesion. The policy advocates inclusive collaboration with the private sector to ensure mutual benefits for both displaced populations and host communities, all while safeguarding the rights and well-being of displaced populations and supporting Egypt's overall stability.

Originality: Key recommendations include deploying mobile health clinics, implementing community-driven integration initiatives, expanding vocational training programs, and prioritizing infrastructure investments. These are designed to be inclusive, sustainable, and adaptable to the needs of displaced populations. Success depends on decisive, collaborative action from governments, NGOs, the private sector, and international organizations, supported by partnerships and monitoring.

Keywords: Refugees; Well-being; Policies; Practices; Mental health; Healthcare system

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سياسة تهدف إلى تعزيز رفاهية الإنسان وتطوير قدرات السكان المهاجرين والمتنقلين في مصر

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ملخص

أهداف البحث: هدفت الدراسة إلى تحليل ظاهرة الهجرة في مصر، حيث شهدت البلاد مؤخرًا زيادة نتيجة للصراعات في المناطق المجاورة، مما يعكس تعقيد ديناميات هذه الظاهرة. وتواجه الجهات المعنية تحديات كبيرة في تلبية احتياجات السكان المهاجرين بسبب المخاطر الاجتماعية والبيئية، مما يزيد من هشاشتهم على المدى البعيد. يركز هذا البحث على تحسين ظروف معيشة السكان المهاجرين والمتنقلين في مصر، ويقدم توصيات مبنية على الأدلة لتعزيز رفاهتهم وقدراتهم. منهج الدراسة: أُستُخدم تحليل الوثائق النوعي في هذه الدراسة لفحص الأدبيات والوثائق السياسية الموجودة ذات الصلة بالسكان النازحين في مصر. أُتبع نهج منهجي لإجراء تقييم شامل للسياسات الحالية والتحديات وأفضل الممارسات. النتائج: تشير النتائج إلى أن العديد من الأفراد النازحين في مصر يقيمون في المناطق الحضرية، مثل القاهرة الكبرى والإسكندرية. تمتلك الفئات النازحة، بما في ذلك اللاجئون والمهاجرين، قوى عاملة غير مستغلة يمكن أن تعزز الاقتصادات المحلية. الإطار السياسي المقترح يتناول التحديات الرئيسية التي يواجهها السكان اللاجئون في مصر، بما في ذلك الوصول إلى الرعاية الصحية، الإدماج الاقتصادي، والتماسك الاجتماعي. تدعو السياسة إلى تعاون شامل مع القطاع الخاص لضمان فوائد مشتركة لكل من السكان اللاجئون والمجتمعات المضيفة، مع الحفاظ على حقوق وسلامة السكان اللاجئون ودعم استقرار مصر بشكل عام. أصالة البحث: تشمل التوصيات الرئيسية نشر العيادات الصحية المتنقلة، وتنفيذ مبادرات تكامل يقودها المجتمع، وتوسيع برامج التدريب المهني، وإعطاء الأولوية للاستثمارات في البنية التحتية. تم تصميم هذه التوصيات لتكون شاملة ومستدامة وقابلة للتكيف مع احتياجات السكان النازحين. يعتمد النجاح على اتخاذ إجراءات حاسمة وتعاونية من قبل الحكومات والمنظمات غير الحكومية والقطاع الخاص والمنظمات الدولية، بدعم من الشراكات والمراقبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: لاجئون، الرفاه، سياسات، ممارسات، الصحة النفسية، نظام الرعاية الصحية

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1. Introduction

Egypt, strategically located at the crossroads of Africa and the Middle East, has historically served as a destination for various displaced and mobile populations, including refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants (Segal & Davenport, 2022). These groups often face significant socioeconomic challenges, including limited access to healthcare, inadequate living conditions, and restricted employment opportunities (2021). The situation has been exacerbated in recent years due to conflicts in neighboring regions (Country, 2025), economic instability (2004), and the growing impact of climate change (Climate Refugees, 2025), leading to intensified displacement flows (Global Report on Internal Displacement, 2024).

A growing body of evidence suggests that despite the efforts of international organizations, governments, and local NGOs, significant gaps persist in addressing the needs of displaced populations in Egypt. For instance, the UNHCR's 2024 annual report indicates that a considerable proportion of refugees and asylum seekers still face challenges accessing essential health services (2024). This can lead to long-term vulnerabilities if not addressed effectively (Fares & Puig-Junoy, 2021).

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) identifies critical areas for addressing migration challenges and supporting displaced populations. These areas encompass migration management, the protection of migrants' rights, the enhancement of livelihood opportunities and labor mobility, and initiatives to counter trafficking and smuggling. Furthermore, IOM emphasizes health and border management within migration systems while focusing on promoting community cohesion and migrant integration to establish inclusive societies (Segal & Davenport, 2022).

There is an urgent need to address these gaps. As the number of displaced populations continues to rise. Current policy frameworks in Egypt are insufficient to address the multifaceted challenges these groups face. A 2021 World Bank report points to limited progress on poverty reduction across all segments of the population despite economic growth, suggesting a growing strain on Egypt's public services due to the increasing influx of displaced individuals and stressing the need for inclusive systemic reforms (World Bank, 2021). Without a clear and unified policy to address their well-being, displaced populations remain vulnerable to social exclusion, economic dependence, and limited opportunities for upward mobility. One of the main issues with the current approach is the lack of coordination among different governmental bodies and international organizations. This fragmented approach leads to overlapping efforts and unmet needs. To strengthen the analysis, the authors should explicitly outline the services offered to refugees by each actor. For instance, the Egyptian government provides access to public health and education services; international organizations such as UNHCR offer protection, documentation, and financial assistance; and local and international NGOs provide legal aid, psychosocial support, and vocational training. Including this information would enhance clarity about stakeholder roles and help identify service gaps and opportunities for improved coordination (Global Report, UNHCR, 2024).

This study proposes evidence-based recommendations to enhance the well-being and capabilities of displaced populations in Egypt. It focuses on improving access to essential services, including healthcare, education, and social services, to ensure equitable access to fundamental needs. This policy's focus on promoting economic stability through employment, skills training, and micro-enterprise initiatives is essential. Building on these frameworks, social inclusion can be further advanced by ensuring displaced populations have access to existing public services like education and healthcare, which serve both refugees and host communities alike. Community-based livelihood programs that engage both groups can stimulate local economies and reduce tensions. Additionally, promoting dialogue and awareness helps foster social cohesion at minimal cost. These cost-effective strategies support the policy's goals by strengthening overall community resilience and economic integration without imposing additional burdens on Egypt's economy. It advocates fostering social inclusion by establishing frameworks that promote the integration and social cohesion of displaced populations into Egyptian society. This paper emphasizes strengthening legal protections by proposing modifications to legal and policy frameworks, ensuring that displaced persons and migrants have access to legal resources and services. However, political factors and the willingness of authorities to implement these changes are crucial. Without strong political commitment and institutional readiness, legal reforms and social inclusion efforts may face significant obstacles, limiting their effectiveness.

The policy aims to enhance the health and well-being of displaced populations by improving access to healthcare, addressing mental health and chronic diseases, and reducing health disparities. This aligns with Egypt's Vision 2030 for public health infrastructure and equitable access to healthcare. To enhance economic resilience, the policy proposes creating economic opportunities through vocational training, employment programs in renewable energy, agriculture, and construction, as well as promoting micro-enterprise initiatives. This strategy would reduce aid dependency and integrate displaced populations into Egypt's growing sectors, aligning with the goals of reducing poverty and fostering inclusive economic growth. The policy also aims to promote social cohesion by addressing discrimination, xenophobia, and social tensions through community engagement and culturally integrated initiatives. This comprehensive approach supports Egypt's objective of developing sustainable cities and communities where both Egyptian citizens and displaced populations can thrive. To ensure long-term success, these efforts should be implemented within a coordinated national framework that fosters inclusion, protects rights, and advances broader sustainable development goals related to social stability and economic prosperity.

2. Literature Review

To effectively address the challenges faced by displaced populations in Egypt, it was essential to examine existing research, reports, and case studies that highlight key trends, barriers, and opportunities. This evidence base forms the foundation for crafting policies that are both responsive and sustainable in improving the well-being and capabilities of displaced and mobile populations. For

example, a 2021 World Bank report (2021) points to limited progress on poverty reduction despite economic growth, suggesting a growing strain on Egypt's public services due to the increasing influx of displaced individuals and stressing the need for systemic reforms. In addition, the UNHCR's annual report (2024) indicates that a considerable proportion of refugees and asylum seekers still face challenges in accessing essential health services. Research indicates that these challenges are not only structural but also influenced by legal, social, and economic factors, which collectively hinder the self-reliance and integration of displaced communities.

The following sections explore the key dimensions of displacement-related vulnerabilities:

2.1 Health Disparities

Displaced populations in Egypt face significant health disparities compared with host communities. The World Health Organization's strategy to promote the health and well-being of refugees, migrants, internally displaced persons, and other displaced groups highlights that barriers, such as legal restrictions, cultural differences, and insufficient health services, exacerbate poor health outcomes (Organization, 2023). According to the UNHCR Public Health Annual Results Report (2024), refugees in Egypt experience disproportionate rates of chronic disease and mental health challenges. These disparities are further compounded by inadequate access to healthcare facilities and services, resulting in delayed treatment and increased morbidity (Fares & Puig-Junoy, 2021).

2.2 Food Security

The displaced populations in Egypt face significant challenges related to food security. More than 40% of displaced individuals experience unreliable access to nutritious food (Abay et al., 2023), exacerbated by rapid urbanization and overcrowded informal settlements that strain local food systems (World Bank, 2021). Economic shocks such as reduced income or loss of employment can also lead to food insecurity (World Bank, 2021). The situation is further complicated by Egypt's reliance on imported food, which makes the country vulnerable to fluctuations in global commodity prices (Sarant, 2017).

2.3 Economic Integration and Employment

Economic integration and employment are critical for the well-being of displaced populations in Egypt. Many refugees are classified as foreigners under Law 12 of 2003, which restricts their ability to obtain valid work permits, pushing them into informal employment. Key barriers to economic integration include limited education, a lack of technological skills, missing documentation, and cultural differences. A UNHCR report mentions the lack of access to work permits and limited job opportunities as a key challenge faced by refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt (2024). To address these challenges, there is a need for targeted initiatives, such as job training programs, language

education, and policy reforms that promote economic participation among refugees and migrants. The UNHCR also finalized a socio-economic profiling report together with the ILO, which provided an overview of the opportunities and challenges faced by refugees in their efforts to achieve economic inclusion (Global Report, UNHCR, 2024). Some advocate inclusive policies that prioritize integration from the outset, encompassing access to education, healthcare, and employment as well as initiatives that foster social cohesion (Badwi, 2023).

2.4 Social Inclusion and Protection

Social inclusion and protection are essential for the well-being of displaced populations in Egypt, and the UNHCR Annual Results Report emphasizes the importance of addressing issues such as discrimination, gender-based violence, and child protection to foster social cohesion. Discrimination against displaced populations is common and limits access to essential services and opportunities. The absence of a national asylum system further exacerbates vulnerabilities, particularly for women and children who face heightened risks of exploitation and abuse (Global Report, UNHCR, 2024).

2.5 Gaps in Social Protection and Economic Inclusion

Limited research on the long-term impacts of cash transfer programs: While the World Bank highlights the need for a comprehensive review of subsidies (2021), there is limited evidence of the effectiveness of cash transfers in improving refugee livelihoods over time.

The World Bank's FY22 report (2021) emphasizes the need for a comprehensive and adaptive social protection strategy, including a review of subsidies and an analysis of existing programmes. The report noted that Egypt lacks a comprehensive strategy for social protection.

There is a lack of access to formal employment forces in the informal sector, but data on their working conditions, wages, and economic mobility are scarce. The Annual Results Report (2024) states that wage employment support matches refugees' educational backgrounds and professional expertise with available employment opportunities (2024). Skill development is crucial for meeting employers' demands (Global Report, UNHCR, 2024). The office finalized a socio-economic profiling report together with the ILO, which provided an overview of the opportunities and challenges faced by refugees in their efforts to achieve economic inclusion. There is little information on the skills refugees bring and how they could be matched with Egypt's labor market needs. As noted above, the UNHCR and the ILO collaborated on a socioeconomic profiling report to understand the challenges and opportunities for refugees to achieve economic inclusion (Global Report, UNHCR, 2024).

2.6 Gaps in Health Research and Policy

Although the UNHCR highlights health disparities, data regarding healthcare access, cost, and service quality for refugees in Egypt are scarce. Research on the mental health of displaced populations, including

refugees and asylum seekers, is lacking despite their significant exposure to trauma and stress. There is a need for studies to investigate innovative methods for delivering medical and psychosocial support to migrants, with an emphasis on safeguarding vulnerable groups, such as women and children. Displaced women and children encounter distinct health challenges. However, research on maternal healthcare access, neonatal health outcomes, and vaccination rates among refugees is limited. Food security research often targets rural populations; however, the ways in which displaced populations manage food access in urban areas (where many refugees reside) have not been thoroughly documented. Impact of global food price fluctuations on refugees: Egypt's dependence on imported food makes the refugee population susceptible to price shocks. However, no comprehensive analysis has been conducted on how food inflation specifically impacts displaced groups.

2.7 Gaps in Social Inclusion and Protection

Although discrimination is acknowledged as an issue, insufficient research on discrimination and social integration exists; there is a lack of comprehensive studies evaluating the social exclusion faced by displaced populations and the perceptions of host communities towards them. Despite the UNHCR's emphasis on vulnerabilities, gaps in addressing gender-based violence and child protection, information on the frequency, reporting systems, and protective measures for gender-based violence and child exploitation is still incomplete. Egypt does not have a national asylum law, which means that refugee protection relies on international bodies such as the UNHCR; yet, there is limited research on the effects of this legal gap. By the end of 2023, the UNHCR registered approximately 473,000 refugees and asylum seekers (Global Report, UNHCR, 2024). In 2019, the Government of Egypt announced the drafting of an asylum law, which was anticipated to be enacted sometime in 2024 (Andrade, 2021).

3. Methodology

This study employed qualitative document analysis to examine the existing literature and policy documents relevant to displaced populations in Egypt. A systematic approach was adopted to evaluate and synthesize data from multiple sources, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of the current policies, challenges, and best practices.

3.1 Data Sources

A diverse range of primary and secondary sources was analyzed, drawing from both national and international contexts. These include

- **Government Reports:** These encompass documents such as policy briefs, national strategies, and legal frameworks that govern the treatment of refugees and migrants in Egypt.

- **NGO and International Organization Publications:** This category includes reports from entities such as the UNHCR, WHO, IOM, and the World Bank, which concentrate on healthcare access, food security, and initiatives aimed at social inclusion.
- **Academic Studies:** This refers to peer-reviewed journal articles and case studies that provide empirical insights into the socioeconomic and health challenges encountered by displaced populations.
- **Grey Literature:** This includes policy briefs, working papers, and unpublished reports that offer additional context and understanding of the subject matter.

3.2 Analytical Framework

Thematic content analysis was conducted to systematically categorize the findings into key themes.

- **Healthcare Access:** The analysis revealed significant disparities in health service accessibility, with legal barriers and resource constraints limiting displaced populations' access to essential care.
- **Food Security:** This review highlighted economic vulnerabilities and unreliable food access among refugees, exacerbated by fluctuating global food prices and limited policy interventions.
- **Socioeconomic Challenges:** The findings confirmed that restrictive employment policies, lack of social protection mechanisms, and legal uncertainties pose major obstacles to refugee integration.

4. Findings and Analysis

4.1 Urbanization of Displaced Populations

A significant portion of displaced individuals in Egypt reside in urban areas, particularly in Greater Cairo and Alexandria (UNHCR, 2022). While urban settings offer better access to services, they also strain resources, such as healthcare, housing, and education. Egypt's urbanization rate is low, but a large share of its population lives in areas officially designated as urban (Norman, 2021).

Informal settlements are growing, particularly in the Greater Cairo urban Region (Norman, 2021). To address this, the Egyptian Urban Refugee Strategy emphasizes the need for sustainable urban planning that accommodates both displaced populations and host communities. Urban growth in Egypt's cities primarily occurs in informal areas (Abouzied, 2022).

4.2 Access to Legal Protection and Rights

Egypt has made strides to improve legal frameworks for displaced populations, as seen in its National Strategy for Human Rights (2021-2026). Forcibly displaced persons holding UNHCR documentation

benefit from GoE residence permits that are valid for six months and renewable. However, undocumented asylum seekers faced challenges (Global Report, UNHCR, 2024). Expanding legal protection could unlock opportunities for displaced individuals to contribute more significantly to society.

4.3 Social Cohesion and Public Perception

The displaced populations in Egypt, including refugees and migrants, often encounter significant challenges related to xenophobia, discrimination, and social exclusion. These barriers not only hinder their integration into society but also exacerbate their vulnerabilities. Engagement with refugees and host communities remains a priority, especially in the urban context, to support peaceful coexistence and social cohesion (Global Report, UNHCR, 2024). Education, awareness campaigns, and community dialogue are effective means of reducing tensions and fostering mutual understanding between host and refugee communities. For instance, community-based initiatives have demonstrated potential to mitigate xenophobic attitudes and promote social cohesion.

4.4 Potential for Local Economic Contributions

Displaced populations, including refugees and migrants, possess untapped labor and entrepreneurial potential that can contribute to local economies in Egypt. A significant proportion of refugees live in urban areas, such as Cairo, Giza, and Alexandria (UNHCR, 2022), highlighting the importance of local economic integration. Evidence suggests that when refugees achieve self-reliance, they can enjoy greater respect for their human rights (Raimondi, 2023).

This model can be replicated in Egypt, where refugee entrepreneurs face barriers to access to capital and markets. Establishing microfinance initiatives for refugees can provide capital to start and grow businesses. Refugee-led microfinance initiatives have been successful in Kampala, Uganda, although they often lack sufficient capital and business training resources (Easton & Calabria & Hakiza, 2020). These programmes should focus on providing low-interest loans and financial literacy training to empower refugee entrepreneurs. Some Syrian-managed organizations provide support to fellow refugees (Did You Know That Syrian Refugees Have Contributed Over 800 million to the Egyptian economy? (2017)). In addition to urban entrepreneurship, agriculture presents a promising yet underexplored pathway for displaced populations, especially in reducing the overconcentration in urban centers. Egypt's agricultural sector, while facing challenges, offers opportunities for small-scale farming, agri-business, and climate-resilient agricultural practices. Integrating refugees into agricultural value chains through access to land, vocational training, and cooperative farming models can stimulate rural development and food security while enabling economic decentralization. Such models have shown success in contexts like Uganda and Ethiopia, where agricultural livelihoods

have been used to promote both integration and self-reliance. Moreover, interventions that strengthen refugees' perceived abilities and capabilities, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, would have significant long-term benefits (Mawson & Kasem, 2019). Through diversifying economic opportunities beyond urban centers, Egypt can promote more balanced and inclusive development while reducing pressure on already burdened cities.

4.5 Technology-Enabled Healthcare Access

One promising innovation is the use of telemedicine to improve healthcare access for displaced populations, especially considering the challenges they face in accessing traditional services (Fares & Puig-Junoy, 2021). Telemedicine provides remote consultations, diagnostics, and follow-up care, reducing barriers that prevent refugees and migrants from seeking health services. This approach aligns with the WHO's strategy to promote the health and well-being of displaced groups by ensuring access to a continuum of care (Organization, 2023). For example, telemedicine can expand healthcare access, improve the quality of care, and reduce the burden on the traditional healthcare infrastructure.

4.6 Blockchain for Transparent Aid Distribution

Transparency and accountability in aid distribution are significant challenges in a humanitarian context. Blockchain technology has the potential to establish a transparent and traceable system for distributing humanitarian assistance (Palande, 2021; Reinsberg, 2018). This approach enables donors and aid organizations to monitor resource allocation, ensuring that assistance reaches intended beneficiaries (McIsaac et al., 2019). Furthermore, blockchain technology can facilitate the creation of digital identities for displaced individuals, thereby enabling them to access essential services, such as healthcare and education, even in the absence of formal documentation (Mesa, 2021). For example, the WFP building block program uses blockchain to ensure transparency and streamline aid (Awan and Nunhuck, 2020; Building Blocks, 2022). Building Blocks function as an accounting system, delivering cash assistance to Syrian refugees in the Azraq and Zaatari camps in Jordan (Awan & Nunhuck, 2020). In vulnerable countries that lack financial infrastructure, blockchain could help to roll out lifesaving cash assistance on days when disasters strike (2021).

4.7 Behavioral Insights to Encourage Social Integration

Behavioral science offers novel approaches to enhance social integration and combat discrimination. Behavioral research strategies can reduce xenophobia and cultivate favorable attitudes towards displaced communities, contributing to social harmony (Nasri, 2020). These initiatives can be implemented in educational institutions, work environments, and community spaces, promoting interactions between Egyptians and displaced individuals and mutual understanding.

For instance, nudging techniques can be employed in public awareness campaigns to highlight the positive contributions of displaced populations to Egyptian society. Additionally, school curricula can be adapted to teach tolerance, empathy, and the value of cultural diversity, helping build a more inclusive society from a young age. Evidence from Canada's Refugee Integration Programs shows that behavioral insights, when integrated into community outreach efforts, can significantly improve public attitudes towards refugees and foster integration (Nasri, 2020).

4.8 Mobile Applications for Employment and Skill Development

Considering that many displaced persons in Egypt work in unofficial sectors, creative approaches such as mobile applications for job matching can help link refugees and migrants to formal job market opportunities. These apps can provide information on available jobs, training programs, and skill development opportunities tailored to the Egyptian labor market. AI-driven platforms can assess displaced individuals' skills, match them to suitable jobs, and provide online courses and certifications to upskilled refugees and migrants. The creation of digital platform-based job boards is a promising option to facilitate job searches (World Bank, 2021).

4.9 Policy Tools and Instruments

The successful implementation of innovative strategies requires a diverse set of policy instruments and tools. These mechanisms will promote a supportive environment for the proposed initiatives and interventions, while simultaneously ensuring the longevity and effectiveness of the implemented solutions.

4.10 Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships can mobilize resources and expertise to address the challenges faced by displaced populations (Innovative Solutions to Improve Livelihoods in Host Communities of Syrian Refugees in Egypt, 2021). Through collaboration with private-sector entities, governments can facilitate solutions that benefit both displaced populations and host communities. For example, partnerships with mobile telecommunications companies can facilitate the rollout of mobile health and employment apps by providing technology and infrastructure support (Mesa, 2021). Similarly, partnerships with financial institutions can help expand digital financial services for refugees, thus improving their access to cash assistance and financial inclusion. These applications can enhance access to essential services for displaced populations. Collaboration with financial institutions can expand digital financial services for refugees, improve their access to cash assistance, and promote financial inclusion. A significant example is the Egyptian Government's partnership with Vodafone on mobile financial services, serving as a model for future public-private partnerships. Collaboration

can address the challenges faced by displaced individuals by providing tools to navigate financial systems and access essential resources.

4.11 Regulatory Frameworks for Legal Employment

Establishing legal frameworks for displaced populations' access to formal employment is essential for economic integration (Bahar et al., 2024). Modifying labor laws to recognize refugees and migrants as legitimate workforce members can reduce employment barriers. Employer incentives such as tax credits or subsidies for hiring refugees and migrants may encourage businesses to employ displaced workers and mitigate labor market discrimination.

The Jordanian government's regulations permitting refugees to work legally in the formal sector have demonstrated efficacy in integrating displaced populations into the labor force. This model can serve as a valuable reference for Egypt in its efforts to enhance the economic participation of displaced communities.

4.12 Tax Incentives for Businesses Supporting Refugees

To stimulate employment generation and support for displaced populations, Egypt can implement fiscal incentives and subsidies for enterprises that employ refugees, provide vocational training, and invest in programs for the economic integration of displaced individuals. These incentives could extend to businesses collaborating with NGOs or international organizations to deliver social services, healthcare, or education to refugees and migrants (Bahar 2024).

Colombia has successfully utilized fiscal incentives for businesses employing displaced persons, resulting in increased employment opportunities and improved economic inclusion for refugees. Egypt could adopt similar strategies to encourage enterprises to employ refugees, particularly in high-demand sectors, such as construction, hospitality, and technology (Galal et al., 2020).

4.13 Educational Campaigns for Social Cohesion

Public awareness campaigns are essential for combating discrimination and promoting social cohesion (2021). These campaigns could be designed to highlight the positive contributions of displaced populations, challenge stereotypes, and encourage Egyptians to embrace diversity. By leveraging media outlets, social media platforms, and community events, these campaigns can foster a more inclusive environment and reduce tensions between displaced individuals and host communities. According to a phone survey conducted in Egypt in May 2020, 81% of the respondents learned about measures taken against the spread of the virus through TV (2021). Social media is also a major source

of information (World Bank, 2021).

For example, the UNHCR's social cohesion campaigns in countries such as Lebanon have helped improve public attitudes towards refugees and migrants by highlighting their resilience and contributions to society. Similar campaigns in Egypt could promote mutual understanding and enhance social integration. "It's a Match!" is an Egyptian Click funding campaign to promote dialogue between migrants and their welcoming communities ("It's a Match!" Egyptian Clickfunding Campaign Goes Viral, 2016; Lukovszki et al., 2016).

5. Policy Discussion and Recommendations

Effective advocacy and awareness campaigns are fundamental in building support for the proposed policies and ensuring successful interventions for the displaced populations in Egypt. This involves educating the public and key stakeholders about the challenges faced by refugees, migrants, and displaced individuals as well as the broader societal and economic benefits of integration and inclusion (World Bank, 2021). Several strategies can be employed to engage stakeholders effectively.

5.1 Public Awareness Campaigns

Public awareness campaigns are essential for dispelling myths, addressing misconceptions, and fostering empathy towards displaced populations and their host communities alike. These initiatives should highlight how integration benefits both refugees and Egyptians through promoting social cohesion, economic collaboration, and shared community development (Nasri, 2020). Through emphasizing the common experiences and inherent dignity shared by displaced populations, these public awareness campaigns can mitigate xenophobic attitudes, foster a sense of communal solidarity, and establish a more inclusive societal environment. According to a phone survey conducted in Egypt in May 2020, television emerged as the predominant medium through which 81% of the respondents accessed information regarding measures implemented to curb the spread of the virus (World Bank, 2021).

For example, Germany's "Wir Zusammen" initiative, an integration initiative of German businesses, has effectively promoted social integration through public awareness campaigns that highlighted the skills and potential of refugees (Wir zusammen, 2019). Similarly, Egypt can use media channels, social media platforms, and community-based initiatives to promote inclusion messages (Finland: New Campaign Amplifies Refugee Voices, 2022).

5.2 Engaging Stakeholders in Policy Development

Building collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders is critical to the success of policy initiatives. Stakeholders, including government agencies, local authorities, international organizations, civil

society, the private sector, and displaced populations, should be involved in policy development and implementation (Global Report, UNHCR 2024). Their input ensures that policies are grounded in the realities of displaced individuals, while aligning with national priorities. The UNHCR and IOM regularly engage with governments and civil society groups to develop policy recommendations that reflect the needs of displaced people. Egypt can strengthen its collaboration with these organizations to create policies that are both comprehensive and tailored to local needs (Global Report, UNHCR 2024).

5.3 Leveraging the Private Sector

The private sector plays a crucial role in providing economic opportunities, services, and resources for displaced populations (Expanding Opportunities for the Egyptian Private Sector in the Post-COVID Era, 2024). To engage private sector stakeholders, the government can promote corporate social responsibility initiatives that focus on the integration of both displaced populations and local Egyptians, creating employment opportunities and training programs that strengthen the workforce for all and contribute to inclusive economic growth.

5.4 Enabling Infrastructure and Systems

For the proposed policies to be effectively implemented, Egypt must ensure that enabling infrastructure and systems are in place to support the integration of displaced populations. This involves creating a supportive institutional and legal framework as well as ensuring that physical and digital infrastructure is available to provide services and opportunities for refugees and migrants.

5.5 Institutional and Structural Changes

One key requirement for successful policy implementation is establishing dedicated government bodies to coordinate efforts to integrate displaced populations. This could involve creating or strengthening a National Refugee and Migrant Coordination Authority that works across ministries to ensure a whole-of-government approach to refugee and migrant issues. This authority would help to plan, implement, and monitor policies that support displaced populations.

Moreover, Egypt will need to streamline its legal and regulatory framework to ensure that displaced populations can access essential services. This includes revising labor laws to allow refugees and migrants to work legally in the formal economy and revising social security and healthcare regulations to make them accessible to displaced individuals.

5.6 Digital Infrastructure

In addition to traditional infrastructure, Egypt must prioritize the development of digital infrastructure to integrate displaced populations into the country's social and economic fabric. This includes providing access to mobile phones, the Internet, and digital platforms that allow displaced people to access health services, job opportunities, and educational resources. Digital solutions such as mobile applications, online platforms, and e-governance systems can deliver services more efficiently and create opportunities for displaced people to integrate into Egyptian society. The Digital Egypt Portal, for instance, offers over 170 e-government services (DPI is a game changer for all, 2024). Prioritizing digital infrastructure is especially important considering that refugees are often less likely to have Internet access than the general population.

5.7 Coordination with Local Authorities

Local authorities are essential in implementing policies for displaced populations, particularly at the municipal and district levels. Egypt's urban areas, where most displaced populations reside, must have the capacity to deliver services such as healthcare, education, and housing, while also managing the social integration of migrants and refugees (Galal et al., 2020; Norman, 2021). Local authorities should be empowered with the necessary resources, training, and tools to meet these demands.

5.8 Best Practices from Similar Contexts

Looking at best practices from global, regional, and local contexts can provide valuable insights into how Egypt can overcome challenges in integrating displaced populations. Several countries have demonstrated success in creating inclusive policies that address the challenges faced by refugees and migrants. These best practices can inform Egypt's approach to policy development and implementation.

Germany's experience in integrating over a million refugees highlights the importance of language acquisition, job training programs, and civic education (Innovative Solutions to Improve Livelihoods in Host Communities of Syrian Refugees in Egypt, 2021). Egypt can implement similar programs to help displaced populations improve their language skills, gain vocational training, and become familiar with Egyptian culture and legal frameworks. Turkey's work permit policy for refugees has also contributed to the economic empowerment of refugees and reduced reliance on humanitarian aid. Colombia's National Integration Plan for Venezuelan Migrants, focusing on healthcare access, education, and social protection, provides another example of an integrated response that addresses the broad needs of displaced populations.

5.9 Capacity Building and Funding

Effective implementation policy requires the development of local capacity and access to adequate funding. Egypt must invest in training programs for government officials, local authorities, NGOs, and the private sector to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to support displaced populations.

Additionally, international partnerships and funding will be crucial for financing the proposed policies. Egypt can collaborate with organizations like the United Nations Development Programme, World Bank (2021), and European Union to secure funding for refugee-related initiatives. Similarly, engaging the private sector in funding and resource mobilization, through CSR programs or philanthropic contributions, can help ensure that the necessary resources are available to implement these policies. The rollout and expansion of the Takaful and Karama cash transfer programs illustrates how citizens' engagement and evidence-based policy adjustments can be replicated for other programs in Egypt (World Bank, 2021).

5.10 Key Interventions

To operationalize the proposed policies for improving the well-being of displaced populations in Egypt, several targeted interventions must be implemented. These interventions will focus on addressing the immediate needs of displaced populations while also ensuring their long-term integration and empowerment. The following outlines specific actions and programs that can effectively support the policy objectives.

5.11 Pilot Projects for Health Access and Delivery

One key intervention to improve health outcomes of displaced populations is implementing pilot health access programs in urban centers with large refugee and migrant populations, like Cairo, Alexandria, and Giza, and underserved Egyptian communities alike, ensuring equitable healthcare delivery that strengthens the entire health system. These projects can focus on providing primary healthcare services, including vaccination campaigns, maternal and child health services, and mental health support. Mobile health units can reach refugees in remote or underserved areas, offering medical care, health education, and referrals to specialized services. Telemedicine solutions can be integrated, allowing displaced populations to consult healthcare providers remotely. A comprehensive health screening program for migrants could address health issues specific to refugees, such as infectious diseases and malnutrition, while preventing the spread of communicable diseases within host communities.

A successful example of this is the Jordan Health Project for Syrian Refugees, which provides integrated health services through mobile clinics and telemedicine, ensuring broader access to healthcare, even

in informal refugee settlements (Dator et al., 2018). Egypt could replicate this model while adapting it to local needs and capacities. Note that refugees may face challenges in accessing healthcare due to financial constraints or other obstacles (Fares & Puig-Junoy, 2021).

5.12 Educational and Vocational Training Programs

Providing educational opportunities for displaced individuals is another critical intervention to improve their well-being. These initiatives should include language and literacy programs, as well as vocational training, designed to benefit both displaced populations and vulnerable Egyptian youth, promoting skills development that addresses national labor market needs and fosters social integration. In addition to formal education, non-formal programs focused on skills development in sectors such as agriculture, construction, and retail could improve employability. These programs should involve partnerships with vocational schools, universities, and community centers already working with vulnerable populations. Online learning platforms can provide digital literacy training, benefiting both refugees and host community members, helping reduce the digital divide. Vocational training programs are a common response to enhance skill formation among youth (Chakravarty et al., 2018).

For example, Ethiopia's Job Creation and Skills Development Program has successfully provided training and employment opportunities for displaced populations by focusing on practical skills and local labor market needs. Egypt can build on this approach by focusing on sectoral skills development and creating pathways for economic self-sufficiency.

5.13 Community-Driven Social Integration Initiatives

Social integration of displaced populations is hindered by isolation, discrimination, and a lack of community participation. Community-driven initiatives foster social cohesion and cultural understanding by engaging displaced populations and Egyptian host communities together in cooperative activities, building trust, reducing tensions, and encouraging inclusive community development. Community-based dialogue programs and conflict resolution workshops address tensions and promote peaceful coexistence. Joint initiatives involving refugees and local communities in activities like environmental conservation, sports events, and cultural exchanges build mutual respect and trust (Taylor, 2024). UNFPA has also supported the training of Syrian and Egyptian community health workers, with a focus on strengthening social cohesion through integrating Egyptians into most outreach activities (Humanitarian Programme of UNFPA, 2016).

5.14 Legal Aid and Protection Services

Another key intervention is providing legal assistance to displaced populations. Many refugees and migrants in Egypt face legal barriers limiting access to employment, education, and healthcare. Establishing legal aid clinics offering free or low-cost services can help displaced populations navigate

legal challenges related to residency, work permits, and documentation. This initiative can extend to awareness campaigns on refugee rights and labor laws, ensuring displaced individuals know their entitlements.

Additionally, protection services are essential for addressing refugees' vulnerabilities, particularly those at risk of exploitation, abuse, or trafficking. Strengthening legal aid providers' role in preventing these abuses is crucial for ensuring displaced people's safety and dignity.

5.15 Role of Stakeholders

Effective implementation of these interventions requires coordinated effort from diverse stakeholders, each fulfilling a specific role. Identifying and engaging key stakeholders in policy development and implementation is critical to success.

5.16 Government Agencies

The Egyptian government serves as the primary stakeholder in implementing and ensuring the sustainability of policies for displaced populations. Key ministries involved include:

- Ministry of Health and Population: Overseeing health access programs and facilitating healthcare delivery to displaced populations.
- Ministry of Education: Responsible for incorporating displaced children and adults into the national education system and vocational training programs.
- Ministry of Social Solidarity: Engaged in providing social services and supporting social integration initiatives.
- Ministry of Manpower: Overseeing the creation of employment opportunities and legal work permits for displaced individuals.
- Local Government Authorities: Responsible for implementing community-based initiatives at the local level.

The government's role is to establish a regulatory framework supporting the integration of displaced populations, allocating necessary resources, and ensuring coordination among ministries. Institutional capacity-building within these agencies will be crucial to ensure they can effectively manage and oversee the interventions.

5.17 Non-Governmental Organizations

NGOs are vital in addressing global displaced populations' needs. In Egypt, organizations like

UNHCR, IOM, Save the Children, and Caritas Egypt provide crucial humanitarian aid, advocacy, and technical support. They partner with the government to implement pilot projects, fund initiatives, and offer expertise in protection, health, and education. UNHCR has assisted refugees in Egypt with education and health access through its “Refugee Education Program” and “Health Access Program.” NGOs remain key in designing and delivering services for displaced populations.

5.18 Private Sector

The private sector can contribute by providing job opportunities, funding initiatives, and supporting vocational training programs. Through corporate social responsibility initiatives, businesses can help integrate displaced populations into the labor force. Partnerships with private companies could help create inclusive supply chains where displaced populations are employed or receive training, contributing to the national economy.

For example, Microsoft’s partnership with the International Rescue Committee to provide digital literacy training and job placement programs for refugees has been an effective model of private-sector involvement in refugee integration. Vocational training is considered an indispensable way for the development of human capital (Ullah & Malik, 2020).

5.19 Academia

Academic institutions can contribute by conducting research, gathering data, and providing evidence-based insights into the challenges and needs of displaced populations. Universities and think tanks can evaluate the impacts of policies and interventions, helping refine strategies and ensuring they are grounded in local realities. The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies at the American University in Cairo is an interdisciplinary center that aims to further the scientific knowledge of refugee and migration movements in the MENA region (Center for Migration and Refugee Studies, 2024, 2025).

For instance, the Cairo Institute for Development Studies can partner with governmental agencies to assess the socio-economic impacts of refugee integration policies and provide recommendations for improvements. Academic institutions can also provide training and capacity-building programs for governmental and non-governmental actors involved in refugee assistance.

5.20 Scaling Up

Once initial interventions have been successfully piloted, scaling them up across Egypt requires a strategic roadmap and sustainable mechanisms for policy impact.

5.21 Roadmap for Scaling Up

The scaling-up process should begin by identifying efficacious interventions that are replicable across diverse regions. This can be accomplished through:

- **Expanding Pilot Projects:** Extend successful pilot initiatives to additional urban areas, refugee camps, and rural settlements.
- **Regional Partnerships:** Collaborate with local governmental entities and international organizations to adapt interventions to various regions and ensure efficacy.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement robust mechanisms to assess the impact of scaling up interventions and facilitate necessary adjustments.

5.22 Sustained Funding Models

Implementation of policies must be supported by sustained funding models. These could include a combination of government funding, international aid, and private-sector contributions. Egypt should explore development bonds, impact investing, and public-private partnerships to secure long-term financial resources for scaling up interventions.

For example, the Jordan Response Plan for Syrian Refugees has successfully used a combination of donor funding, international loans, and private investments to ensure the sustainability of refugee support programs.

5.23 Periodic Evaluations

Finally, the efficacy and impact of these interventions should be evaluated through systematic assessments. These evaluations will facilitate the determination of whether the interventions are achieving their intended outcomes, identify areas for enhancement, and ensure the efficient utilization of resources. Stakeholders should adopt an adaptive management approach, allowing for flexibility and responsiveness to emerging challenges.

6. Recommendations for Action

To address the challenges facing displaced populations in Egypt, a multifaceted strategy encompassing both short-term and medium-to-long-term measures is required. These proposed interventions aim to enhance access to services, facilitate social integration, and establish sustainable systems that benefit both displaced individuals and host communities. Each recommended action is grounded in empirical evidence, feasible, and aligned with existing national and international frameworks.

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Intervention	Description	Justification	Timeframe	Stakeholders Involved
Pilot Health Programs	Implement mobile health clinics, vaccination campaigns, maternal and child healthcare, and mental health support in Cairo, Alexandria, and Giza	Reduces preventable illnesses and alleviates the burden on emergency care systems. Mobile clinics have proven successful in resource-limited settings (Fares & Puig-Junoy, 2021)	Short-Term (1-2 Years)	Ministry of Health and Population, UNHCR (2024), WHO (Organization, 2023), IOM, Local Healthcare Providers
Educational Support	Launch language/literacy programs and vocational training	Addresses language barriers and skills gaps that hinder employment and social inclusion. Prevents long-term poverty and dependency. Vocational training is indispensable for human capital development	Short-Term	Ministry of Education, NGOs, Local Vocational Institutes
Legal Aid Services	Establish legal aid clinics in urban centers to assist with documentation, work permits, and residency papers. Provide awareness campaigns on legal rights and refugee protection	Enables access to employment, healthcare, and education while safeguarding against exploitation and abuse. Strengthening legal aid providers' role in preventing abuses is crucial	Short-Term	UNHCR (2024), Legal Aid Providers, Ministry of Justice, NGOs
Coordination Task Force	Create a multi-stakeholder task force (government, NGOs, international organizations, private sector) to coordinate responses	Fragmented responses often result in service gaps. A centralized platform enhances efficiency and resource allocation	Short-Term	Government Agencies, NGOs, International Organizations, Private Sector Partners
Community Initiatives	Implement community-driven projects (cultural exchanges, joint environmental programs, sports events) to bring together displaced individuals and host communities	Builds trust and addresses discrimination, vital for long-term integration. Community-driven initiatives have successfully reduced tensions in similar contexts	Short-Term	Local Municipalities, Grassroots Organizations, Displaced Individuals, Host Community Members
Sustainable Livelihood Programs	Develop economic empowerment initiatives offering employment/ entrepreneurship opportunities. Facilitate work permits and support small businesses	Economic self-reliance reduces long-term costs and allows displaced populations to contribute to the economy	Medium-to-Long-Term	Ministry of Manpower, Private Sector, Microfinance Institutions
Policy & Legal Frameworks	Adopt a national strategy for displaced populations. Update labor laws to remove restrictions on refugee employment and clarify work permit guidelines	Promotes fairness, reduces exploitation, and supports access to sustainable livelihoods	Medium-to-Long-Term	Government (various ministries), Legal Experts, UNHCR (2024)

Capacity-Building	Develop training programs for government officials, healthcare workers, educators, and community leaders	Ensures program sustainability and improves outcomes	Medium-to-Long-Term	Government, Training Institutions, NGOs
Monitoring & Evaluation	Establish a comprehensive M&E system to assess the impact of interventions	Ensures accountability and allows for program improvements	Ongoing	Government, Research Institutions, NGOs
Scale-Up Social Cohesion	Expand social cohesion initiatives nationally, incorporating them into local development plans	Critical for long-term stability and integration	Medium-to-Long-Term	Government, Local Development Agencies, Community Organizations

7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework

A comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework is essential for assessing the effectiveness and impact of interventions intended to support displaced populations. The framework should encompass the following key dimensions:

- **Evaluation Metrics:** Define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound indicators to track progress in key areas:
 - *Health Outcomes:* Increase in access to healthcare services and reduction in preventable diseases among displaced populations.
 - *Economic Inclusion:* Increased employment rates, self-employment, and household incomes among displaced individuals.
 - *Educational Access:* Improved school enrollment and literacy rates for displaced children and adults.
 - *Social Cohesion:* Enhanced trust and collaboration between displaced populations and host communities, measured through satisfaction surveys.
 - *Infrastructure Development:* Tangible progress in housing, water, and sanitation projects.
- **Data Collection and Reporting:** Implement systematic data collection methods, including:
 - *Household surveys to gather quantitative data on key indicators.*
 - *Focus group discussions to gain qualitative insights into experiences and perceptions.*
 - *Program performance reports from implementing partners.*
 - *Collaboration with stakeholders, including NGOs, government agencies, and international organizations, to ensure comprehensive data collection.*
 - *Annual reports to assess progress against established metrics, disseminated through stakeholder meetings and public channels to ensure transparency.*
- **Continuous Improvement and Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish feedback loops to refine policy interventions:

- *Participatory* feedback systems allowing displaced populations to provide real-time feedback on service delivery (Global Report, UNHCR, 2024).
- *Adaptive* programming that uses evaluation findings to adjust interventions and address emerging challenges.
- **Cultivating Scholarly Advancement and Inventiveness:** Foster a policy framework conducive to continuous learning and improvement:
 - Collaborative information systems for sharing successful strategies among stakeholders.
 - Support for innovative approaches, including e-health solutions, to improve service provision.
 - Skill enhancement programs to build the capacity of local and national stakeholders in MEL.

8. Conclusion

The proposed policy framework addresses the critical challenges faced by displaced populations in Egypt, outlining essential short-and long-term actions. These actions aim to improve access to healthcare, promote economic inclusion, strengthen social cohesion, and invest in sustainable infrastructure, all while safeguarding the rights and well-being of displaced populations and supporting Egypt's overall stability (Farahat, 2021).

Key recommendations include deploying mobile health clinics, implementing community-driven integration initiatives, expanding vocational training programs, and prioritizing infrastructure investments. These recommendations are designed to be inclusive, sustainable, and adaptable to the evolving needs of displaced populations. The success of these policies hinges on decisive and collaborative action from government agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and international organizations, supported by strong partnerships, sustained funding commitments, and robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks (Gilson et al., 2014).

The effective implementation of this framework will require adaptive programming that uses evaluation findings to adjust interventions and address emerging challenges. Strengthening social protection systems and fostering a policy framework conducive to continuous learning and improvement will be crucial to achieving these goals.

Future research should focus on several key areas:

Health Surveillance Systems: Future research should focus on developing health surveillance systems specifically tailored for migrant populations (Maaroufi, 2020). These systems should integrate migrant health data into existing health information systems (Maaroufi, 2020).

Skills of Healthcare Professionals: Research is needed to identify the most effective methods for strengthening the skills of healthcare professionals in addressing the specific health needs of migrant

populations, including tropical diseases (Maaroufi, 2020).

Medical and Psycho-Social Assistance: Studies should explore innovative approaches to providing medical and psycho-social assistance to migrants, with a focus on protecting vulnerable categories such as women and children (Maaroufi, 2020).

Impact of Intersectoral Policies: Further research is needed to assess the impact of intersectoral policies on migrant health outcomes (Refugee and Migrant Health, 2024). This includes policies related to labor, education, and social services.

Health Promotion Programs: Develop and evaluate health promotion programs tailored to the specific needs of migrant populations (Maaroufi, 2020). These programs should address mental health, occupational safety, and prevalent communicable and non-communicable diseases (Kristiansen & Sheikh, 2014).

Accessible Healthcare: Research should investigate barriers to accessing culturally and linguistically appropriate healthcare services for low-income migrants (Kristiansen & Sheikh, 2014). Studies should focus on identifying effective strategies for overcoming these barriers.

Mobile Health (mHealth) Adoption: Explore the adoption of mHealth solutions among migrant populations (Duarte & Pinho, 2019). Studies should investigate the factors that influence mHealth adoption and the potential of mHealth to improve health outcomes.

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