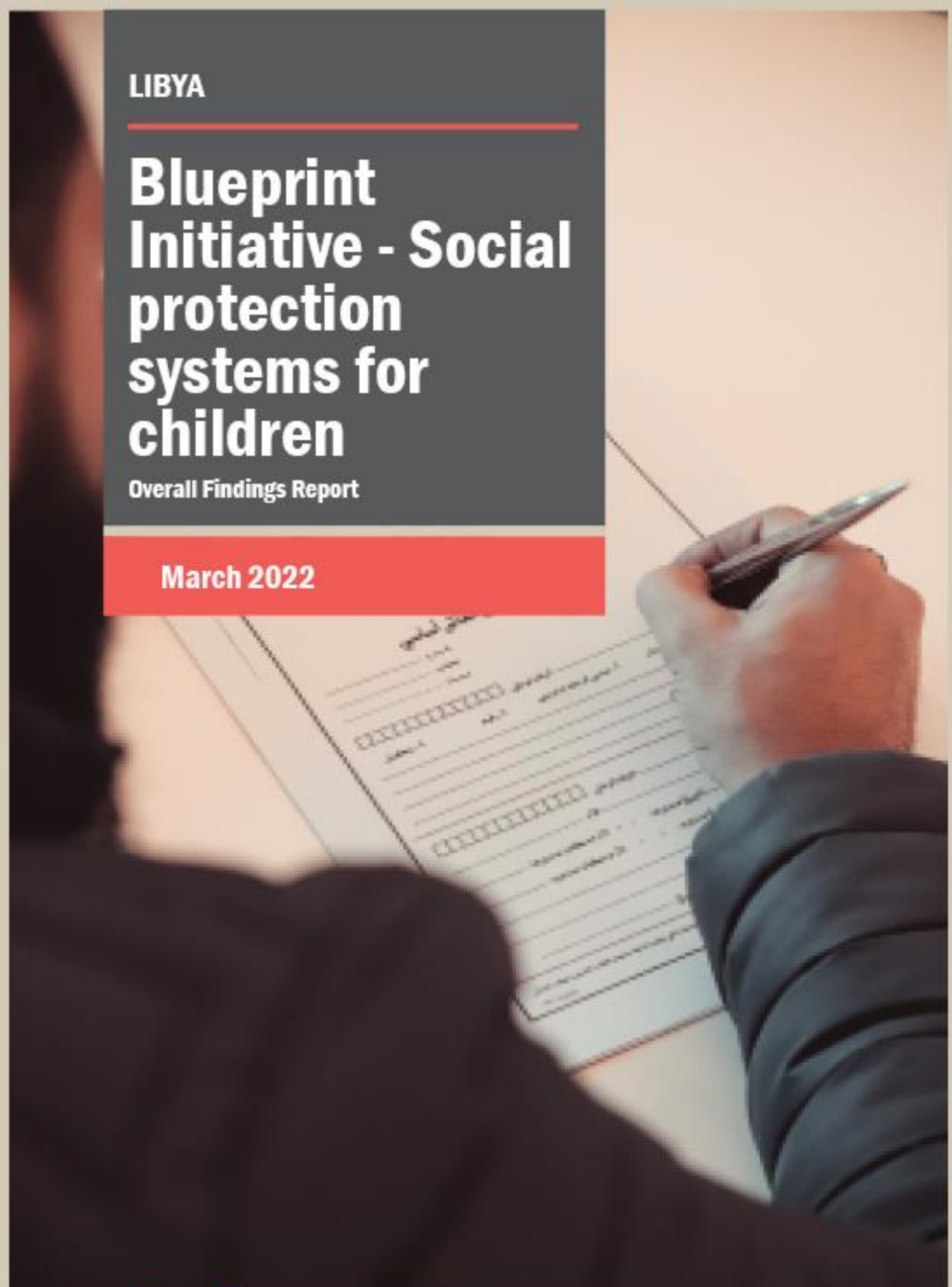
LIBYA

Blueprint Initiative - Social protection systems for children

Overall Findings Report

March 2022



unicef for every child

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The cover photo was taken by REACH in Benghazi, January 2022.

This study is commissioned by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and conducted by REACH, in partnership with the Libyan Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and the Social Solidarity Fund (SSolF).

The SSolF is one of the several autonomous bodies of the MoSA. Both agencies are the main implementers of social assistance programmes in Libya. They oversee the implementation of non-contributory benefits and provide social services to vulnerable population groups. They are also responsible for managing social care institutions.

About REACH

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery, and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT). For more information, please visit our website. You can contact us directly at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us on Twitter @REACH_info.

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNICEF or UNHCR. This report has been peer reviewed both externally and within UNICEF and UNHCR. The text has not been edited to official publications standards and UNHCR and UNICEF accept no responsibility for errors.

SUMMARY

Introduction

Social protection can ensure children's access to an adequate standard of living, health, education and care, and represents a safety net against the effects of poverty and deprivation in childhood that have ramifications that can last a lifetime. The role of social protection is particularly critical in crisis-affected and fragile contexts like Libya, where a decade of protracted conflict and instability have limited the population's access to public services and livelihoods.[1] Despite the emphasis placed on this topic, globally, millions of children are not covered by social protection systems, with important disparities across regions. In 2019, only 16 per cent of children in Africa were receiving social protection benefits.[2]

This study, conducted by UNICEF and UNHCR, in partnership with REACH, examines the social assistance system for children in Libya. As the country transitions from a humanitarian crisis toward stabilisation and recovery, there is a growing interest in understanding the legal and administrative framework that underpins social protection, as well as how programmes targeting vulnerable population groups, including children, function in practice. In line with these questions, the Libyan authorities have already validated in October 2021 a roadmap for the elaboration of a national social protection policy.[3]

The research draws on an extensive litterature review, secondary data review as well as primary data collection which took place between August and December 2021. This included 37 key informant interviews (KIIs) with service providers from the investigated implementing agencies (Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Solidarity Fund) and academics, 53 KIIs with social workers, 202 individual interviews (IIs) with Libyan service users, and 30 KIIs with migrant and refugee community representatives. The methodology allows for an understanding of the legal framework underpinning social protection in the country, as well as how the registration process works in practice for various population groups. The research also focuses on the bottlenecks and barriers faced by applicants when they try to access social assistance programmes.

Key Findings

Legal and administrative framework

Libya is a signatory to several international and regional treaties that are relevant to social protection, notably the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (ICESCR), the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (CRC), the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (CRPD), and the **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**. These treaties have been incorporated into the **Libyan Constitutional Declaration**, which recognises the right to social protection for all Libyan citizens, the **Social Security Law** (No. 13) of 1980, which stresses the right to social security to both Libyan and non-Libyan residents, and the **Social Solidarity Law** (No. 20) of 1998 that establishes a number of social assistance programmes.

However, the core principle of **non-discrimination**[4] in the international treaties is seldom applied in the national legal framework or applied in practice. Indeed, social assistance schemes are only open to Libyan citizens, except for the **Wife's and Children's Grant** that targets all Libyan children and **children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers,** although findings indicated that this is still not enforced. These gaps in coverage are reportedly the results of challenges in **law enforcement** and **unclear**

[1] Libya Humanitarian Response Plan 2022, December 2021
[2] UNICEF and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Towards universal social protection for children: Achieving SDG 1.3, 2019
[3] National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), UNICEF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), Roadmap for the Development of a National Social Protection Policy in Libya, November 2021
[4] Meaning that all children should enjoy their rights to effective protection equally, regardless of their race, skin colour, gender, language, religion, nationality, ethnicity, disability, wealth, etc.

collaboration strategies between the institutions in charge of implementing social assistance programmes, namely the **MoSA** and the **SSolF**.

Social protection programmes in practice

The MoSA and SSolF run several social assistance programmes targeting vulnerable population groups, including the **Basic Assistance**, the **Emergency Assistance**, and the **Wife's and Children's Grant**. Mass media, and notably **social and audiovisual media**, are used by both implementing agencies to promote awareness and understanding of their programmes among the intended populations. Although these means of outreach appear to be efficient for the Wife's and Children's grant, the majority of beneficiaries of the Basic Assistance and those of the Emergency Assistance reported having heard about both programmes through their **personal networks and in-person**. However, the overall findings show that the **current outreach is generally considered satisfactory** by service providers and service users. Only national-level key informants (KIs) reported perceiving that the **current outreach is weak and unequal across the country**, especially in the South, where populations are reportedly less aware of the different services and programmes from which they could benefit.

The findings from this study also suggest that the **registration process appears to be much easier for the Wife's and Children's Grant** than for the two other programmes. Indeed, a considerable portion of interviewed Libyan families benefitting from this grant have been **automatically registered** with the programme, upon its reactivation, through the previous Head of Household Allowance. Those who did not benefit from the latter allowance, registered at the MoSA municipal offices by providing identification documentation, including a **national identification number** (NIN). Children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers must be enlisted in the foreigners database of the Civil Registry Authority (CRA). As for the **Basic Assistance** and the **Emergency Assistance**, applicants register at the SSolF municipal offices by **providing several documents**, including the NIN, family book or family status certificate, proof of residence, and a proof of not already benefitting from benefits or pensions provided by the Social Security Fund (SSecF).

The findings indicate a general **lack of clear and standardised information management systems across registration offices and locations**, which complicates and tends to delay the verification processes. This also seems to be the case for **grievance mechanisms,** which do not always exist in all registration offices.

Role and capacity of social workers

The findings from this assessment indicate that **social workers can play a pivotal role** in the implementation and management of social assistance programmes. In terms of outreach, although interviewed Libyan service users commonly reported perceiving that **social workers do not play any significant role** or that they are not aware of social workers' role, a considerable minority of interviewed service users and social workers highlighted being aware of several tasks and responsibilities carried out by social workers. This includes the **organisation of seminars and workshops by social workers, and in-person door-to-door campaigns**. Social workers also reportedly **inform legal guardians and parents in schools and care centres about social protection programmes and the registration process**.

Moreover, findings suggest that social workers' role is quite prevalent during the **registration process**, when they reportedly **receive applicants, conduct a social assessment of their needs, and refer them to the appropriate programme department and registration service**. Nonetheless, their role appears to be less known and limited for the Wife's and Children's Grant.

However, service provider KIs stressed the **lack of training or trained staff and social workers**, reportedly due to a lack of funding. It was particularly reported that **computer illiteracy** was prevalent in some offices, and that this illiteracy in turn results in ill-management of digital database for storing beneficiaries' information. Moreover, some offices are **lacking a sufficient number of staff** to support applicants throughout the registration process. This was most commonly reported for **Sebha**.

Barriers and bottlenecks faced by applicants

The findings from this study indicate that **displaced children, children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers, children born out of wedlock, and those with disabilities** are likely to face more barriers to accessing social protection schemes. This appears to mainly be due to a **lack of documentation**, and particularly of a NIN. Other commonly reported obstacles to register or receive the benefits were related to the **liquidity crisis** in the country and the challenges of **coordination between government institutions** that creates delays in the disbursement of the grants. These challenges appear to be **more acute in the South** where, generally, **less financial and human resources** are allocated to implementing agencies, and where a considerable minority of the population is of **undetermined legal status** (ULS). This group, which often includes migrant and refugee communities, which rely on their host community support, is generally excluded from formal social assistance programmes because of a lack of NIN.

Key recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, **policy recommendations** were jointly developed with UNICEF and UNHCR, and commissionned by the MoSA and SSolF. Firstly, it is recommended that implementing agencies **adhere to Libya's commitments under international law,** by removing all regulatory, physical, and attitudinal barriers to accessing social protection programmes for children with disabilities, children of ULS, and children born out of wedlock. Moreover, the MoSA and SSolF are encouraged to **strengthen their efforts to enforce national laws that facilitate the inclusion of non-Libyan children in the social protection system**, notably through the issuance of executive regulations.

Secondly, to **enhance accessibility of social protection schemes**, both agencies are also advised to **increase their efforts to promote awareness and understanding of programmes**, notably through **mass media campaigns and targeted outreach**. Alongside this, specific recommendations regarding the aforementioned groups that are more likely to face hurdles accessing social protection systems include: **creating mobile social workers teams**, enabling **rapid obtentation of civil documentation as well as delays** for displaced families, holding **frequent meetings of the SSolF medical committees** for persons with disabilities, and strengthening **capacity building of staff**.

Thirdly, the MoSA and SSolF are encouraged to **build clear grievance mechanisms** that would include mutliple channels for receiving complains to ensure widespread access. It is also recommended to **train staff and allow for online procedures**, as well as to **create operational hotlines**.

Eventually, in the long term, both agencies are advised to **create efficient digital and integrated information management systems**. This is especially recommended for the SSolF to reduce burden on staff, facilitate data sharing between offices, and enable timely transfer of funds to beneficiaries. It is also suggested to **create common beneficiary registries** across implementing institutions to increase responsiveness and inclusiveness of programmes.

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List of Acronyms

CMWG	Cash and Markets Working Group
CRA	Civil Registry Authority
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
GNU	Government of National Unity
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
II	Individual Interview
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPC-IG	International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth
KI	Key informant
KII	Key Informant Interview
LYD	Libyan Dinar
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MSNA	Multi-Sector Needs Assessment
NESDB	National Economic and Social Development Board
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIN	National Identification Number
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
SSecF	Social Security Fund
SSolF	Social Solidarity Fund
ULS	Undetermined Legal Status
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

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INTRODUCTION

After years of hostilities that have damaged infrastructure and displaced thousands within Libya, a ceasefire agreement was signed in October 2020 that brought about progress, and most notably in reducing the number of people requiring some form of humanitarian assistance from 1.3 million to just over 800,000, including 321,430 children, 74,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees, and 84,000 migrants and refugees.[5] The transition towards stabilisation, helped by the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in March 2021, allowed thousands of people to resume their livelihoods, and reinforced the trend of previously displaced families returning to their places of origin, with 129,555 returnee families recorded between July and September 2021.[6] Nevertheless, several challenges still need to be addressed across the country, whether in displacement sites or in the places of origin, to enable returnees, as well as the current 38,920 IDP families, and all other vulnerable population groups, to access basic services.[7]

According to the 2021 Libyan population Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA), many households are still unable to afford their basic needs. This included 28% of the assessed Libyan households who reported not being able to afford their essential health needs, such as medicines or treatments, while 19% reported not being able to afford their essential education needs, such as tuition, fees, and books, in the 30 days prior to data collection. Overall, 53% of these households reported being unable to afford all their basic needs.[8] Additionally, 6.10% of the population living in Benghazi, 8.05% of the population living in Sebha, and 12.55% of the population in Tripoli are deemed vulnerable to poverty according to the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index of 2021.[9] Indeed, in 2021, the Cash and Markets Working Group (CMWG) estimated that 216,660 Libyans and 100,997 non-Libyans require cash transfer support to meet their basic needs, including 116,699 children.

In this fragile context, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic[10], social protection systems can provide vital support to poor and vulnerable individuals, and especially to children and families by creating a lifeline protecting families from falling deeper into poverty and helping them avoid negative coping strategies.[11] Social protection is defined as "the set of policies and programmes designed to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability throughout the life cycle".[12] In 2015, a commitment to "implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all" and "achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable" by 2030 became a sustainable development goal.[13] In Libya, this sector is a priority for decision makers, as illustrated by the validation by the Libyan authorities of a roadmap to inform the preparation of the country's first Social Protection Policy, in October 2021. notably with joint efforts to develop a roadmap to inform the preparation of the country's first Social Protection Policy. This roadmap has been validated in October 2021 by national social protection experts committee

the Social Solidarity Fund[14] (SSolF) and the Ministry of Social Affairs[15] (MoSA) are the main implementers of state-led social assistance. Both institutions support vulnerable people, particularly those who do not have pensions, jobs, or other sources of income. Their programmes benefit a significant proportion of the Libyan population, with 21% of Libyan households reportedly relying on government subsidies as their main source of income, and more specifically 15% reportedly relying on the SSolF, and 8% on the

[5] Libya Humanitarian Response Plan 2022, December 2021
[6] International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), IDP and Returnee Report, Round 38, July – September 2021
[7] Libya Humanitarian Response Plan 2022, December 2021
[8] REACH, Libya MSNA result tables, August 2021
[9] Alkire, S., Kanagaratnam, U. and Suppa, N. (2021). 'The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2021', OPHI MPI Methodological Notes 51, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, University of Oxford
[10] IOM DTM, COVID-19 Socio-economic Impact on Vulnerable Populations in Libya, December 2021
[11] UNICEF, UNICEF's Social Protection Response to Covid-19: Strengthening social protection systems before, during and after crises, 2020
[12] International Labour Organisation (ILO), World Social Protection Report: Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals", 2017-19
[13] ILO, Relevant SDG Targets related to Social Protection Floor
[14] SSolF website
[15] MoSA website

MoSA.[16] These households received an average of 607.5 Libyan dinars (LYD) through government subsidies over the 30 days prior to the Libyan MSNA data collection.[17]

While the programmes of the SSolF and the MoSA appear to be significant and critical, scant information is available on the scope, status, and coverage of these social protection programmes.[18] An evaluation of the MoSA conducted in 2015 identified significant shortcomings in the ministry and the SSolF, including "administrative laxity", "poor performance" related to its activities to support displaced people, and the inability of many eligible persons to obtain their cash disbursements due to liquidity shortages.[19] The lack of clarity regarding programmes' administration and implementation was also tackled by the 2019 report of the Administrative Control Authority.[20] To advocate for reform and help expand the coverage of existing programmes, there is a need for a precise understanding of the legal framework, management, and implementation of current social protection programmes.

Therefore, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR), in partnership with the MoSA and the SSoIF, commissioned an assessment to understand the existing legal and policy framework for social protection programmes in Libya, as well as how these function in practice. This investigation is anchored in the growing interest and effort of the humanitarian sector to find pathways to link humanitarian programming, and especially cash transfer programmes – which are, in the Libyan context, generally perceived as more efficient and less complex in coordination across institutions than food and in-kind transfers[21] –, with existing national social protection systems.[22] In particular, the assessment sought to determine which families and/or individuals and their children are considered eligible for the three different programmes[23], the application process for registration, and the bottlenecks and barriers experienced by those enrolling. Alongside this, the assessment explored how these factors vary in different regions of the country and among different population groups.

This report provides a detailed description of the methodology and why it was chosen, and then outlines the key assessment findings and recommendations, organised into the following sections:

1) Legal and administrative framework underpinning social protection in Libya
2) Social protection programmes in practice
3) Role and capacity of social workers
4) Barriers and bottlenecks faced by vulnerable population groups

[16] REACH, Libya MSNA result tables, August 2021
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), Non-contributory Social Protection Through a Child and Equity Lens in Libya, August 2018
[19] Libyan Organisation of Policies and Strategies, Performance Assessment of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Libya, December 2016
[20] Administrative Control Authority report of 2019
[21] The CMWG in Libya created, in 2021, a taskforce on the usage of cash and which aims to write an evidence note to advocate for a transition to cash and voucher assistance.
[22] Several assessments on the topic of social protection are currently conducted in Libya, including by UNICEF, UNDP, and IPC-IG in collaboration with the NESDB about social protection policy; by the World Bank and World Food Programme (WFP) using the CODI tool; as well as UNICEF and Coram's mapping of social service workforce delivering child protection services.
[23] The assessed programmes are: the Wife's and Children's Grant, Basic Assistance and Emergency Assistance. They were selected on the basis of their targeting of families and children, their current status (active programmes), and their geographic and demographic scope.

METHODOLOGY

Research definition and questions

This assessment focuses on one of the main components of social protection, namely social assistance, which can be defined as all non-contributory benefits financed by the government and usually provided to those living under a defined threshold of income or assets (means-tested), or particularly vulnerable groups such as children, older persons, and persons with disabilities (categorical). These benefits can be provided in the form of cash or in-kind.[24] The assessment will specifically address the legal and administrative framework, as well as the functionality of three major social assistance programmes in Libya, two of whom are provided by the SSolF (Basic Assistance and Emergency Assistance), and one by the MoSA (Wife's and Children's Grant).

The assessment was guided by the following research questions:

Table 1: Assessment's research questions

Research Questions
1. What social protection programmes cover children currently in Libya?
2. What is the existing legal and administrative framework that underpin social protection programmes for children in Libya? a. What are the eligibility criteria for Libyans and non-Libyans to register with each social protection programme? b. What definition is used for "fragile families"?
3. How do these social protection programmes function in practice? a. What outreach takes place to promote awareness and understanding of this programme among the intended population? b. What process do applicants need to follow to register for each programme and institution?
4. What is the role and capacity of social workers to conduct outreach and support the registration process? a. Does this role differ for social workers from the MoSA and social workers from the SSolF?
5. What barriers[25] and bottlenecks (if any) do eligible applicants face when registering with the SSolF? a. Identification of barriers and bottlenecks and main causes thereof b. How do these barriers and bottlenecks vary across the different assessed locations and among different population groups?
6. Building on the answers from the previous questions and best practices from elsewhere, how social protection systems for children might be reformed in Libya and what role can UNICEF and other actors play in supporting such reforms?

To answer these questions, REACH opted for a phased research approach, the outline of which is detailed in the section below.

Research process

Phase one: Secondary data review

To lay the groundwork for the assessment, REACH carried out a thorough review of secondary data on both the global field of social protection and the social protection system in Libya. This literature review was based on a comprehensive review of existing reports and articles produced by international

[24] ILO, Social protection assessment-based national dialogue: A global guide, February 2016
[25] Barriers could be physical, financial, administrative, social and/or cultural.

organisations and experts on social protection. REACH also carried out a review of the official websites of Libyan government institutions responsible for managing social protection programmes, such as the SSolF and the MoSA, as well as the websites of policy and law-making bodies, including the Higher Committee for Children and the Ministry of Justice. Using a mixture of sources shared by the donors and found through desk-based research, the exercise was intended to provide background information on social protection for children, along with an initial appreciation of the capacity of existing programmes in Libya. This phase of the project helped to design a more effective research framework, including the selection of the assessed programmes and comprehensive data collection tools to address the six main research questions.

Phase two: National-level data collection

Building on the review of secondary data, Phase two involved primary data collection with national-level KIs from key institutions related to social protection, including employees of the MoSA and the SSolF, as well as university professors, researchers, civil society promoters, and employees of the Ministry of Justice. Data was collected between August 16 and October 28, 2021 from 25 KIs in three locations, using a semi-structured paper-based tool that was adapted for each respondent category. The categories were employees of the MoSA and SSolF, employees of policy-making bodies, and academics. KIs were mainly based in Tripoli, but Benghazi and Sebha were also covered.

These key informant interviews (KIIs) allowed REACH to gain a general understanding of the existing social protection programmes in Libya, their legal framework, their geographic and demographic coverage, and of their eligibility criteria. This phase also helped gain an initial appreciation of the registration process for the three assessed programmes, and of what barriers and bottlenecks cause delays or lack of registration.

Initially, the KIs were identified by UNICEF and UNHCR, who have strong links with Libyan ministries, as well as experts on the field of social protection in Libya. After starting the interviews, REACH field staff used the snowballing method to identify additional contacts. The REACH assessment team regularly monitored incoming interview transcripts and held debriefs with the data collection teams to help determine who else needed to be interviewed.

Phase three: Municipal-level data collection

Building on the findings from Phase two, this phase focused on primary data collection at the municipal level, in the three assessed locations: Tripoli, Benghazi, and Sebha.

This third phase explored the registration process in detail by collecting data directly from service providers and from service users at the municipal level, as well as from population groups that are excluded from these programmes and who have been identified through Phase two. Alongside this, the municipal data collection phase sought to provide answers to the multiple questions that emerged through the first data collection, including how the national laws and policies are enforced at the municipal level, how children fostered by state-run care centres can register with the three assessed social protection programmes, and several other questions about the registration process from a service user standpoint. Data was collected between September 23 and December 12, 2021, by REACH partner civil society organisations (CSOs) in the three assessed locations.

This phase specifically covered the following groups:

- **Service providers**:
  - Employees of the MoSA and SSolF in the municipal registration offices, and who are in charge of carrying out the outreach, of data storage and sharing, and of enforcing the national laws and policies at the municipal level.
  - Social workers of the MoSA, SSolF and care centres, who are involved in the registration process. These interviews sought to better understand social workers' capacity within both implementing agencies, their role in the registration process for the three programmes and in care centres, as well as their role in the outreach, and in the grievance mechanisms.
- **Service users**:

- Libyan families registered with at least one assessed social protection programmes. This activity aimed to determine the barriers and bottlenecks Libyans face when registering with social protection programmes. Parents were selected purposively, to capture a diversity of families based on the following characteristics of their registed children: gender, ethnicity, disability, displacement status.
- Eligible but not registered Libyan families. These interviews sought to understand why eligible families are not registered, determine the barriers they face and the alternative social safety nets they rely on. Parents were also selected purposively, based on the same criteria as mentioned above: gender, ethnicity, disability, displacement status.

- **Non-eligible non-Libyan population groups:**
  - Migrant and refugee community representatives were also interviewed to identify the formal and informal alternative social safety nets for non-Libyans, who are excluded from the national social protection system. The sampling process was informed by International Organisation for Migration's (IOM's) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) round 37.[26] Four region-of-origin groups were targeted, based on the largest region-of-origin groups present in Libya: 1) Middle East and North Africa, 2) West and Central Africa, 3) East Africa, and 4) Southern Asia. Given that these groups are not dispersed evenly across Libya, a purposive sampling method was used in order to represent each group proportionally to their relative size in each location. Alongside this, within each region-of-origin group, the most predominant country-of-origin groups were represented in the sample, as much as possible. However, and in order to include all different regions of origin, the logic was slightly adapted. This was notably the case for migrants and refugees from East Africa, who are less represented in the three locations, but who were nonetheless targeted as part of this research. Finally, although they represent a relatively small population group, Palestinians were included in the sampling. Due to pro-Palestinian policies dating back to Gaddafi's time, they reportedly have an easier time gaining regular status and accessing services, including public education and health. Hence, this study aimed to determine whether this also applied to social protection programmes. This was also the case for Syrians, although they form a larger population group in Libya.

Table 2: Respondent groups and sampling strategy

Respondent group	Data collection method	Number of respondents	Profiles
Service providers			
Employees in MoSA and SSolF municipal offices	KIIs using a semi-structured paper-based tool, like the one used with MoSA/SSolF employee for Phase two	12 in Tripoli, Benghazi, and Sebha	Interviews were conducted with: - MoSA: employees of the Family Development Department; employees of the Wife's and Children's Grant Project; employees in charge of the registration process. - SSolF: employees of the Social Development Department; employees of the Social Institutions Department; employees of the Basic Assistance Department.
Social workers within MoSA, SSolF, and care centres	KIIs using a Kobo based, semi-structured tool, that was adapted for	53 overall: - 21 in Tripoli - 21 in Benghazi - 11 in Sebha: social workers from the MoSA were not	- Social workers from the MoSA working with the Wife's and Children's Grant were interviewed; as well as social workers from the SSolF who are mainly working with the Basic

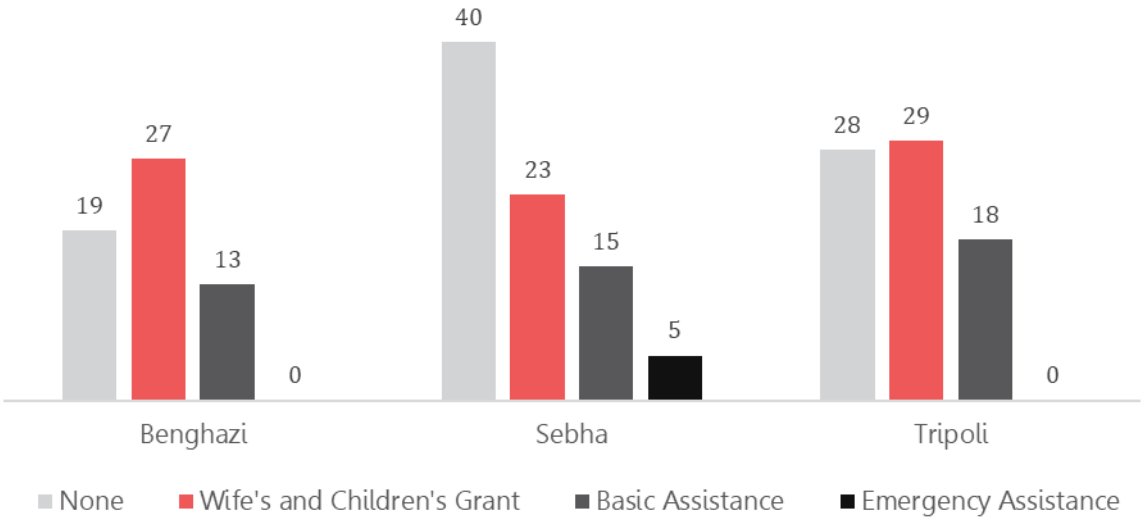
[26] IOM DTM, Round 37 Migrant Report, May – June 2021

	each category (MoSA, SSolF, care centres)	interviewed (further explanations in the Challenges and Limitations section below) Overall, 27 social workers from the SSolF, 12 from the MoSA, and 14 in care centres	Assistance programme, and some with the Emergency Assistance programme. - Social workers in care centres currently fostering children with disabilities, children without legal guardians.
Service users			
Registered Libyan beneficiaries (non-displaced and IDPs, returnees)	Individual interviews (IIs) using a Kobo based, semi-structured tool	114 overall: 68 men and 49 women	This group is composed of: - Libyan families registered with at least one of the assessed social protection programmes - 110 male-headed families and 68 female-headed families - Libyan service users of children with disabilities - Single mothers of Libyan children
Eligible unregistered Libyans (non-displaced and IDPs, returnees)	IIs using a Kobo based, semi-structured tool	88 overall: 42 men and 43 women	This group is composed of: - Libyan heads of families - Libyan mothers married to non-Libyan fathers - Libyan service users of children with disabilities - Libyans of undetermined legal status (ULS)[27] - Single mothers of Libyan children The number of Libyan service users registered with each programme (including unregistered service users) per location are represented in Figure 1 below.
Migrant and refugee community representatives	KIIs using a Kobo based, semi-structured tool	30 overall, 10 per location	Migrant and refugee KIs from the following countries were interviewed: Niger, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Nigeria, South Sudan, Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt, Syria, Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), and Bangladesh.

Due to the sampling approach and the tools used, the findings for this assessment are not representative of sampled profiles and locations and should be treated as indicative only.

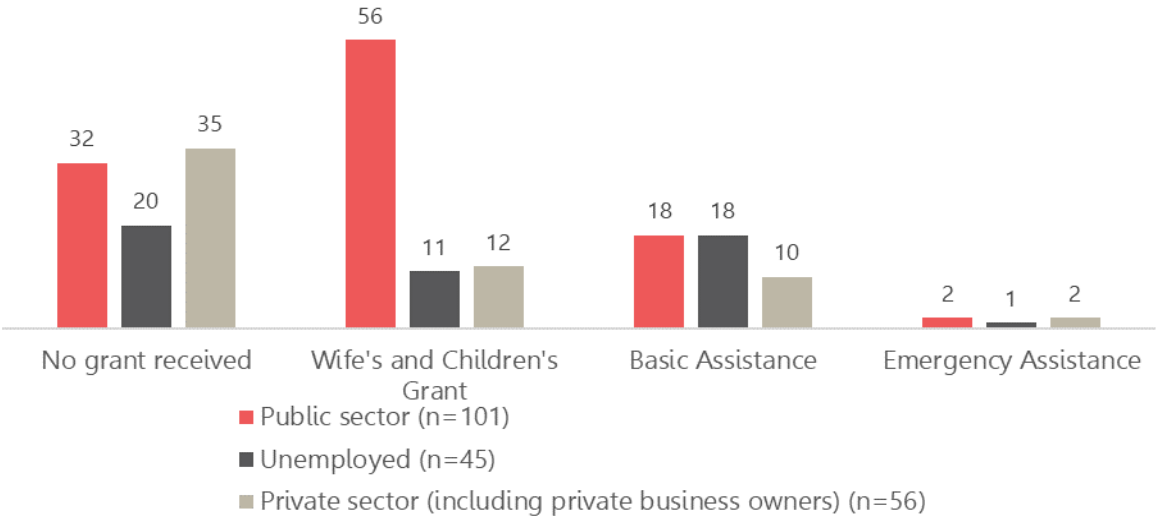
[27] People who reside in Libya, but for various reasons are not registered fully, or their citizenship is pending, unclear or annulled. More on this population group in Humanitarian Access Team Libya, "Lost in Civil Registration: Libyans with Undetermined Legal Status", April 2019 (not published).

Figure 1: Number of interviewed Libyan service users per grant they reported receiving, per location (n=202)



**Respondents can be registered with more than one grant.*

Figure 2: Number of interviewed Libyan service users per grant they reported receiving, per job sector



Ethical considerations

As in all assessments, REACH considered and investigated the ethical implications of data collection. During the design of each tool, a thorough "Do No Harm" review was carried out, taking into consideration prevailing sensitivities surrounding the assessment. Although the population of interest of the assessment is children (18 and under), including orphans, children born out of wedlock, and children with disabilities, no interview was conducted directly with childen as per IMPACT's policy on data collection with minors. According to these guidelines, data collection with children can only be conducted when the research objectives absolutely call for it, and if similar information cannot be collected from parents, guardians or caregivers. In this assessment, REACH decided to rely on KIIs with service providers and IIs with parents or legal guardians.

A remote online training was provided to REACH field teams for Phase two, and an in-person training was delivered to the CSOs for Phase three. In both trainings, a specific section was dedicated to data protection and ethics, which included the principles of ethical data collection and responsibilities, as well as key considerations on the safety and security of enumerators and respondents. This was especially needed in instances where enumerators were to collect data directly with vulnerable groups, such as communities of ULS. Alongside this, REACH tried to limit the questions about sensitive and potentially distressing topics in all the tools to a minimum.

Finally, due to health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus, for Phase two and three, the majority of interviews were conducted remotely over the telephone. For all interviews that took place in person, enumerators had to adhere to local policies and restrictions, both respondents and enumerators had to wear masks, keep distance from the respondent, and wash their hands before and after the interviews. This is in accordance with IMPACT's "SOPs for Data Collection during COVID-19."

Challenges and Limitations

Challenges during data collection

REACH field team and partner CSOs experienced some difficulties when communicating with key institutions and setting up meetings, which resulted in important delays in data collection. This was the case during both phases of primary data collection:

- During the national phase, policy-making institutions, such as the Higher Committee for Children, as well as some KIs from the MoSA and SSolF, whose contacts were shared with REACH by UNICEF and UNHCR, did not confirm their participation in the assessment. Due to these challenges, enumerators had to rely to a greater extent on their personal networks to scope for contacts within governmenet institutions.
- During the municipal phase, enumerators faced challenges to set up interviews with employees and social workers of the MoSA office in Sebha. This considerably limits the possibilities for comparing the MoSA's capacity, coverage, and functionality between all assessed locations. Moreover, the SSolF office's employees and social workers in Tripoli were on strike during Phase three, which further delayed data collection.

The findings are not representative and are indicative only for assessed locations

While this study can draw indicative conclusions about the state of social assistance in Libya, the registration processes for each programme, and the bottlenecks and barriers faced by service users, it cannot categorically generalise findings to the situation nationwide. There may be other locations, for example, that face challenges or barriers to registration with social protection programmes that are not addressed through this report.

Moreover, as this is a qualitative study designed to yield detailed information about an institutional system and process, the findings are not representative of each assessment location or each population group under investigation as the samples were quite small, especially regarding the Emergency Assistance. Within each category, the participants were purposively sampled based on set criteria. Therefore, the findings only indicate different population groups level of access to social assistance programmes.

1. Legal and Administrative Framework

Introduction

Based on secondary data and KIIs, this review examines the laws and policies surrounding social protection in Libya, alongside highlighting the legal acts underpinning the specific social assistance programmes covered by this assessment. A comprehensive and inclusive social protection system needs to be backed up by an adequate and appropriate legal and policy framework. Few reports have explored the current laws and policies that regulate social protection in Libya as outlined by the literature review put together[28]; therefore, REACH conducted KIIs at the national and municipal level to enhance understanding of existing laws and determine the eligibility criteria for the three assessed programmes.

This chapter is organised into two sections: the first one explores the international legal instruments adopted by Libya and that affirm individuals', and especially children's, right to social protection; the second section addresses the national legislation and respective eligibility criteria to register with the Wife's and Children's Grant, the Basic Assistance, and the Emergency Assistance.

International legal instruments

Libya is signatory to several international treaties that stress childen's rights and especially childen's right to social protection. The laws discussed below are among the most relevant ones icluded in the Libyan national legislation.

The International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights

The International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is the chief piece of international legislation covering the right to social protection, including everyone's right to social security (Article 9). It was ratified by Libya on May 15, 1970.[29] Article 11 of this treaty calls for the "right to adequate standard of living", which is correlated with the right to social protection. Special attention is also provided to families and children. The covenant's Article 10 states that family should be guaranteed the right to "the widest possible protection and assistance (…), particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children". Other mentions of children are also provided in this same Article, providing that special measures of protection and assistance be taken on behalf of children and young persons without any discrimination.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the first legally binding international instrument to provide signatory states with an extensive legislative framework to guarantee all children the full range of human rights, including civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights. Libya ratified this treaty on April 15, 1993.[30] The convention recognises the right of all children to the highest attainable standard of health, to equal opportunity education, and to benefit from social security (Article 26). It obliges governments to assist and support families who cannot afford to provide their children with a good standard of living that is enough to meet their physical and mental needs (Article 27, paragraph 3). This can take the form of "material assistance", including through cash-based social assistance programmes.

By adopting the CRC, states commit to adhering to its core non-discrimination principle that is stated in Article 2 of the treaty. Non-discrimination to access social protection signifies that every child has the right to benefit from social insurance and social assistance, regardless of her/his or her/his parents' or legal guardians' kinship ties, race, gender, language, religion, skin colour, nationality, ethnic or social

[28] To be published.
[29] United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966
[30] UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20 November 1989, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577

origin, or any other status. In Libya, this would therefore comprise all children born and/or residing in the country, including migrant and refugee children, children from historically marginalised ethnic groups, and those who are of ULS.

Elements of the CRC have been incorporated into a number of national laws and regulations in Libya, including in the Child Protection Act No. 5 of 2006 that covers children aged 16 and below, and underlines the duty of the state to take care of all children with no legal guardian, the prohibition of all forms of child labour, and provides specific rights related to access to healthcare for pregnant and breastfeeding women.[31] The Higher Committee for Children, which has been established by Article 12 of Law No. 5 of 2006, is the national authority in charge of monitoring the implementation of the CRC in the Libyan legislation.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

Libya also ratified regional treaties, including the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, on September 23, 2000.[32] This charter stresses the principle of non-discrimination, reiterating that every child is entitled to enjoy their rights and freedoms, regardless of her/his or her/his parents' or legal guardians' background and status. Alongside this, Article 6 of the charter states that signatory countries should undertake all the necessary measures to recognise in their legislation the "principles according to which a child shall acquire the nationality of the State in the territory of which he/she has been born if, at the time of the child's birth, he/she is not granted nationality by any other State". Children of migrants and refugees, as well as abandoned children and those of parents of ULS, born in Libya, should therefore be able to enjoy all children's rights, and obtain full Libyan nationality and all the documentation that it affords. However, and specifically regarding these vulnerable population groups, there appears to be a lack of clarity about the application of international laws into the Libyan legal system.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by Libya on February 13, 2018, provides clear guidance on how to enhance persons with disabilities' access to social protection and social services, including dispositions relating to the removal of all physical and attitudinal barriers within service providers' offices (Article 9). Elements of this convention are integrated in the national legal framework, notably through Law No. 5 of 1987 on Persons with disabilities[33] which provides the right to specific benefits for this population group, including a monthly grant (Article 11), subsidies on transportation, and exemption from certain taxes. Yet, persons with disabilities, who represented an estimated 121,000 persons in Libya in 2021[34], are among the most vulnerable population groups in the country as they face numerous barriers to accessing basic services and livelihoods.

National legislation and eligibility criteria for the assessed programmes

This section builds on the discussion of international legal instruments, to assess the national legal framework underpinning the assessed social assistance programmes directly or indirectly targetting children, specifically looking at the legal provisions relating to the eligibility criteria of each programme.

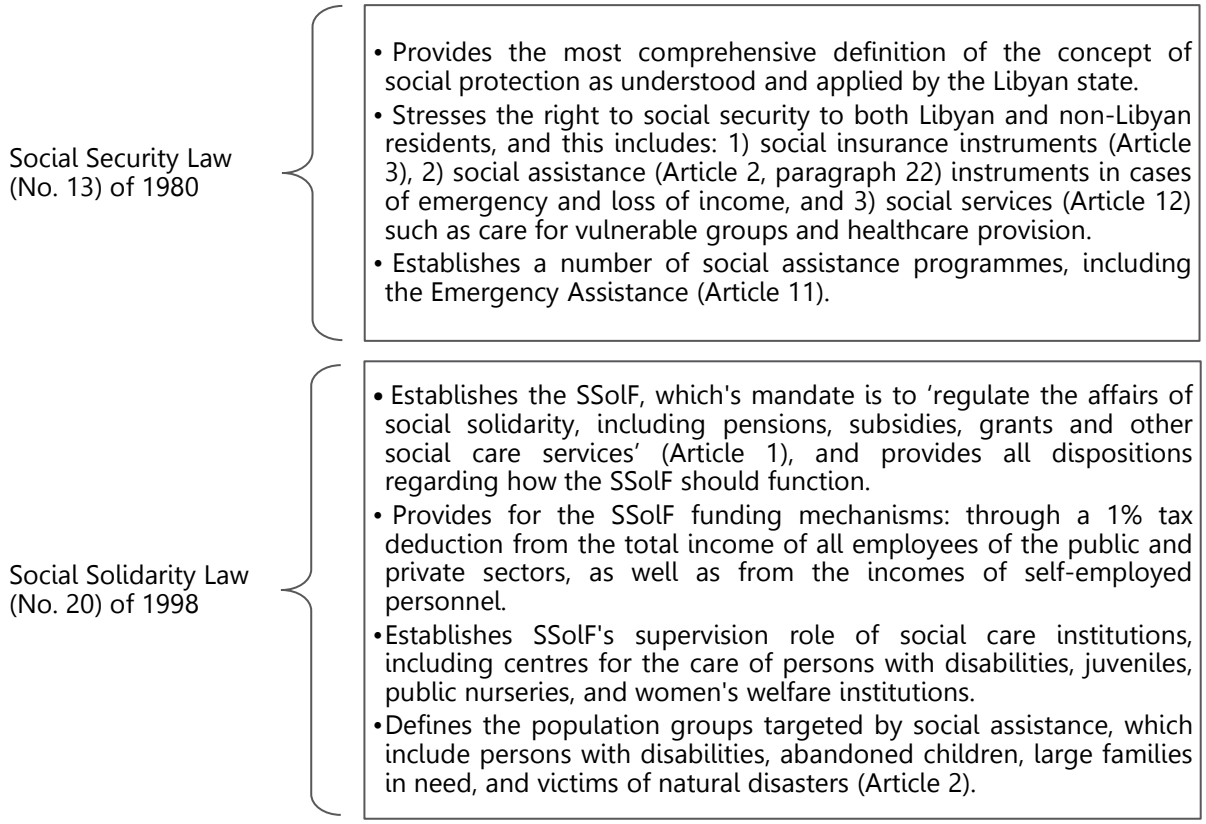
The state of social assistance in Libya

Libya has a comprehensive social protection legislation, among the most developed in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Particularly, the Libyan Constitutional Declaration, finalised in August 2011, recognises the right to social protection for all Libyan citizens. Article 5 of the Constitutional Declaration states that children, mothers, and older persons should be protected, and that the state will provide and care for children, young people, and persons with disabilities. Nevertheless, the decade of conflict and administrative division between the West and the East have undermined the social protection system. Despite the existence of 12 active social assistance programmes and 70% of the

[31] Libyan Ministry of Justice, Law No. 5 of 2006 on Child Protection
[32] African Union, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
[33] Libyan Ministry of Justice, Law No. 5 of 1987 on Persons with Disabilities
[34] Libya Humanitarian Response Plan 2022, December 2021

population indicating their need for financial assistance, these programmes have a relatively small coverage. For instance, Libya's largest social assistance scheme, the Basic Assistance, only covered 3.3% of the population in 2020.[35]

Figure 3: Key national legal acts underpinning social assistance in Libya



Social assistance programmes are implemented by the 114 MoSA branches and 27 SSolF branches across Libya.[36] They provide financial assistance to poor and large families, housing benefits, health grants for individuals living with chronic diseases or disabilities and no or limited income, psychosocial support including for children in the context of wars, as well as in-kind assistance to people living in displacement or victims of natural disasters. KIs also reported entertainment, educational and awareness programmes provided by the different specialised centres supervised by the MoSA and the SSolF, in collaboration with the Red Crescent and local CSOs. Other programmes include workshops and trainings provided to CSOs and frontline workers who interact with children with special needs and children with disabilities (1/33).

Although the Law does not provide a clear definition of what a "poor/vulnerable" family is, this category is the main target of social protection programmes according to almost all national and municipal level KIs. Some KIs reported that this category is usually identified through means-testing, meaning that all Libyan families with incomes below 450 LYD per month (which is reportedly the minimum wage in the public sector) fall under this group. However, KIs unanimously agreed that the three assessed social assistance programmes could be described as entirely or partially categorical[37] (Annex 2) as they are open to specific population groups, namely (and by order of occurrence):

[35] NESDB, UNICEF, UNDP, and IPC-IG, Roadmap for the Development of a National Social Protection Policy in Libya, November 2021
[36] See Annex 1 for an organigramme of both institutions.
[37] The Basic Assistance is also, and to some extent, means-tested.

1. Persons/children with disabilities or special needs (25/34 national and municipal KIs who were asked the question).
2. Children without legal guardians including orphans and children born out of wedlock (21/34).
3. Women who are divorced or widowed (16/34, amongst whom three mentioned "unemployed widows").
4. Older persons (8/34).
5. Families where the head of household is a martyr or imprisoned or missing (4/34).

These are also the groups identified by the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) 2018 study of non-contributory social protection programmes in the MENA region.[38]

Box 1: Social assistance coordination framework in Libya

The MoSA and SSolF are the main implementers of social assistance in Libya. Both are mandated to provide, among other things, social services to vulnerable population groups, and both manage social care institutions. Although the MoSA, through its Family Care Section, identifies and refers large, poor and vulnerable families to the SSolF and other social services providers, findings from this assessment indicate limited cohesion between both agencies. KIs at the national and municipal level highlighted:

- An unclear division of labour (6/37): the lack of clear division of responsibilities, overlaps in competencies and targeted population groups between both agencies lead service users to misunderstand which institution runs which programme and where to go to register. An academic KI suggested to transfer all programme implementation to the SSolF and other autonomous bodies of the MoSA, which would in this scenario assume the role of a supervising authority.
- A lack of clear and efficient data sharing agreements and systems: this reportedly is notably the case regarding persons with disabilities, as both agencies are in charge of supporting them but do not share a common registry. The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), UNICEF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and IPC-IG Roadmap for social protection policy highlights this lack of communication and data sharing, as the Department of the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities within the SSolF, which is in charge of issuing disability cards and thus has a registry for this population group, is not aware of the MoSA's plan to build upon this registry to create a shared database.
- A lack of referral pathways: only one service provider KI, in Sebha, mentioned the existence of referral mechanisms between the MoSA and the SSolF (1/37). They reported that the MoSA, in charge of assessing each applicant's social situation and needs, prepares a report of the child or family's status that it then shares with the relevant authorities (e.g. care centres, SSolF). This finding was supported by social workers and Libyan service users in all three locations.

Wife's and Children's Grant

Legislation

The Wife's and Children's Grant, provided by the MoSA's Wife's and Children's Grant Project, and formerly called the Family Allowance, is a cash benefit that was created in 2013 in order to support Libyan families to meet their basic needs. It was operational for a year, before being paused due to conflicts and instability, until its reactivation in March 2021, in a context of deterioration of the standard of living of children and families due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[39] Originally, the family allowance was established through Cabinet Decree No. 9 of 1957, and then further fleshed out through Law No. 6 of

[38] Machado, A. C., C. Bilo, F. V. Soares and R. G. Osorio. 2018. Overview of Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region through a Child and Equity Lens. Brasília and Amman: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office

[39] UNICEF, UNICEF's Social Protection Response to Covid-19: Strengthening social protection systems before, during and after crises, 2020

2013[40] and Law No. 27 of 2013[41] which provide for this universal child allowance to be granted to the head of the family on behalf of the children, and to the caregiver or legal guardian if parents are separated (Article 3).

Targeted population groups

Law No. 6 of 2013 covered:

- All Libyan boys and girls, aged 18 or younger, residing in Libya (Artcile 1): they unconditionally benefit from a monthly allowance of 100 LYD.
- All unemployed and unmarried Libyan women, on the condition of not already receiving a salary, pension, grant, or any other income from any party (Article 4): the value of the grant for this category is not specified in the law.

Based on the above-mentioned legal act, Law No. 27 of 2013 expanded the coverage of the Wife's and Children's Grant to also include:

- All unemployed and married Libyan women who do not receive any salary, pension or grant from any party (Article 4): they benefit from a monthly allowance of 150 LYD.
- All children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers, aged 18 or younger (Article 3): Libyan mothers or female caregivers receive a grant on behalf of these children only if they are residing in Libya and did not leave the territory for more than three consecutive months (Article 5). It is the only social assistance programme of the country that is opened to non-national children, although this disposition is currently not enforced as further addressed in Chapter 4.

The Wife's and Children's Grant is reportedly covering 1,075,000 children[42] since its reactivation, meaning that half of the country's children (18 and under) are currently registered.[43] However, this figure appear to be disproportionate in light of the numerous obstacles faced by children residing in Libya to access the programme (Chapter 4).

Basic Assistance

Legislation

The Basic Assistance is the largest active social assistance programme in Libya, and it is provided by the SSolF's Basic Assistance Department. This cash benefit has been established through Law No. 13 of 1980, and further fleshed out through Law No. 16 of 1985 on the Basic Assistance.[44] The latter provides a legal underpinning for the financial support to vulnerable groups and those unable to work. The programme was initially run by the Social Security Fund (SSecF), until the creation of the SSolF in 1998. The grant is disbursed on a monthly basis to the intended population groups (spelled out in Article 7). Its value has been increased through Cabinet Decree No.1 of 2021, from a standard allowance of 450 LYD to an amount that depends on the household size: 650 LYD per month for one-member households, 750 LYD for households of two members, and 850 LYD for households of three or more members.[45]

Targeted population groups

Article 2 of Law No. 16 of 1985 provides the eligibility criteria for the Basic Assistance:

[40] Law No. 6 of 2013 on Family Allowance
[41] Law No. 27 of 2013 on the Wife's and Children's Grant
[42] NESDB, UNICEF, UNDP, and IPC-IG, Roadmap for the Development of a National Social Protection Policy in Libya, November 2021
[43] The total population in Libya was estimated at 6.9 million by the World Bank's Health Nutrition and Population Statistics in 2020, and the share of children (under 18) was about 33.5% of the total population in 2018 according to Machado, A. C., C. Bilo, F. V. Soares and R. G. Osorio. 2018. Overview of Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region through a Child and Equity Lens. Brasília and Amman: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office
[44] Law No. 16 of 1985 on the Basic Assistance
[45] The Basic Assistance's value increase was reported by 8 KIs.

- First, this programme is only open to Libyan citizens residing in Libya[46], and who do not have a stable income or whose net income is below the value of the Basic Assistance.
- Second, only those who do not have a breadwinner capable and legally obliged to support them are eligible.
- Third, targeted individuals must not have savings or a capital that could be used or invested to meet their needs.
- Fourth, beneficiary must be unable to work or to attend traning courses.
- Fifth, applicant must not be a beneficiary of any SSecF's grants, pensions, or military benefits.

According to Article 7, the programme is open to the following vulnerable population groups (as long as they fall within the above-mentioned criteria):

- Older persons: above 65 for men and 60 for women.
- Incapacitated individuals: persons with disabilities or diseases that leads to their incapacity to work, for more than a year. The level of disability must be above 50%. The disability type and level is determined by the medical committees within the SSolF through their assessments.
- Widowed women: this includes non-national widowed of Libyan husbands, who are residing in Libya.
- Orphans: according to Article 11, this category includes all children who lost their parents, but also abandoned children and children with no legal guardians. The programme covers boys until the age of 18 and until they graduate for those who are studying, and it covers girls until marriage.
- Individuals who have lost their livelihoods or source of income, and this category includes:
    - Divorced women
    - Single mothers
    - Families with the head of household and breadwinner sick and hospitalised for more than two consecutive months
    - Families with the head of household and breadwinner imprisoned, missing, or martyr.

For the last two categories, the law, as well as the application form for the Basic Assistance and the SSolF's website[47], only mention male-headed families as potential beneficiaries of the grant. Indeed, these sources state that the "wife" of the imprisoned, missing or martyr spouse can register with the programme.

The Basic Assistance covered 231,024 individuals, including 43,826 families in 2020.[48]

Emergency Assistance

Legislation

The Emergency Assistance is a programme run by the SSolF's Social Development Department. It has been established through Article 11 of the Social Security Law (No. 13 of 1980) that mentions the provision of a compensation for victims of "emergencies and disasters". Cabinet Decree No. 184 of 2012[49] is the most recent piece of legislation related to this programme, and that transfers its supervision from the SSecF to the SSolF. Article 1 of the Decree states that this in-kind and financial assistance is provided to people affected by catastrophes and disasters, specifically defined as resulting from natural causes, such as floods, droughts, earthquakes, fires, and famines. This programme falls within the "shock-responsive" social assistance systems that have traditionally been used to assist poor and vulnerable individuals to cope with the effects of natural or human-made disasters and manage risks.[50] The multiplication of such programmes worldwide highlight the expansion of social safety nets and their objectives, especially now playing a key role in the response to climate change. The Emergency Assistance appears indeed to have the potential to provide key assistance to families affected by the crisis and the ever-growing impact of climate change, as Libya has been exposed to dust and sandstorms,

[46] At the exception of non-Libyan widowed women.
[47] SSolF website page about the Basic Assistance
[48] Facebook post of April 23, 2021 on the SSolF page
[49] Cabinet Decree No. 184 of 2012 on the Emergency Assistance
[50] Beegle, Kathleen, Aline Coudouel, and Emma Monsalve. 2018. Realizing the Full Potential of Social Safety Nets in Africa. Africa Development Forum series. Washington, DC: World Bank

as well as flash flooding episodes, which have damaged infrastructure and farmland vital for livelihoods and caused widespread displacement.[51]

Targeted population groups

- Only Libyan citizens can benefit from this programme.
- Article 2 states that victims of natural disasters that can benefit from the compensation must have lost their main source of income or their livelihood as a result of the natural disaster, or they can be covered if the catastrophe resulted in the death of the head of household and/or breadwinner, or if the damage lead to the incapacity of head of household and/or breadwinner.
- Article 3 states that applicants should not be able to cover for the damages by themselve (e.g. through insurance).
- Applicants must apply within the 90 days following the disaster.

The Emergency Assistance covered 821 beneficiaries in 2020.[52]

Conclusion and recommendations

Although Libya is a signatory to multiple international treaties that guarantee universal child's right to social protection, some groups of children appear to be excluded in the comprehensive national legal and policy framework. This is notably the case of non-Libyan children that are not covered by the specific laws that underpin the Basic Assistance and Emergency Assistance. However, this chapter has shown that the Wife's and Children's Grant is by law more inclusive, as the programme also targets children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers.

Service provider KIs reported that the comprehensive legal acts still lack clear executive regulations and a cohesive and harmonised enforcement strategy across branches in the country. This can have considerable consequences on the functionality of social protection programmes in practice, as will be explored in the next chapter.

It is therefore recommended to ensure that Libya adheres to its commitments under international law. In particular, it is encouraged to enforce Articles 2, 26, and 27 of the CRC that recognise child's right to social protection, as well as vulnerable families' right to assistance from the state, without discrimination of any kind. Along this line, it is encouraged to remove barriers that are embedded in the existing eligibility criteria of the Wife's and Children's Grant (Law No. 27 of 2013) and the Basic Assistance (Law No. 16 of 1985), by extending the coverage of both programmes to all children, reglardless of their nationality.

Moreover, it is recommended to apply all dispositions of the CRPD, by developing executive regulations, policies, and minimum standards and guidelines to remove all physical and attitudinal barriers faced by persons with disabilities when trying to access social protection programmes. Eventually, and regarding children born out of wedlock and abandoned, both agencies are encouraged to further their efforts to revise the law to enable unhindered access to citizenship at birth for this population group.

[51] On the impact of climate change on livelihoods and communities in Libya, check the on-going REACH assessment funded by WFP (Climate and Livelihoods Assessment)
[52] NESDB, UNICEF, UNDP, and IPC-IG, Roadmap for the Development of a National Social Protection Policy in Libya, November 2021

2. SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES IN PRACTICE

Introduction

Building on the previous chapter that explores the legal framework underpinning social protection in Libya, this chapter focuses on how social assistance programmes function in practice. Based on social media monitoring, KIIs with service providers, and IIs with service users, the chapter covers the findings on the outreach, registration process, information management systems, and grievance mechanisms for the three assessed social protection programmes.

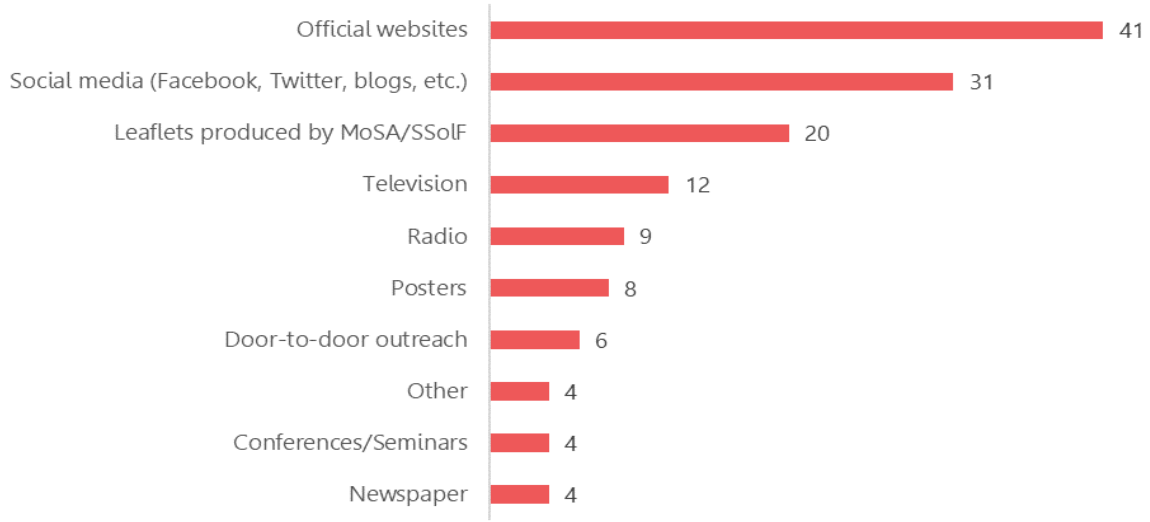
Promoting awareness and understanding of social protection programmes

Means of outreach to beneficiary

The implementation of beneficiary outreach in social assistance programmes is critical, at the beginning of programme implementation and throughout the process of enrolment, as proper outreach maximises targeting efficiency and improves programme transparency and accountability.[53] It is especially fundamental to reach out to the most vulnerable population groups, for whom social assistance programmes are designed, including those living in remote areas. Outreach involves the communication of programmes' information to potential beneficiaries, stakeholders, and the general public. It aims to inform the public about social protection programmes, their eligibility criteria, benefit entitlements, and registration processes.

Service providers and service users interviewed for this assessment were asked about the different means of communication used by the MoSA and SSolF to promote awareness and understanding of the Wife's and Children's Grant, the Basic Assistance, and the Emergency Assistance. The majority of interviewed Libyan service users registered with the Wife's and Children's grant reported having heard about this programme through social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.) (39/79), and a considerable minority heard about this grant through the MoSA's and other implementing agencies' official websites (24/79), indicating that digital outreach is critical in promoting awareness and understanding about the programme. On the other hand, only a few interviewed parents mentioned door-to-door outreach (6/79) as well as personal networks (5/79).

Figure 4: Number of interviewed social worker KIs (53) per reported means of outreach they reported to be used by the MoSA and SSolF



[53] World Bank, Beneficiary outreach, Safety Nets How to

**Respondents could select multiple answers.*

These findings were corroborated by the KIIs with service providers (figure 4), and especially by social worker KIs who widely reported social media (31/53) and official websites (41/53) as the main means of outreach used by the MoSA and SSolF. In addition, interviewed social workers also commonly reported leaflets distribution in MoSA and SSolF offices as a significant means of outreach (20/53), followed by audiovisual media, including television (12/53) and radio (9/53). The latter, which was also commonly reported by KIs during the national-level data collection phase, was especially mentioned by employees and social workers of the SSolF. The institution has a national radio programme called "*At-Tadamun*" (The Solidarity), which provides in-depth information about its programmes and allows individuals and beneficiaries to call-in and ask questions on air. Nonetheless, radio was solely mentioned by one interviewed and registered service user (1/114), who benefits from the Basic Assistance. This is most probably due to a general lack of awareness about the frequency and timing of radio programmes, such as "*At-Tadamun*".

Television was also mentioned as a means of outreach by 14 KIs from the MoSA and SSolF, as well as interviewed academics at the national and municipal level during semi-structured interviews. Two of them specifically mentioned the national televised show "*Lamsa*" as an important mean of awareness raising, since it hosts members of the government and implementing agencies, as well as academics, to tackle multiple societal topics, including social protection. According to studies, the audiovisual media formats are generally thought to be the most inclusive outreach means as they are easily accessible to non-literate individuals.[54]

However, although social media and electronic outreach appear to appeal to a wide audience, the frequent challenges to access internet and eletricity in Libya might be a noteworthy obstacle to vulnerable population groups' awareness and understanding of social protection programmes. Hence, face-to-face outreach appears to be a strong alternative, especially for people with a lack of access to and savviness towards digital platforms. Face-to-face outreach enables trust building between service providers and beneficiaries.[55] This seems to be the main mean of outreach for the two other social protection programmes assessed.

Indeed, the majority of interviewed Libyan service users registered with the Basic Assistance reported having heard about this programme through personal networks (through word of mouth) (29/46). Other means of in-person outreach, including door-to-door and in care centres, were also recorded (6/46). On the other hand, social media and official websites were only reported by few interviewed parents (9/46).

Finally, all 5 interviewed service users registered with the Emergency Assistance reported having heard about this programme through their personal networks, which might indicate a dissemination gap with awareness campaigns from the SSolF to reach out to the intended populations, especially in high-risk zones vulnerable to natural disasters.

Outreach coverage and efficiency

Service provider KIs and Libyan service users were asked questions on outreach efficiency to understand if all potential beneficiaries are aware of the programmes, including how to apply or register for them and what the qualifying criteria are. While interviewed beneficiaries of the three programmes commonly rated the outreach efficiency as "good" (41/79 for the Wife's and Children's Grant; 16/46 for the Basic Assistance; and 3/5 for the Emergency Assistance), interviewed service providers appeared more critical.

Interviewed Libyan service users, especially those who are registered with the Wife's and Children's Grant, deemed the current outreach to be sufficient, and the information clear and easily accessible. This is also noticeable in the migrant and refugee KIIs, as a considerable minority of KIs reported having heard about the Wife's and Children's Grant (11/30), and about the Basic Assistance (9/30). Findings suggest that knowledge of the Arab language is an enabler of access to social protection outreach campaigns, as most of the migrant and refugee KIs who reported having heard about the grants came

[54] Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Awareness, Communication, and Outreach for Social Protection Schemes during COVID-19, 2020, COVID-19 Global Situation Room
[55] *Ibid.*

from Arabic-speaking countries. On other hand, this also suggest that an inability to understand Arabic might be a barrier to accessing outreach campaigns. Moreover, the length of stay of migrant and refugee KIs in the country could be another factor enabling access to outreach campaigns; only KIs who have been residing in Libya for more than 5 years reported having heard of at least one of the three assessed programmes.

Similarly, interviewed social workers overwhelmingly rated the current outreach as good, with the majority of them reporting that all beneficiaries and intended beneficiaries are aware of the three programmes. Moreover, a noteworthy group of interviewed beneficiaries, for all three programmes, rated the outreach as "satisfactory" (33/79 for the Wife's and Children's Grant, 19/46 for the Basic Assistance, and 2/5 for the Emergency Assistance), highlighting the need for some improvements, notably regarding the means used for dissemination, with a considerable number of interviewees suggesting to increase awareness raising through social and audiovisual media (67/202).

While interviewed service users generally seemed to consider outreach to be either good or satisfactory, interviewed service providers commonly reported a need for improving current outreach, mentioning that outreach tended to be weak and/or unequal across the country, among other reasons. The majority of KIs who were asked the related question reported that the current outreach is insufficient (18/33). Although KIs commonly reported that the MoSA and SSolF have a specific department dedicated to the outreach (Information and Awareness Department) (20/33), KIs stressed the absence of a coherent and national outreach strategy, reporting the lack of support from government's institutions to municipal offices and staff. Outreach has thus been highlighted as one of the main issues when it comes to social protection coverage. A lot of families among vulnerable groups are not aware of the different services and programmes from which they could benefit (including how to register with these programmes). This limitation was especially highlighted for Sebha and the whole Southern region of the country, as further explored in Chapter 4, Section 3.

Registration process

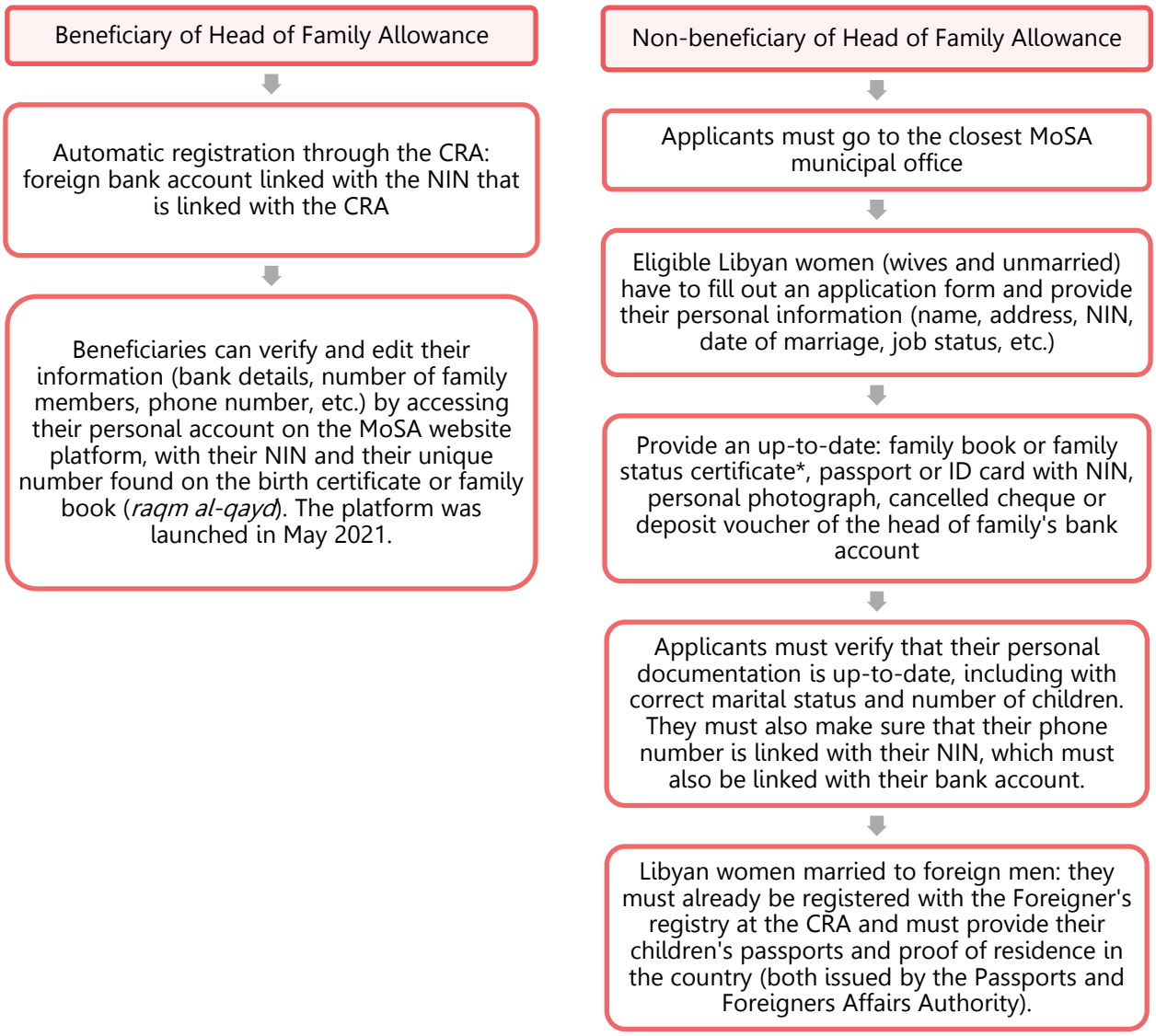
Findings from all phases indicate that the MoSA and SSolF mainly function at the municipal level, at which the employees are familiar with the people who reside in the area and can provide them with adequate assistance. It was also reported that the registration process takes place in the agencies' municipal offices in most of the cases.

Wife's and Children's Grant

Political conflict, closure of oil fields, and a damaged banking system, have reduced government revenues and the availability of cash liquidity in Libya.[56] This has caused a protracted liquidity crisis that has led to the growth of the black market, frequent price fluctuations, and the inaccessibility of cash.[57] With the shortage of foreign currency (USD), the Central Bank of Libya, with the support of the government, has issued a decision in 2017 to provide each head of household with the possibility to open a foreign currency account at any bank in the country. The head of household could purchase approximately 500 USD per individual holding a NIN, at the official state price. According to two KIs from the MoSA, due to the high demand of foreign currency accounts, the Central Bank of Libya now owns a database of all heads of Libyan households in the country. When the Wife's and Children's Grant was reactivated in 2021, and in order to make the process faster and easier for citizens, this grant was merged with the Head of household Allowance and deposited in the head of household's foreign currency account, in 2017, 2018 and 2020. Thus, all households already benefiting from the Head of household Allowance were automatically registered with the Wife's and Children's Grant upon its reactivation in 2021, as it was indeed the case for 22 of the 79 interviewed Libyan service users registered with this programme. This approach presented a barrier for those who were not benefitting from the previous allowance; those who did not receive the Head of household Allowance have to apply separately for the Wife's and Children's Grant, as explained in Figure 5 below.

[56] REACH, Libya's Currency Crisis Brief, 2021
[57] *Ibid.*

Figure 5: Registration process for the Wife's and Children's Grant



Source: KIIs and IIs conducted during the assessment, MoSA Facebook page and online registration platform.
**Since around 2013, family status certificates have been used as a substitute to family books by many.*

Among the interviewed Wife's and Children's Grant beneficiaries, 31 reported having gone to the MoSA municipal office to register with the programme, while 17 reported having used "automatic registration", as they were already beneficiaries of the Head of household Allowance. A handful of interviewed beneficiaries reported having registered for the grant online (5/79), which indicates that they were also beneficiaries of the Head of household Allowance.

The majority of interviewed and registered service users and social worker KIs reported that the registration process for this programme takes less than a month (41/79 service users, 10/12 social workers). However, some of the interviewed service users registered with the Wife's and Children's Grant said that the registration can take up to three months (19/79).

According to the interviewed service users, once the applicant is successfully registered, they are notified through their bank (58/79), by going to the MoSA's registration office (10/79), or by text message or email (7/79). They then receive the grant on their head of household's bank account, which would generally be the father, the mother, or any other legal guardian for children. However, up until now, and as reported by interviewed service providers, social workers and service users, the eligible married and unmarried Libyan women did not receive the grant, neither did children of Libyan mothers and non-

Libyan fathers. Only Libyan children benefitted from it in 2021, as also indicated by the MoSA's statements on their Facebook page.[58]

Basic Assistance

The majority of interviewed service users who were recipients of the Basic Assistance reported having travelled to the SSolF municipal office to register with the programme (36/46). Nonetheless, 6 interviewed service users (two in each location) reported having gone to the MoSA municipal office to register, highlighting what has already been mentioned in Box 1 regarding referral pathways between the MoSA and SSolF. During registration, applicants have to fill out a form providing their personal information, including their name and parents' names, NIN, address, date of birth, along the reason why they are applying for this benefit. While each category of recipients have to provide specific documentation, as listed in Figure 4, all applicants are obliged to share:

- Family Book or Family Status Certificate
- NIN
- Proof of not being a beneficiary of any SSecF benefits or pensions (including military)
- Proof of unemployment from the Labour office
- Proof of residence
- Deposit voucher or cancelled cheque for the bank account details
- Personal photographs[59]

Figure 6: Requested documentation to register with the Basic Assistance

Divorced women	•Divorce papers
Widowed women	•Certificate of death of husband
Single mothers (to children born out of wedlock)	•Court ruling about the child
Incapacitated and persons with disabilities	•Medical report stating on the type and level of disability •Identification documents of legal guardian in case of mental retardation or depression
Families with head of family imprisoned or missing or martyr	•Prison sentence •Court ruling on the absence of the head of family

The majority of interviewed social workers (18/27) and a considerable number of interviewed service users (21/46) reported that the registration process for this programme takes between one and three months. Several registered service users interviewed mentioned, however, that the registration can take longer, between three and six months (6/46), while some reported that, for them, it took more than six months (7/46).

Finally, almost all interviewed service users were notified of their registration by going back to the registration office (37/46), while few reported having been notified through their bank (5/46).

Emergency Assistance

In Libya, the altered precipitation patterns, rising sea levels, and shifts in temperature have led to an increased incidence of extreme weather events.[60] The arid areas, exposed to warmer temperature and

[58] MoSA's Facebook page.
[59] A proof of children's school enrolment can also be requested, although this was only reported by one interviewed beneficiary, showing that, in practice, registration can go ahead without this document.
[60] United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Arab Region, 2017

decrease in rainfall, are subject to longer and more severe droughts. While the Mediterranean areas are regularly affected by flash flooding episodes that cause damage to infrastructure and farmland vital for livelihoods, especially in impoverished areas where infrastructure is not built to withstand floods or landslides. These natural disasters have also led to the displacement of thousands of individuals.[61]

Despite this, public awareness of the Emergency Assistance programme, which was initiated by the government to assist vulnerable population groups affected by crises, appears to be limited. This limited awareness appeared to extend to service providers; among all interviewed service providers, including individuals holding senior-level positions, only a few reported being knowledgeable about the programme.

Overall, only 5 beneficiaries of the Emergency Assistance were identified by REACH and its partners and participated in the IIs, all of whom were located in Sebha, which might be due to the fact that shocks appear to be more frequent in the Libyan southwest than the northeast (especially in Ghat, Albayda).[62] This was most notably the case in November 2020, when heavy rainfall in the Jabal al-Akhdar mantika[63] led the municipal authorities to declare a state of emergency, and displaced at least 145 people.[64]

The IIs findings were triangulated with the findings of the KIIs with service providers to understand the registration process for this grant. First, all respondent groups agreed on the place where victims of natural disasters must go to register; namely at the SSolF municipal offices. However, one interviewed service user reported going to their baladiya[65] to register.

According to the national and municipal level KIs, applicants must provide several documents to register with this programme:

- A formal request or application form
- Family status certificate
- Proof of residence from the muhalla's mukhtar[66]
- Certificate of salary
- Proof of property ownership or official house renting contract
- Statement/proof of not receiving financial assistance from any party
- Police report of the natural disaster in the neighborhood
- Civil Safety Authority report by type of disaster assessing damages

Figure 7: Registration process for the Emergency Assistance

According to the interviewed social workers who work with the Emergency Assistance programme, registration takes less than a month (5/7). This would make sense given the fact that the core purpose of this grant is to provide assistance to vulnerable families in cases of emergencies, which means in a very short amount of time. However, interviewed service users registered with this programme mainly

[61] The Borgen Project, Ongoing flooding in Libya requires aid, 2020
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] In Arabic, a political subdivision that is equivalent to a district. In Libya, it is the second administrative level (smaller than a region).
[64] REACH, Rapid Flood Assessment in Albayda, November 2020
[65] In Arabic, a political subdivision that is equivalent to a municipality.
[66] In Arabic, the muhalla is a political subdivision that is equivalent to a neighbourhood. The mukhtar is a community leader, usually elected at the village or neighbourhood level.

reported that the registration process took between three and six months (3/5), with a service user mentioning the process had taken more than six months.

Once the applicant is successfully registered, the modality of disbursement of the financial assistance appears to vary per office or even per individual case. Indeed, several options were reported by the different respondent groups: assistance can be provided in form of cash distribution, cash transfer or cheque. The amount appears to vary as well, although this assistance cannot cover more than 75% of the cost of the damages. In-kind assistance, consisting of basic non-food items (e.g. mattresses, blankets, house cleaning materials, clothing, personal hygiene items, etc.), food, medical supplies, or, in rare cases, shelter, is provided to the beneficiary either at the SSolF registration office or directly through door-to-door distribution.

Interviewed service users registered with the Emergency Assistance reported having been notified of their registration by going back to the registration office (3/5) or through a phone call from the SSolF (2/5).

Information management and grievance mechanisms

Information management systems are of critical importance in the administration of social protection programmes. Their efficiency can determine the accuracy of beneficiary identification, and they play a key role in the registration process and delivery of benefits. Information management systems are also key to process complaints and appeals. In Libya, and within the MoSA and SSolF, service providers reported a lack of comprehensive and national digital system, as well as unclear and weak grievance mechanisms for applicants who got their registration rejected or beneficiaries who did not receive the intended benefit.

Data storage and sharing

Twenty-two (22) employees of the MoSA and SSolF were asked about beneficiaries' data storage and sharing policies and practice within both institutions. While KIs unanimously reported that the information concerning programmes beneficiaries is stored safely and securely, findings suggest that information management systems are quite different from one agency to another.

The MoSA's system

To ensure all Libyan children, children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers, as well as all eligible Libyan women are covered by the Wife's and Children's Grant, the MoSA identifies the beneficiaries through the CRA. Since the introduction of the NIN system in 2013, which was meant to connect all CRA offices using one electronic system to store all collected data[67], MoSA offices also gained access to this national database, which contains all citizens' personal information. Each branch of the MoSA has unique access to this database for individuals who are registered with the CRA in their jurisdiction only. KIs from the MoSA confirmed that the registration for the programme was done electronically, although half of the KIs reported that original hard copies of the documentation provided by applicants are also stored in the registration offices at the municipal level (7/14).

Although the existence of this overarching electronic system is assumed to ensure a streamlined process without hiccups, KIs reported several bottlenecks, most of which seem to be due to the system is not being updated regularly. First, out of the 202 interviewed Libyan service users (registered or not), 6 reported having experienced the lack of regular updates of the CRA database, which reportedly led to delays in the registration process and benefit delivery, since vital events (including birth and divorce) are not recorded in a timely manner. All 6 interviewed service users who reported this were non-displaced people living in Sebha, which is the location where families reportedly face more obstacles to register with social protection programmes (see Chapter 4).

[67] Al-Sabah, "New Libyan national number and establishment of a new system for entry and exit of foreigners in Libya", 3 February, 2013.

Furthermore, some KIs from the MoSA, as well as social workers (15/53), reported that children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers could not be identified by this database. Indeed, these families must first be registered with the 'Database for Foreigners' within the CRA, which is meant to provide each family with a unique identification number. However, according to a senior KI at the Wife's and Children's Grant project, the database did not include any households at the time of data collection, reportedly due to a lack of awareness among the population about the requirement to do so, as well as how to register.

The SSolF's system

The SSolF's information management system appears to be widely paper-based. The majority of employee KIs reported that the Information and Documentation Department within the SSolF is in charge of storing beneficiaries' files at the municipal level (15/22). It was also reported that, although digital databases exist (on Excel), most of the departments and offices work on hard copies. According to these KIs, this is mostly due to computer illiteracy of staff and a lack of funding to buy the necessary devices, including computers. Moreover, KIs from offices in Sebha also reported frequent power cuts as a reason for working with paper-based systems. As for the Emergency Assistance; all KIs who are working on this grant confirmed that only paper-based files and copies are used. This might be partly due to the fact that very few applications are received every year; for example for the Sebha (Fezzan) SSolF branch, which covers almost all baladiyas of the Southern region (Sebha, Albawanees, Murzuq, Wadi Etba, Alsharguiya, Traghen, Algatroun), a maximum of two applications have reportedly been received per month since January 2021.

Alongside this, the majority of service provider KIs reported that beneficiaries' information is also shared between departments and agencies (e.g. the SSolF and MoSA) through hard copies (18/22). Only 7 KIs reported that some information is shared through emails, and one KI reported that information is even shared using TeamView, especially to verify information between the municipal/regional and central branches (in Tripoli). However, as highlighted by a MoSA Facebook post in June 2021, gaps remain in communication and information sharing between the MoSA and its autonomous bodies, including the SSolF.[68]

Finally, a KI working for the Information and Documentation Department reported that the department is working to create a national electronic database for all SSolF programmes to have a centralised place to store all beneficiaries' information. This database would optimise registration and verification processes, as beneficiaries would already be in the system and would not have to bring all the documentation every year when they want to renew their registration with any of the SSolF programmes.

Verification process

The verification process of the information provided by applicants does not appear to be standardised nationwide. Indeed, 11 out of the 23 KIs who discussed this topic reported that a special committee within the MoSA and SSolF oversees the process. This process seems much longer for the SSolF programmes than for the MoSA's grant:

- For the SSolF, KIs reported that the committee cross-checks the information with the muhalla's mukhtar; the police station for the Emergency Assistance, the CRA (especially for children in care centres), and with hospitals' health registries (for persons with disabilities or chronic illnesses).
- For the Basic Assistance programme, the SSolF's Information and Documentation Department, which is in charge of this verification process, collaborates with the National Information and Documentation Centre. This institution, which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice, has a national electronic database with the NIN and other personal information of all citizens working in the public sector in Libya. The SSolF offices in the municipalities share applicants' data with the main office in Tripoli, which then sends applicants' NIN to this institution to verify that applicants are not working in the public sector and not receiving other pensions or benefits from the state (e.g. from the SSecF).

[68] Facebook post of June 2021 on the MoSA's page

- For the MoSA, the committee reportedly only triangulates the information with the CRA, which in turn is linked with the Ministry of Finance. This verification is carried out at the end of each month by the MoSA to update each beneficiary's situation and account for any changes (death, birth, new job, etc.). This verification is carried out at the central level: applicants' information received in municipal registration offices are shared with the main office in Tripoli.

However, a KI from the SSolF reported the lack of a clear and unified verification process, since some employees do not always cross-check the information provided by applicants with the CRA, which the KI attributed to a lack of a shared electronic database and general difficulties to access the databases. This same KI reported having heard of numerous cases of fraud in the verification process.

Grievance mechanisms

What is most striking about the eclectic discussion points about grievance mechanisms raised by the different respondent groups is the lack of clear, formal and nationwide mechanisms, as was also outlined above for the outreach strategy. A few KIs reported the existence of special committees responsible for hearing and processing the complaints, and that are usually appointed by the head of the MoSA and SSolF main offices in Tripoli (5/20). According to a KI, in the SSolF, the committee is most often composed of a social worker, a legal consultant, the head of the Department (Social Development or Basic Assistance) or of the branch, and a member of the National Information and Documentation Centre. However, and according to this same KI, these committees are seldom active, due to a lack of budget, and complaints end up being treated by the administrative and financial affairs offices. This special committee was also mentioned by 11 interviewed social workers within the SSolF, some of them reporting that, within this institution, it is called the Dispute Resolution Committee.

Alongside this, the different answers highlight the "case by case" approach, as 4 KIs reported that a "complaint box" is avaible in each MoSA office, and three other KIs reported that any employee of both agencies can hear the complaints. Another KI reported that the complaints can be delivered to the muhalla's mukhtar for the Emergency Assistance. Almost all KIs (12/20) said that these mechanisms were free of charge, unless the complaint goes through the judiciary system in which case it involves fees. A KI working for the Wife's and Children's Grant mentioned the creation of a hotline and website page, including a page listing the "most frequently asked questions", to receive the complaints that should be operational in the coming months. These two options were notably requested by interviewed Libyan service users to facilitate programme implementation. Eventually, two KIs reported that the SSolF and MoSA do not have grievance mechanisms, and this was justified by one of them, for the Wife's and Children's Grant, because all the applications are usually accepted for this programme.

This last finding is in line with what interviewed Libyan service users largely reported, as only 15 interviewed service users mentioned being aware of the existence of grievance mechanisms (15/202). These complaints were mainly reported for the Basic Assistance. Out of the 26 interviewed Libyan service users who reported having their application rejected at least once, only one did appeal the decision. The majority reported not applying to grievance mechanisms because the process to do so was not clear, as they did not know where to apply, which documents to provide, and the length of the process (14/25). A minority did not appeal the decision due to what they considered a "time consuming" process (3/25).

Contrastingly, social workers largely reported the existence of grievance mechanisms (5/12 within the MoSA, 20/27 within the SSolF), although how they operate seem to vary from an office to another, similarly to what KIs described above. While some reported that applicants have to submit a complaint form directly to the head of department in charge of the programme, others mentioned the necessity to present a formal complaint at the administrative affairs office, or even to re-apply if the applicant is a person with disabilities.

The lack of clear complaint mechanisms at an institutional level is also reflected in the several Facebook groups and pages dedicated to each programme (Wife's and Children's Grant and Basic Assistance), where service users and some employees of implementing agencies exchange information and advice:[69]

[69] Notably, a Facebook group named "Wife's and Children's Grant: problems and enquiries", an another one titled "Page for charity actions"

" Good morning, how do we know for which months we have received the grant or not? How are we notified? I would need help on this please." (Post from a service user on 'Wife's and Children's Grant: problems and enquiries' Facebook page, from January 2022)

" Hello, I want to know if I give birth to a child in 2022, would they benefit from the Wife's and Children's Grant or not? If they are eligible, where should I go to register them? Thank you, please reply." (Post from a service user on 'Wife's and Children's Grant: problems and enquiries' Facebook page, from January 2022)

Conclusion and recommendations

Findings suggested that, overall, the outreach to promote awareness and understanding of social protection programmes is deemed sufficient, clear, diverse, and easily accessible by interviewed service users and service providers. While social media are the main means of outreach reported for the Wife's and Children's Grant, interviewed service users registered with the Basic Assistance or the Emergency Assistance reported hearing about the programmes through their personal networks. This points out to some gaps in outreach coverage, as mentioned by some KIs who highlighted weak and/or unequal outreach across Libya.

The MoSA and SSolF are thus encouraged to increase and diversify their current efforts to expand outreach, notably through mass media campaigns. Both agencies are also encouraged to build a focused and clear outreach strategy specifically targeting vulnerable population groups, including individuals with lower levels of literacy and families with limited access to technology and internet. Alongside this, it is recommended to develop specific information materials and conduct awareness campaigns about the Emergency Assistance in high-risk zones vulnerable to natural disasters. Finally, the MoSA and SSolF are encouraged to enhance collaboration with INGOs and CSOs to disseminate information about social protection programmes, reduce the stigma around accessing assistance from the state, and create referral mechanisms between humanitarian programmes and social assistance schemes.

Regarding the registration process, findings indicated that it appears to be fairly smooth for the Wife's and Children's Grant, but relatively more intricate for the Basic Assistance and the Emergency Assistance as numerous documents are required. Therefore, the process is reportedly lengthy, notably due to a lack of digital and integrated information management systems within the SSolF, which has consequences on the process of applicants' information verification. Eventually, the challenges experienced by service providers and service users related to data storage and sharing are also noticeable in the lack of clear and standardised grievance mechanisms in both agencies.

In light of these findings, the MoSA and SSolF are encouraged to work towards enhancing a smooth registration process, notably through having easy to read and understandable application forms, as well as through the creation of moble social workers teams, especially in remote areas and in areas affected by natural disasters. It is also recommended to create 'priority' registration desks and to open more MoSA and SSolF offices across the country, and particularly in remote and rural areas.

Moreover, both implementing agencies are encouraged to create clear and standardised grievance mechanisms, as well as to improve awareness campaigns about these mechanisms. It is notably recommended that multiple channels are set up for receiving complaints to ensure widespread access: Dispute Resolution Committees, operational hotlines, e-portal with an e-filing system for the SSolF (on the model of the MoSA's website). Both agencies are also encouraged to train their staff on grievance processes so that they can guide and support applicants and beneficiaries throughout the process, including referring them to the adequate office.

Eventually, to identify and enrol beneficiaries, as well as manage their information, it is recommended that the SSolF develops a digital information management system, in order to speed up verification processes, enable timely transfer of funds to beneficiaries, and facilitate the treatment of complaints. The MoSA and SSolF are also encouraged to develop integrated information management systems to better understand the demand for social protection programmes and to improve the coordination and

minitoring of the suppy of programmes. Notably, it is suggested that common beneficiary registries across agencies are created.

Throughout all these processes, social workers reportedly play a pivotal role as discussed in the following chapter.

3. ROLE AND CAPACITY OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Introduction

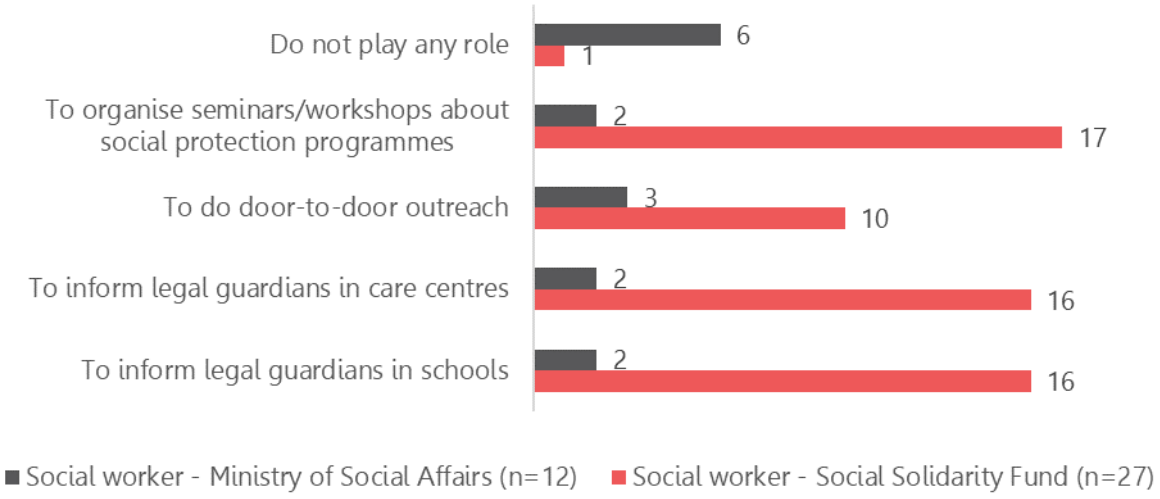
According to the International Federation of Social Workers, the daily work of social workers is to enhance and strengthen solidarities between people and within the family, the community and the society, as well as ensure individuals' rights are fully respected.[70] In the Libyan social protection system for children, although social workers are employees of the main implementing agencies, it is not apparent, especially from the law, what role they play. Hence, this chapter addresses social workers and staff capacity in the administration and implementation of social assistance programmes. The findings are based on the KIIs with service providers and IIs with service users.

Social workers' role in the outreach

This section focuses on social workers' role in the effort to promote awareness and understanding of social protection programmes. Findings show a noteworthy similarity between service users' experience and social workers' narrative. Although the majority of the former group reported that they do not know what role social workers play in the outreach (80/202) or that they do not play any role (26/202), some interviewed service users mentioned several tasks and responsibilities; social workers reportedly organise seminars and workshops about social protection (47/202), inform legal guardians in schools (46/202), are in charge of informing legal guardians in care centres (33/202), and are also in charge of conducting door-to-door outreach (37/202).

In person or door-to-door outreach was notably mentioned by 5 interviewed service users when asked about ways to improve the outreach, coverage, and accessibility of social protection programmes. Indeed, this means of outreach appears to be one of the most inclusive ones, as it is interactive and helps building a relationship between service providers and beneficiaries. It is also much more accessible to illiterate individuals and persons with reduced mobility or other disabilities. Nonetheless, this appears to be quite expensive in terms of human resources (which both agencies reportedly lack), and risky in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 8: Role of social workers in the outreach according to interviewed social workers (n=53)



**Respondents could report more than one role.*

[70] Fédération internationale des travailleurs sociaux, The role of social work in social protection systems, 2016

Registered Libyan service users were also asked about the role of social workers in the ongoing communication with beneficiaries after registration. While a few reported that a social worker is assigned to each beneficiary to follow up with them throughout the period of receiving the grant and in case of any hurdles (12/114), the striking majority had reportedly not heard back from social workers after registration, nor did they know about their role (98/114).

Social workers' role in the registration process

Registration process

Social workers seem to play a pivotal role in the registration process for the three programmes according to all respondent groups, although this was much less commonly reported for the Wife's and Children's Grant compared to the other assessed grants. Half of the KIs who answered this section (13/26) reported that social workers are in charge of receiving applicants in implementing agencies' municipal offices, conducting a social assessment of their needs, and then referring them to the appropriate programme department and registration services. Social workers are also responsible for following up with residents of care centres on a regular basis as they act as liaison officers between care centres, the SSolF, the CRA, the Ministry of Health and other bodies (4/26). Two KIs also mentioned social workers' role in grievance mechanisms as they are allegedly in charge of receiving, processing and hearing the complaints, and they "*defend the applicants and care for their problems*" (KI from the SSolF).

Interviewed Libyan service users registered with the Wife's and Children's Grant overwhelmingly reported that social workers do not play any role in the registration process or that they are not aware of their role (72/79), which might be related to fact that the automatic registration for this programme reduces the interactions between service providers and applicants. Similarly, interviewed service users registered with the Emergency Assistance reported not knowing about the role of social workers. The majority of the interviewed service users registered with the Basic Assistance, on the other hand, reported that social workers do play a role in the registration process as they are reportedly in charge of the whole process (12/46), support families and raise awareness and understanding of the process (including the documents required to register) (16/46), and follow up with applicants during and after registration (5/46). In addition, two interviewed service users corroborated what social worker KIs reported, namely that social workers are in charge of conducting a 'social research' to understand the social and economic status of the family applying for the grant and identify their needs.

Only three interviewed social workers reported not playing any role in the registration process, whereas all others provided different tasks and responsibilities that are incumbent upon them:

- They receive applicants in registration offices (12/53)
- They provide support and counselling to families and explain the registration process (37/53)
- They conduct the 'social research' to understand the social and economic status of the family and their needs (14/53)
- They refer applicants to the competent authorities (3/53)
- They are in charge of verifying the documentation provided by applications to register (4/53)
- They provide psychological support to families coming to registation offices to apply (1/53)

Staff and social workers' capacity

While almost all employee KIs reported that the number of staff and social workers in charge of the registration process is sufficient (18 KIs out of the 26 who were asked the question), a majority highlighted the issue of limited capacities and unqualified staff in both the MoSA and SSolF (14/26), especially in Sebha and Benghazi. Furthermore, 12 KIs stressed the lack of training or trained staff, due to a lack of funding (12/26), and particularly computer illiteracy was mentioned by these KIs as a major issue, as well as a lack of qualified personnel in care centres (one employee KI reported child abuse in some care homes as the result of a lack of training on how to work with children with special needs). Computer illiteracy of staff and ill-management of digital databases were commonly reported by all service providers, especially within the SSolF. Interviewed service providers notably reported that the delays in the registration process and in the benefit delivery are due to the erronous information about beneficiaries that are entered because of a lack of training and savviness on the use of specific types of

software, or because the data entered is obsolete and rarely updated. The lack of a comprehensive and nationwide management strategy and system is reportedly impacting staff and social workers' capacity, which is further weakened by the high turnover of managers, according to employee KIs. These elements were also found in the Administrative Control Authority report of 2019[71], which highlights a lack of sufficient and qualified staff in the MoSA and SSolF.

To some extent, interviewed Libyan service users' responses align with those provided by the KIs, as users commonly reported that there is a sufficient number of staff in registration offices to support applicants with the registration process (140/202). A minority of interviewed service users also reported having experienced discriminatory practices in some offices, with staff reportedly not treating all applicants and beneficiaries equally on the basis of gender, age, disability, area of residence, or ethnicity and tribal affiliation (22/202). This was almost only reported by IDPs and returnees in all three locations (19/22), and half of these service users reported having at least a child with disabilities (11/22), which are population groups that seem to face more hurdles to accessing social protection programmes as detailed in Chapter 4.

The findings from the KIIs with the 39 interviewed social workers within the MoSA and SSolF generally seemed to confirm what has been reported by the two other respondent groups. They were asked about the capacity of staff and social workers throughout the registration process using the following true or false questions:

1. There is a sufficient number of staff within the MoSA and SSolF municipal offices to be able to support the registration process:
- True: 33 KIs
- False: 6 KIs

2. Staff within the MoSA and SSolF municipal offices have received sufficient training to be able to support the registration process:
- True: 17 KIs
- False: 22 KIs

Care centres

Overview

The provision of institutional care for children falls under the framework for providing social protection. Social security, as defined by Libyan Law, includes social care for children, notably through the social institutions that provide housing, support, social and health care, training, and rehabilitation for vulnerable children groups such as orphans, children with disabilities, children born out of wedlock, and juveniles.[72] These centres can be residential or not. The Libyan state is in particular responsible for caring for all children with no legal guardian, including orphans, children born out of wedlock, children whose parents are prisoners, separated, divorced or living with illnesses, or any child whose parents cannot care for them for other reasons. Care centres are managed by the SSolF's Social Institutions Department[73], although the institutional structure governing the care centres system is unclear as different bodies have overlapping responsibilities, including the MoSA and SSolF, which both run care centres for persons with disabilities. The funding mechanism is also not entirely transparent, although a KI from the SSolF reported that these social institutions are funded through a tax on state-owned companies that provide a share of their profits to the SSolF's department in charge of these centres.

According to a senior KI working with the Social Institutions Department within the SSolF, there are three types of childcare residential institutions that are currently operational in Libya and that overall foster 518 children[74]:

[71] Administrative Control Authority report of 2019
[72] Article 7 of Law No. 5 of 2006 on Children Protection
[73] Article 4 of Law No. 20 of 1998 on the Social Solidarity Fund
[74] Based on the table of number of residents of social institutions (adults and children) in Libya, in 2021, shared by a KI.

- Residential homes for boys and girls from 0 to 12 years old, that are located in Tripoli, Misrata and Benghazi. They respectively host 46, 65, and 20 children. Some homes are also gender specific:
    - Boys' homes fostering boys from 0 to 12 years old, also located in Tripoli (hosting 55 boys), Misrata (hosting 25 boys), Benghazi (hosting 42 boys) and Jabal al-Akhdar (hosting 21 boys).
    - Girls' homes that foster girls from 0 to 12 years old, also located in Tripoli (hosting 51 girls), Misrata (hosting 15 girls) and Benghazi (hosting 32 girls).
- Care homes for adolescents, fostering children aged from 13 to 18. These institutions are located in Benghazi, Misrata, Al-Bayda (Jabal al-Akhdar), and a new one recently opened in Tripoli in 2018.
- Education and rehabilitation homes for juveniles (minors aged 14 and under and who committed crimes) that were founded in 1973 and were first affiliated with the Ministry of Justice. They were recently transferred under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs and are now also managed by the SSolF. These are locared in Tripoli (fostering 40 boys) and Benghazi (25 boys, and one centre fosters 10 girls).

Alongside these, operational care centres providing support, education, health services and psychosocial support for children with disabilities were reported in Sebha, where there also used to be residential homes, including a centre for juveniles that closed in the 1990's. Children with no legal guardian and juveniles in the South, who need to be fully taken care of by the state, are therefore transferred to institutions in Misrata after completing their registration process in Sebha as reported by a KI. Children can easily be registered with care homes according to KIs, however, these institutions' capacity appears to be limited. This is especially the case in Benghazi, where interviewed social workers in a care centre for children with disabilities (including migrant and refugee children) reported hundreds of children registered on a waiting list to access the centre.

Regarding non-national children's access to care homes, a senior KI working with the SSolF's Social Institutions Department explained:

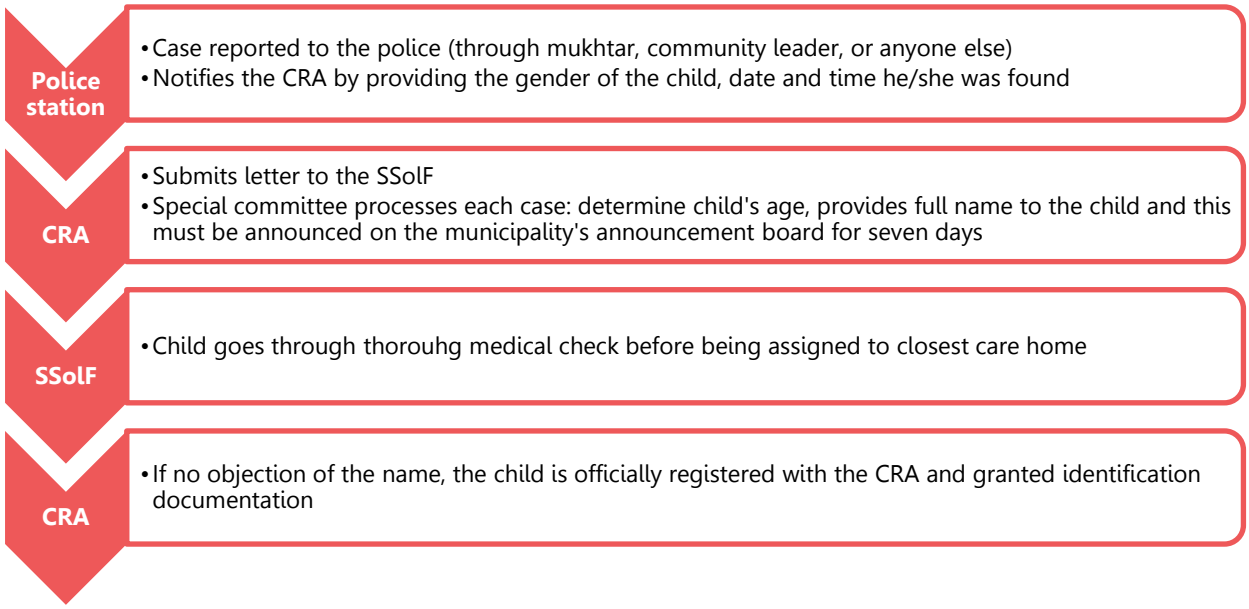
"In the case of non-Libyan children, who do not have legal guardianship, they are temporarily accommodated until communication takes place and they are transferred to their respective embassies."

This, however, only applies to residential institutions, meaning that care centres where children can actually benefit from social services are opened to migrant and refugee children and families, but this assessment did not further explore this topic.[75]

For abandoned children and children born out of wedlock, the registration process to residential homes consists of the following steps, according to KIs:

[75] UNICEF and Coram's current mapping of social service workforce delivering child protection services further investigate social institutions' functioning in Libya.

Figure 9: Registration process in care homes for abandoned children



For this assessment, 14 social workers within care centres were interviewed. Data collection took place within:

- Two institutions located in Benghazi, one hosting children with disabilities including migrant and refugee children with disabilities, and another one fostering Libyan children without legal guardians (excluding migrant and refugee children).
- Four care centres for children with disabilities, all hosting migrant and refugee children, located in Sebha: one centre for children with intellectual disabilities, one for autistic children, one for deaf and hard of hearing children, and one for children with mutism.
- Two care homes located in Tripoli: one fostering Libyan children with no legal guardians, and another one for juveniles (boys).

Registration process for social protection programmes in care centres

According to a senior staff KI at the SSolF's Social Institutions Department, children in residential homes receive accommodation, food, bedding, hygiene items, their school and transportation fees are covered, and they receive a free healthcare insurance. Those who access non-residential institutions reportedly benefit from multiple material, educational and psychosocial forms of support as well. All children in the different care centres reportedly also have free access to sports and entertainment programmes. Alongside this, children who are eligible to social assistance programmes, namely the Wife's and Children's Grant and Basic Assistance, can also benefit from the grants according to several interviewed service providers and service users, including a senior KI within the Social Institutions Department of the SSolF. However, KIs from other departments of the SSolF, including from the Basic Assistance Department, unanimously reported that children in care homes do not receive any complementary grant, as the state already provides them with all basic care and services. According to these same service provider KIs, only orphans and children born out of wedlock who live with their relatives or any other legal guardians can benefit from the Basic Assistance if their legal guardians' income is insufficient to cover for their needs. Based on these findings, it appears that the functioning of these care centres and their linkages with social protection programmes are quite opaque and unclear, even to the interviewed MoSA and SSolF employees themselves.

Nonetheless, it appears from the overall findings that some children do benefit from the Basic Assistance and from the Wife's and Children's Grant, both in residential and non-residential care centres, although the former was much less frequently reported. Indeed, two interviewed social workers within non-residential care homes reported that children in their centre benefit from the Wife's and Children's Grant just like any other child in Libya, while 11 social workers mentioned that children fostered by their

respetive centre benefit from the Basic Assistance. Around half of Libyan service users who have children attending care centres for children with disabilities reported that their children receive at least one grant; while 9/19 reported not receiving any grant, 5/19 reported being registered with the Wife's and Children's Grant, and 6/19 with the Basic Assistance.

The modality of delivery of the grant depends on the status of the child: if they are with no legal guardians or in a juveniles home, they reportedly directly benefit from the grant on their personal bank account opened through the SSolF's social workers, according to a national-level KI. All other children that do benefit from the services of care centres, and especially for children with disabilities who live, at least partially, with their parents or other legal guardians, receive the Basic Assistance on their head of household's or legal guardian's account.

Interestingly, although some of these care centres are opened to non-national children, and mainly located in Sebha, non-national children cannot benefit from any of the social protection programmes mentioned earlier, particularly the Basic Assistance, as the citizenship criteria still applies for residents and hosts of the MoSA's and SSolF's social institutions.

While the registration process for social protection programmes for children who attend non-residential care centres is similar to the one described in Chapter 2, since it is their parents' or any other legal guardians' responsibility to register them, in residential homes, social workers are the ones in charge of registering the children, as reported by a KI from the SSolF and 6 out of the 14 interviewed social workers within care centres. They are also the ones carrying the verification of children's information, by liaising with different institutions, including the SSolF's Social Institutions Department, the Ministry of Health (in case of disabilities), the CRA, and legal bodies in charge of child protection (especially for abandoned children). The process is fairly easy and reportedly takes less than a week according to a KI from the SSolF. Contrastingly, social workers reported rather long delays, with half of them mentioning that the registration takes over a month. Although the number of social workers is reportedly sufficient in care centres (9/14 of interviewed social workers), the lack of qualified staff remains an issue (6/14), as reported by a KI:

"*Although social workers are academically qualified, scientifically and practically they lack the needed skills and capacity to work in social care institutions. (...) There must be trainings for social workers to deal with children or juveniles in care homes in the best way*".

Conclusion and recommendations

While the majority of interviewed service users reported that they do not know what role social workers play in the outreach or that they do not play any role, interviewed service providers listed a number of responsibilities and tasks carried out by social workers, including the organisation of seminars and workshops to raise awareness about social protection, and in person outreach in care centres, schools, and door-to-door. Regarding the registration process, KIs and parents overall agreed to describe social workers' role as pivotal, particularly for the Basic Assistance.

Moreover, findings suggested that the number of staff and social workers in MoSA and SSolF registration offices is sufficient. Nonetheless, a majority of KIs highlighted the issue of limited capacities and unqualified staff in some offices, notably due to a lack of funding and training. These challenges appear to be less pregnant in care centres, within which the majority of interviewed social workers reported being in charge of registering children or supporting their registration with the Basic Assistance or with the Wife's and Children's Grant.

In light of these findings, the MoSA and SSolF are encouraged to strengthen capacity building for their staff and social workers. Trainings on ethical considerations to apply the principle of 'non-discrimination' and raise awareness of the needs of specific population groups are advised. Alongside this, improving staff's computer literacy appears to be essential throughout the registration process and for an efficient management of beneficiaries' information. Moreover, both agencies are encouraged to train their staff to enforce the law and allocate more human and financial resources to do so. Eventually, it is

recommended to create clear referral mechanisms to allow staff and social workers to refer applicants to another implementing agency.

Alongside the gaps in capacity and skills of staff and social workers, several other barriers and bottlenecks were reported by interviewed service providers and service users as further developed in the following section.

4. BARRIERS AND BOTTLENECKS FACED BY APPLICANTS

Introduction

Based on the KIIs and IIs, this final chapter outlines the bottlenecks and barriers faced by different vulnerable population groups in Libya when they try to access and/or register with social protection programmes. The challenges mentioned by the different respondent groups are all similar to the preliminary findings of the NESDB, UNICEF, UNDP and IPC-IG's study for the social protection policy roadmap.[76] The focus is first on the children groups that are more likely to face barriers to access social protection programmes, followed by a short section on the main reported causes of delays in the registration process and benefit delivery. The last section zooms in on Sebha and the overall Southern region of Libya, which, based on the findings of this assessment, is the area where the coverage of social protection programmes is reportedly much more limited.

Groups facing more barriers to accessing social protection programmes

Children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers

Children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers were widely reported as the population group more likely to face barriers when trying to register with social protection programmes by interviewed Libyan service users (114/202) and social worker KIs (15/53). Findings suggest this is driven by two intertwined reasons. First, challenges result from a lack of documentation, and more specifically of a NIN and thus citizenship, as these children are considered to be foreigners. Among the 88 eligible but not registered Libyan families interviewed, 37 reported that the reason for not being registered is a lack of documentation, and more specifically of a NIN (37/88). The NIN was introduced in 2013 as part of a larger government strategy to modernise and digitalise the work of public institutions and facilitate better service delivery. It consists of a unique number assigned to every Libyan citizen once they are registered at a CRA office. It became the main proof of identity that authorities rely upon for the disbursement of salaries, pensions, benefits, and subsidised goods.

Law No. 17 of 1954 regulating citizenship stated that Libyan nationality can only be granted through the father. It has then been replaced by Law No. 24 of 2010[77] which retains ambiguities and made it uncertain how the law would be applied in practice. Indeed, Section 2 of the law stipulates that "every person residing in Libya regularly since 07/10/1951 and who does not have other foreign nationality" is considered Libyan if he/she was born in Libya and/or if he/she was born outside of Libya but one of their parents was born in Libya. Section 11 adds that children of Liyan women from non-Libyan nationals could have the Libyan nationality. This would therefore mean that any child born to a Libyan mother or father would be considered Libyan. However, Section 3 appears to contradict the two above-mentioned dispositions, as a Libyan is defined as "everyone born in Libya to a Libyan father", and Libyan mothers can only confer their nationality to their child if the child's father is stateless or if his nationality is unknown.

When asked about the children groups that are more likely to face obstacles to access social protection, two interviewed social workers in Benghazi reported:

"*In the past, the biggest problem and barrier was faced by children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers because they were treated as foreigners due to their lack of citizenship. But not long ago, the laws and procedures were amended to allow Libyan mothers to give their nationality to their children.*"

The law they are referring to is the Cabinet Decision No. 322 of September 2021, that recently amended the Libyan citizenship Law, allowing Libyan women to pass on nationality to their children.[78] Children born to Libyan women and non-Libyan fathers are therefore, in legal terms, considered Libyan nationals.

[76] NESDB, UNICEF, UNDP, and IPC-IG, Roadmap for the Development of a National Social Protection Policy in Libya, November 2021
[77] Law No. 24 of 2010 on the Libyan Nationality
[78] Cabinet Decree No. 322 of 2021, Article 4

They can obtain Libyan nationality from birth through their mothers, and no longer have to go through naturalisation when they reach adulthood. However, this is reportedly yet to be applied in practice in the assessed locations, notably due to a limited knowledge and understanding of laws and procedures by staff and social workers within state institutions. This was indeed reported by interviewed service providers themselves, as half of the national and municipal KIs (13/26) and interviewed social workers (29/53) reported that they did not believe that "staff within the MoSA/SSolF have a sufficient understanding of the laws and policies that underpin social protection programmes".

Moreover, although children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers are among the targeted population groups for the Wife's and Children's Grant[79], they are reportedly still not benefiting from the programme due to a lack of law enforcement and limited programme implementation strategy. This finding from interviewed service providers and service users was also suggested by several publications on the MoSA's Facebook page.[80] Indeed, and as mentioned in Chapter 1 already, to be able to register with this programme, families with a Libyan mother and a non-Libyan father have to be registered with the Foreigners Database at the CRA. Nevertheless, very little communication has apprently been made about the need to do so and how to do so according to a senior KI working for the Wife's and Children's Grant Project, which would explain why there are currently zero family in this system. Moreover, these children should be able to register with their Libyan mother's NIN according to KIs, but this is reportedly never applied either.

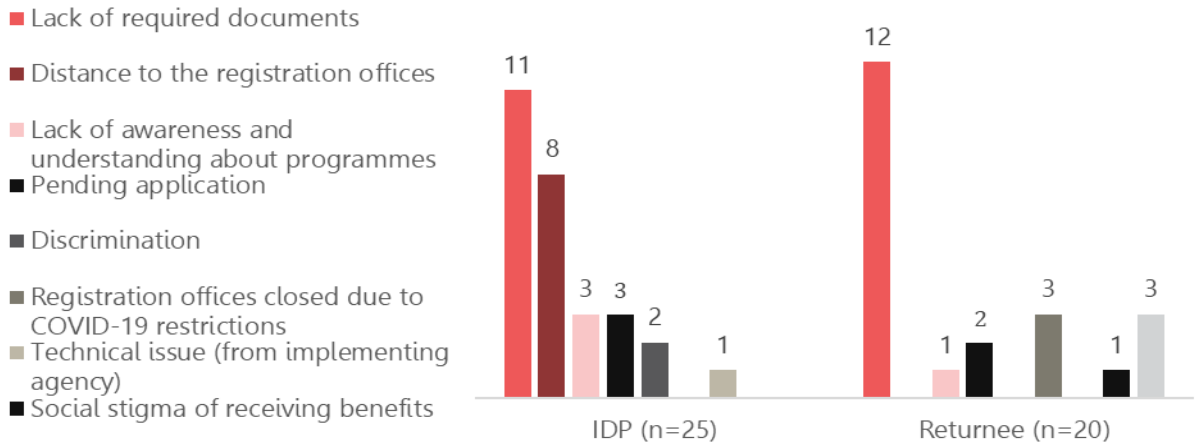
People living in displacement (IDPs and returnees)

The next most commonly cited population that is more likely to face barriers to register with social protection programmes are IDP and returnee children (73/202). People living in displacement in Libya are not targeted by any official policy or legal framework to protect them from the main protection concerns that they face, which include limited access to services, civil documentation, and housing, as well as safety concerns. IDPs often have nothing to return to in the areas they fled from, due to damage or destruction of their residential buildings and infrastructure and limited reconstruction. Alongside these challenges, in 2019, the Administrative Control Authority reported that there was a general lack of cash assistance provided to people living in displacement due to limited funding allocated by the Ministry of Finance to support this population group.[81] Findings suggest that a lot of IDP and returnee families are indeed missed out by social assistance programmes[82], for multiple reasons, but mainly due to their inability to provide all required documents to register. This was summed up by an interviewed Libyan IDP parent from Tripoli as follows:

"I can't get my papers because I'm displaced in another city, and the papers have to be extracted from the same city, and I can't go back to my city because my house is destroyed."

[79] Law No. 27 of 2013 on the Wife's and Children's Grant
[80] MoSA's Facebook page.
[81] Administrative Control Authority report of 2019
[82] Among the interviewed Libyan service users, displaced families less commonly reported being registered with social protection programmes than non-displaced users.

Figure 10: Causes of lack of registration reported by interviewed unregistered displaced Libyan service users (n=45)



**Respondent could report more than one cause*

The most commonly cited reason for a lack of registration was indeed incomplete documents, as reported by 37/88 of all unregistered Libyan service users (displaced and non-displaced) and 79/114 of registered service users. This was also reported by half of the KIs (16/32). It was mainly reported for people living in displacement, who may have lost their identification documents, or are more likely to face obstacles when trying to retrieve some of them. This is because each Libyan family is registered with a particular CRA office and when they move and they are missing documentation, they are usually not able to renew or replace documents except at their local office. This bottleneck was notably reported for the proof of residence as the processes for changing the address is quite long and challenging, and they cannot register with the SSolF or MoSA branch of their current location, as it is for instance the case for IDPs from Tawergha and Tarhuna in Benghazi. This was however mainly reported for the SSolF as all applications are treated at the municipal level, and this is one of the noteworthy consequences of the lack of national digital information management system. Returnees are also reportedly unable to provide their child's proof of school registration according to a KI working for the SSolF.

Furthermore, it appears that not all people who have been displaced due to natural disasters are aware of the existence of the Emergency Assistance, which would explain the reportedly fewer applications for this programme. The REACH field team and the partner CSOs were indeed only able to identify 5 Libyan servcie users who have benefitted from the Emergency Assistance, among whom 4 are displaced. Alongside this, 15 of the 45 unregistered displaced service users interviewed for the assessment reported knowing about this programme, while this number goes up to 31 for the Basic Assistance, and 38 for the Wife's and Children's Grant.

Abandoned children and children born out of wedlock

The third most commonly reported group facing barriers, according to interviewed social workers (12/53) and Libyan service users (53/202), were children born out of wedlock and abandoned children. These children are reportedly victim of widespread social stigma, which leads some mothers to refuse to declare their child's birth in a timely manner or at all, and even when they do declare their child's birth, they do not register their child with social protection programmes, especially in rural areas, as reported by a KI. These delays in registering births with the CRA further puts on hold the issuance of civil documentation for these children, and particularly of a NIN, as reported by almost all interviewed Libyan service users (45/53), which is the key documentation required for registering with social protection programmes. Which documents the child is entitled to depends on whether parentage can be proven, and especially access to the NIN and a passport is dependent on the recognition of children born out of wedlock by their extended family according to the current policy surrounding the birth registration of children born out of wedlock. This represents a barrier to registration, due to prevailing social attitudes that can prevent families to come forward to acknowledge the child as theirs. This policy is therefore not fully aligned with child protection laws adopted by Libya, including Article 6 of the

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child[83] as mentioned in Chapter 1, as it makes the child's birth registration process subject to long delays.

The registration process and issuance of civil documentation for abandoned children can also be quite lenghty as already explained in Chapter 3. Moreover, the application form for the Basic Assistance enquires about the personal information of the child's father and grandfather, as well as some information about the child's mother. Nonetheless, as children born out of wedlock and abandoned children cannot provide proof of their lineage and personal information about their legal guardian, they face hurdles accessing social assistance programmes as reported by some interviewed Libyan service users (6/53). According to national-level KIs, limited capacity in care centres, and especially in the South of the country, could also be an obstacle for children born out of wedlock to access social protection programmes, as the registration process for the latter appears to be smoother in social institutions compared to the regular process for children who are not resident of care homes.

Persons with disabilities

In 2016, the Administrative Control Authority recorded delays in the treatment of persons with disabilities' cases and in the provision of their benefits by the SSolF.[84] These delays were also reported by all respondent groups, who mentioned several causes of the obstacles and delays faced by persons with disabilities, who represent about 15% of the total popopulation in the country.[85]

Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by Libya in 2018, provides several points on the right to accessibility, including specific measures that states should take to identify and remove all obstacles and barriers to access "buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities", as well as "provide training for stakeholders on accessibility issues facing persons with disabilities". However, and although efforts towards raising awareness of the rights of persons and children with disabilities are carried out by the MoSA and SSolF, a considerable number of interviewed Libyan service users (46/202) and social worker KIs (18/53) mentioned children with disabilities, including girls with disabilities, as one of the groups more likely to face barriers to register with social protection programmes. The main reported cause of persons with disabilities not being registered with social protection programmes was 'registration not being accessible due to mobility limitations (not possible to go to registration offices that are not equipped to receive persons with disabilities)' (15/46). Almost all interviewed service users registered with the Basic Assistance also reported being notified of their registration by going back to the SSolF office, which could represent an additional obstacle for persons with reduced mobility.

Moreover, Article 8 of the Convention underlines the importance of awareness raising and outreach to ensure persons with disabilities' rights and dignity are fully respected. However, and according to interviewed service users, the second most commonly reported reason for persons with disabilities to face hurdles accessing social protection programmes was the 'lack of awareness and understanding of social protection programmes and clear procedures to register' (14/46). A hypothesis for this lack of awareness could be the inaccessible means of communication, notably for persons with difficulties seeing and/or hearing.

[83] African Union, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990
[84] Administrative Control Authority report, 2016, p.108
[85] Protection Sector Libya, Libya Protection Sector Strategy 2020-2021

Box 2: Gender, disability, and registration

Although the principle of non-discrimination and equality is enshrined in the Libyan Constitutional Declaration of 2011 and other key legal acts (including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Law No. 5 of 1987) girls, and especially girls with disabilities, continue to face discrimination on a daily basis. This phenomenon is observable in the whole MENA, notably due to a "poor rule of law and governance, traditional and cultural practices and prejudice", as well as poverty.* Girls and women are among the least protected population groups, considering all forms of social protection worldwide**, and girls with disabilities migth face multi-faceted barriers due to women's status in society and the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in general.* Among the interviewed Libyan service users, 21 reported perceiving that girls with disabilties are more likely to face barriers to register. Alongside this, 18 service users reported that girls/women in general face particular hurdles accessing social assistance.

This is reportedly due to the following factors:

- A lack of awareness and understanding of girls and girls with disabilities' rights to social protection from families' side. This results from limited outreach that reportedly does not efficiently tackle the specific challenges experienced by girls and girls with disabilities. It is outlined by the higher proportion of women service users interviewed reporting not being registered with social protection programme due to a lack of awareness and understanding (about the programme, the eligibility criteria, their rights, the registration process, etc.) (18/23 unregistered service users reporting not being registered due to this cause) compared to male service users (5/23).
- Discriminatory social and cultural norms against girls and women in general that impact their freedom of movement (6/21) which reportedly prevent those living in remote and marginalised areas, where there are no MoSA or SSolF offices, to register. Studies in the MENA region showed that girls with disabilities are more likely to leave school due to the environmental and material constraints, which puts them even more at risk of protection concerns and exclusion from social protection systems, as their ability to move is often restricted to their home.*

**Source: Marcia Rioux, Are We Moving Forward? Regional Study on the Rights of Women with Disabilities in the Middle East, 2014, York University*
***Source: Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board, Social Protection to Promote Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment*

Lack of sufficient qualified staff to support the registration process was the third most commonly reported barrier by interviewed Libyan service users and employee KIs. Moreover, an interviewed Libyan parent reported perceiving that staff and social workers lack awareness regarding persons with disabilities' situation and rights, particularly for persons living with mental health and intellectual disabilities, which, according to this parent, results in discriminatory practices.

Eventually, the lack of required documents, and more specifically of an up-to-date medical report, was also reported as an important bottleneck for persons with disabilities. This results from two factors, according to two KIs from the SSolF. Firstly, the medical committee within the SSolF, which is responsible for examining the cases of persons with disabilities and providing the green light for their registration, does not hold regular meetings, which further delays the registration process. Secondly, it appears to be quite challenging to access operational medical facilities across the country and especially in rural and remote areas. This was notably stressed by IOM's DTM that indicated that only 65% of the public and private health facilities in Libya were reported to be operational, and that services available in operational health facilities were often reported to be limited.[86]Thus, persons with disabilities face hurdles providing an accurate and updated medical file detailing their type and level of disability.

[86] IOM DTM, IDP and Returnee Report, Round 38, July – September 2021

Delays in the registration and benefit delivery processes

While the previous section focused on the population groups that are more likely to face barriers to access and register with social protection programmes, this section covers additionnal challenges faced by all applicants and targeted population groups due to institutional barriers and bottlenecks that lead to delays in the registration and benefit delivery processes.

One-fifth of the registered Libyan service users interviewed reported having experienced delays in the registration process (23/114), among whom 17 were women, and mainly residing in Benghazi (15/23). The main reported barrier for registration by all respondent groups, and especially by employee KIs, was the lack of required documents (16/32 employee KIs of the MoSA and SSolF) as already mentioned previously. Delays in the registration process can indeed be explained by the lack of updated documents, as the process to collect the required documentation from the different institutions (muhalla's mukhtar, CRA, MoSA, Labour office, etc.) can be quite lenghty. This was mainly reported for the registration with the SSolF's programmes, which require a long list of documents. This issue is likely particularly acute in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the closure of several offices according to a SSolF KI, further delaying the registration process as reported by some social workers (2 from the MoSA and 8 from the SSolF). A few unregistered Libyan service users interviewed for this assessment, all living in Tripoli, also reported not having been able to register due to the closure of registration offices and the restrictions because of the pandemic (5/88).

Moreover, delays in receiving the benefits were quite frequently reported. Indeed, 65/114 interviewed registered service users reported experiencing some delays in receiving their benefits, half of whom were women (33/65). This was especially reported for the Wife's and Children's Grant that is supposed to be paid on a monthly basis, but in practice is received by beneficiaries every two to three months at least. Although less delays were reported for the Basic Assistance, that is also a monthly cash transfer, Libyan service users and the social media monitoring findings outlined considerable delays, as, for instance, a Facebook post on the SSolF's page of April 2021 stated the delivery of the Basic Assistance to beneficiaries for the months of January and February 2021.

Liquidity shortages was another commonly reported main cause of the delays in receiving benefits (39/65 Libyan service users, 5/32 KIs), although some KIs mentioned having perceived improvements with the GNU (5/32). Indeed, survey data from August 2021 by the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)[87] shows that 81% of interviewed households reported being able to withdraw sufficient cash to meet their needs in the 30 days prior to data collection, while this figure was at only 12% in November 2020.[88]

Following liquidity shortages, the second most reported cause of delays in receipt was the delay in transfer of the budget from the state (Ministry of Finance) to implementing agencies (12/65 Libyan service users). According to KIs, this delay in budget transfer results from the administrative instability and division within Libya (8/32 KIs), including the already mentioned lack of clear division of roles and responsibilities between implementing agencies (Chapter 1) and administrative levels. The limited coordination within implementing bodies might be further related to reports of staff not always being aware of legislation and policies surrounding the assistance programmes. Some KIs reported that these administrative divisions could also explain the lengthy information verification process between the municipal registration offices and the main MoSA and SSolF authorities in Tripoli (4/32 KIs), although considerable efforts are noticeable since 2021 towards the unification and harmonisation of the social protection systems through a decentralisation process across the country.[89]

Linked with the above, delays in benefit delivery are notably due to a lack of sustainable sources of funding for social protection programmes.[90] According to two SSolF KIs, the SSolF was funded through taxes on imported goods and public telecommunication companies before 2011, and has ever since been funded by retaining one LYD from every state employee's salary. In March 2021, a senior staff of

[87] REACH, Libya Cash Working Group, JMMI 1-13 August 2021
[88] World Bank, Libya Key conditions and Challenges, October 2021
[89] Libya Herald, Serraj government proposes further decentralization, 24 February 2021
[90] This is notably a key finding of the World Bank and WFP assessment of social protection systems in Libya using the CODI tool (presentation to the Libya CMWG in November 2021)

the SSolF's Basic Assistance Department[91] declared that the funds mainly come from oil companies (National Oil Corporation), and the payments and delays are thus dependent on these companies who may take time to transfer the funds to the state. This was also outlined in the Administrative Control Authority's report of 2019, which stated that the SSolF's partners in charge of funding the Basic Assistance are 'not compliant' on sending the amounts that were agreed upon.[92]

Eventually, two KIs reported that social networks and social capital can sometimes be used to obtain documentation and register with social protection programmes, leading to particular vulnerability for less well-connected households. This was notably reported by a KI working for the Humanitarian Affairs and Assistance Department (MoSA), and who replied (when asked about the outreach means):

"According to my expertise in assistance, the best and most important strategy is that of snowballing since it allows direct contact with those who need social services assistance whether it is just the children or the entire family. For a long time, we used to reach out to various actors to provide assistance inside of the baladiya (such as municipal councils or local councils). But there were challenges in delivering the assistance to people who need it, and there was also a sort of favouritism in terms of the provision of the assistance and registration process. But thanks to the snowballing strategy (it is true that there is more work to be done in terms of the investigation and the transmission of information), assistance reaches most of the those who need it."

The use of relational ties to access social protection programmes in some branches was also mentioned by three KIs in Benghazi, who reported that, despite of a legislation that does not include non-Libyans in the system, some non-Libyans can still "randomly" access social protection programmes through their personal networks and "amical treatment".

[91] The press conference is available on the SSolF's Facebook page.
[92] Administrative Control Authority report of 2019, p.114

Box 3: Including migrant and refugee children and families in social assistance systems

A total of 621,007 migrants from over 43 nationalities were identified in Libya, in November 2021, 14% of whom were children.* As a signatory to the ICESCR, Libya is bound by Article 9 to recognise the right of everyone to social security, including an equal treatment in access to social assistance between nationals and non-nationals. Nonetheless, in the Libyan national legislation and in practice, migrant and refugee children and families are not covered by social protection systems due to legal, administrative, and bureaucratic barriers to eligibility. The country maintains an ambivalent policy for migrants and refugees, like neighbouring Egypt, which consists of leaving the responsibility for these populations to international agencies and non-governmental organisations.**

REACH interviewed 30 community representatives to identify the alternative social safety nets from which migrant and refugee communities benefit in Libya. The two main support networks reported by the KIs were host communities (16/30) and Zakat and Charity from religious institutions (14/30), while humanitarian assistance (3/30) and community-based support (1/30) were much less frequently mentioned.

The findings indicate that these migrant and refugee families were generally well integrated in host communities upon which the pressure of providing cash and in-kind assistance seems to rely. This underlines the need for strengthening the advocacy regarding the revision of the legislation that underpins social protection in Libya, to make it more inclusive of non-national population groups. Ensuring a minimum living standard for these communities, by providing income, food, and housing, appears to be fundamental to the protection of migrants' and refugees' rights and to their full inclusion within the host society. This is notably already carried out in other countries:

- In Turkey for instance, the adoption of a comprehensive legal framework, through the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, adopted in 2013, ensures 'regular' migrants' access to social assistance. This is notably linked with the optimisation of regularisation and naturalisation processes.
- Also in Turkey, the comprehensive legislation has been enforced through the alignment between humanitarian action and government systems, and more specifically through the Emergecy Social Safety Net, which is an unconditional cash transfer programme funded by the European Union (EU) that targets vulnerable refugee families in the country.

The extension of social protection schemes to migrants and refugees throughout the world is, however, quite fragile. It has been subject to some noteworthy concerns, and 'irregular' and undocumented migrants remain left out of these schemes.**

**Source: IOM's DTM, Migrant Report Round 39, October – November 2021*

***Source: Andrade, M., Sato, L., Hammad, M. 2021. Improving social protection for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt: An overview of international practices. Research Report No. 57. Brasília and Cairo: IPC-IG and UNICEF*

Variation of barriers across the assessed locations: zooming in on Sebha

Lack of human and financial means

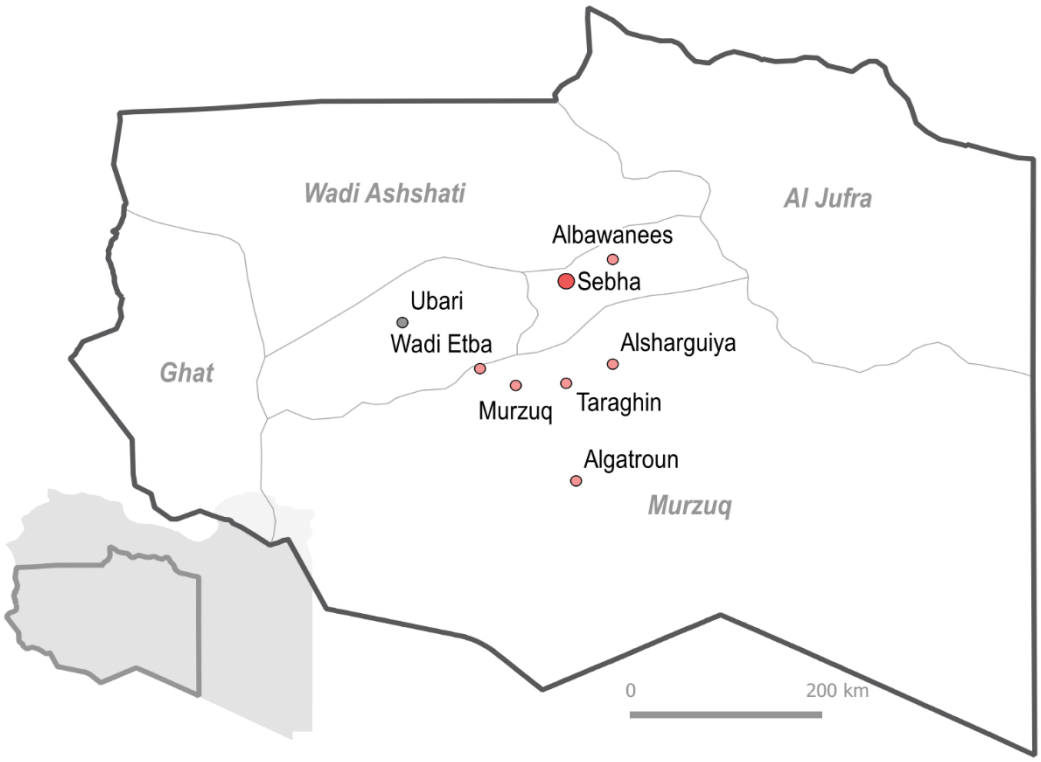
The findings of the assessment underline that access to social assistance programmes is likely to be more difficult in the Southern region of Libya, as also shown by the 2021 Libyan MSNA. Indeed, the South appears to experience more protection concerns, including movement restrictions, higher percentages of individuals without valid identification documents, higher percentages of households reporting feeling unsafe.[93] Findings from the 2021 Refugee and Migrant MSNA seem to triangulate these findings, with, for instance, higher food security needs reported in the South (67% of surveyed households in Sebha) compared to the rest of the country.[94] Findings from the 2021 Libyan population MSNA also outline more severe protection needs in the South with 33% of surveyed households

[93] REACH, Libyan Population MSNA 2021: Sectoral Findings, August 2021
[94] REACH, Refugee and Migrant Population MSNA 2021: Key Findings, January 2022

reporting having protection needs.[95] The greater barriers experienced by populations in the South when they try to register with social protection programmes appeared to be mainly due to a lack of financial and human means allocated to the MoSA and SSolF in this region, as mentioned by half of the service provider KIs (12/32). One KI explained that this causes long delays in the payment of the Basic Assistance and the Wife's and Children's Grant, leading vulnerable Libyan families to turn to humanitarian and foreign assistance to meet their needs instead.

The limited financial and human capital allocated to the MoSA and SSolF was most commonly reported by service provider KIs in Sebha, where the value of the grants seems to differ from Tripoli and Benghazi. Indeed, while a KI in Tripoli reported that the Emergency Assistance value can vary between 1,500 and 3,000 LYD, another KI, in Sebha, stated that beneficiaries cannot receive more than 1,000 LYD through this programme. This KI also highlighted that this lack of funding leads to the incapacity of the Sebha SSolF branch to provide grants to all the applicants to the Emergency Assistance and to the Basic Assistance (see Map 1).

Map 1: Geographic coverage of the SSolF's Fezzan branch (located in Sebha)



According to service provider KIs, this lack of budget is also affecting the outreach and the hiring of qualified staff in the MoSA and SSolF's offices in Sebha. While the Sebha SSolF branch covers all the municipalities of the Southern region (Fezzan), except for Ubari which has recently opened an office, the number of employees within this branch appears to be proportionally relatively lower than the numbers of staff in Benghazi (mantika) which includes several offices. Indeed, the Fezzan branch, located in Sebha, counted 637 employees in November 2021 (for an estimate of 447,000 inhabitants)[96], whereas there were 3,931 employees in Benghazi (for an estimate of 849,000 inhabitants).[97] The understaffing problem also seemed to emerge through the relatively high number of employees of the MoSA and SSolF in Sebha that had to postpone or cancel their interview with the assessment teams due to recurrent "work overload". Moreover, "understaffing" was reported as a barrier by an interviewed employee of the SSolF's Information and Documentation Department, which implies further delays in carrying out the verification process of applicants' information. The funding limitations are also impacting staff capacity

[95] REACH, Libyan population MSNA 2021: Key Findings, December 2021
[96] United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Libya population dataset per mantika and municipalities, 2020
[97] Facebook post on the SSolF's page, on November 18, 2021

building, as reported by the Administrative Control Authority report of 2016 which outlines a global phenomenon in Libya, across all the MoSA and SSolF branches.[98]

Alongside these challenges, the southern part of the country faces structural instability, notably due to governance issues and a lack of security (8/32). Indeed, local conflicts between various communities are prominent in the South, which experienced particular spikes of violence over 2011 to 2014.[99] According to a senior KI within the SSolF, the volatile security situation led to the closure of CRA and SSolF offices, notably in the city of Murzuq, which resulted in the delays or even interruption in the provision of cash and in-kind assistance, as well as in the hindered access to civil documentation for families in the region.

Other reported barriers to accessing social protection likely associated with the insecurity in the South were the risk of theft of in-kind assistance during transport to the different offices and distribution sites, which was noted by one service provider KI in Sebha, and considerable fuel shortages. Moreover, out of the 7 interviewed Libyan service users who reported experiencing delays in the benefit delivery due to 'movement difficulties (lack of transport, fuel shortage, etc.)', 6 were from Sebha.

The case of people of undetermined legal status (ULS)

In 1954, the Libyan administration conducted a national population census to generate the CRA, which, however, did not take into account the populations living in rural areas, especially in the South. A decade later, while local councils were responsible for updating the census lists, the nomadic population groups could not all register, since the majority were not able to provide a proof of birthplace and residence in Libya in line with Law No. 17 of 1954 regulating citizenship. Gaddafi's policies further left additional groups of people in the South with ULS, who were unacknowledged by the government and were never naturalised despite the regime's "pro-immigration" discourse.[100] Therefore, an estimated of 150-200,000 Libyans, and especially non-Arab minority groups such as Tebu and Twareg, fell outside the system and could not access civil documentation, such as family books and birth certificates. Although Gaddafi's regime encouraged immigration for temporary military services in exchange of a civil registration, people of ULS were never naturalised and recognised as Libyan citizens.[101] The establishment of the NIN system in 2013 further contributed to their exclusion as the NIN became the main proof of identity that authorities relied upon, and notably to access, social protection programmes as outlined by this research.

In the South, an estimated of 30% of the population is considered to be of ULS.[102] Indeed, people of ULS, who are often referred to as "returnees" in Arabic, were mentioned by some interviewed social workers (5/53) and Libyan service users (2/202) as one of the groups most likely to face barriers registering with social protection programmes. These populations face hurdles due to a lack of civil documentation, and especially of a NIN. The four IIs with Tebu and Twareg parents highlighted these groups' lack of access to all basic services as well, such as education and health services, as they all reported their need to benefit from education assistance (e.g. through payment of school fees) and health assistance to access medical treatments.

These challenges are furthered with the intersecting identities of individuals: for instance, a person with disabilities cannot access the SSolF's Basic Assistance and other state benefits provided to persons with disabilities as when they are not considered a national and lack the required documentation to register.[103] This case was illustrated by one of the interviewed Libyan service users from Sebha, who is a "returnee" and has a child with disabilities; this parent reported not being able to access any assistance programme due to a lack of NIN.

[98] Administrative Control Authority Annual Report for 2016, p.107 and p.109
[99] UNDP, Instability and Insecurity in Libya – Analysis, 2015
[100] Stocker, Valerie. 2019. Citizenship on hold: Undetermined legal status and implications for Libya's peace process, European Institute of Peace.
[101] *Ibid.*
[102] REACH 2021 Libyan population MSNA shows that 26% of households in the South reported household members without valid identification documents, which is higher than the national overall percentage.
[103] United States Institute of Peace, Contested Citizenship Marginalizes Libya's Vulnerable, May 27, 2021

Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter outlined the noteworthy bottlenecks and barriers faced by applicants when trying to register with social assistance programmes. Vulnerable population groups, such as persons with disabilities, children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers, children born out of wedlock and abandoned, and families living in displacement are reportedly more likely to face these hurdles, notably due to a lack of updated civil documentation and challenges to access registration offices. Liquidity shortages and administrative division within the country are also causes of delays in the registration or benefit delivery processes. These obstacles are reportedly more striking in the South of Libya, where a significant minority of the population is of ULS.

Eventually, findings indicated that migrant and refugee children are left out of national social assistance schemes, emphasizing the need for strengthening the efforts to make the current system more inclusive.

Based on these findings, and to strengthen efforts to facilitate the inclusion of non-national children in the social protection system, it is recommended to enforce the recent decree that amended the Libyan citizenship law, allowing Libyan women to pass on nationality to their children (Decree No. 322 of 2021). The enforcement of Article 3 of Law No. 27 of 2013 underpinning the Wife's and Children's Grant is also advised, in order to effectively cover children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers. Notably, it is recommended to consider the use of mass media campaigns targeting families with a Libyan woman and a non-Libyan spouse, to raise awareness about CRA's Database for Foreigners and the registration process.

Both agencies are also encouraged to work towards allowing more flexibility in the requirements for official documents to register, notably by allowing IDPs and returnees to rapidly obtain their identity and civil documentation, as well as allowing delays for these population groups to provide a proof of residence. Alongside this, the SSolF is encouraged to hold frequent and regular meetings of the medical committees nationwide, and it is recommended that all implementing agencies strengthen efforts to equip all medical facilities with qualified staff and adequate devices.

Finally, and particularly for the South, the MoSA and SSolF are advised to open more offices, hire more staff, and amend relevant legislation to allow children of ULS to use their administrative number to register with social assistance programmes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this assessment reflect the gaps in coverage and capacity of social assistance programmes targeting children and families in Libya. The research included a thorough analysis of the laws and policies that underping social protection, alongside an exploration of how social protection programmes run by the MoSA and SSolF function in practice. Following a secondary data review to identify the existing operational social assistance programmes in the country, primary data collection proceeded in two phases: the first phase involved KIIs with service providers from the two implementing bodies at the national level, as well as academics, researchers, and employees of the Ministry of Justice; while the second phase included KIIs with employees and social workers from the MoSA and SSolF at the municipal level, alongside IIs with Libyan service users, and KIIs with migrant and refugee community representatives. Together, these two data collections provided distinct and complementary perspectives.

In terms of legislation and policies, Libya is signatory to several international laws that recognise social protection as a universal child's right and core strategy for poverty reduction, critical risk management and particularly for supporting children and families. Moreover, the national legislation provides a comprehensive framework for a wide coverage of vulnerable population groups through social assistance schemes. Nonetheless, findings suggest that international treaties and national laws are seldom known and understood by interviewed staff of implementing agencies, at the regional and local level, leading to gaps in the enforcement of laws and implementation of policies in some areas.

The secondary data review helped identify three of the main social protection programmes targeting vulnerable families; the Basic Assistance run by the SSolF, the Wife's and Children's Grant managed by the MoSA, and the Emergency Assistance, also run by the SSolF. While the Basic Assistance and Wife's and Children's Grant have a wide coverage across Libya, the Emergency Assistance, comparatively has a much smaller scope.

Findings indicated strong and diversified means of outreach used by both the MoSA and the SSolF, as well as overall clear and well-established registration processes in the main cities of the country where data collection took place (Tripoli, Benghazi, Sebha). Applicants can go to the closest MoSA or SSolF offices to register, supported by social workers, and by providing a list of documentation and filling out an application form. The process appears to be comparatively easier for the Wife's and Children's Grant, as a considerable minority of beneficiaries were automatically enrolled in the system through the CRA database.

Nevertheless, findings also suggested several bottlenecks and barriers throughout the registration process, benefit delivery, and programme management. The assessment outlined that a lack of updated documentation, liquity shortages, as well as administrative division are main obstacles and challenges driving delays in the registration and benefit delivery processes. Findings also suggest that these challenges are more acute among the most marginalised groups, including IDPs and returnees, persons and children with disabilities, those living in remote areas, and illiterate applicants, due to limited access to information about social protection.

Moreover, while social workers appear to play a key role in supporting applicants, they reportedly lack capacity and skills in some MoSA and SSolF branches, particularly related to computer literacy. The latter might further be linked to the lack of a digital and standardised information management systems and grievance mechanisms, as findings suggest number of applications are overwhelmingly processed through paper-based files. This, in turn, has an impact on the verification mechanisms and benefit delivery, making the overall registration with social protection programmes a lenghty process.

Alongside this, access to social protection programmes is reportedly hindered for several vulnerable population groups, mainly because they are unable to provide the required documentation for registration. Findings suggest that families living in displacement, persons with disabilities, and children born out of wedlock and abandoned children are among the groups who are most likely to experience access barriers.

In particular, children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers, as well as children of Libyans of ULS in the South, face acute challenges and fall outside the system, as they currently cannot access the Libyan

citizenship in practice, which is the key eligibility criteria for all three assessed programmes. This is indeed also the case of migrant and refugee children who were found to be generally excluded from the social assistance system, both due to a limited integration into the legislative framework and lack of pathways to cover them in practice. The findings show that these families, facing multiple protection concerns, mainly rely on informal support from host communities.

Based on the findings, policy recommendations were jointly developed with UNICEF and UNHCR, and commissionned and endorsed by the MoSA and SSolF, to advocate for reform of the social protection system and legislation underpinning it in order to expand the coverage of existing programmes and strengthen linkages with current humanitarian efforts. The key recommendations cover the need for strengthening efforts of the MoSA and SSolF to amend and enforce laws to include non-national children, remove barriers for persons with disabilities and children born out of wedlock, and facilitate registration process for people living in displacement. Moreover, suggestions related to enhancing outreach and registration process, as well as to building clear grievance mechanisms and digital and integrated information management systems were included in the policy brief[104] which details all the recommendations.

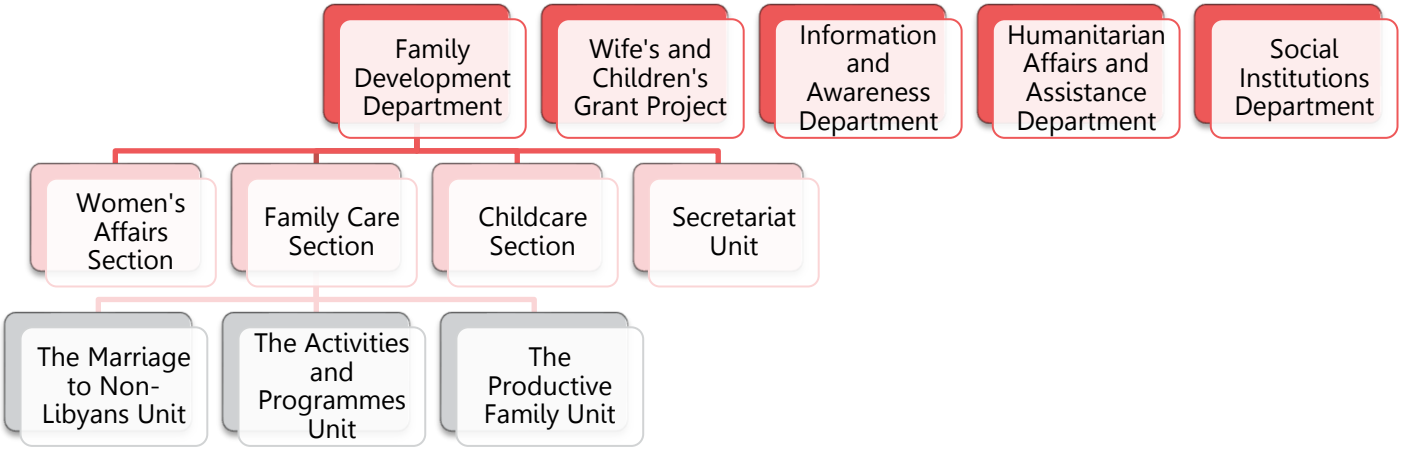
In light of the findings, further investigation could be done in other locations of Libya, and especially in marginalised areas in the South where there are less MoSA and SSolF offices, as well as in areas with large displaced populations (e.g. Misrata, Ejdabia)[105] and high-risk zones vulnerable to natural disasters (e.g. Ghat), to better understand the different gaps in coverage and barriers faced by applicants across the country. Moreover, both implementing institutions run other large-scale programmes targeting vulnerable families, which's efficiency and inclusivity would benefit from an investigation to further identify potential pathways to link humanitarian programming with the national social assistance system.

[104] The policy brief and all other publications for this assessment can be found here.
[105] IOM DTM, IDP and Returnee Report, Round 38, July – September 2021

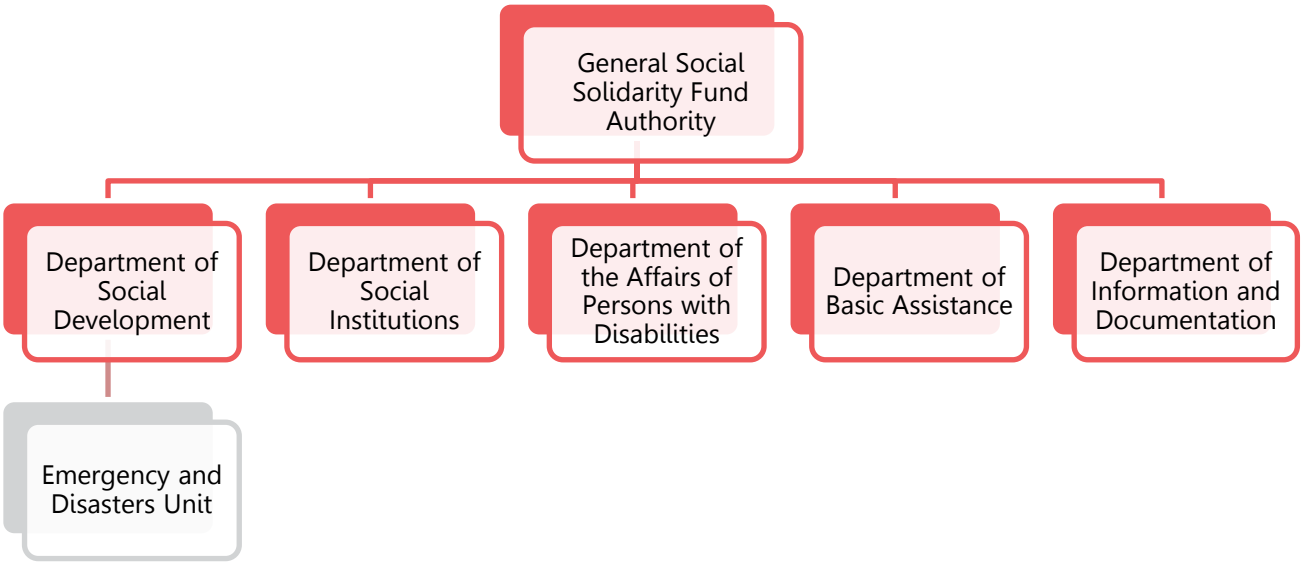
ANNEXES

Annex 1: MoSA and SSoIF organigrammes

MoSA organisational structure



SSoIF organisational structure



Annex 2: Key definitions relating to social protection

Social assistance

Social assistance is defined as the provision of benefits financed from the general revenue of the government rather than by individual contributions. Social assistance programmes are targeted at vulnerable individuals and families living under a defined threshold of income or assets (**means-tested**), or belonging to a certain category, such as children in the case of universal child allowanes (**categorical**).

Social safety nets

They are non-contributory transfer programmes that also targets poor population groups that are vulnerable to shocks and poverty. These safety nets can be provided by the government, but also through INGOs and NGOs, charities, private firms, and family or community.

Conditional cash transfer

A special form of social assistance scheme which provides cash to families subject to the condition that they fulfil specific requirements. This may include that parents must ensure their children attend school regularly or that they utilise basic preventative nutrition and health care services, such as vaccination programmes or maternal and post-natal check-ups.[106]

[106] ILO, World Social Protection Report: Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals", 2017-19