

## Labour mobility for refugees - Past and Present examples

The following draft overview provides selected examples of labour mobility programmes and practices, involving refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR. These programmes and practices have been chosen because they contribute to meeting the host countries' labour needs and at the same time enhance protection and solutions for refugees or other people of concern to UNHCR. Some examples do not directly relate to refugees but some of their characteristics could be replicated for refugee programmes. This matrix is structured in chronological order and is divided in three parts. The first focuses on programmes and practices which facilitates onward labour mobility and the second compiles practices which enhance self-reliance and local integration. Finally, the last section compiles education programmes, which specifically target refugees and allow for greater mobility. This list is the result of an initial 4 weeks desk review. It is non-exhaustive and not all information it includes has yet been verified.

### Onward mobility programmes and practices

	Host country	Dates	Type of programme	Beneficiaries	Review	Involvement of international organisations	End of programme
<i>1920s</i>							
<b>Nansen passport</b>	These documents were used in 52 countries by 1942.	Designed in 1921 by Fridtjof Nansen	The Nansen passport is the first travel documents for refugees.	Approximately 450,000 Nansen passports were issued, helping hundreds of thousands of stateless people and refugees to move freely.	The issuance of Nansen passports opened various opportunities for stateless people and refugees, such as work, self-reliance and integration in the country of first refuge. Overtime, they became passeports for onwards movement to other states in need of labour migrants.	The League of Nations issued these documents.	While Nansen passports are no longer issued, present national authorities, including the United Nations, issue documents for stateless people and refugees.
<i>1940-50s</i>							

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<b>UNESCO exchange of person programme</b>		After World War II	This programme promoted educational, scientific or cultural exchange for students, young persons, workers, teachers or professors.	Refugees who were engaged in educational, scientific or cultural activities also benefitted.	This programme had a particular focus in matching skills and labour market demands.	UNESCO evaluated the file of refugees under the Commissioner's mandate to assess their professional qualification and match them with vacant jobs in other countries. WHO has also participated in the programme and helped to place refugee medical personnel in countries where their services were needed	
<b>Post war refugee placement</b>	Belgium	After World War II	This labour placement programme specifically targeted refugees to work for a two year period in coal mines as a response to labour shortages.	50,000 refugees benefitted.	This contributed to the economic recovery of the country following WWII. There was a marked preference in selecting refugees from Baltic states, who were believed to integrate easily into society. In contrast to the British programme, this scheme rigorously enforced the labour restrictions.		
<b>Post war refugee placement</b>	Australia	After World War II	This labour placement scheme, which specifically targeted refugees, was used to bring additional work force into the country and ease labour shortages. Contract: 2 years of government designated labour with possibility of renewal.	160,000 refugees were admitted to Australia under this scheme.	It contributed to the development of Australia's resources, basic industries and services. There was a preference to recruit refugees from the Baltic states. Workers were ensured paid work, prevented from exploitation and could obtain Australian citizenship after 5 years.	International Refugees Organisation (IRO)	

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<b>Post war refugee placement</b>	Canada	After World War II	This is a labour placement scheme for refugees in order to ease labour shortages	100,000 refugees benefitted from this scheme.	This programme eased the labour shortages and created work opportunities for refugees. There was a marked preference in selecting refugees from Baltic states, who were believed to integrate easily into society	Following the requests from the Canadian government for additional work force, the IRO was responsible for pre-selecting the refugees	
<b>European Voluntary Service</b> <b>Balt Cygnet Programme (B.C)</b> <b>Westward Ho Programme (W.H)</b>	The UK	1946-1953 B. C: 1946-1948 W.H 1948-1950s	This labour placement programme targetted refugees from Eastern Europe to work in selected industries and sectors, experiencing labour shortages. B.C : recruitment of women from Baltic States as a response to labour shortage of domestic staff and nurses in hospitals. 12 months contract, subject to review. W.H : recruitment of refugees from Eastern Europe to work in industries, coal mines and agriculture.	91,000 European workers were brought to the UK under the Balt Cygnet and Westward Ho programme. B.C: 5,000 women from Baltic states benefitted.	This scheme contributed to fill labour shortages in the UK. B.C: Restricted access to the scheme based on an integration criteria (middle-class, single women from the Baltic states). Other nationalities (such as Ukranian) were allowed after the programme faced recruitment difficulties. W.H: In comparison with B.C, this scheme was less restrictive and created a flexible pool of labour. It allowed a more flexible response to labour shortages.		Balt Cygnet was included into to the Westward Ho programme in 1948. In 1953, the term European volunteer workers was no longer used. People then referred to foreign workers recruited under the W.H scheme. It is not clear from the literature when the W.H ended
<b>Post war refugee placement</b>	The Netherlands	early to mid-1950s	This labour placement scheme provided refugees from camps in Austria, Greece, Italy and Trieste with work opportunities in Netherlands	205 refugee families were selected. These had to included one skilled or semi skilled worker in the building trade per family	This contributed to easing the labour shortages of the country, while at the same time providing work opportunities for refugees.		
<b>1960-early 2000s</b>							

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<b>The Bureau of Placement and Education of African Refugees</b>	Countries of the OAU	1968-2002	A placement system for qualified refugees allowed the acquisition of new skills for refugees and increased labour mobility opportunities.	African refugees holding the necessary degree or certificate and who were seeking employment in Africa or African refugee students wishing to complete secondary or tertiary education were able to benefit from this placement.	This programme allowed refugees to pursue labour or education opportunities within the region and provided them with skills and knowledge for successful return and/or resettlement. Refugees often faced difficulties in securing work permits leading the BPEAR to find alternative placements outside of Africa.	UNHCR, ILO, UNESCO and ECA advised the bureau on issues affecting resettlement, education, medical care and social well being of refugees.	The BPEAR closed when the OAU became the AU in 2002.
<i>Current examples</i>							
<b>Issuance of convention travel documents</b>	Saudi Arabia and Gulf States	late 1980 - ongoing	Issuance of convention travel documents by the government of Sudan to refugees. CTDs are issued or renewed for a period of 2 years.	It is estimated that 25,000 CTDs have been issued, mainly to Eritrean refugees who reside in the Gulf states as migrant workers. In 2011, 219 CTDs were issued to 303 individuals compared with 387 in 2010. In 2009, 209 CTDs were issued and 657 refugee benefitted from these.	The CTDs opened a complementary legal venue for refugees and increased their access to social rights. However, refugees that overstayed the validity of their CTDs were in an irregular situation which deprived them of social service and heightened the risk of deportation.		N/A

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<b>Temporary and Circular Labour Migration Plan (TCLM plan)</b>	Spain	2001- on going	This temporary programme was initiated by a Spanish trade union as a response to labour shortages in harvesting fruit in Catalonia. It promotes the regular migration of Colombian workers to Spain. Contract: 6 to 9 months, with possible extension up to two years	In 2007, 1,519 people were included in the TCLM plan, including displaced communities, women heads of household and people from high-risk zones of natural disasters.	The programme fills labour market needs in Spain. At the same time, it provides work opportunities for Colombians. The workers acquire knowledge and skills which allows the diversification of their income upon return to Colombia. This also reduced their vulnerability to environmental disruptions, without being forced to permanently relocate.	IOM joined the programme from 2006 to 2008. It was responsible for documenting, analysing and raising awareness about the TCLM plan, amongst other activities.	N/A
<b>Australian seasonal workers programme</b>	Australia	2012-2015	The objective of this programme is to contribute to the economic development of the Pacific Island countries (Kiriba, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanatu) and East Timor and meeting Australia's labour need through a returning work force. Contract: minimum of 14 weeks to 6 months. More information is available at: <a href="http://www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/Programs/seasonalworker/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/Programs/seasonalworker/Pages/default.aspx</a>	Up to 12,000 places available for workers from the participating countries. The participants from East Timor may include persons of concern to UNHCR.	The programme helps Australia to meet labour shortages in specific sectors. Participating migrants receive training which may enhance their opportunities upon return home, including enterprise development and participation in further education or training. The programme does not target refugees, but beneficiaries include groups with humanitarian needs.		The pilot will run until 30 June 2015

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**Self-reliance and local integration through mobility**

<i>Current examples</i>							
<b>IMM13 registrations</b>	Malaysia	August - December 2005	The issuance of work and residents permits to people of concern from Indonesian Province of Aceh provided them with the right to stay, work and study legally in the country. The permit is valid for 2 years.	30,000 Acehnese people of concern benefitted from these registrations.	Malaysia is not party to the 1951 Convention and does not provide residence permits to refugees. This programme enabled people of concern, who were unwilling or unable to return to their home country, to legalise their status. It also contributed to ease the acute labour shortages the country was facing.		2005
<b>Issuance of work permits for labour migrants</b>	Thailand	2004, renewals were issued in 2005, 2006, 2007	This issuance of work permits to migrants who could then legally access employment. These permits are valid for 1 year.	1,2 million migrant workers from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar were issued with legal work permit. Refugees were also able to benefit.	Thailand is not party to the 1951 Convention. This scheme was a viable alternative to encampment and facilitated a migration solution for individuals who would have otherwise remained undocumented. Names and fingerprints of registrants were required to be shared with the Government of Myanmar in order to prove the nationality.		The end of this programme remains difficult to date from the literature.

	Host country	Dates	Type of programme	Beneficiaries	Review	Involvement of international organisations	End of programme
<b>Regularization of Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees in Nigeria</b>	Nigeria	2007- on going	This multipartide agreement between the governments of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, ECOWAS and the UNHCR facilitates the local integration of remaining Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugee in Nigeria.	2,525 Sierra Leonean refugees in Nigeria and Liberia have opted for local integration.	This agreement allows the refugees to reside, work and fully integrate in their country of reception while keeping their original nationality.	UNHCR was included on the basis of the multipartide agreement.	N/A
<b>Issuance of Residence permits</b>	Iran	2012 - on-going	This exchange of 'displaced person' status for a temporary residency permit allows free travel within Iran and abroad, employment in any business activity (subject to work permit), primary health insurance and access to tertiary education. The permit is valid for a year, with possible extension.	Registered Afghan refugees are able to benefit from this practice and exchange their status of 'diplaced person' (Amayesh) for a temporary residence permit.	If necessary protection safeguards are provided, the programme could benefit the holders of the residence permit, who will enjoy more rights than enjoyed as Amayesh card holder, including freedom of movement. It will also be advantegous for the host country, since it provides a valuable work force.		N/A
<i>Forthcoming</i>							
<b>Alternative stay arrangements</b>	Pakistan	Management and Repatriation of Afghan Refugees Strategy (2009-2012)	Possibility of establishing alternative stay arrangements for different categories of Afghan refugees in Pakistan as part of the Government's Management and Repatriation of Afghan Refugees Strategy.	Afghan refugees, including business owners, skilled and unskilled workers, and their families would benefit from these arrangements.	The programme would allow Afghan refugees or former refugees to legally access the labour market. The host country would also benefit as it would allow the stay of a valuable work force as a response to labour market needs. Protection safeguards will need to be put in place.		N/A

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### Education and mobility

<i>1950s</i>							
<b>Netherlands University Asylum Fund</b>	Netherlands		This fund allowed for refugees to access tertiary education and made permanent residence available to them	15 refugee students, including 3 tuberculosis patients were admitted in 1955 under this fund.	This fund allowed the full time university training and the permanent stay of refugees. This allowed refugees to develop skills and knowledge which might have been of use to labour market.		
<i>Current examples</i>							
<b>Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI Programme)</b>	Germany. The programme has supported refugee students from Sudan, Iraq, Rwanda, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, amongst others.	1992	the DAFI programme provides scholarships for qualified refugees to study at universities or colleges in their host country and their country of return.	From 1992 to 2007, the DAFI Programme has supported a total of 4,774 students. In 2011, over 1'700 students benefited from the programme in 39 UNHCR operations country.	The DAFI programme contributes to skills development, empowerment and academic achievement and facilitates the onward movements of refugees and their integration in a third country, their country of asylum or upon their return home by empowering them to access gainful employment.	UNHCR, with earmarked funding from the German Government, provides annually over 1,000 university scholarships to refugees in developing countries.	On-going. In 2008, the programme also started offering education opportunities in the countries of origin of refugees, who are considering repatriation.



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<b>Erasmus/Mundus 'External Cooperation Window'</b>	EU - Third countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, West Bank Gaza, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Yemen, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan)	Academic year 2007-2008. On-going	This is an EU cooperation scheme designed to foster co-operation in the field of tertiary education between the EU and Third countries through the mobility of students and academic staff.	The programme targets three specific groups of students, one of which refers to those in particularly vulnerable situations (ie refugees, asylum seekers etc). This target group is allowed to enroll for 6 to 34 months, depending on the type of study level, at partner universities.	This programme provides good students from vulnerable groups (i.e. refugees, displaced populations, amongst others) with further education and contributes to their professional development and empowerment. This scheme may facilitate the integration of refugees or displaced populations in a third country, their host country or their home country upon return by empowering them to access gainful employment.		