



Identity in
times of need

How technology can facilitate identity management in a crisis to deliver humanitarian aid.



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Who is affected?.....	4
Are we counting the unaccounted?.....	7
Registering and identifying the displaced.....	8
Proper and prompt identification is imperative.....	10
Innovation.....	11
Benefits of issuing secure ID cards.....	12
Conclusion.....	13





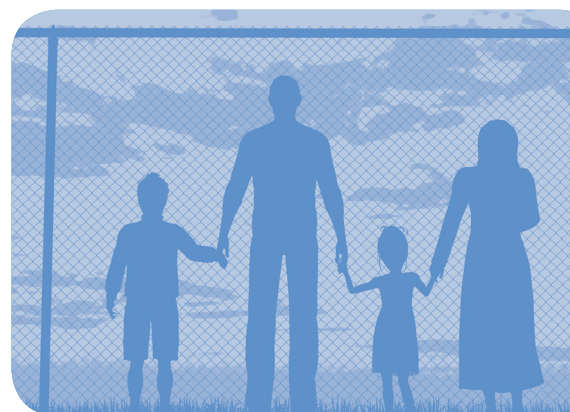
Introduction

IDs matter... more so, in times of need

An estimated 1.1 billion people worldwide cannot officially prove their identity, according to the 2017 update of the World Bank's Identification for Development (ID4D) Global Dataset.

- 78% live in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia
- 40% are children under the age of 18 and one in six are under the age of five
- More than half live in lower-middle income economies, while a third live in low-income economies

An officially-recognised form of ID plays a critical role in enabling an individual exercise rights such as voting, as well as gaining access to essential social and economic services such as education, and healthcare. Imagine trying to apply to university, open a bank account, apply for a loan, or prove your eligibility for health insurance, without an ID; quality of life and opportunities become severely restricted.¹

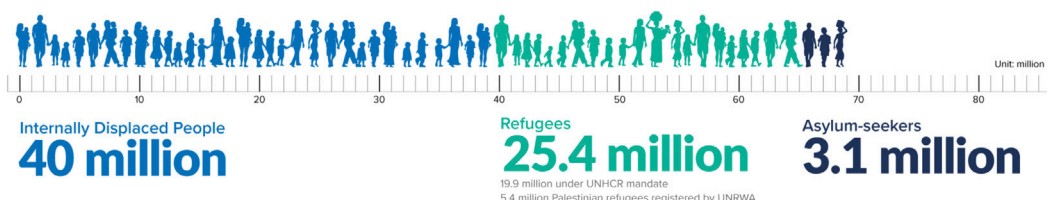


¹ <http://blogs.worldbank.org/ic4d/counting-uncounted-11-billion-people-without-ids>

Who is affected?

Imagine a displaced family which doesn't hold identifying documents or have lost their documents in the chaos of fleeing their home, amidst falling bombs or a natural disaster. Without documents to prove their identity, this already terrifying situation becomes exponentially worse. According to a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report, as of June 19, 2018, a record 68.5 million people are displaced worldwide.²

68.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide



Where the world's displaced people are being hosted

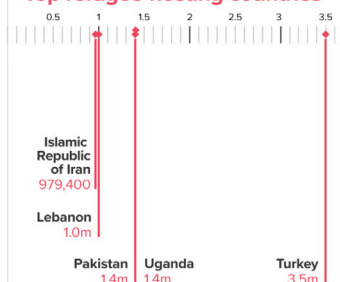


85 per cent of the world's displaced people are in developing countries

57% of refugees worldwide came from three countries



Top refugee-hosting countries



10 million stateless people

102,800 Refugees resettled

44,400 people a day forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution

16,765 personnel
UNHCR employs 16,765 people worldwide (as of 30 November 2018)

138 countries
We work in 138 countries (as of 30 November 2018)

We are funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions, with 87 per cent from governments and the European Union and 10 per cent from private donors

Of the 68.5 million displaced, 40 million have fled violence or armed conflict and are internally displaced which means they have fled their homes but have not crossed an international border to seek refuge. The plight of these refugees is no less tragic. Even while they remain within their country's borders, without the requisite identity cards, their right to access basic services to benefits, such as compensation for being displaced, is severely compromised.

² <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>



The remaining 25.4 million are refugees, and 3.1 are asylum seekers i.e. political refugees seeking asylum and international protection. Crossing international borders through the legal channels is not an option if they don't hold the necessary documents. Most are forced to migrate illegally which often means being hidden in vehicles or getting on over-loaded boats to cross dangerous waters. At the height of the European refugee crisis in 2015, about 1.8 million people crossed borders illegally without documentation.³

Refugee

A person with a claim to refugee status in the country to which they have fled, or even to nationality within their own, may be unable to get recognition of their right to be there. Lacking the necessary identification, they may face trouble accessing goods and services that facilitate self-sufficiency and local integration, such as a SIM card, a bank account, education for children, and healthcare.⁴

If the displaced person is a member of an ethnic community fleeing persecution in their home country, they may never have had identification papers to begin with. How would they get their claim to remain as refugees processed without these documents? How would they get themselves put on the list for resettlement for especially vulnerable refugees? If a child is born in exile, how would his or her parents ensure the child is not left stateless and eventually gets recognised a national of their home country if they lack the necessary identity documentation or are unable to register the birth in the host country?⁵ The questions are many and there is no simple answer, but ID solutions do exist that can address the issues.

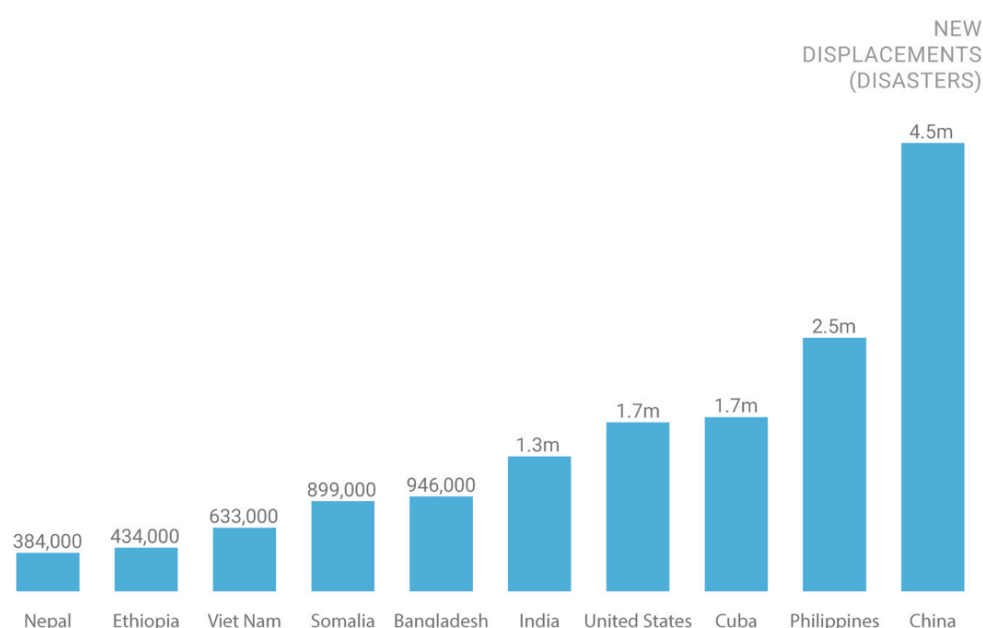


³ <https://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2018/02/20/illegal-border-crossings-into-europe-fell-60-percent-in-2017-eu-says>

⁴ <http://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/papers-please-importance-refugees-and-other-forcibly-displaced-persons-being-able-prove-identity>

⁵ <https://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2018/02/20/illegal-border-crossings-into-europe-fell-60-percent-in-2017-eu-says>

The need for identification also arises in case of displacement associated with natural disasters. In 2017, there were nearly 19 million people displaced internally across 135 countries. Floods accounted for 8.6 million and tropical cyclones resulted in 7.5 million people being displaced.⁶ Without proper legal documentation it becomes difficult for these internally displaced people to prove their identity and exercise their basic civil rights and access services.



Countries most affected by disasters

A lack of identity documents significantly increases the vulnerability of those who have been forcibly displaced, whether in their own country or across international borders. This is not only in the context of flight, but also when return home becomes possible. More than 70% of migrants travelling overland through north Africa to Europe have become victims of human trafficking and exploitation along the way according to a survey conducted by the UN's International Organisation for Migration.⁷ The situation is much for children without documentation who are separated from their parents.



⁶ <http://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/papers-please-importance-refugees-and-other-forcibly-displaced-persons-being-able-prove-identity>
⁷ <http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/>

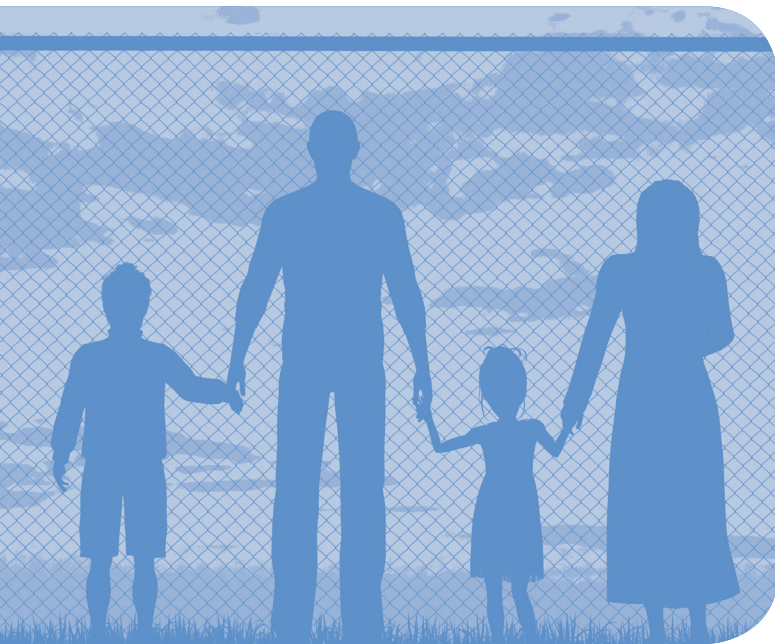


How are we counting the unaccounted?

According to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all countries have agreed to achieve legal identity for all. Target 16.9 states "By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration".⁸

Likewise, ensuring universal coverage for individuals from birth to death, free from discrimination and removing barriers to access, usage and disparities in the availability of information and technology are the first two of the 10 Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development published 2017 by the World Bank Group, UN agencies and other organisations.

Universal birth registration for all born in their territory is among the most basic responsibilities of states, apart from the registration of deaths and marriages and other changes in status. In particular, birth registration prevents statelessness, and provides a child with official evidence of their place of birth and who their parents are. This can facilitate confirmation or acquisition of a nationality and ensure family unity during resettlement or repatriation.



⁸ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>



Registering and identifying the displaced

In 1951, the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was adopted by the United Nations with 145 countries as parties to the convention. This multilateral treaty created a system for providing protection to refugees – Article 27 specifically requires contracting states (countries that have ratified the Convention) to issue identity papers to any refugee in their territory who does not have a valid travel document.

These documents should document their status as a refugee and serve as their proof of identity while accessing public and private services in the host country. The UNHCR's iBelong campaign aims to end statelessness and emphasises the importance of issuing similar protection to the world's 10 million stateless people, who have not been granted nationality by any state.⁹

Host countries must ensure that refugees and other displaced persons are registered in a way that ensures protection of their rights, enables access to services, and allows local authorities to administer these populations and support voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement. The registration process should therefore be fair and accessible and should ideally allow for appeal if an application is rejected.

Identification plays a key role in finding long-term solutions to the rehabilitation, resettlement or repatriation of displaced people.



⁹ <http://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/>

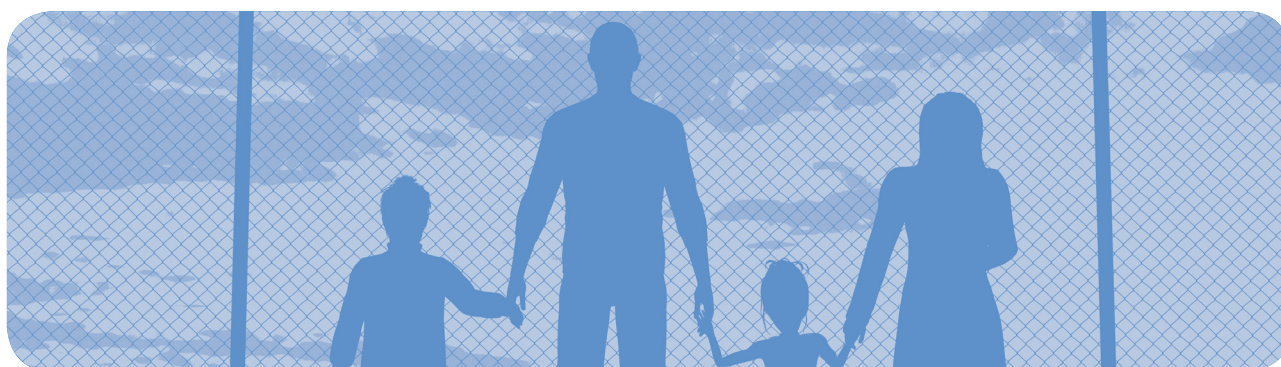


However, the mass displacement of people poses a challenge to host countries. In the past, the UNHCR would often be called in to support refugee registration. The situation is changing with host governments now taking on more responsibility even during the first phases of a mass influx, even while working the UNHCR, using shared identity management tools and registration processes.¹⁰

Some host countries – Ethiopia being the first such state - are now allowing refugees to record their vital life events with the national authorities.¹¹

In general, the registration and identification process varies by country and region. Broadly speaking, however, these processes can be grouped into three categories:¹²

HOST GOVERNMENT-LED	JOINT-LED	HUMANITARIAN AGENCY-LED
Prevalent in high-income countries	Prevalent in developing countries	Prevalent in some developing and many Least Developed Countries (LDCs)
<p>Host government provides required support, including documentation and durable solutions.</p> <p>Government-issued ID is used to access various services.</p> <p>Humanitarian agencies play a limited role, mostly around maintaining population records, but step in to provide a proof-of-identity where this is required.</p>	<p>Refugee registration is a joint effort between the host government and humanitarian agencies, either for the entire process or for a specific area in which external assistance is required.</p> <p>Government issued ID is recognised by local authorities.</p> <p>Humanitarian agencies' ID may or may not be recognised.</p>	<p>Host government lacks the capacity and resources to provide ID and support to international standards.</p> <p>Humanitarian agency ID is a vital and, in some cases, sole proof of identity.</p> <p>Humanitarian agencies play a bigger supporting role to the host government in the resettlement of displaced persons.</p>



¹⁰ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/empowering-refugees-and-internally-displaced-persons-through-digital-identity>

¹¹ <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5a0adefe4.html>

¹² <https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Refugees-and-Identity.pdf>



Proper and prompt identification is imperative, and technology can help

Past research by the World Bank shows that the proper identification of refugees and their inclusion in their local communities has the power to transform not just their lives but also benefit the host country. Providing officially-recognised ID cards facilitates social and financial inclusion of refugees, eliminates dependency on aid and empowers them to meet their needs in a safe, legal and sustainable way. They can earn their livelihoods, access credit, and participate in the local economy as consumers.

Given the potentially transformative impact of proper identification, host countries must give the registration and identification process due importance. The UNHCR's 2003 Handbook for Registration presents a core methodology for refugee registration. It recommends the collection of basic demographic data such as the individual's name, date of birth, gender, and country of origin, and details of any identity documents, if available.

Governments must find ways to issue official ID cards that are secure as early as possible, and if needed, in challenging environments. Furthermore, these identity documents should be issued in a format that prevents misuse and enables the relevant authorities to be satisfied that the person using the document is in fact the person to whom it has been issued.¹³ The UNHCR is advocating the collection of biometric data – including photographs, fingerprints and iris scans – as a regular part of the refugee registration and verification process. Biometric data provides fail-safe identification.¹⁴



¹³ <http://www.unhcr.org/excom/scip/3ae68cce4/identity-documents-refugees.html>

¹⁴ <https://blog.crossmatch.com/market-trends/refugee-identity-difference-biometrics/>



Innovation

Innovation in digital technology and ID systems are resulting in new approaches to registration, identification and service delivery. A technological intervention called EyeCloud facilitates the delivery of financial assistance to refugees through a combination of banking and biometric technologies, based exclusively on UNHCR biometric registration data.¹⁵ Blockchain and mobile technologies can also facilitate the identification process. While blockchain is mainly associated with cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, it can be used to open financial avenues to those who don't have the means to access modern financial services.¹⁶ Similarly, mobile applications can aid data collection during registration. Of the biometric technologies being used for identification, iris recognition is most expensive. Fingerprints remain among the most widely used biometric technologies for identification.¹⁷

Developments in printing technology also contribute to the refugee registration and identification process. Portable printers are convenient and facilitate prompt and speedy issuance of secure ID cards from any location, even in the most challenging environments. ID cards can be issued as early as possible - at the port of entry or at the border, and soon after the displaced persons have been relocated to camps and shelters. These self-contained, simple-to-use and portable printers can operate around the clock to issue secure ID cards. Card issuing authorities can use app-based software that is compatible with Android and iOS handheld devices to capture essential information such as the individual's photograph and fingerprints. These images can then be printed on an ID card quickly, and the card can be issued in minutes. In fact, some printers take, on average, under a minute per person.



¹⁵ <http://www.unhcr.org/excom/scip/3ae68cce4/identity-documents-refugees.html>

¹⁶ <https://blog.crossmatch.com/market-trends/refugee-identity-difference-biometrics/>

¹⁷ <https://www.bayometric.com/iris-recognition-scanners-vs-fingerprint-scanners/>

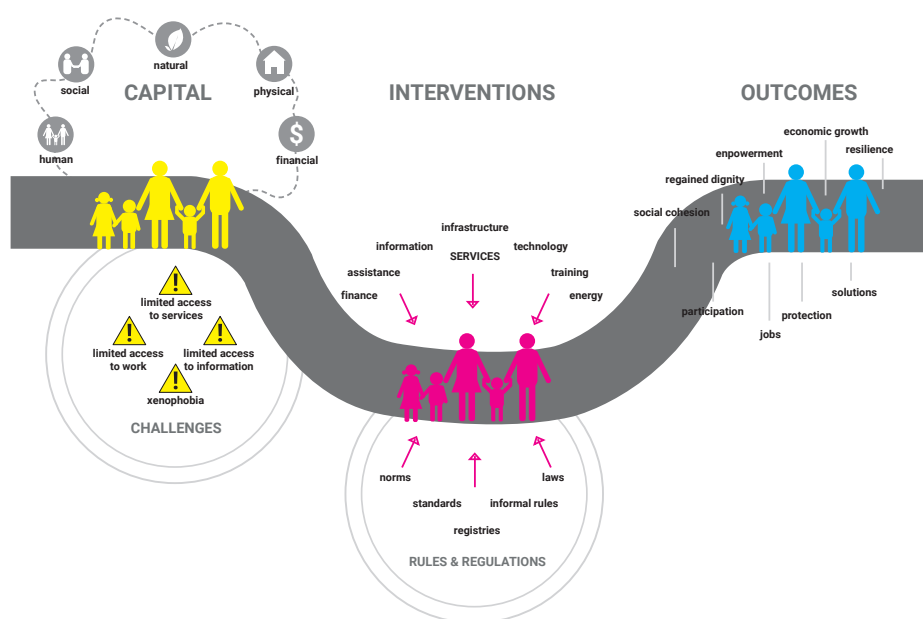
Benefits of issuing secure ID cards

Secure ID cards can streamline the registration and identification process and prevent double registration of displaced people during their passage between two different countries, or within the country while moving from a temporary shelter to housing. This can be a huge asset especially in instances of (1) mass influx of refugees like the recent Rohingya crisis or the EU migration crisis of 2015, or (2) people displaced during natural disasters like the floods in Hunan, China in 2018, which displaced close to two million people.¹⁸

1. **Mass influx of refugees:** Let's take the European Union as an example. A refugee could be registered at the port of entry – e.g. Italy or Greece – once identified and registered into a central database that can be accessed by all member countries, making it easier to provide assistance, intervention and facilitate inclusion.
1. **Displacement caused by natural disasters:** Survivors who have lost their documentation and homes can have their IDs reinstated within hours, thus reducing the impact of loss and helping people get back on their feet, gain access to services and return to normality as quickly as possible.¹⁹

Secure IDs, which include fingerprint data for instance, can reduce the risk of identity theft. The individual's identity can be verified against data previously collected and stored by the host country, even if the physical ID is stolen or misplaced.

ID cards also make service delivery and economic inclusion of the displaced people more efficient. As shown in the illustration below, the livelihoods outcomes and economic inclusion of displaced people or 'people of concern' are dependent on various factors. Inclusion into a market system depends not only on access to capital and services, but also on a conducive environment shaped by rules and regulations governing rights and security.²⁰



¹⁸ <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/07/25/internal-displacement-in-asia-due-to-natural-disasters.html>

¹⁹ <https://prontopk.com/>

²⁰ <https://www.afi-global.org/blog/2018/06/advancing-financial-inclusion-refugees-through-inclusive-market-system-approach>



Conclusion

For displaced people around the globe, currently estimated to be more than 68 million, a valid, verifiable and credible identity can serve as a lifeline by enabling access to basic services. The provision of secure IDs is typically the first step to their economic and financial inclusion in the host country, or even within their own country. Identification plays a key role in also finding long-term solutions to the rehabilitation, resettlement or repatriation of these displaced people.

Technology can make a huge difference in streamlining the identification process. Around the world, humanitarian agencies and governments are exploring ways in which they can improve registration and capture of essential personal data, to ensure provision of fail-safe IDs as soon as possible, even in the most challenging environments, in a secure, legal and sustainable manner ultimately coming to the aid of people who may have lost everything else.