

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES



Photo: Bjayanna Hadaway

# Migration, Displacement and Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Eastern Caribbean

Daniel Longhurst and Elisaveta Gouretskaia



World Food Programme



Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States



One Community - Growing Together

December 2021

**This report has been produced by the World Food Programme in cooperation with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States.**

Reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product for educational or other non-commercial uses are authorized without any prior written permission from the copyright holder provided the source is fully acknowledged. Reproduction of material in this information product for resale or other commercial purposes is prohibited without written permission. Applications for such permission should be addressed to the Director, Communications, Advocacy and Marketing

Division e-mail: [wfp.publications@wfp.org](mailto:wfp.publications@wfp.org).

**© World Food Programme 2021. All Rights Reserved.**

ISBN 978-92-95050-14-3

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

# FOREWORD

# Foreword

The unprecedented socio-economic crisis caused by COVID-19 has moved social protection into the spotlight of policymakers, highlighting the role that it can play in mitigating the impact of such large-scale shocks. OECS countries have used social protection in response to shocks since the early 2000s.

It is common for people in the Eastern Caribbean to move to other countries due to natural hazards or for job opportunities, yet migrants do not always have access to social protection programmes. Climate-related migration and displacement are becoming increasing concerns for Caribbean Small Island Developing States. As such, displacement and migration are vital issues to be considered by social protection policymakers.

The World Food Programme (WFP) and the OECS Commission have partnered to produce this study on Migration, Displacement and Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Eastern Caribbean, which is both necessary and timely. This study builds on WFP Caribbean's broader research on countries' use of social protection in times of shock, which includes a series of national case studies and regional reports

A study of this kind provides a truly unique opportunity to explore options for strengthening national systems and policy frameworks in the OECS, backed by a strong regional arrangement with protocols for freedom of movement, a common currency and central bank, and a commitment by governments and people to assist each other in times of crisis. It is hoped that this research can be used as an advocacy and policy tool to contribute to addressing challenges at the intersection of social protection, migration and displacement in the context of shocks.



**Regis Chapman**  
Head of Office  
WFP Caribbean Multi-Country Office



**Carlene Radix (Dr), MD, MPH**  
Head of Human and Social Division  
Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission

# About the World Food Programme

Assisting 115.5 million people in 84 countries, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is the leading humanitarian organisation saving lives and changing lives, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.

In 2018, WFP re-established its presence in the Caribbean with an office in Barbados. The Multi-Country Office supports 22 countries and territories across the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> WFP Caribbean's programme focuses on vulnerability analysis and mapping, end-to-end supply chain management, shock-responsive social protection, food systems strengthening, and climate risk financing. WFP adopts a systems-focused approach as part of its capacity strengthening programme through research and advocacy, digitalization, human resource development, south-south engagement, and by investing in critical infrastructure and assets. In times of crisis, WFP works with partners to provide direct assistance when events surpass national and regional capacities. These investments place the most vulnerable people at the centre of efforts to minimize the combined impacts of climate, pandemic and economic shocks in the Caribbean.

## About the OECS

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is an International Inter-governmental Organisation dedicated to regional integration in the Eastern Caribbean.

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States came into being on June 18th 1981, with the Treaty of Basseterre, named in honour of the capital city of Saint Kitts and Nevis where it was signed. The 1981 Treaty was replaced in 2010 with a Revised Treaty of Basseterre, creating an economic union of the seven original Member States. The revised treaty established a single financial and economic space where goods, people and capital move freely. The OECS is now an eleven-member grouping comprising of the Protocol Member States of Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, The Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Associate Member States of The Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Martinique and Guadeloupe. The countries of the OECS continue to adopt a common approach to trade, health, education, social protection and the environment, as well as the development of critical sectors such as agriculture, tourism and energy and responses to environmental and economic shocks to which the Small Island States of the region are prone.

The OECS Commission is led by the Director General with one Commissioner of Ambassadorial rank from each Member Country. The OECS Commission is located on Morne Fortune, Castries, Saint Lucia. The Commission's functions include the provision of Secretariat services to the Organs of the Organisation, coordinating meetings of these Organs and acting on decisions, recommendations or directives approved at such meetings.

### World Food Programme

Caribbean Multi-Country Office  
UN House, Marine Gardens  
Barbados

Tel: +1 246 467 6085  
Email: [wfp.barbados@wfp.org](mailto:wfp.barbados@wfp.org)  
Website: [www.wfp.org/countries/caribbean](http://www.wfp.org/countries/caribbean)

Twitter: [@WFP](https://twitter.com/WFP)  
Facebook: [@WorldFoodProgramme](https://www.facebook.com/WorldFoodProgramme)  
YouTube: [@World Food Programme](https://www.youtube.com/WorldFoodProgramme)

### Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

Headquarters  
Morne Fortune, P.O. Box 179, Castries  
Saint Lucia

Tel: +1 758-455-6327 / +1 758-452 2194  
Email: [oeecs@oeecs.int](mailto:oeecs@oeecs.int)  
Website: [www.oeecs.org](http://www.oeecs.org)

Twitter: [@oeecscommission](https://twitter.com/oeecscommission)  
Facebook: [@OECSCommission](https://www.facebook.com/OECSCommission)  
YouTube: [oeecstv](https://www.youtube.com/oeecstv)

<sup>1</sup> Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Curacao, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Republic of Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the Virgin Islands

# Acknowledgements

This report, produced by WFP in collaboration with the OECS, is part of WFP's research on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean, which aims to generate evidence and inform practice for improved emergency preparedness and response linked to social protection systems. All case studies and research products can be found at [www.wfp.org/publications/study-shock-responsive-social-protection-caribbean](http://www.wfp.org/publications/study-shock-responsive-social-protection-caribbean).

This report draws from secondary literature and from interviews conducted with stakeholders within the OECS and in OECS Member States. The authors sincerely appreciate the many individuals from the OECS, national governments and NGOs who participated in interviews and consultations. The authors would like to thank Nicholas Grainger (WFP Caribbean) and Shari Inniss-Grant (WFP Caribbean) for their support to the research. Special thanks are also extended to Sarah Bailey and Francesca Ciardi (WFP Caribbean) for their guidance, support and contributions to the research, and to the individuals at the OECS Commission who provided feedback on this report.

This report was produced with support from the Joint SDG Fund for Universal Adaptive Social Protection in Barbados, Saint Lucia and the OECS. The Joint Programme contributes to reducing poverty and inequality and strengthening people's resilience through adaptive and universal social protection based on integrated policy development, programme design and service delivery.

WFP also expresses its gratitude to the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations and the United States Agency for International Development for their support.

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of WFP, its partners or donors. Responsibility for any inaccuracy rests solely with the authors.

**This report is available at the following link and QR Code:**

[www.wfp.org/publications/study-shock-responsive-social-protection-caribbean](http://www.wfp.org/publications/study-shock-responsive-social-protection-caribbean)



# Executive Summary

With the frequency and intensity of climate-related shocks expected to worsen in the Caribbean, governments, international financial institutions and development partners are focusing on the role that social protection can play in addressing needs and reducing the risks posed by large-scale shocks. Making social protection more responsive to these shocks helps ensure continuity of social protection programmes when disasters and shocks occur, respond to additional demand for benefits and services, and build resilience in the longer term by promoting wellbeing. While the term ‘shock-responsive social protection’ is new, Caribbean governments have been using social protection programmes and systems to respond to disasters and economic shocks since the mid-2000s, including in response to COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>

Migration is an integral part of the history and identity of the Caribbean. For Caribbean small island states, understanding the opportunities and challenges of using social protection in response to shocks also requires understanding the linkages with migration and displacement. If people leave a disaster-affected country and move to another one in the region, what are their entitlements to social protection? Can migrants living in a country that experiences a disaster access assistance provided through social protection systems, or are other options needed to assist them? When shocks lead to increased numbers of people in need of support, what financing options are available to governments?

This report, produced by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in collaboration with the OECS Commission, looks at issues of migration, displacement and social protection in the context of covariate shocks in the Eastern Caribbean. Building on the opportunities and challenges identified, the report offers recommendations to help strengthen migrants’ access to social protection, with a focus on improving the management of risks posed to people by natural hazards and economic shocks.

## Social protection policies and programmes in the context of migration, displacement and covariate shocks

Migration in the Eastern Caribbean is shaped by the broader process of regional integration and governed by the institutions and policies that underpin this process. With the establishment of the Eastern Caribbean Economic Union (ECEU) and the larger CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), free movement regimes have been put in place that allow for the movement of people between Member States at varying degrees. The ECEU allows for full free movement of people while the CSME allows for free movement of CARICOM Skilled Nationals.<sup>2</sup>

Since the establishment of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) in 1973 and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in 1981, several policy instruments have been adopted at the regional level to ensure the harmonised provision of social protection across countries and to secure social protection benefits for people moving under the regional free movement regimes. The main regional policy measures have focused on the portability of social security benefits, meaning the transferability of acquired rights across countries, and on contingent rights, which are specific rights granted to OECS citizens and their spouses and dependents who exercise their right to free movement within the framework of the ECEU or the CSME.

At OECS level, contingent rights are granted under the Protocol of Eastern Caribbean Economic Union and articulated in the ‘OECS Policy on Rights Contingent on the Right to Freedom of Movement within the Economic Union (2015)’. According to the policy, citizens from OECS Protocol Member States moving to another country within the ECEU enjoy equal rights and privileges as citizens of the host Protocol Member State, including access to social security, social safety nets such as cash advances and labour market schemes, health care, as well as

<sup>1</sup> For an overview of regional experiences, challenges and opportunities see [Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean: Synthesis Report](#) (WFP/OPM, 2020)

<sup>2</sup> The term CARICOM Skilled Nationals refers to certain categories of CARICOM nationals with specific professional or academic qualifications who are permitted to seek employment in another Member State under Article 46 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. A CARICOM national who falls within one of the approved categories of skills and wishes to seek employment in another Member State must apply for a CARICOM Certificate of Recognition of Skills Qualification (CARICOM Skills Certificate).



primary and secondary education, including related government assistance, bursaries and scholarships. While Protocol Member States have already made efforts to partially implement the policy, additional legislation is required at the national level. To this end, the OECS Commission has developed a draft model bill that, if adopted by Protocol Member States, will give full effect to all arrangements for the issuance of contingent rights. At the level of CARICOM, the signing of the CARICOM Protocol on Contingent Rights by all CSME participating states in 2019 has paved the way for national processes of ratification that would give effect to the Protocol's provisions, though concerns have been raised that states with more extensive social protection systems could face disproportionate costs.

Regarding the portability of social security benefits, the CARICOM Agreement on Social Security (1997) is the principal agreement in the region, signed by 13 states, including all OECS Protocol Member States. The agreement, which applies to long-term social security benefits such as old-age and disability benefits, aims to ensure that social security entitlements earned in one country are maintained regardless of changes in the insured person's country of residence. By allowing insured persons to aggregate their social security contributions made in different countries, the agreement makes it easier for persons who live and work in different countries to meet eligibility requirements in terms of minimum contributions in a single country.

These regional policy instruments provide a solid foundation for the provision of social protection to people moving within the region. However, a number of gaps remain, both in the scope of these policies and their implementation at the national level, which limit access to social protection benefits for migrants and for people displaced across countries in the context of a covariate shock, such as a natural disasters or economic crisis. Such shocks can increase the existing vulnerabilities of migrants and result in cross-border displacement, placing an additional strain on national social protection systems. Yet, regional social protection policy

documents have paid limited attention to the potential impact of covariate shocks. The OECS Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategy (2021-2030) represents an important shift, as it promotes universal and adaptive social protection, with a view to addressing increased needs and vulnerabilities caused by climate-related and other shocks.

The unprecedented crisis caused by COVID-19 has highlighted the role that social protection can play in mitigating the impact of economic shocks, prompting all governments in the Caribbean to adopt social protection measures. Various governments in the OECS, including Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis, introduced social protection programmes that offered support to non-nationals. COVID-19 has unequivocally demonstrated the importance of making social protection more responsive in the face of future shocks. In doing so, it is critical to consider the particular challenges posed by migration and displacement.

## Linking shock-responsive social protection and migration: Gaps and challenges

To identify entry points for strengthening shock-responsive social protection in a manner that includes a migration and displacement lens, it is important to consider gaps related to regional and national policies, protocols and programmes. These include the need for a formalised regional approach to migration and displacement in the OECS, as well the extent to which migration is addressed within social protection policies, programmes and coverage at the national level.

Migrants seeking social protection support are faced with a number of eligibility and access issues that policymakers need to take into account when considering whether and how social protection programmes and schemes might support them in the event of a disaster or economic shock. The regional social protection framework secures certain benefits for migrants in the context of the free movement regimes. However, due to the limited

scope and coverage of these agreements, access to social protection is constrained for non-nationals, including for displaced persons and migrants living in a country that is affected by a shock. For example, OECS Associate Member States are not part of the ECEU or CSME, and consequently regional provisions for contingent rights and for the portability of social security benefits do not apply to them. Likewise, many migrants are employed in the informal sector – including tourism – which means that they do not have access to social security benefits, although their precarious employment situation makes them particularly vulnerable to the impact of economic crises and other shocks.

Nationals from OECS Protocol Member States who live in another Protocol Member State have the same rights to social protection as nationals, as articulated in the OECS Policy on Rights Contingent on the Right to Freedom of Movement within the Economic Union. However, there are several challenges associated with operationalizing these rights at the national level, including concerns that countries with more generous social welfare programmes could be disproportionately burdened. Governments of OECS Member States have long acknowledged the challenges in providing social protection to non-nationals, resulting from a combination of factors including limited resources and capacity of programmes to scale up, legal provisions that preclude support to non-nationals, and political sensitivity around providing assistance to non-nationals.

In most OECS Member States, eligibility for social assistance programmes requires citizenship or an official residence status, and a specified minimum duration of residence. In some countries, these criteria are enshrined in legislation, while in others there are operational requirements that in practice do not allow non-citizens to qualify. There are also examples where programmes primarily target nationals but where social assistance is also provided to non-citizens on a discretionary basis. In the context of shocks, such limitations mean that either alternative forms of support are needed, or specific

measures put in place to ensure support for migrants.

Despite legal or policy restrictions on access to social protection, there is a general consensus among government stakeholders in the region that emergencies warrant the provision of assistance to all persons in need regardless of their nationality or residence status. However, most countries have not integrated considerations on migration and displacement into their social protection and disaster risk management policies. While several countries in the region have used social protection to meet the needs of migrants and displaced persons in the case of shocks and disaster, examples are often small in scale. Governments are likely to face more significant challenges in the event of larger numbers of people being displaced and needing assistance, or in displacement situations where the regional free movement regimes do not apply.

People who are displaced to a different country in a disaster face specific difficulties and protection risks, which are particularly concerning for women, unaccompanied minors and persons from LGBTQI community. The Caribbean constitutes a direct migration corridor from Latin America to North America, for migrants from within and outside the Caribbean, which provides the conditions and incentives for human trafficking and for unregulated and illegal employment and exploitation. The impacts of shocks increase the risks to vulnerable groups from traffickers and can lead to generalised violence and abuse, making it difficult to address these issues, especially when people are moving across borders as a result of a shock. However, legislation and policy measures such as anti-trafficking laws remain incomplete, and the capacity to enforce laws is limited.

In the context of a shock, coordination among immigration, social protection and disaster management authorities is crucial to effectively track, assess, and refer people displaced across countries to adequate services and provide support to them. However, most Caribbean countries are yet to

incorporate provisions for mass displacement in their disaster risk management plans and strategies. Cross-departmental protocols for responding to displacement events have not yet been established, which means that coordination is done on an ad hoc basis. In some countries, institutional links between the disaster risk management and social protection sectors are strong, since social protection ministries and staff are tasked with specific relief responsibilities as part of national disaster risk management plans. However, links with immigration authorities are generally lacking, and in most countries, national emergency committees do not include representatives from immigration departments.

Policies and programmes to address the impacts of covariate shocks in a more integrated manner would greatly benefit from a more complete data and information picture. Yet, data availability and management related to migration remains a major challenge in the region. Accurate and comprehensive data on migrants is not generally available and capacities to collect such data are often limited. Whilst an increasing amount of information is being collected by governments and international organisations, sharing, managing and effectively translating data into policy and programme design remains a challenge. Most governments do not have a social registry or inter-operability across databases, which makes it difficult to have a comprehensive picture of who is benefiting from which programmes overall. The OECS is actively addressing some of the broad challenges around data and social protection through its Human and Social Protection Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which is pursuing recommendations for improving data management to optimise social protection support for vulnerable groups.

Developing appropriate and flexible financing mechanisms is key for scaling up social protection in response to a shock. Countries in the OECS face a 'double bind' when it comes to financing social protection and responding to shocks. While they are highly vulnerable in terms of the per-capita and

national impact from shocks on economies, their status as upper- middle or high-income countries or overseas territories means many cannot access Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) or concessional financing, and high debt to GDP ratios, make access to concessional lending a challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of social protection as both a responsive and protective mechanism, yet governments are faced with hard decisions around which programmes to fund and scale up in the context of a global economic downturn brought about by COVID-19. Given that the picture of migrants' social protection needs is unclear, it is difficult to assess the financial implications of enhancing their access to social protection.

## Opportunities and lessons learned

Incorporating a displacement and migration angle into shock-responsive social protection requires the development and implementation of standards, plans, programmes, strategies that incorporate the needs and challenges facing migrants, as well as appropriate institutional arrangements and capacity to implement them. The use of social protection in response to COVID-19 offers an opportunity to build on good recent practices and emerging lessons to strengthen social protection systems in preparation for covariate shocks and to explore how such efforts can incorporate considerations on migrants and people displaced by a shock. In developing programmes and policies, due consideration must be given to cross-cutting issues such as gender, age and disability, as well as the various forms of migration and displacement, to ensure that measures address the diverse needs, vulnerabilities and constraints of different groups.

Some of the key opportunities in strengthening shock-responsive social protection and its linkages with migration are summarized in the following pages.

## Building policy coherence for comprehensive migration management and social protection

The drafting of the OECS Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategy (2021-2030) provides an excellent opportunity for strengthening shock-responsive social protection and enhancing linkages to comprehensive migration management at the regional level. Particular attention could be given to the provision of non-contributory social assistance as it focuses on assisting the most vulnerable and holds significant potential for scalability in times of shocks, in addition to being an area where access for non-nationals appears the most limited. In this context, the development of strategy has provided the basis for reviewing, revising, or developing much needed protocols and action plans for migration and displacement events, and for ensuring that they incorporate links to social protection.

## Strengthening institutional capacity and cross-coordination

Implementing migration-sensitive policies around emergency management requires the ability to coordinate effectively, both across government departments and from the central government to the local level. Developing inter-ministerial committees on migration, as implemented in some countries with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), can support coherent visioning, policy guidance and action plans in working towards a whole-of-government approach to migration that include social protection as a core component. Likewise, ensuring that inter-ministerial emergency management committees include representatives from immigration and social development/protection authorities, can assist with clarifying roles and responsibilities and improve coordination, communication and collaboration. Part of the formalisation may include developing standard operating procedures (SOPs), protocols and tools for different elements of disaster risk management and shock-responsive social protection that are inclusive of a migration and displacement dimension.

## Improving data and enhancing information management

When it comes to migration and its links to social protection, data is the cornerstone for improved policy and programme design and decisions on resource allocation. Given the limited quantitative data on migration in the region, core data collection on migration in combination with more qualitative research on migrants' experiences will provide a more comprehensive picture of migration and displacement, including the implications for social protection needs in the context of a disaster. The OECS is already investing in enhanced data collection and analysis on the links between climate change, disasters and migration, including through the 'Regional Dialogue to Address Human Mobility and Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean' launched in October 2021. In addition to data collection, there is also an opportunity to learn from the experiences of countries that have established data-sharing protocols and agreements for social protection to produce standardised guidelines and identify how such data-sharing mechanisms could be extended to migration management actors. The OECS has prioritised improving data collection and management as part of its Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategy (2021-2030), which provides an optimal starting point for building capacity in data management, developing minimum data quality conventions and improving the interoperability of systems in the region.

## Addressing the interface between border control, data capture and social protection referral

In the context of a shock, the interface between border control, data capture and social protection referral is crucial to effectively track, assess, and provide support to people displaced across countries. The issue of border management has gained added relevance due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent border closures, highlighting priorities such as the need to implement a regional approach to irregular migration, combat

human trafficking, create a comprehensive border management system linking states across the Caribbean, and improve inter-agency mechanisms for sharing locally collected data. Initiatives in this area could create a 'win win' for improving the information picture on migration and helping countries better adapt their support to migrants, including through links to social protection. These issues are also of great importance in the case of disasters, which can lead to the displacement of people across national borders, overwhelming the capacities of border authorities. Establishing systematized data collection, assessments and referral mechanisms at ports of entry would allow to target and provide support, including social protection.

## Leveraging the diaspora and returning nationals

Global experience shows that migrants can play a key role in disaster response by contributing their financial resources, networks, skills and knowledge. National governments and regional actors in the Caribbean can build on this emerging evidence to explore how they can best leverage the Caribbean diaspora and returning nationals to support disaster planning, response and recovery, and to enhance social protection responses to shocks. Facilitating discussions and consultations among relevant stakeholders, such as the first regional dialogue on diaspora engagement in the Caribbean in Grenada in 2019, represents a first step to identify specific activities of diaspora engagement for shock preparedness and response. Initiatives in this area also provide an opportunity to collect insightful data on migration and remittance flows as well as on migrants' social protection needs.

## Exploring innovative disaster risk financing for shock-responsive social protection

Scaling up social protection programmes and systems to meet increased needs following a shock requires flexible financing instruments, and specific regional solutions may be required for scenarios where cross-border displacement after a shock

places a financial burden on the host country. Disaster risk financing instruments already existing in the Caribbean include the weather-indexed insurance programmes CRAIC and CCRIF SPC<sup>3</sup>, and the Catastrophe Draw-Down Options (CAT-DDOs) from the World Bank. Linking disaster risk financing to social protection is a subject gaining traction in the Caribbean, yet this area offers significant growth potential. Working around data-driven, needs-based approaches can help ensure the inclusion of migrants in disaster risk financing planning when it is linked to social protection systems.

The following pages provide regional and country-level recommendations for strengthening shock-responsive social protection with a focus on migration and displacement in the OECS.

## Recommendations

### Policies and institutions

#### Country-level recommendations:

- **Develop an inter-ministerial/inter-agency committee on migration**, building on country experiences from the region, to support a coherent vision, policy guidelines, and action plans on migration, and to work toward a whole-of-government approach to migration that includes social protection as a core component.
- **Ensure that SOPs and similar documents for disaster risk management include the issues of migration, displacement, referral mechanisms to social protection, or develop such documents where they are missing**, building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 response.
- **Assess relevant national legislation and policies to identify legal barriers that may restrict the access of non-nationals to social protection**, including in emergency situations, and explore policy options to ensure improved access for migrants and displaced persons in emergencies, with due consideration for the rights articulated in the OECS Contingent Rights Policy.

<sup>3</sup> The 'Improving Access to Insurance among Vulnerable Individuals through the Climate Risk Adaptation and Insurance in the Caribbean' (CRAIC), and the 'Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility Segregated Portfolio Company' (CCRIF SPC)

- **Facilitate consultations among relevant stakeholders to identify opportunities for diaspora engagement** for shock preparedness and response, building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing efforts in regional diaspora mapping.
- **Establish linkages among national disaster risk management, immigration, and social protection/development ministries** to improve coordination and cooperation on displacement in disasters, including referral of displaced persons to social protection services, for example through inter-ministerial emergency management committees.
- **Review, revise, or develop protocols and action plans** for mass migration/displacement events to ensure they include considerations on social protection.

#### Regional recommendations:

- **Enhance the OECS Social Protection and Social Inclusion policy** by adding a migration and displacement perspective. Build on this process, support a review of national social protection and disaster risk management policies to highlight recommendations related to migrants and their access to social protection, particularly in the context of displacement.
- **Mainstream migration into social development at OECS level.** In this process, create a dialogue with relevant stakeholders such as the OECS Human and Social Protection Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Economic Union Working Group on Movement of Persons (EUWGMOP) and national inter-ministerial migration committees. Use this process to promote a joint regional approach to the management of displacement resulting from shocks, including its implications for national social protection systems.
- **Ensure that consideration is given to social protection** as protocols for displacement are developed at the regional level. This process could take advantage of the work of national inter-

ministerial migration committees and other nationally developed tools.

- **Facilitate regional consultations among relevant stakeholders to identify opportunities and activities for diaspora engagement for shock preparedness and response**, building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Data and information management

#### Country-level recommendations:

- **Engage social protection ministries and disaster risk management agencies to identify gaps and needs** related to disaggregated data on migrants that would help inform migrant-sensitive policies and actions related to shock preparedness and response.
- **Develop standardized tools for registering persons displaced by shocks** upon arrival in the country and for assessing needs and ensuring referral to social protection and other services. Involve relevant government and non-government actors in this process.

#### Regional recommendations:

- **Discuss the disaggregated data needs for migrants**, including both core quantitative demographic data, as well as data to understand migrant origin/destination, and supporting a better understanding of intersectional needs and vulnerability. Identify and map key data sources held at country level that could contribute to a better data picture.
- Building on the recommendations of the OECS Human and Social Protection Technical Advisory Committee, **create and test a harmonised approach to data collection** for migrants in the event of covariate shocks.

## Programmes and delivery systems

### Country-level recommendations:

- Building on existing evidence and experience, **map financial, human and material capacity gaps of frontline workers**, including social protection service providers, in regard to managing migration and displacement around disasters.
- **Implement sensitization campaigns for migrants and vulnerable groups** with a focus on areas such as legal protections and rights, the right to access social services and education, including specialized services such as medical care, legal assistance and psychological services.
- **Involve migrants in disaster planning and implementation**, including at the local level to ensure that emergency plans and systems are migrant-sensitive.

### Regional recommendations:

- **Facilitate a discussion on a standardised methodology and process to support the integration and referral of migrants/displaced persons into national social protection systems.** Map country level experience in integrating migrants into national social protection programmes, with a particular focus on support provided around disasters, with a view to moving from discretionary to systematised approaches.
- In parallel to discussions around harmonising databases and creating a regional approach to data sharing and a regional database, **review the capacity of existing beneficiary databases**, such as those for social assistance, **to integrate migrants**, and how to link these programmes and databases through referral methodologies.

## Financing

### Country-level recommendations:

- **Ensure a comprehensive approach to financing social protection to meet regular needs and address shocks** when they arise. Explore financing options and strategies that could support the provision of assistance to migrants linked to social protection.

### Regional recommendations:

- **Enhance policy dialogue around the establishment of disaster risk financing policies and strategies** at national and regional level and develop financial protection policies and instruments against interconnected risks.
- **Build the evidence base around the cost-benefit of using social protection systems to deliver assistance for shocks.**
- **Develop policy options to support remittances from the diaspora**, including through measures focused on reducing the transfer cost of remittances, and provide relevant guidance to national governments.
- **Adopt financing options to support the provision of social protection to migrants**, for example through international donors and international agencies with relevant mandates.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



# Table of Contents

Foreword .....	iii
About the World Food Programme .....	iv
About the OECS .....	iv
Acknowledgements .....	vi
Executive Summary .....	vii
Table of Contents .....	xv
Tables and Figures.....	xvi
Acronyms .....	xix
<b>Introduction and Key Concepts.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Migration in the Caribbean.....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	6
1.2 SHOCKS, VULNERABILITIES AND RISKS .....	7
1.3 NATURAL HAZARDS, ECONOMIC SHOCKS AND MIGRATION .....	9
1.4 MIGRATION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION .....	11
<b>2. The regional institutional framework in the context of migration, disasters and social protection.....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND FREE MOVEMENT REGIMES .....	14
2.1.1 ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES (OECS) .....	14
2.1.2 THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM).....	15
2.2 FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS REGIMES IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN .....	15
2.2.1 EASTERN CARIBBEAN ECONOMIC UNION (ECEU) .....	15
2.2.2 CARIBBEAN SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY .....	16
2.3 REGIONAL DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT .....	16
2.4 SOCIAL PROTECTION.....	17
<b>3. Social protection policies and programmes in the context of migration .....</b>	<b>19</b>
3.1 OVERVIEW OF POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL .....	20
3.1.1 HARMONISATION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES .....	20
3.1.2 PORTABILITY OF SOCIAL PROTECTION BENEFITS .....	21
3.1.3 CONTINGENT RIGHTS.....	22
3.2 OVERVIEW OF POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL .....	24
3.2.1 ACCESS TO SOCIAL ASSISTANCE .....	24
3.2.2 SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESPONSES TO COVID-19 .....	27
<b>4. Gaps and challenges with regard to migrants' access to social protection.....</b>	<b>29</b>
4.1 POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS .....	30
4.1.1 ELIGIBILITY AND ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR NON-NATIONALS .....	30
4.2 INTERFACE BETWEEN IMMIGRATION, DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION .....	31
4.3 DATA AVAILABILITY AND MANAGEMENT .....	32
4.4 PERCEPTIONS AND PREJUDICE .....	33
4.5 PROTECTION ISSUES AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING .....	34

4.6 FREE MOVEMENT VERSUS BORDER CONTROL .....	34
4.7 GENDER ISSUES SURROUNDING MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT .....	35
4.8 FINANCING FOR SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION .....	36
4.9 THE SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT FROM COVID-19 .....	38
<b>5. Opportunities and lessons learned .....</b>	<b>41</b>
5.1 BUILDING POLICY COHERENCE FOR COMPREHENSIVE MIGRATION MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION.....	42
5.2 LEARNING FROM COUNTRY EXPERIENCE .....	42
5.3. EXPLORING OPTIONS OF SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION .....	43
5.4. STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND CROSS-SECTORAL COORDINATION.....	43
5.5 IMPROVING DATA AND ENHANCING INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.....	44
5.6 EXPLORING INNOVATIVE DISASTER RISK FINANCING FOR SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION .....	45
5.7 ADDRESSING THE INTERFACE BETWEEN BORDER CONTROL, DATA CAPTURE AND SOCIAL PROTECTION REFERRAL .....	47
5.8 LEVERAGING THE DIASPORA AND RETURNING NATIONALS.....	48
<b>6. Recommendations .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Annex A. List of interviewees .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Annex B. Research questions .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Annex C. Glossary .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Annex D. Social protection responses to COVID-19 in OECS countries .....</b>	<b>75</b>

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

# TABLES AND FIGURES

# Tables and Figures

## Tables

TABLE 1: ELIGIBILITY FOR SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES FOR NON-NATIONALS IN A SAMPLE OF OECS MEMBER STATES ..... 25

TABLE 2: IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN SELECTED ISLAND STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN ..... 37

## Figures

FIGURE 1: TOP 20 COUNTRIES OF EMIGRATION IN 2019 (IN % OF TOTAL POPULATION) .....6

FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF DISASTERS IN THE CARIBBEAN REGION, 1980-2016 .....7

FIGURE 3: POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LINE.....8

FIGURE 4: AVERAGE ANNUAL DISPLACEMENT RELATIVE TO POPULATION SIZE (NUMBER OF PEOPLE DISPLACED PER 100,000 INHABITANTS).....9

FIGURE 5: MEMBER STATES OF THE OECS ..... 14

FIGURE 6: MEMBER STATES OF THE OECS, ECCU AND CARICOM ..... 15

FIGURE 7: GDP GROWTH PROJECTIONS FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 2020 ..... 38

# ACRONYMS

# Acronyms

<b>ACS</b>	Association of Caribbean States
<b>CARICOM</b>	Caribbean Community
<b>CASS</b>	CARICOM Agreement on Social Security
<b>CAT-DDO</b>	Catastrophe Draw-Down Option
<b>CCRIF SPC</b>	Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility Segregated Portfolio Company
<b>CDB</b>	Caribbean Development Bank
<b>CDEMA</b>	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
<b>CERC</b>	Contingency Emergency Response Component
<b>CRRF</b>	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
<b>CSME</b>	CARICOM Single Market & Economy
<b>DRM</b>	Disaster Risk Management
<b>ECCB</b>	Eastern Caribbean Central Bank
<b>ECLAC</b>	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>ECEU</b>	Eastern Caribbean Economic Union
<b>EUWGMOP</b>	Economic Union Working Group on Movement of Persons
<b>GCR</b>	Global Compact on Refugees
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>IMPACS</b>	Implementation Agency for Crime and Security
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>MCOF</b>	Migration Crisis Operational Framework
<b>MCIC</b>	Migrants in Countries of Crisis
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organisation
<b>ODA</b>	Overseas Development Assistance
<b>OECS</b>	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
<b>OSPTC</b>	OECS Social Protection Technical Committee
<b>PAP</b>	Public Assistance Programme
<b>SOPs</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>TAC</b>	OECS Human and Social Protection Technical Advisory Committee
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar

# INTRODUCTION AND KEY CONCEPTS



# Introduction and Key Concepts

Migration has shaped the history and identity of the Caribbean. Today the region is a place of origin, transit, and destination for regular and irregular migrants. Many families have a history of transnational movements that facilitate and sustain migration trends through cross-boundary familial ties and livelihoods.

The interface between covariate shocks - that is, shocks that affect large numbers of people simultaneously - and mass migration or displacement is pronounced in the Caribbean. Member States of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) are particularly exposed due to their geographic location within the Atlantic hurricane belt, and also face a variety of other natural hazards including floods, landslides, droughts and occasional volcanic eruptions (UNDP, 2011). These hazards intersect with structural challenges and constraints shared by most, if not all, Member States. These include: high levels of poverty and public debt, small and open economies dependent on agriculture and tourism, heavy dependence on foreign trade, and limited fiscal space for public spending - which limits countries' capacities to manage these risks (IOM, 2017; Barca et al., 2019; CAB, 2020). As climate change exacerbates these pressures, compounded by other shocks such as COVID-19, the need to reinforce regional and national capacities to mitigate, respond to and manage disasters and address multidimensional vulnerabilities more comprehensively has become an urgent priority.

Demonstrating the multiple drivers of migration is not easy, and discussions around the connection between migration and climate change remain politically sensitive. While the number of global migrants and forcibly displaced has risen to their highest levels on record, international law does not yet provide a governing framework for climate-induced migration, creating an important protection gap for cross-border climate migrants. However, a large body of literature now clearly shows the links

between human mobility and disasters, including the increasing impacts of climate-related events in Latin America and the Caribbean (Wilkinson et al., 2021).

Climate- and weather-related disasters cause large and sudden internal and transboundary displacements which are particularly difficult for OECS countries to manage. The three major hurricanes that comprised the 2017 hurricane season - Harvey, Irma, and Maria - displaced approximately 3 million people within one month and, in the case of Barbuda, required the evacuation of the entire island to neighbouring Antigua (IOM, 2017; CNN, 2017). Although absolute displacement numbers are lower, per-capita rates relative to overall population are the highest in the world, posing distinct economic and social challenges for countries with limited capacities. Extreme weather events are anticipated to exacerbate inter-regional migration patterns and may affect host countries' capacity to manage and provide for nationals and non-nationals (IOM, 2017).

Partly as a result of these factors, both global and regional discussions have begun to coalesce around the role that social protection can play in addressing needs and reducing the risks posed by large-scale shocks, which is also known as 'shock-responsive social protection' (O'Brien et al., 2018). Shock-responsive social protection focuses on adapting social protection programmes and systems to address shocks that affect a large number of individuals simultaneously, and on enhancing links with other sectors to improve the comprehensiveness, coverage and adequacy of support to the most vulnerable before, during, and after a shock (O'Brien et al., 2018; TRANSFORM, 2020). Migration and forced displacement are therefore increasingly at the centre of discussions on shock-responsive social protection, as countries seek to identify sustainable, nationally-led solutions for people as part of strategies that align with both national interests and regional and global commitments.

Citizens of the OECS and the wider Caribbean Community (CARICOM) benefit from free movement regimes that in principle enable them not only to travel but also live and work in other Member States and to access key social protection benefits through what is known as the 'portability of rights' in a frictionless and reciprocal manner. Yet in practice challenges remain, including around mass-displacement events created by climate- and weather-related shocks. OECS Member States have only relatively recently begun to discuss and address the link between disasters and mass migration in the region, which has highlighted a range of interconnected challenges, but also opportunities that national and regional initiatives can build upon.

This study, produced by WFP in collaboration with the OECS in the context of the Joint SDG Fund for Barbados, Saint Lucia and the OECS, seeks to increase the evidence base around migration, displacement, social protection and shocks in the Eastern Caribbean. More specifically, the study aims to:

1. Provide an overview of migration, displacement and social protection in the OECS, including the legal and policy framework underpinning social protection in the region;
2. Identify the main gaps, challenges and restrictions with regard to migrants' access to social protection in normal times and after a shock and other crises; and
3. Explore opportunities to strengthen social protection through an integrated regional approach with a view to improving migrants' access to social protection and scaling up systems in response to future shocks.

The study is based on a combination of a desk-based literature review and semi-structured interviews with representatives of the OECS Commission, Member States' social development ministries, and other stakeholders, conducted between November 2020 and February 2021 (see Annex A for the full list of interviewees). The study also explores some of the

opportunities arising from national and regional work in this area and concludes with recommendations for the OECS and its Member States to improve migrants' access to social protection, with a focus on improving the management of risks posed to people by covariate shocks.

## KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

The following concepts and definitions are used in this study (See Annex C for a more comprehensive glossary).

**Displacement / Forced displacement** — According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), forced displacement, or simply 'displacement', refers to 'the movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters (IOM, 2019, p. 55; UNHCR, 2006). The term is used to describe the movements of refugees, internally displaced persons, and, in some instances, victims of trafficking.

**Migrant** — At the international level, no universally accepted definition for 'migrant' exists. The term migrant is usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate was taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of 'personal convenience' and without intervention of an external compelling factor. It therefore applies to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family, including certain kinds of shorter-term migrants, such as seasonal farm-workers who travel for short periods to work planting or harvesting farm products (IOM, 2011).

**Migration** — The movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border or within a state. The term refers to migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification (IOM, 2019).

**Non-contributory schemes / programmes** — Non-contributory schemes, including non-means-tested and means-tested schemes, normally require no direct contribution from beneficiaries or their employers as a condition of entitlement to receive relevant benefits. Social assistance and social safety net schemes are forms of non-contributory schemes. The term covers a broad range of schemes, including universal schemes for all residents (such as a national health services), categorical schemes for certain groups of the population (e.g. children below a certain age or older persons above a certain age), and means-tested schemes (such as social assistance). Non-contributory schemes are usually financed through taxes or other state revenues, or, in certain cases, through external grants or loans (ILO, 2015, p. 162).

**Shock** — As ‘hazards’ and ‘disasters’ tend to be understood by the disaster risk management community to be weather- and climate-related events, the wider term ‘shock’ is often used to denote events that can cause severe disruption to lives, livelihoods, infrastructure, and economic assets. However, there is no consensus across different sectors on what the term ‘shock’ constitutes. For the purposes of this paper, a shock is used to denote the wide array of events (e.g. natural, economic, epidemiological, conflict-based) whose (potential) impacts are addressed by governments and international actors through humanitarian assistance, disaster risk management, social protection and other systems and programmes

(TRANSFORM, 2020). A disaster refers to a situation when the impacts of a shock are widespread and often overwhelm local and national capacities (UNDRR, 2017). Shocks can be both slow- and fast-onset in nature. They can affect the individual or household (idiosyncratic shocks) or a large number of people simultaneously (covariate shocks).

**Shock-responsive social protection** — Shock-responsive social protection is concerned with how social protection programmes and systems can be adapted, prepared and used to mitigate the impacts of shocks (e.g. natural hazards, economic crisis, conflict and forced migration) that affect people’s wellbeing, including by building resilience to shocks. Some use the term ‘adaptive social protection’ to describe the role of social protection in building resilience and responding to covariate shocks (Beazley et al., 2020).

**Social protection** — Social protection refers to policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion throughout their lifecycles, with a particular emphasis towards vulnerable groups. Social protection can be provided through a broad variety of instruments, including contributory social insurance and non-contributory social assistance (in cash or in-kind). It can be targeted through categorical, poverty-based or other methodologies, and includes universal measures such as health care as well as those that build human capital, productive assets, and access to jobs (SPIAC-B, 2016; ILO, 2017).

# MIGRATION IN THE CARIBBEAN

# 1. Migration in the Caribbean

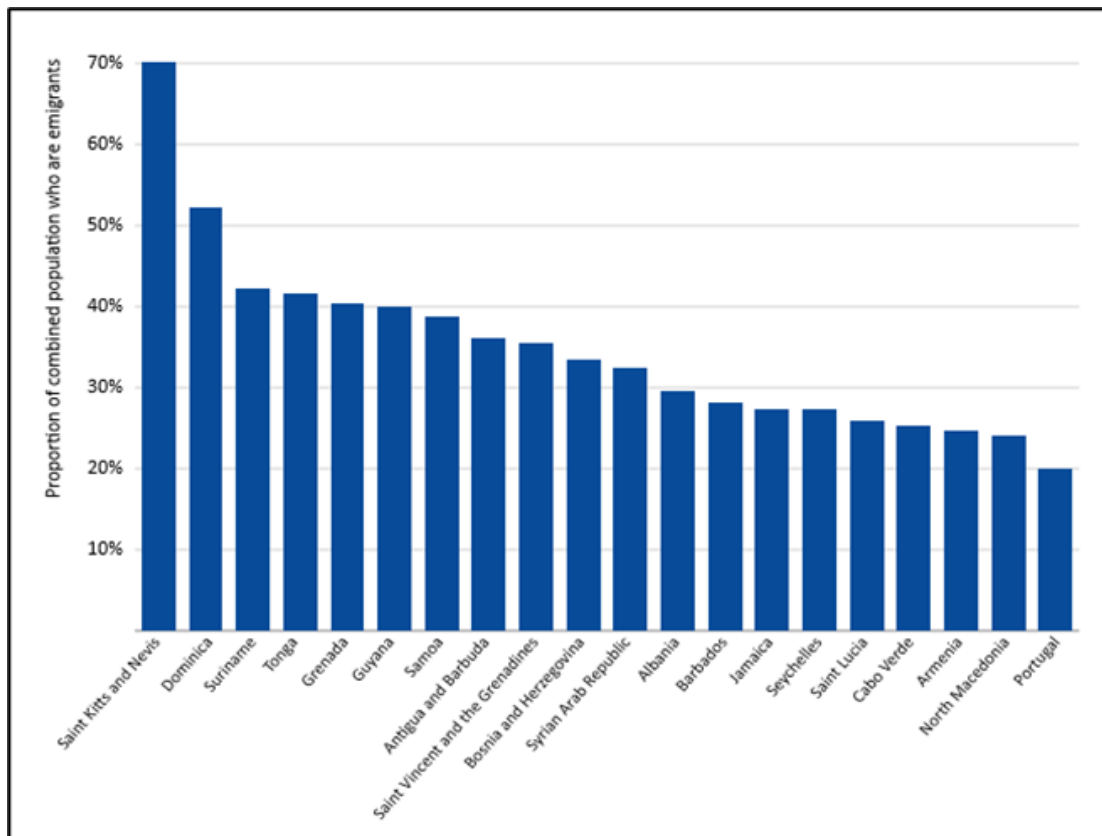
## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The history and identity of the Caribbean have been defined by migration. After the first major waves of global migration prompted by European colonization in the 16th century, followed by the massive forced migration of African slaves for the colonial plantation economies, a large number of people from the Caribbean left the region in the 20th and 21st centuries in search of work, including but not limited to emigration to former colonial and other countries of the OECD (Aragon and El Assar, 2018). In the 21st century population movements have been sustained by the tourism trade on which so many Caribbean countries depend, though this movement has been heavily curtailed by the current COVID-19 pandemic. Today, the Caribbean acts as both a region of origin, transit, and destination for migrants from within and outside the region, while experiencing considerable return migration (IOM, 2017).

Overall, the Caribbean is experiencing net emigration, and Caribbean countries have some of the highest emigration rates in the world relative to their total population (see Figure 1). According to 2012 estimates, five million people of a total population of 37 million have emigrated in the last 50 years from the Caribbean, a rate that is four times higher than for Latin America as a whole (Aragon and El Assar, 2018).

Although the emigration rate has slowed in recent years, intra-regional migration and other country-to-country movements are increasing due to international cooperation (not least with China). A range of push and pull factors shape such migration patterns, as people search for better economic opportunities and quality of life, illustrated by movement from the Dominican Republic and Haiti to The Bahamas and Dominica, and the movement of refugees and migrants from Venezuela to the

FIGURE 1: TOP 20 COUNTRIES OF EMIGRATION IN 2019 (IN % OF TOTAL POPULATION)



Source: UNDESA, 2019, in Wilkinson et al., 2021<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The population size used to calculate the percentage of emigrants is based on the UNDESA resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born and international migrants originally from that country. Only countries with a combined population of more than 100,000 residents and emigrants were included in the analysis (Wilkinson et al., 2021).

Caribbean. In 2019, there were 114,800 Venezuelan refugees and asylum seekers in the Dominican Republic, 38,500 in Trinidad and Tobago, 23,300 in Guyana and 17,000 each in Aruba and Curaçao (RDV, 2021).

Irregular migration in the region occurs on a large scale, driven by poverty, unstable political conditions, the demand for a low wage workforce, disasters and shocks, and other factors. The Caribbean acts as a direct migration corridor from Latin America to North America, which also attracts large numbers of Caribbean migrants, both regular and irregular (IOM, 2017). These factors have created the conditions and increased the incentives for human trafficking, unregulated employment, exploitation and crimes (IMPACS, 2013). It is estimated that some 10% of human trafficking victims worldwide are from the Latin America and Caribbean region (Aragon and El Assar, 2018).

Migration, whether immigration or emigration, is a fact of life for the people of the Caribbean, and many families have a history of transnational movements that, along with modern communication technology and travel, facilitate and sustain migration trends through cross-boundary familial ties and livelihoods (IOM, 2017). Instead of clearly visible, linear movements, Caribbean migration is characterised by complex and reciprocal flows, which are not always easily identifiable (Aragon and El Assar, 2018). Furthermore, the drivers of different forms of migration and displacement (temporary, seasonal, permanent) 'exist on a continuum or spectrum of

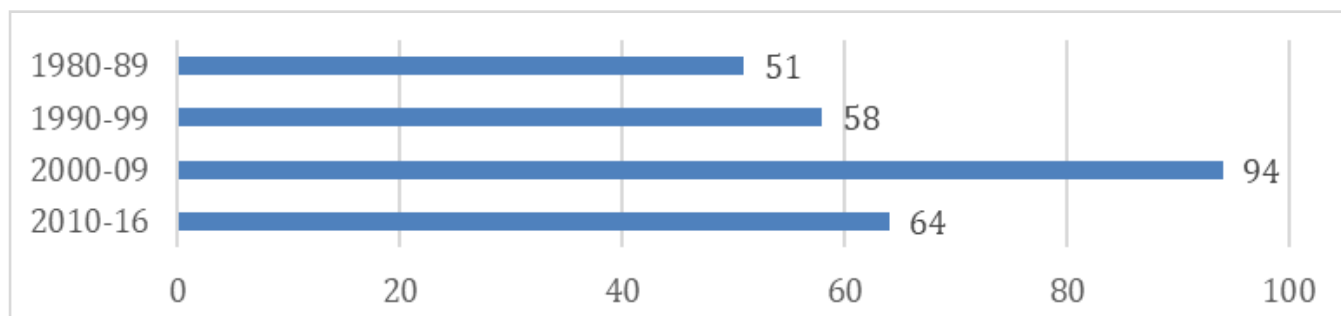
mobility from forced-to-voluntary, but in many instances, choice and coercion will co-mingle' (Wilkinson et al., 2021, p. 2).

## 1.2 SHOCKS, VULNERABILITIES AND RISKS

Climate change is already impacting small island developing states, with cascading and compounding risks that are expected to become disproportionately higher over the course of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Magnan et al., 2019).<sup>5</sup> Due to their geographic location within the Atlantic hurricane belt, their small topography and their proximity to active tectonic plate boundaries, OECS<sup>6</sup> Member States are highly exposed to hurricanes and tropical storms, as well as a wide range of other natural hazards including floods, landslides, droughts and occasional volcanic eruptions (UNDP, 2011). Their susceptibility to natural hazards is increased by the relative lack of comprehensive land-use and environmental protection regulations (UNDP, 2011).

Countries in the Eastern Caribbean also share similar economic, social and environmental challenges and constraints, including small and open economies dependent on agriculture and tourism, heavy dependence on foreign trade, and high energy, transport and communication costs (Beazley et al., 2020; Kirton, 2013). These factors render them extremely susceptible to external global shocks, as seen recently with the COVID-19 outbreak and the 2007-2008 financial crisis, which both drove a considerable contraction in economic growth (Barca et al., 2019; Beazley et al., 2020). Additionally,

**FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF DISASTERS IN THE CARIBBEAN REGION, 1980-2016**



Source: Barca et al., 2019

<sup>5</sup> The scientific community deems it likely that the adaptation capacity of communities in low lying coastal regions, including small island developing states, will be exceeded well before the end of the century even in a low greenhouse gas emission scenario (Magnan et al., 2019).

<sup>6</sup> The OECS is an eleven-member grouping of islands spread across the Eastern Caribbean comprising the Leeward Islands Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Montserrat, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands; and the Windward Islands Dominica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada, Martinique and Guadeloupe.

countries in the region are also typically characterised by high levels of public debt, limited fiscal space and ineligibility for concessional finance due to their middle-income status, limiting their capacity to borrow and increase public spending in order to manage risks (CAB, 2020).

Economically, disasters in the Caribbean cause an estimated USD 3 billion in annual losses, and between 1950 and 2009, the disaster frequency in the region rose by 347% (CDEMA, 2014) (see Figure 2). The average economic cost of climate-related disasters between 1950 and 2014 (13% of the national gross domestic product) in the Caribbean was approximately 13 times greater than the damage suffered by large states (at 1%) (IMF, 2017, cited in Barca et al., 2019). In recent decades, small Caribbean countries ranked highest in terms of losses – calculated as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) – caused by natural hazards (Barca et al., 2019).<sup>7</sup>

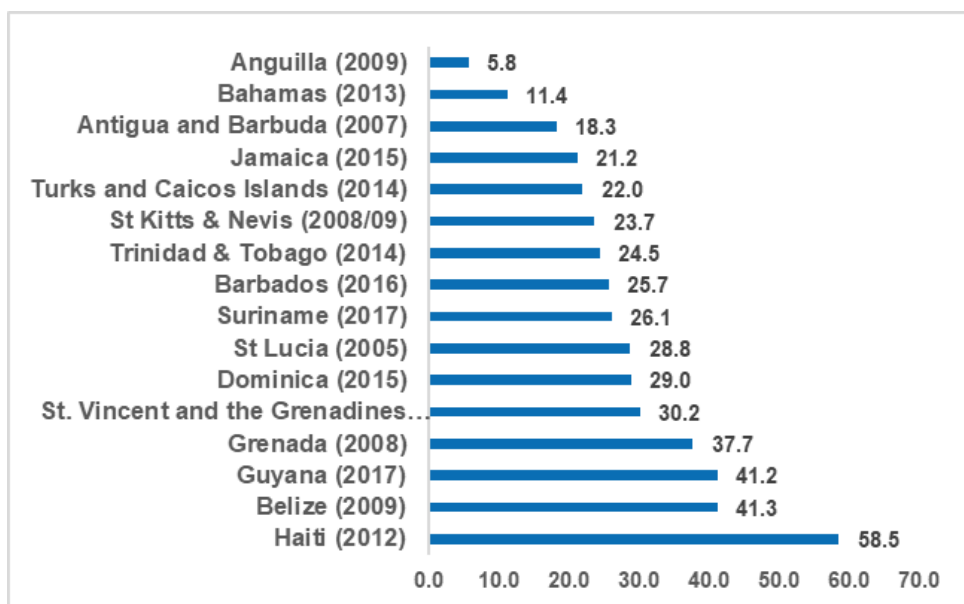
The human impact of disasters is correspondingly higher in small island developing states, affecting 10% of the population on average, compared to just 1% in large states. Between 1970 and 2016, over 23

million people were affected by disasters, resulting in over 239,000 deaths (Barca et al., 2019). Disasters and shocks routinely take a severe toll on the lives and livelihoods of people in the Caribbean, where, despite general improvements in living standards, poverty remains a challenge with rates averaging 30% of the population (see Figure 3).

Climate change is expected to exacerbate the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, with a likely reduction of output and government revenue, higher expenditures on disaster reconstruction and less time for recovery between events (Beazley et al., 2020). It also underlines the need to reinforce regional and national capacities to mitigate, respond to and manage disasters and to address multi-dimensional vulnerability more comprehensively (Kirton, 2013).

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed additional challenges for the Caribbean. Beyond increasing morbidity and mortality risks, it has driven a sharp increase in unemployment, particularly severe given the region’s reliance on tourism-related services and activities, which were halted almost overnight due to travel restrictions to avoid the arrival of imported

**FIGURE 3: POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LINE**



Source: Barca et al., 2019

<sup>7</sup> Between 1990 and 2014 the Caribbean small states suffered the highest economic losses (2.4%) compared to other small island developing states (1.8%) and other states (0.4%) (Barca et al., 2019).

cases, and to enable other containment measures. This situation had a devastating socioeconomic impact in a region with the world's highest dependence on tourism as a percentage of GDP (WTTC, 2019)<sup>8</sup>. Estimates in mid-2020 suggested that up to 1.5 million people in the Caribbean may have lost their job due to COVID-19 and 2.9 million could be food insecure (ILO, 2020; WFP, 2020). The economic contraction in the region has been forecast at 1.8%, from an average growth rate of 4.2% (CAB, 2020). In the face of this crisis, governments across the region have expanded existing social protection programmes or rolled out new ones in an attempt to mitigate the negative impacts on households (see Annex D for an overview of countries' social protection responses).

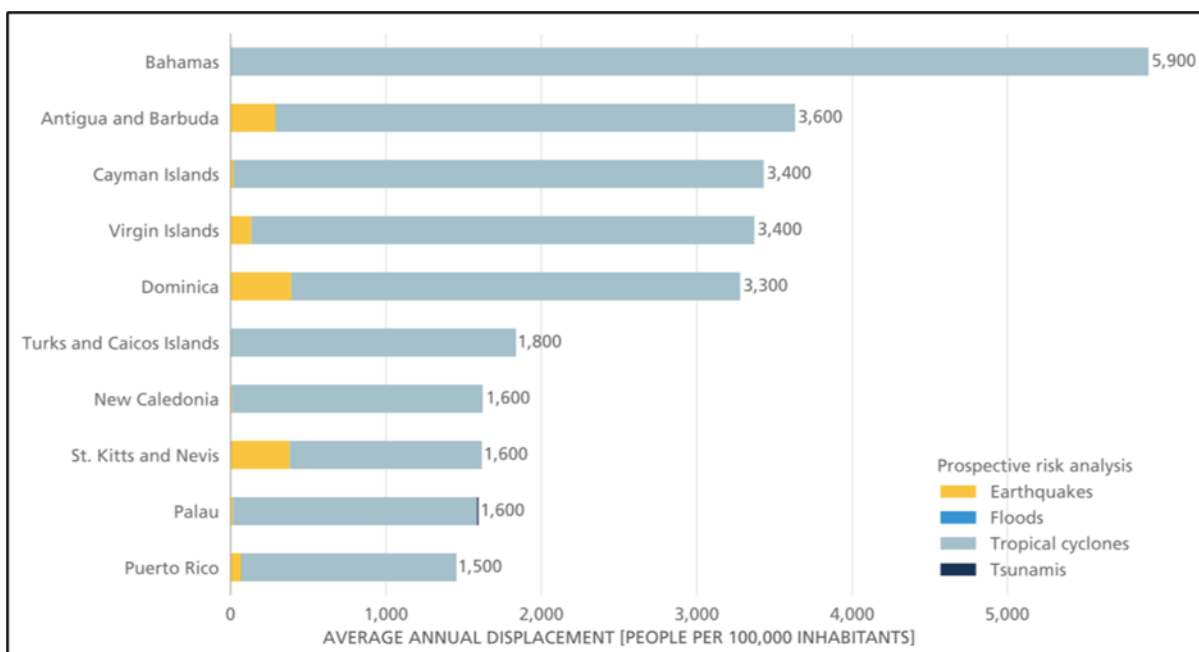
### 1.3 NATURAL HAZARDS, ECONOMIC SHOCKS AND MIGRATION

Human society and migration cannot be considered in isolation from the natural world. Environmental factors such as weather-related hazards, natural resource degradation, epidemiological risks and the

longer-term effects of climate change have always spurred migration or impacted migration patterns (IOM, 2017). Demonstrating the multi-causal drivers of migration is not easy, and discussions around the connection between migration and climate change remain politically sensitive. However, a large body of literature now clearly shows the links between human mobility and disasters, including the increasing impacts of climate-related events in Latin America and the Caribbean (see for instance the summary in Wilkinson et al., 2021). Such events are likely to influence people's livelihood strategies and migration decisions, acting as a stressor that drives internal displacement (for instance from rural to urban areas, as in Haiti), and movement across borders (for instance between Haiti and the Dominican Republic) (Wooding & Morales, 2014, in IOM, 2017).

However, international law does not provide a governing framework for climate-induced migration, creating a key protection gap at the international level. While frameworks such as the Sendai

**FIGURE 4: AVERAGE ANNUAL DISPLACEMENT RELATIVE TO POPULATION SIZE (NUMBER OF PEOPLE DISPLACED PER 100,000 INHABITANTS)**



Source: IDMC, 2017 (with UN Population Division Data)

<sup>8</sup> In 2019, tourism contributed 13.9% of total GDP in the Caribbean region, the highest share in the world. See WTTC - <https://wtcc.org/Research/Economic-Impact>



Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change underscore the importance of addressing climate-induced migration, 'climate migrants' and those displaced by disasters do not benefit from legal status under international law in the way international refugee law recognises and protects those displaced by political conflict. The recent Global Compact for Refugees (GCR), although non-binding, recognises climate migration for the first time and lays out further pathways for migrants and host countries to pursue as part of strategies for long-term solutions (United Nations, 2018).

In 2017, the ten countries in the world with the highest average annual rates of internal displacement due to disasters were all small island developing states, and seven of them were Caribbean countries (IDMC, 2017). Climate change is expected to have a profound impact on the countries of the Caribbean, not only in terms of livelihoods and economy, but also in patterns of people movement. As the frequency and intensity of hazards such as hurricanes and associated storm surges increase, this trend will likely be accompanied by increased temperatures, aggravating drought-like conditions and desertification as well as rises in sea levels, with potentially severe and long-lasting effects for coastal communities and sectors such as tourism on which they depend (Francis, 2019).

The impacts of climate change coincide with the impact of disasters that can cause large and sudden internal and cross-border displacement. The three major hurricanes that comprised the 2017 hurricane season - Harvey, Irma, and Maria - displaced approximately 3 million people in a single month and, in the case of Barbuda, required the evacuation of the entire island to neighbouring Antigua (IOM, 2017; CNN, 2017). Extreme weather events are anticipated to exacerbate inter-regional migration patterns and affect host countries' capacities to manage and provide for nationals and non-nationals, due to limited capacities and financial resources (IOM, 2017). As noted earlier, while absolute displacement numbers may be lower in the Caribbean than larger countries, per-capita rates

relative to overall population are some of the highest in the world, posing distinct economic and social challenges for countries with limited capacities (Francis, 2019).

Beyond climate- and weather-related hazards, the Caribbean has been majorly affected by economic shocks such as the 2008 financial crisis, which led to economic downturns in both countries of origin and countries of destination, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Latin America, affecting migrants' livelihoods in the sectors most susceptible to depressions, including construction and manufacturing (IOM, 2010). Caribbean countries and territories have also received people fleeing political turmoil and socio-economic instability, notably in the context of the crisis in Venezuela. COVID-19 has had a huge impact on national economies and households' incomes, including due to a reduction of the flow of remittances. Although no evidence is available yet, it is possible that migration patterns will change again in this context, as people are prevented from leaving or entering the country either for personal or professional reasons, or as the rate of return of the global Caribbean diaspora increases. The COVID-19 pandemic example also demonstrates that climatic, epidemiological and economic shocks are not experienced in isolation, but combine to compound the risks that migrants (and countries) face.

While the broad correlation between climate change and migration is recognised, knowledge is limited in a number of key areas. Firstly, more attention has been paid to date to the risks posed by physical events rather than the mix of social, political, livelihood and other rights-based factors that may interact with or compound the pressures exerted by incremental or catastrophic climate change events (Wilkinson et al., 2021). Secondly, research also tends to focus on conditions at the point of origin for the migrant, generally eliding two other important moments - conditions and risks along the migrant's journey and at their point of arrival or destination.

A combination of factors - poor information, lack of resources and capital (human, finance, social),

prejudice and violence - at any one of these points can lead to migrants (along with others) making poor decisions that increase their exposure to potential shocks, including settling in hazard prone areas such as informal settlements, camps, and slums, with poorly designed housing and a lack of access to basic services and infrastructure (Wilkinson et al., 2021). This phenomenon helps explain why demographic trends indicate that Caribbean people are moving toward and into disaster-prone areas at an increasing rate (Ferris and Petz 2013, in IOM, 2017).

More recently, there has been a move towards understanding migrants' experiences and 'the intersectional, relative and dynamic nature of vulnerability - in relation to specific population groups, age cohorts, ethnic and racial, gender characteristics' (Wilkinson et al., 2021, p. 9). Intersectional vulnerability<sup>9</sup> is by definition experienced in different ways by different migrant groups. It may hinder migrants' their capacity to prepare for and recover from shocks, as well as their ability or willingness to seek support from state, such as through social protection. Yet, limited understanding and recognition of migrants' intersecting vulnerabilities and risks may to reduce the quality and provision of social protection to migrants, heighten inter-communal tensions, and increase migrants' exposure to future covariate shocks.

To better understand these changing dynamics, information is needed on who migrants are (including their official status as well as demographic and socio-economic characteristics) and the challenges and risks they face at their point of origin, on their journeys, and upon arrival (Wilkinson et al., 2021). The answers to these questions have a bearing on migration management as well as the possible interface with social protection provision. However, these issues are currently neither well researched nor sufficiently acknowledged and addressed in national disaster risk management or social protection policies and systems in the Caribbean, with frameworks and policy instruments yet to catch up with the reality of migration and displacement. They also pose distinct challenges for disaster risk management and social protection

actors attempting to support migrants and displaced people.

#### 1.4 MIGRATION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The recognition of the multidimensional nature of migration, and the need for effective and durable solutions to the challenges posed by migration, has been reflected at the global level in the adoption by 193 UN Member States of the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, a non-binding resolution which contained as an annex the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. This declaration paved the way for the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR), signed by 164 countries, which calls for greater support for refugees and host countries. These policy documents aim to mitigate some of the adverse drivers of migration and forced migration, support migrants and refugees and protect them from risks on their journeys, generate improved conditions for self-reliance, support host communities, expand access to third country solutions, and support conditions for return. The GCR is the first international cooperative agreement that recognises the key role that state-sponsored legal migration pathways play in addressing climate-induced displacement and other forms of migration, as well as the supporting roles to be played by international development and humanitarian actors and International Financial Institutions (United Nations, 2018; Francis, 2019).<sup>10</sup>

To help address the types of administrative, social, and financial hurdles that refugees typically face, the GCR makes a series of recommendations ranging from humanitarian visas, private sponsorships, and temporary work permits, to provision of cash-based transfers through social protection systems, connections to health care systems, support towards integration into the labour market, and enabling greater access for refugees and stateless persons to civil and birth registration and documentation (United Nations, 2018). These dimensions among others make the GCR unique as a global agreement, with potential implications for national social protection systems and programmes.

<sup>9</sup> Intersectionality can be understood as 'the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of social difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power' (Chaplin et al., 2019, p. 2). It helps understand intra-group difference and the existence of multiple forms and cross-sections of identity that govern an individual's or group's relationship to power (Chaplin et al., 2019).

Internationally however, the provision of social protection to migrants remains complex. While free movement agreements within regions (such as the European Union and OECS), bilateral labour agreements and migrant corridors enable recognised economic migrants to move freely and benefit from social protection, access to social protection benefits for migrants is constrained due to a number of administrative, legislative and financial reasons (Panhuys et al., 2017). The situation becomes more complex if migration is irregular or forced, such as following a shock, with only a handful of examples where countries have managed to systematise and regularise the process. Especially for countries with limited resources and capacity, it is not possible to provide everyone, whether nationals or non-nationals, with the tailored support they need, or to provide the equivalence of support to that of the migrant's country of origin. There can be enrolment requirements into social protection programmes (such as proof of ID or address) that migrants may find difficult to comply with, political issues around providing support to non-nationals in terms of perceptions of unfairness or a fear of incentivising integration of migrants over return of nationals, and concerns amongst irregular migrants and the forcibly displaced in coming forward to regularise their situation and gain access to social protection for fear of being penalised, deported or having to make tax or social security contributions that they cannot afford.

The regional and national legislative and policy landscape contains provisions for access to social protection and the portability of rights, including in the OECS (see Sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 for an explanation of portability of rights). However, significant gaps remain between regional policies and national processes of ratification, and between national legislation or policy and the actual provision of support, owing to some of the reasons mentioned

earlier. Free movement regimes such as those found under the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) enable the frictionless movement of OECS citizens between Member States. In this context, the OECS Convention on Social Security (1991), the CARICOM Agreement on Social Security (CASS) (1997), and the CARICOM Protocol on Contingent Rights, provide for access to social protection within the region. However, discussions for this study highlighted that greater focus has been put to date on the economic aspects of the free movement regimes of CARICOM and the OECS, rather than on the social side of mobility. The latter, however, would provide the basis for creating social programmes and support systems that would enhance migrant populations' experience in the host country, protecting them from the risks posed by idiosyncratic and covariate shocks, and enabling them to become active contributors to the national system in turn.

Regional agreements to date do not address the significant policy and programme adjustments and financial ramifications involved for the host region or the receiving country when absorbing large numbers of people into social protection, health and education systems and programmes following a covariate shock, which many countries have already experienced. Furthermore, national policies (either in immigration, disaster risk management or social protection) may not define processes or roles and responsibilities to address migrant needs through national systems. Likewise, programmes may not be able to identify or sufficiently support vulnerable migrants, including women, children, and members of the LGBTQI+ communities. Recent climate-related disasters have brought this issue to the forefront, which is discussed in more detail below. To date, however, there is limited experience in incorporating migrants into national and local disaster risk management and social protection policy and planning.

<sup>10</sup> The *United Nations General Assembly New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016)*, included a commitment to 'develop national strategies for the protection of refugees within the framework of national social protection systems'. The CRRF is now exploring transition strategies from camp to out-of-camp models promoting resilience and inclusiveness of host and displaced communities in 15 countries.

THE REGIONAL  
INSTITUTIONAL  
FRAMEWORK IN  
THE CONTEXT OF  
MIGRATION,  
DISASTERS AND  
SOCIAL  
PROTECTION

## 2. The regional institutional framework in the context of migration, disasters and social protection

Following the independence of Caribbean countries, a number of institutions were established to promote regional integration, economic and human development as well as a stronger presence of Caribbean countries on the international political stage (Bishop et al., 2011). While CARICOM is the main organisation for regional integration of the Caribbean, the OECS was created with the objective of deepening integration of the Eastern Caribbean sub-region. Member States of both organisations have signed treaties which allow for the free movement of persons across countries. The process of regional integration also entailed increased cooperation in disaster risk management and social protection, as well as the creation of specialised regional organisations.

### 2.1 REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND FREE MOVEMENT REGIMES

#### 2.1.1 ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES (OECS)

The OECS was established with the signing of the

Treaty of Basseterre on 18 June 1981 to promote the regional integration, cooperation, economic and social development of the Eastern Caribbean (OECS, 2020).

The organisation's seven founding members include the small island states of Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In addition to the Protocol Member States, the organisation has four Associate Member States, including the overseas territories of the United Kingdom of Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and the French overseas departments and regions Guadeloupe and Martinique (see Figure 5).

The Protocol Member States of the OECS took a step towards deeper economic integration by signing the Revised Treaty of Basseterre on 18 June 2010, which established a Single Financial and Economic Space allowing for the free movement of goods, services, people, enterprise and capital (OECS, 2016). While part of the OECS, the Associate Member

FIGURE 5: MEMBER STATES OF THE OECS



Source: Authors

States Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Martinique and Guadeloupe are not part of this economic union (OECS, 2020).

### 2.1.2 The Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

All OECS Member States, with the exception of Guadeloupe and Martinique, are either full or Associate Member States of CARICOM, which is the main organisation promoting Caribbean regional integration and is dedicated to economic integration, foreign policy and human and social development (CARICOM, 2021a) (see Figure 6). CARICOM, which is composed of 15 Member States and five Associate Member States, came into being on 4 July 1973 – eight years prior to the creation of the OECS - with the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas by the governments of Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago (CARICOM, 2021).

CARICOM Member States deepened their economic integration process through the establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) with the signing of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas in 2001, which came into force in 2006. The CSME allows for the free movement of goods, skills, services and capital across CARICOM Member States with the exception of The Bahamas and the five Associate Member States, which are not part of the

CSME (Bishop et al., 2011). All Protocol Member States of the OECS are also part of the CSME and its free movement regimes.

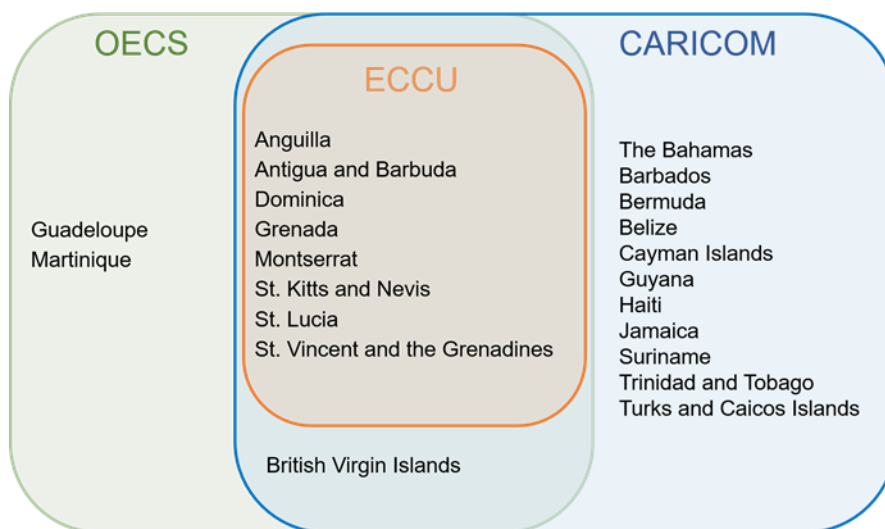
## 2.2 FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS REGIMES IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

Both the Eastern Caribbean Economic Union (ECEU) and CSME are characterized by free movement regimes which allow for the movement of persons across Member States at varying degrees. These free movement regimes do not extend to the four Associate Member States of the OECS - Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Guadeloupe, Martinique - as they do not participate in the ECEU or the CSME (see section 2.1) (see Figure 6).

### 2.2.1 Eastern Caribbean Economic Union (ECEU)

Under the Revised Treaty of Basseterre (2010), all citizens of OECS Protocol Member States enjoy the right of free movement within the ECEU, which includes the right to live and work in any of the Protocol Member States without restrictions and without discrimination in terms of employment, remuneration and other conditions of work and employment based on nationality (Article 12). Within the ECEU, citizens of Protocol Member States also enjoy the right to pursue business activities as self-

FIGURE 6: MEMBER STATES OF THE OECS, ECCU AND CARICOM



Source: Authors

employed persons (Article 27). All Protocol Member States have passed laws to give effect to these provisions. Persons that make use of their right of free movement under the treaty are granted entry into the country for an indefinite period and do not require a work permit to work in other Protocol Member States (OECS, 2020b).

The Economic Union Working Group on Movement of Persons (EUWGMOP) was established to discuss and address matters relating to the free movement of persons in the Economic Union. The working group, which meets two or three times a year, comprises senior officials of the seven Protocol Member States including the OECS Commissioners, Heads/Chiefs of Immigration, Customs Officials, OECS Focal Points at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, and other delegates as per the proposed agenda. The agenda of the OECS Commission with respect to the free movement of persons regime is in many cases guided and approved at the EUWGMOP.

### **2.2.2 CARIBBEAN SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY (CSME)**

In addition to the free movement regime under the ECEU, all OECS Protocol Member States through participation in the CSME are also part of a system of free movement of skilled labour which is largely limited to university graduates, holders of an Associate Degree or comparable qualification, musicians, artistes, sportspersons, nurses, teachers, artisans and domestic workers (OECS, 2008). Persons that fall within the approved categories enjoy the right to work in any of the participating CSME Member States without the need to obtain a work permit, once they hold a CARICOM Certificate of Recognition of Skills Qualification (CARICOM Skills Certificate). The procedure for requesting and obtaining such a certificate is detailed in the domestic law of Member States (CSME, 2014). Aside from these provisions, all CARICOM Nationals can enter into another CARICOM Member State as a visitor with an automatic six month stay, but this does not entail the right to work without permission, provide services or establish a business (CSME, 2021).

In 2018, the Heads of government of CSME Participating States took a number of decisions to advance free movement of labour, including agreement that those Member States so willing would move towards full free movement of labour within the next three years, and the decision to add additional categories of skilled nationals to those entitled to move freely and seek employment within the CSME (Al Hassan et al., 2019). However, in practice the transition towards free movement of skilled labour in the CSME appears to be uneven across countries. For example, while ten categories of workers are entitled to work throughout the region without work permits, it appears that only Jamaica, Guyana and Grenada currently recognize all ten agreed categories (Al Hassan et al., 2019). Furthermore, free movement of skilled labour has been constrained by several additional factors, including issues of noncompliance, lack of harmonised processes, delays in granting skills certificates and other administrative hurdles (Al Hassan et al., 2019).

### **2.3 REGIONAL DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Caribbean region has greatly enhanced its regional institutional architecture for the management of disaster risk. At the regional level, as per Article 12 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (2001), disaster risk management falls principally under the responsibility of Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), which evolved out of the former Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) in 2009 (Kirton, 2013).

CDEMA was developed by CARICOM to serve as a regional inter-governmental agency with the primary responsibility to facilitate, coordinate and drive efforts around comprehensive disaster management in all its participating states. Interestingly, the move to create CDEMA by Caribbean heads of state came at time when the region was experiencing the negative impact of the migration of its skilled workforce due to shocks (Kirton, 2013).

CDEMA presently comprises nineteen Participating States, including all OECS Member States except for Guadeloupe and Martinique (CDEMA, 2021). It has adopted a Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) approach that seeks to reduce the risk and loss associated with environmental hazards and the effects of climate change to enhance regional sustainable development, including by encouraging the adoption of national and regional disaster loss reduction and mitigation policies and practices, and by coordinating the establishment, enhancement and maintenance of adequate emergency disaster response capabilities among the Participating States (CDEMA, 2014).

Several other institutions have also engaged in the development of disaster risk management strategies or initiatives in the region, including the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Caribbean Commonwealth and British Overseas Territories, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Eastern Caribbean and Central Bank (ECCB), and the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility Segregated Portfolio Company (CCRIF SPC). All Protocol Member States of the OECS are also members of ACS, CCRIF SPC, the Caribbean Commonwealth and CDEMA.

As noted above and elaborated further below, the interface between disaster risk management and social protection is critical when trying to understand and address the movement of people caused by the effects of incremental climate change or sudden onset covariate shocks. However, disaster risk management policies, programmes and departments remain insufficiently prepared and funded to address mass movements of people in the event of disasters, and these challenges are replicated when attempting to link disaster risk management to social protection (Aragon and El Assar, 2018). At the same time, some Caribbean countries have well established and practical links between disaster risk management and social protection institutions (Beazley et al, 2020). There has also been a surge in experiences in using social protection in response to COVID-19 in the Caribbean, which provides the potential basis for further coordination, collaboration

and institutionalisation across sectors (see Annex D for a summary of countries' social protection responses).

## 2.4 SOCIAL PROTECTION

OECS Member States are committed to pursuing coordinated and harmonised policies in various sectors, including social protection, as stipulated in the Revised Treaty of Basseterre establishing the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union (2010).

At the strategic level, the Council of Ministers of Human and Social Development was established to serve as a sub-regional policy and legislative mechanism. The council convenes on an annual basis, bringing together OECS Ministers and Permanent Secretaries of Human and Social Development, the Director General of the OECS, as well as international partners working in social protection. These annual meetings aim to harmonise the social development strategy of OECS Member States and provide the opportunity for participants to exchange updates and advise on the policy and programme direction of the OECS Social Development Unit (OECS, 2020c).

The annual meetings of the Council of Ministers of Human and Social Development are typically preceded by meetings of the OECS Human and Social Protection Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which is composed of the Permanent Secretaries and leading technical staff from OECS Member States. Additionally, the members of the TAC convene on a monthly basis with relevant development partners through the OECS Social Protection Technical Committee (OSPTC). The main functions of the OSPTC include facilitating the 'technical expertise, support and assistance for the implementation of integrated social protection systems among Member States' and coordinating the OECS Social Protection Agenda at the level of CARICOM (OECS, 2016). Importantly, the OSPTC is also mandated with and advising on social protection issues within the context of the freedom of movement of people in the ECEU.



THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

SOCIAL  
PROTECTION  
POLICIES AND  
PROGRAMMES IN  
THE CONTEXT OF  
MIGRATION

# 3. Social protection policies and programmes in the context of migration

Since the establishment of the OECS and CARICOM, several foundational and intersecting legal and policy instruments have been established to support the harmonised provision of social protection across the Caribbean. There is also a multitude of policies at the national level that are relevant to social protection. An overview of these regional and national policies is provided below, with a specific focus on their applicability for migrants.

## 3.1 OVERVIEW OF POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

As mentioned above, OECS Member States have adopted a variety of legal and policy instruments aimed at harmonising social protection systems and ensuring the provision of social protection to migrants within the OECS, such as the 'OECS Policy on Rights Contingent on the Right to Freedom of Movement within the Economic Union' (see section 3.1.3). By virtue of their CARICOM Membership, all OECS Protocol Member States are also signatories to additional regional agreements on contingent rights and on the portability of social protection benefits.

### 3.1.1 HARMONISATION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES

With the signing of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre establishing the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union (2010), the Member States of the OECS committed to coordinating, harmonising and undertaking joint actions and pursuing joint policies, including with regard to social protection mechanisms and social policy (Article 4). More specifically, OECS Protocol Member States agreed on working towards 'a harmonised, common policy framework for human and social development which addresses poverty reduction, gender equality, social protection, equal access to quality social services, human resource and capacity development, livelihood security and empowerment across the life cycle' (Article 23).

While the Treaty does not contain specific

stipulations for the provision of social protection to persons moving within the OECS, the Protocol Member States have agreed therein to provide 'the enabling legislative, policy and administrative environment needed to support social relations and cohesion for children, youth, men and women in the Economic Union Area, with particular attention to the consequences and impact of the free movement of peoples on shared family responsibilities and economic stability' (Article 23). Under Article 12, which provides for the free movement of persons within the ECEU area, citizens of Protocol Member States enjoy the rights contingent to the right of freedom of movement that are agreed by Protocol Member States (see section 3.1.2 on portability of social protection benefits).

In 2009, in light of the socioeconomic impacts of the global financial crisis, the OECS adopted the OECS Social Safety Net and Social Protection Strategic Framework, articulating a common vision for an integrated and coordinated system of social protection for the OECS (OECS, 2009). The Framework, which is in the process of being updated, recognises the role of social protection not only in reducing and preventing poverty but also in mitigating risks such as those resulting from global economic shocks, environmental hazards and changing labour markets. While the Framework does not make explicit reference to the provision of social protection to persons displaced by disasters or crises, it aims to improve the effective targeting and protection of vulnerable groups, including through special outreach strategies for seriously disadvantaged or excluded groups, which include migrant workers and victims of disaster (ibid.).

The Framework also aims to expand the coverage of social protection measures through the institution of a harmonised regional social protection system that guarantees similar or equal provisions for all citizens in the OECS. This policy strategy includes the conclusion and adoption of reciprocal arrangements

in order to ensure that persons moving to other Member States of the ECEU and the CSME for purposes of work do not lose or leave unsecured their social protection benefits (ibid.). Section 3.1.2 provides more information on existing reciprocal agreements in the region, which aim to ensure the portability of social security benefits.

The 2009 Framework will be replaced by the OECS Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategy (2021-2030) which is aligned with and supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals under the Agenda 2030 (OECS, 2020a). The strategy is a blueprint for universal access to social protection across the region and takes into account major global and regional events over the past decade and most recently COVID-19, which have negatively affected the GDP of Member States, reduced investments in tourism, and curtailed expenditure in the social sector areas (OECS, 2020a). It is articulated around four strategic priorities, including facilitating effective social protection responses, building human and community resilience, advocating for inclusion, and facilitating social reintegration and inclusive communities (OECS, 2021).

The Strategy aims to support provisions for the portability of contributory social insurance benefits across OECS Member States, with greatest attention given to old age and survivors' pensions, disability, maternity/paternity and health care benefits (for health care in relation to contingent rights, see section 3.1.3). In this context, the draft strategy speaks of a 'special application in humanitarian situations' (OECS, 2021), but without currently giving further details. It should be noted that the main regional agreement on the portability of social security benefits covers old age, disability and survivor pensions (see section 3.1.2). The draft strategy available at the time of research in February 2021 did not mention the provision of non-contributory social benefits for people moving across Member States.

The Strategy also aims for advocacy actions to promote universal and adaptive social protection with a view to strengthening institutional

arrangements for social protection to address increased needs and vulnerabilities caused by climate-related and other shocks. In this regard, the Strategy aims to build human and community resilience by facilitating the expansion of social networks which are responsive to various crises. However, at the time of writing in February 2021, the draft strategy did not make explicit mention of links between social protection and migration and displacement in the context of shocks.

### 3.1.2 PORTABILITY OF SOCIAL PROTECTION BENEFITS

Both CARICOM and the OECS have adopted policy instruments to ensure the portability of social protection benefits for persons moving under the regional free movement regimes within the CSME and ECEU (see section 2.2).

All OECS Member States - except for Guadeloupe and Martinique - are signatories to the CARICOM Agreement on Social Security (CASS) (1997) which aims to ensure the coverage and portability of long-term social security benefits for CARICOM nationals as they move from one country to another<sup>11</sup>. The agreement, which was signed by all CARICOM Member States except for Haiti and Suriname, can be seen as key in facilitating the free movement of labour since it aims to ensure that social security benefits acquired in one country are maintained, regardless of changes in the insured person's country of residence (OAS, 2015; CARICOM, 2010).

Under the CASS, insured persons can aggregate their social security contributions earned in the countries in which they have worked if they do not meet the eligibility requirements in terms of minimum contributions in one single country (see Article 17). Payments of benefits are prorated based on the number of contributions made in different countries (Articles 18 and 19). The CASS applies to all employed and self-employed persons who are or have been subject to the social security legislation of one or more signatory states, as well as to their dependents and survivors where applicable, without regard to nationality (CARICOM, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> The CARICOM Agreement also provides for the establishment of a committee composed of the heads of the Social Security Schemes, which is responsible for settling administrative questions arising out of the provisions of the agreement.

The CASS is applicable to long-term benefits, including old-age and retirement benefits, disability benefits, survivor pensions and disablement and death pensions resulting from employment injuries (Forteza, 2008). Unemployment benefits are not covered, which can be attributed to the general lack of unemployment insurance schemes in the region (Paddison, 2007).<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, short-term benefits such as maternity allowances or sickness benefits are not covered by the agreement (Forteza, 2008).

While the agreement provides a legal basis for social security portability within CARICOM, the provisions and wording of the document have led to some criticism and misunderstanding. Since the agreement does not contain any provisions to avoid the overlapping of benefits, insured persons who have accumulated contributions in different countries could end up receiving a total benefit that is higher than the maximum benefit of any single state (Forteza, 2008). Another problem concerns the wording of the agreement, which has led to disagreement over the interpretation of certain provisions, specifically on the procedure to be followed in cases where minimum eligibility requirements are met in one state but not in others (CARICOM, 2020; Hirose et al., 2011). These difficulties resulted in the conclusion of a Protocol in 2009, which amended two provisions concerning the payment of partial benefits for purposes of clarity. However, only four signatories<sup>13</sup> to the Agreement have signed and ratified the Protocol (ibid.).

The Agreement sees harmonisation of social security legislation as a means to promote cooperation and regional unity among CARICOM Member States. However, 'the fact that the social security coverage provided by each CARICOM Member State varies, full compliance with the Agreement has, to date, eluded the signatories' (OAS, 2015).

A 2013 study also found that the number of enrollees who have validated their acquired rights under the CASS has been very limited, which was attributed among others factors to rising unemployment and informality as well as to the return of a large population of workers to their country of origin prior

to completing their compulsory contribution periods stipulated in the CASS with regards to validating rights acquired in another country (Perez Montas, 2013).

Prior to the signing of the CARICOM Agreement, the OECS Convention on Social Security (1991) was developed to ensure the portability of social security benefits within the OECS (Paddison, 2007). Unlike the CASS, the Convention covered not only long-term social security benefits but also short-term benefits such as sickness and maternity benefits, funeral grants and benefits in respect of employment injuries and occupational diseases (ibid.). However, the convention was only signed by two OECS Member States - Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Lucia - and is therefore not operational in practice (IOM, 2019).

The OECS has the intention to review the provisions of the Convention at some point in the future. In the meantime, the OECS is working on a proposal for a draft regulation which would resolve the gap in terms of the portability short-term benefits. The proposal aims to amend existing benefits regulations in the Protocol Member States, which are made under their Social Security/National Insurance Acts, by inserting a new regulation to provide for entitlement to short-term benefits for OECS Protocol Member State citizens and their dependents, where they would not otherwise have qualified, once certain conditions are met. In order to come into effect, the regulation will need to be approved by the Cabinet and signed by the responsible Minister.

### 3.1.3 CONTINGENT RIGHTS

Both the OECS and CARICOM have frameworks that recognize the need to secure certain social rights for those moving between countries so that people can fully exercise their right to freedom of movement in the region.

Under the Revised Treaty of Basseterre (2010), which established the Eastern Caribbean Economic Union, citizens of Protocol Member States enjoy the rights contingent to the right of freedom of movement that are agreed by Protocol Member States (Article 12). The OECS Policy on Rights Contingent on the Right to

<sup>12</sup> Within the OECS, only Guadeloupe and Martinique have an unemployment insurance.

<sup>13</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Freedom of Movement within the Economic Union (2015) was developed to clearly articulate the rights granted to OECS citizens (and their spouses and dependents) who exercise the right to freedom of movement under the Revised Treaty of Basseterre (OECS, 2015). Originated from discussions within the EUWGMOP, the policy was approved by the OECS Authority in 2015 for immediate implementation by Member States.

The rights granted under the OECS Policy on Rights Contingent on the Right to Freedom of Movement within the Economic Union aim at maintaining the quality of life of citizens of Protocol Member States that exercise the right to freedom of movement within the Economic Union as well as protecting the unity of the family structure and the right of the family to live together. Under the policy, spouses and dependants of OECS citizens who make use of their right to freedom of movement within the Economic Union enjoy the right to reside in a host Protocol Member State, irrelevant of their nationality. Furthermore, spouses have the right to engage in gainful employment in the host Protocol Member State without the need to obtain a work permit.

In addition to these general contingent rights, OECS citizens and their spouses and dependents are granted a number of social rights under the policy, contingent on the exercise of the right to free movement. These include the right to social security, as well as access to resources allocated through cash advances, labour market schemes, and other social safety net mechanisms to protect vulnerable individuals. The policy also confers the right to healthcare on the same terms and conditions as citizens of the host Protocol Member State country.<sup>14</sup> In terms of education, the policy grants the children of a primary beneficiary<sup>15</sup> the right to primary and secondary education under the same conditions as citizens of the host Protocol Member State, including access to scholarships, bursaries and support offered by the government of the host Protocol Member State.

The proper implementation of the contingent rights policy is key for the full realization of the free

movement of persons, and its importance becomes even greater in the context of the impact of disasters and other shocks. However, there are still gaps in the implementation of contingent rights. As revealed by a review of domestic legislation in OECS Protocol Member States completed in June 2021, the incorporation of the contingent rights policy into domestic legislation has been uneven across these countries, which has led to implementation challenges in practice (OECS, 2021a). In order to achieve greater legal recognition of the benefits granted under the policy, the OECS has developed a draft model bill that, once approved by Protocol Member States, would give full effect to the arrangements for the issuance of contingent rights.

At CARICOM level, the CARICOM Protocol on Contingent Rights (2018), which was signed by all CSME participating Member States in 2019, grants a number of social and economic rights to CARICOM Nationals and their immediate family members, contingent on the exercise of their right of establishment, provision of services, movement of capital or free movement of skills under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (2001). The contingent rights guaranteed under the Protocol include among other things the right of a spouse and dependents to work in a host country without a work permit, the right of dependent children to access primary and secondary education on a non-discriminatory basis in a host country, and the right of spouses and dependent children to access primary health care and national scholarships or bursaries on a non-discriminatory basis in the host country (Nicholls, 2019). Many of these rights, however, are not yet in effect. In order for the obligations of the Protocol to be binding on the signatory states, it needs to be implemented into domestic law. At the time of the publication of this report in December 2021, only Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Barbados (non-OECS Member) had started the ratification process, which, when completed, would give effect to the CARICOM Protocol on Contingent Rights (ibid.). The issue of contingent rights has been a sensitive one due to the varying levels of social benefits offered by CARICOM Member States, which creates fears that a

---

<sup>14</sup> Including the right of access to specialized treatment, the right to treatment by drugs where programmes exist, and the right to hospitalization on referral by a medical practitioner.

<sup>15</sup> A Principal beneficiary means of a citizen of a Protocol Member State exercising the right of freedom of movement under the Protocol of Eastern Caribbean Economic Union.

disproportionate burden may be placed on those States with more generous social welfare programmes (ibid.).

### **3.2 OVERVIEW OF POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL**

All OECS countries have comprehensive social security schemes that are broadly similar in design and typically offer old age pensions, disability and survivor's pensions, and benefits for sickness, maternity, and employment injury (IMF, 2016). As mentioned earlier, social security schemes of OECS countries largely do not include unemployment insurance, the implications of which in terms of migration and shocks will be further addressed in Section 4.

All countries also have non-contributory social assistance programmes in place, many of which provide cash assistance. These programmes are particularly interesting in the context of shock responses, as they tend to target people facing poverty and vulnerability (Beazley et al., 2020). In fact, various countries in the region have expanded flagship cash programmes to respond to the impact of natural hazards as well as in response to COVID-19 (ibid.). These programmes are also relevant in the context of migration since, in many cases, migrants tend to be among the most vulnerable and marginalised groups (OHCHR, nd). The same also holds true for persons displaced due to shocks since these persons, especially in the case of certain groups such as unaccompanied minors and women who may also face protection issues.

#### **3.2.1 ACCESS TO SOCIAL ASSISTANCE**

In most OECS Member States, eligibility for non-contributory social assistance programmes requires citizenship or an official residence status as well as a specified minimum duration of residence (see Table 1 for an overview of eligibility criteria of national social assistance programmes with regards to non-nationals). In some countries, these criteria are enshrined in legislation while in other cases, there are operational requirements that in practice do not allow non-nationals to apply for or access social assistance. There are also examples where programmes primarily target nationals, but where social assistance is also provided to non-citizens on a discretionary basis.

In cases where social assistance programmes exclude non-nationals, this circumstance is often explained as being the result of limited financial resources and the consequent need to prioritise nationals over non-nationals. However, even in countries where foreigners are granted social assistance, government officials interviewed for this study indicated that the number of applications from foreigners is very low. In general, ministries and departments responsible for providing social assistance in OECS Member States do not appear to have data or estimates on the number of foreign nationals in their country who may need social assistance, which was largely attributed to the general lack of data on migrants, especially irregular migrants. Covariate risks posed by natural hazards or economic shocks may increase the existing vulnerabilities of migrants or cause cross-border displacement, increasing overall social protection needs. Social assistance is one of the principal tools used by governments in the region for providing support in emergencies. While regular social assistance programmes in the region are largely limited to nationals, there are examples of countries providing social assistance to non-nationals in the event of a shock or crisis (See section 3.2.2 for an overview of countries' social protection assistance to COVID-19).

**TABLE 1: ELIGIBILITY FOR SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES FOR NON-NATIONALS IN A SAMPLE OF OECS MEMBER STATES**

Country	Eligibility for social assistance programmes for non-nationals
Anguilla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the 2015 Social Protection Act, the following persons are eligible for assistance: 'belongers'<sup>16</sup>, spouses of belonger who have lived in the house of the belonger for three or more years; and guardians of a dependent who is a belonger of Anguilla and is resident in Anguilla for no less than ten months per calendar year and is not in prison</li> <li>'Non-belongers' are generally excluded from assistance from the Department of Social Development</li> <li>However, Clause 21 of the Act allows the Social Protection Board to provide benefits to someone who is not a 'belonger' in cases of particular need, but this assistance can only be offered for three months</li> <li>'Non-belongers' are eligible for social services provided by other departments, including immunisation, education, and access to emergency care.</li> </ul> <p>Source: Government of Anguilla (2018). Anguilla National Social Protection Policy.</p>
Antigua and Barbuda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To qualify for assistance under Antigua and Barbuda's Social Protection Bill 2019, an applicant must be a legal resident in Antigua and Barbuda and an OECS Member State citizen<sup>17</sup></li> <li>Some programmes require a minimum (legal) residence period minimum of 3 years (e.g. cash and food assistance, elderly support, elderly utility subsidy, funeral assistance, housing improvement, residential care, support and counselling, work and training)</li> <li>The following benefits do not require minimum residence period: elderly care support (provided for a monthly fee), fire victims assistance, residential care (child), school support</li> <li>Access to primary, secondary and tertiary education is granted to all irrelevant of citizenship</li> </ul> <p>Source: Antigua and Barbuda (2019). Social Protection Bill.</p>
British Virgin Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the Public Assistance Act, 2013, the following persons are eligible for assistance: 'belongers'<sup>18</sup>, residents, spouses of belongers who reside in the Virgin Islands with that person, and caregivers of a dependent person who is a belonger or resident</li> <li>'Non-belongers' are not eligible under the Act</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> The definition of "belonger status" under Anguilla law is contained in the Anguilla Constitution Order. Under the amended Anguilla Constitution Order of 2019, the term was replaced by "Anguillian status". The Anguillian Status Act of 2019 gives effect to the Anguillian status as set out in the Anguilla Constitution (Amendment) Order. A number of factors are considered in defining "Anguillian status," including place of birth, length of residence, status of family members, and marriage to an Anguillian.

<sup>17</sup> Guadeloupe is not among the Member States listed

<sup>18</sup> The belonger status is defined under the British Virgin Islands Constitution Order. There are several categories of persons who are deemed belongers,



Country	Eligibility for social assistance programmes for non-nationals
Commonwealth of Dominica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social assistance is provided irrelevant of nationality and status as long as needs justify it</li> <li>• The targeting of the Public Assistance Programme (PAP), as well as of other social assistance programmes in the country, is based on recommendations by Members of Parliament, Village Councils, local leaders, or others, which are followed by subjective assessments carried out by the field officers of the Social Welfare Division, now situated within the Ministry of Youth Development and Empowerment, Youth at Risk, Gender Affairs, Seniors' Security and Dominicans With Disabilities. PAP has no documented criteria for eligibility and no clear processes for beneficiary selection</li> </ul>
Montserrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To qualify for services from the Social Services Department (e.g. Welfare Assistance, Medical Assistance, One-Off Grants, Rental Assistance, Children &amp; Family Services), applicants must meet one or more of the following criteria: 1) Be Montserratian or have Permanent Residency status, 2) Over sixty (60) years and unable to support themselves, 3) Disabled and unable to support themselves 4) Caring for dependents and unable to support themselves.</li> </ul> <p>Source: Government of Montserrat (2021)</p>
Saint Lucia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the 1968 Public Assistance Act “Any person, who, in the opinion of the Board, is a need person will be entitled to relief under this Act.”</li> <li>• However, non-nationals are not eligible for assistance under the Public Assistance Programme. A prerequisite for applying to the PAP is possessing a NIC (National Identification Card) because the card number becomes the unique beneficiary identifier in the Ministry of Equity’s records. Obtaining an NIC necessitates applying at the NIC office with a birth certificate. This requirement means that non-nationals cannot apply for the PAP</li> </ul> <p>Source: Marzi et al. 2020; Government of Saint Lucia (2005). CHAPTER 13.22. Public Assistance Act. Revised Edition.</p>

The study was unable to confirm information for Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as well as Guadeloupe and Martinique . The two latter are departments of France and are thus subject to the legal requirements of the French Republic.

Source: Authors, based on sources cited above

### 3.2.2 SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESPONSES TO COVID-19

Globally and in the Caribbean, large-scale covariate shocks have increased the focus on the role that social protection can play in supporting the most vulnerable and in reducing existing risks. Countries in the OECS are therefore increasingly using national social assistance programmes to respond to large-scale shocks, including natural hazards such as hurricanes as well as economic shocks (Beazley et al., 2020).<sup>19</sup> There is a consensus among government stakeholders that humanitarian emergencies warrant the provision of assistance to all persons in need, regardless of their nationality or residence status, as expressed by some interviewees for this study. There are some examples in the region where national responses to such shocks included support to people displaced from affected countries, or to migrants living in-country.

Following Hurricane Maria in 2017, Saint Lucia saw the arrival of displaced people from Dominica who received assistance from the Ministry of Equity, Social Justice, Empowerment, Youth Development, Sports and Local Government. The Ministry developed a social assistance form that was administered at the ports of entry to collect information on the needs of people arriving from Dominica, which was used to obtain extra budgetary provision to cater for the needs of 30 Dominican citizens, through rental payments, payment of school costs and food for children (Marzi et al. 2020). While this support was possible because of the regional free movement regime and the small number of arrivals from Dominica, countries are likely to face significant challenges in the event of larger numbers of people being displaced and needing assistance (Beazley et al., 2020).

The unprecedented crisis created by COVID-19 in the region has also highlighted the role that social protection can play in responding to and mitigating

the impact of economic shocks. The crisis has prompted all countries in the region to leverage existing or to create new social protection programmes (see Annex D for an overview of social protection responses in the region). Most of these measures entailed non-contributory social assistance through unemployment grants and income support programmes.

In various OECS countries, the social protection measures implemented in response to COVID-19 provided support to non-nationals. In Dominica, for instance, non-nationals were eligible for COVID-19 Social Cash Transfers under the expansion of the Public Assistance Programme (PAP). In Grenada, COVID-19 temporary unemployment assistance was provided to residents of Grenada who had made a minimum of contributions under the social security scheme (Government of Grenada, 2020). In Montserrat, under the COVID-19 response package, which includes the extension of the provision of hot meals, social income support and unemployment benefit and monthly food packages, all persons who meet programme criteria, regardless of nationality, were assisted (Government of Montserrat, 2020). In Saint Kitts and Nevis, under the expansion of the PAP to new beneficiaries, non-nationals were included as long as they met the eligibility criteria and had proof of residency status (Nevis Pages, 2020) (see Annex D for an overview of countries' social protection responses).

These examples show that shock-responsive social protection in the OECS has to some extent addressed the needs of non-nationals in the context of COVID-19. Discussions for this study have highlighted that border closures combined with job losses and the subsequent inability of non-nationals to return to their home countries created a need for further support from the government for these persons.

<sup>19</sup> For a more complete summary of the different ways social protection has been used to respond to shocks in the Caribbean, see: <https://www.opml.co.uk/projects/study-shock-responsive-social-protection-latin-america-and-caribbean>.



GAPS AND  
CHALLENGES  
WITH REGARD TO  
MIGRANTS'  
ACCESS TO  
SOCIAL  
PROTECTION

## 4. Gaps and challenges with regard to migrants' access to social protection

The increase in the frequency and intensity of covariate shocks, as well as a growing interest in the linkages between social protection and emergency responses in the region, have highlighted the need for comprehensive national and regional approaches to shock-responsive social protection in the context of migration and displacement. OECS Member States, supported by international partners, have begun to discuss and address the connection between disasters and migration in the region, which has highlighted a range of interconnected challenges.

*"Managing the reality of migration requires a whole of government approach"*

### 4.1 POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS

A challenge for examining how social protection can be used in the context of displacement and migration arises from the fact that there is not yet a formalized regional approach to forced and irregular migration in the OECS, and alignment with certain international standards on migration is limited.<sup>20</sup> As highlighted further below, there is a need to update protocols and action plans in support of such a regional approach. Likewise, while OECS policies recognize the importance of social protection in addressing covariate shocks, more consideration could be given to the provision of social protection to migrants and persons displaced across countries in the context of such shocks. However, this situation is not surprising given how new the topic of shock-responsive social protection is.

The OECS Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategic Framework (2021) refers to a 'special application in humanitarian situations' in reference to the coordination of the provision of contributory benefits in OECS Member States, which can provide the anchor point to expand on how this support might be extended to migrants in times of disasters. Two particular issues around policies and protocols deserve further elaboration, including eligibility and access for non-nationals to social protection

programmes, and the interface between disaster risk management and social protection actors in the context providing support to migrants and/or displaced persons after a shock. These issues are addressed in the following sections.

#### 4.1.1 ELIGIBILITY AND ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR NON-NATIONALS

Governments of OECS Member States have long recognised the challenges in providing social protection to non-nationals, resulting from a combination of factors including programmes eligibility criteria, obstacles for accessing social protection, limited resources and capacity of programmes to scale up, and gaps in national and regional policy and legislation. The increased and protracted needs caused by the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 have further highlighted these gaps, prompting governments to re-think of models of social protection that are more inclusive (see section 3.2.2).

Migrants wishing to receive social protection support (in normal times and after a shock) are faced with a range of eligibility and access issues:

**Access to social assistance for migrants.** Many OECS countries make the provision of non-contributory social assistance conditional on citizenship or residence criteria, though non-citizens can sometimes access these programmes on a case-by-case basis, especially after shocks (see section 3.2.1 for more information on eligibility). In other cases where foreigners are not excluded from social assistance in theory, they may face other challenges in practice, such as language barriers, mobility restrictions, confiscated or lost identity or travel documents, limited social networks and support structures, and social isolation. They may refrain from applying due to (perceived or actual) irregularities in their immigration status, and the fear of possible consequences. In the context of shocks, which can increase the vulnerabilities and hardships

<sup>20</sup> For instance, a majority of Caribbean countries have not ratified the *Convention on the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*.

faced by migrants, these restrictions or obstacles may limit or entirely exclude their ability to access support through social protection.

Even where non-contributory social assistance programmes do not exclude non-nationals per se, persons interviewed for this study noted that these programmes tend to be limited in their ability to scale-up due to a lack of financial resources. There is a discussion among OECS Member States about the provision of social assistance to non-nationals. Nationals from other OECS Protocol Member States enjoy the same rights to social protection as nationals, as articulated in the OECS Policy on Rights Contingent on the Right to Freedom of Movement within the Economic Union (see section 3.1.3). However, there are several problems associated with operationalizing these rights, one sensitive issue being the varying levels of benefits in OECS Member States. Discrepancies across national social safety nets can lead to a situation where non-nationals, including those displaced by a shock, receive a level of support they would not normally have access to in their home country. This issue carries a degree of political sensitivity because of concerns that countries with more generous social welfare programmes could be disproportionately burdened. However, experience in the region shows that some countries tend to go beyond 'business as usual' in providing assistance to foreigners in times of disaster. There is an opportunity to build on this experience and the lessons learned for a planned approach to ensure access to social protection for non-nationals displaced or otherwise affected by a shock.

#### **Access to social protection for informal workers.**

Since current agreements in the region focus on the portability of social security benefits, they only apply to formal workers who make social security contributions. However, many migrants work in the informal sector, including in tourism and hospitality. Due to their precarious employment situation, these migrants may be particularly vulnerable and exposed to various work-related risks, but not eligible for social security. Limited access for non-nationals to non-contributory programmes (see point above) in

combination with the lack of unemployment insurance in the region implies that non-nationals who lose their job in the context of a shock or economic crisis may not be eligible to receive any assistance through national social protection systems. COVID-19 has begun to reveal this gap between contributory and non-contributory social protection provision with regards to migrants.

**Portability of short-term social security benefits.** The CASS, which is the main regional agreement for the portability of social security, only covers long-term social security benefits. While the OECS Convention on Social Security also addresses short-term social security benefits, it has only been signed by Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Lucia and is not operational (see section 3.1.2 for more information).

**Access for citizens from Associate Member States of the OECS.** Associate Member States of the OECS face two issues. The portability of social security benefits as provided for by the CASS does not apply to Associate Member States. The second issue is the lack of contingent rights for citizens of Associate Member States.<sup>21</sup> Contingent rights are provided for by Article 12.3 of the Protocol of Eastern Caribbean Economic Union, but this protocol does not apply to the OECS Associate Member States. It appears that at present there is not a discussion on extending contingent rights to Associate Member States.

## **4.2 INTERFACE BETWEEN IMMIGRATION, DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**

Managing the reality of migration requires a whole of government approach. Displacement touches the mandates of multiple ministries and departments, including disaster risk management, civil protection, immigration, health, social development, education, environment, work and pensions, finance. There are multiple policy entry points to address this issue, of which disaster risk management policy is perhaps the most important one. However, a review of disaster risk management and climate change adaptation policies in 30 small island developing states in the Caribbean and Pacific in 2017 showed that most Caribbean countries lack provisions for

<sup>21</sup> Contingent rights means that a citizen of a Protocol Member State who exercises the right of free movement enjoys the same general and social rights and privileges accorded to a citizen of the host Member State.

mass displacements in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation plans and policies, except for immediate actions to address evacuations and relocation (Hamza et al., 2017).

Any discussion on the access of migrants to social protection in the context of disasters must also address the interface between disaster risk management and immigration authorities and the capacity gaps within these. Immigration authorities in OECS countries are likely to face serious difficulties in responding to large displacement events, in part due to the disproportionate impact of such events on small island states and their limited capacity to manage them.

In this context, addressing gaps in policies and protocols is needed for harmonised action across government actors, between governments, and with other external partners. For example, IOM's survey of ten Caribbean Commonwealth countries (four of which are members of the OECS) found that while all ten countries had national plans for responding to emergencies and disasters and specific agencies responsible for implementing these action plans, nine of the ten countries did not have specific protocols for responding to a migration crisis, including provisions for managing the impact of displacement or responding to the specific needs of migrants (Aragon and El Assar, 2018). In most cases, protocols for coordinating with immigration authorities during a disaster have not been formally established, with coordination happening on an ad hoc basis. The study also found that while many countries had established emergency committees and assigned specific tasks to their members, these committees did not include representatives of immigration departments, with the exception of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, and Jamaica. Immigration authorities, however, are often responsible for organising the evacuation of visitors and facilitating relief personnel, supplies, logistics and vehicles in an emergency.

Establishing cross-departmental linkages and protocols for displacement management in the context of a disaster is critical to effectively assess,

assist, track, protect, evacuate, and relocate displaced populations in a safe and appropriate manner. The impact of Hurricane Maria in Dominica in 2017 exemplified the challenge of enforcing immigration law while effectively tracking people leaving the country, and later those returning or coming to assist with recovery efforts. This challenge also highlighted the need for neighbouring countries to establish protocols for receiving and assisting migrants (Aragon and El Assar, 2018).

### 4.3 DATA AVAILABILITY AND MANAGEMENT

Data is key to addressing a range of issues facing OECS Member States in relation to migration, social protection and crisis management. Obtaining, sharing, managing and effectively translating good data into policy and programme design remains a distinct challenge for the region, as highlighted in discussions for this study. The OECS is actively addressing some of the broad challenges around data and social protection through its Human and Social Protection Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which is pursuing recommendations for improving data management to optimise social protection support for vulnerable groups, as part of its draft Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategy (2021-2030).<sup>22</sup> The OECS has also commissioned work to strengthen social protection data management systems in the OECS (see Section 5).

Policies and programmes to address the impacts from covariate shocks in a more integrated manner must be based on a more complete data and information picture. An increasing amount of information is already being collected in-country and by international organisations. However, ensuring that this data is accessible and well-utilized remains a challenge.

The challenges around data which are directly relevant to the nexus of migration, shocks and social protection can be broken down into several areas:

- Accurate and comprehensive data on migrants (whether irregular or regular) is often not available, with many governments facing capacity constraints to capture this information

<sup>22</sup> See - <https://pressroom.oecs.org/oecs-human-and-social-protection-technical-advisory-committee-to-meet-virtually>

at the borders and to assess migrants' needs. Regarding social protection, most, if not all countries, do not yet have a social registry or inter-operability across databases to allow them to understand who receives what kind of support from the state. As a result of this situation, many countries only have a broad picture of migrants who contribute to and receive certain forms of contributory support such as workplace pensions, work-place accident cover, health insurance, and so forth. On the other hand, the numbers of migrants accessing social assistance remains a relative black box, and the process of referring migrants to social assistance remains discretionary as opposed to systematised. The situation is made more difficult for authorities by the fact that many irregular migrants who tend to be in most need of support do not come forward to seek assistance for fear of arrest, deportation, or a lack of understanding of their rights.

- Beyond broad data on who receives what type of assistance, there is a need for disaggregated data on inter-sectional needs of migrants, especially irregular migrants, as related to gender, employment, health, education, finance and psycho-social support amongst other factors. These data gaps are not normally addressed through census sweeps (which themselves are outdated by 5-10 years in many countries) or by on-demand social protection systems that rely on people coming forward to request assistance and services.
- To improve data availability, appropriate data collection methods, tools and capacities need to be developed to register, process, refer and assist migrants (especially irregular migrants and those displaced by disasters) in the immediate aftermath of a shock and over time.
- Finally, legislation and protocols for data protection and data sharing are not sufficiently developed, which means that data produced at

the country level cannot always be legally, efficiently and transparently analysed, shared, updated and managed, either horizontally between ministries and departments or vertically down to local authorities and actors. At the time of drafting this report in February 2021, it was unclear how many OECS countries had updated data protection laws to address the needs of social protection actors, the interface between disaster risk management and immigration authorities, and the handling of sensitive data around displaced populations.

#### 4.4 PERCEPTIONS AND PREJUDICE

While freedom of movement within the OECS is generally accepted as a success, there is a clear difference between a normative premise and the reality of its implementation. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC - the Spanish acronym is CEPAL), 'Caribbean countries seem to be generally reluctant to integrate foreign migrants into their societies' (ECLAC 2006, cited in IOM, 2017, p. 61), seeking to avoid permanent immigration and entry of certain groups.

The political sensitivities with respect to migrants are particularly evident in the decision-making on who is eligible to receive social assistance in the context of very limited resources, a situation faced by all OECS Member States. In many OECS countries, there is no formal process for the provision of social assistance to non-nationals (from other OECS countries or beyond), rather a general expression of the need for solidarity, with decisions made by social development workers and committees on a discretionary and case-by-case basis (see section 3.2). Likewise, the provision of social protection to non-nationals is a sensitive issue in the OECS as elsewhere, highlighted by the effect of the COVID-19 crisis on unemployment and subsequent provision of social protection.

Discussions with different stakeholders in the context of this study highlighted that political economy issues (meaning issues related to relations among individuals, governments, and public policy) around



migrants' access to social protection are nuanced and potentially under-researched. While the CSME is viewed positively by policymakers in terms of the economic benefits for OECS Member States, the benefits of the social side of integration and the investment in universal access to social tend to be less well understood. This situation poses at least three questions – are these issues understood amongst governments in the OECS; do governments have the information to act; and do they have the resources to act? The answers to these questions can be circular and self-fulfilling – if a government lacks resources to address an issue, there might be hesitancy to seek information that highlights the extent of a problem. As with many of the gaps highlighted in this section, a lack of sufficient data hampers collective understanding, advocacy, and the creation of appropriate policy responses (see section 4.2 on data).

#### 4.5 PROTECTION ISSUES AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

It is estimated that some 10% of human trafficking victims worldwide are from Latin America and the Caribbean (Aragon and El Assar, 2018). As noted, the Caribbean provides a direct migration corridor from Latin America to North America, for migrants from within and outside the Caribbean, both regular and irregular (IOM, 2017) (see section 1). This context provides the conditions and incentives for human trafficking and for unregulated and illegal employment and exploitation, with trafficking of minors and young women to islands with a large tourism industry being of particular concern. The impact of shocks, such as natural disasters, can increase the risks to vulnerable groups from traffickers and lead to generalised violence and abuse, making it difficult to address these issues, especially when people are

*“There hasn't been enough focus on the social side of mobility in the OECS. It is generally accepted that freedom of movement hasn't made national situations worse, but it unknown if it has made them better ”*

moving across borders as a result of a shock, which is common in the OECS. However, legislation and policy measures such as anti-trafficking laws remain patchy, and the capacity to enforce laws remains low (Aragon and El Assar, 2018). These problems will persist as long as there are no adequate laws or as long as laws are not enforced, and as long as conditions in the countries of origin do not improve (Thomas-Hope, 2005).

When people decide to move or are forced to move, this situation can put them in a vulnerable situation, posing distinct protection challenges for social services. At the same time, these people may face distinct challenges in accessing social protection due to factors such as lack or loss of identify documents, limited social networks or legal status. Likewise, certain individuals such as irregular migrants, unaccompanied minors, sex workers, pregnant and lactating women, stateless persons as well as persons from LGBTQI community may face differentiated vulnerabilities and protection needs. Hence, there is a need to develop special legislative provisions, programmes, and awareness raising for social development staff and migrants in areas such as legal protections and rights and the right to access social services, education, medical care, legal assistance and psychological services. Likewise, frontline agencies would require training to help identify vulnerable individuals, ensure adequate support for victims of violence, and prevent re-victimization (Astles, 2016). In this context, consideration should also be given to various steps in the migration process (from point of entry to settling).

#### 4.6 FREE MOVEMENT VERSUS BORDER CONTROL

Related to the problem of human trafficking is the issue of border control, which in turn is linked to the free movement regime of the OECS itself. Integration within the OECS, embedded in the CSME, has created new opportunities for OECS countries and the wider CARICOM Member States to engage with each other and the global market and to develop their

economies, facilitating the regular and legitimate movement of people across borders. However, this situation has also contributed to the rise of transnational organised crime, whose primary activities have focused on trafficking drugs and weapons, and diversifying and expanding into fraud, the smuggling of contraband and people, and cyber-crimes (Aragon and El Assar, 2018). Despite efforts to coordinate and share intelligence, criminal networks are evolving and changing methods, routes and targets, as well as moving operations across locations and territories. Government representatives have previously noted that the CSME has created additional security threats due to difficulties monitoring the circular migration of CARICOM nationals, who are granted automatic six-month stays in other CARICOM Member States without the need for a work permit, and subject to minimal oversight (Aragon and El Assar, 2018).

To address these national and regional challenges and help increase border security, CARICOM has created the Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS), a regional agency charged with managing collaborative security strategies as part of an overall regional security framework, including enhancing capacity to combat illegal cross-border activity and detecting irregular migration (CARICOM, 2018c, in Aragon and El Assar, 2018). These security measures are instrumental in enabling good migration governance by ensuring the safe and orderly movement of people. The connection created through IMPACS between customs, police, military and intelligence practices across CARICOM Member States also suggests the potential to exchange information with social protection ministries and other actors providing support to people on the move, including those displaced by disasters.

#### **4.7 GENDER ISSUES SURROUNDING MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT**

At each stage of a migrant's journey, whether in transit, at destination or place of return, they are likely to be treated differently based on gender norms and perceptions. Gendered experiences shape migrants' lives as well as the nature of their

migration process and have contributed to the (re) configuration of Caribbean society (Segura, 2016). However, policies that respond to migrants "generally assume their experience is homogenous, rendering women, girls and other individuals with diverse gender identities invisible, with adverse consequences for programmes' reach and suitability" (Astles, 2016, p. 1).

Historical trends show a clear 'feminization' of migration patterns globally and in the Caribbean (Platonova and Gény, 2017). Today, women represent around half of the global migrant and refugee populations worldwide (UNWOMEN, 2016). They are often first responders in a crisis, their care is central to sustaining and rebuilding communities, and they contribute significantly to national economies, both in destination and home countries. Women make up 73% of the international migrant domestic workers, and in 2015, international migrants sent USD432.6 billion in remittances to developing countries—nearly three times the amount of Official Development Assistance which totalled USD131.6 billion (UNWOMEN, 2016). Over half of all Caribbean migrants to the United States, Europe, and Canada are women, and in Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, women account for more than 50% of migrants (see Table 2) (Aragon and El Assar, 2018). The 'feminization' of migration in the Caribbean is in part a result of labour related mobility such as in the case of Barbados, for example, which has witnessed a high intake of trained nurses from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines due to workforce shortages in the country's health sector (Platonova and Gény, 2017).

Understanding migration from a gender perspective would offer social protection actors the ability to improve the overall provision of assistance to migrants, as well as to guarantee and protect the rights of migrants of all gender identities (Astles, 2016). Currently, there are specific bottlenecks faced by migrant groups to access social protection and services, and gender-differentiated needs and priorities of migrants are often not sufficiently included in policies designed to protect and assist

them.

Global evidence shows that women and girls tend to be disproportionately affected by shocks and may face particular risks because of pre-existing gender inequalities (Holmes, 2019). For example, women may face particular challenges coping with crises due to reduced access to and control over resources (Kumar, & Quisumbing, 2014). Such gendered impacts can be further complicated by intersecting factors such as race, class, sexual orientation, disability, or language, and exacerbate the various risks and vulnerabilities faced by migrants and those displaced by shocks (see section 4.4).

Despite the increasing recognition of the gendered impact of crises and the growing attention worldwide to the role that social protection can play in responding to shocks, most shock-responsive social protection efforts have not yet incorporated a gender perspective (Holmes, 2019). Yet, applying a gender lens to routine social protection programming can also help ensure that any adaptation of social protection programmes in response to a shock is also more gender-sensitive (Holmes, 2019).

Such a gender sensitive policy approach to social protection programming should be complemented by a migrant lens to account for intersecting vulnerabilities and risks. Gender- and migrant sensitive policy measures could entail reviewing and enhancing legal protection and rights, ensuring tailored services especially around medical care, childcare, education, legal assistance and psychological services, and creating communications campaigns for migrants to help them understand their rights and responsibilities. These actions should be underpinned by gender-sensitive research and data disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity and other characteristics (Astles, 2016). By understanding differentiated migrant realities, including gendered risks and impacts, governments in the OECS can create more effective policy, tailor responses accordingly, and help promote, protect and guarantee the rights of all migrants in the region.

## 4.8 FINANCING FOR SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

Countries in the OECS face a 'double bind' when it comes to financing social protection and responding to shocks. While they are highly vulnerable in terms of the per-capita and national impact from shocks on economies, their status as upper-middle or high-income countries or overseas territories means many cannot access Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) financing, based primarily on macroeconomic indicators such as GNI per capita. In addition, many countries have high debt-to-GDP ratios, making access to concessional lending a challenge.<sup>23</sup> These two factors significantly constrain their access to grants or borrowing capabilities for the financing of responses to shocks and economic crises (CAB, 2020; Hagenlocher et al., 2020).

Building social protection systems to support those vulnerable to shocks and ensure a basic minimum protection to all has risen up the political agenda, but still runs up against questions of how it will be financed. Nevertheless, investment in social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean saw significant improvement over the past 15 years up to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, due in large part to the extension of contributory schemes as well as the expansion of non-contributory social assistance. Mostly financed from government budgets and domestic revenue, expenditure on social protection in the Latin America and Caribbean region as a whole is close to the global average of 1.5% of GDP and exceeds that of several other countries (Cubas et al., 2020). In 2019, social protection coverage in Latin America and the Caribbean reached 61.4% across all schemes, with social assistance standing at 39.2% of the population (ILO 2017).

However, these figures belie significant national and regional heterogeneity, with fragmented and sporadic coverage in key areas, and across key groups such as microenterprise, self-employed and domestic workers, as well as hard-to-reach rural populations (ILO 2017). Some cohorts of the

<sup>23</sup> On average the external debt of SIDS accounts for 72.4% of their GDP, reaching up to 198% in the Seychelles and 194% in the Bahamas (Hagenlocher et al., 2020). Caribbean countries collectively owe USD\$8.8 billion that needs to be paid back in 2020 and 2021 (Wilkinson, 2020).

population made newly vulnerable by COVID-19 have highlighted gaps in social protection provision, including for informal workers who account for 53% of the population in the Latin America and Caribbean (Rubio et al., 2020). These workers were not formerly deemed eligible for social assistance, and not part of the contributory social insurance system (Rubio et al., 2020). Migrant populations cut across all these groups.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of social protection as both a responsive and protective mechanism, yet governments are faced with hard decisions around which programmes to fund and scale up. Given that it is often unknown how many migrants are resident in an OECS country at any given time, how many are in need of social protection support, and how much regular or irregular migration contributes to national economies, it is difficult to estimate what the financial implications of enhancing their access to

**TABLE 2: IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN SELECTED ISLAND STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN**

Country	Total population	Total immigrant population	Immigrant population (in % of total population)	Female immigrant population	Female immigrant population (in % of total immigrant population)	Female immigrant population (in % of total population)
Antigua and Barbuda*	100,963	29,000	28.7%	16,066	55.4%	15.9%
The Bahamas	391,232	62,000	15.8%	30,628	49.4%	7.8%
Barbados	284,996	35,000	12.3%	19,285	55.0%	6.8%
Commonwealth of	73,543	7,000	9.5%	3,325	47.5%	4.5%
Grenada*	107,317	7,000	6.5%	3,528	50.4%	3.3%
Jamaica	2,730,900	13,639	0.49%	6,710	49.1%	0.25%
Saint Kitts and Nevis	54,821	8,000	14.6%	3,792	47.4%	6.9%
Saint Lucia	178,844	13,000	7.3%	6,435	49.5%	1.9%
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	109,643	10,300	9.4%	5,222	50.6%	3.6%
Trinidad and Tobago	1,365,000	50,000	3.7%	25,600	51.2%	4.8%

\*OECS Member States

Source: : Adapted from Aragon and El Assar, 2018

social protection would be, which tends to result in a circular argument. A lack of clear information means an inability to form an appropriate policy and programmatic response, and the lack of sufficient resources entails an unwillingness to obtain more data to understand the scale of the problem. The next section elaborates further on the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 crisis.

#### 4.9 THE SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT FROM COVID-19

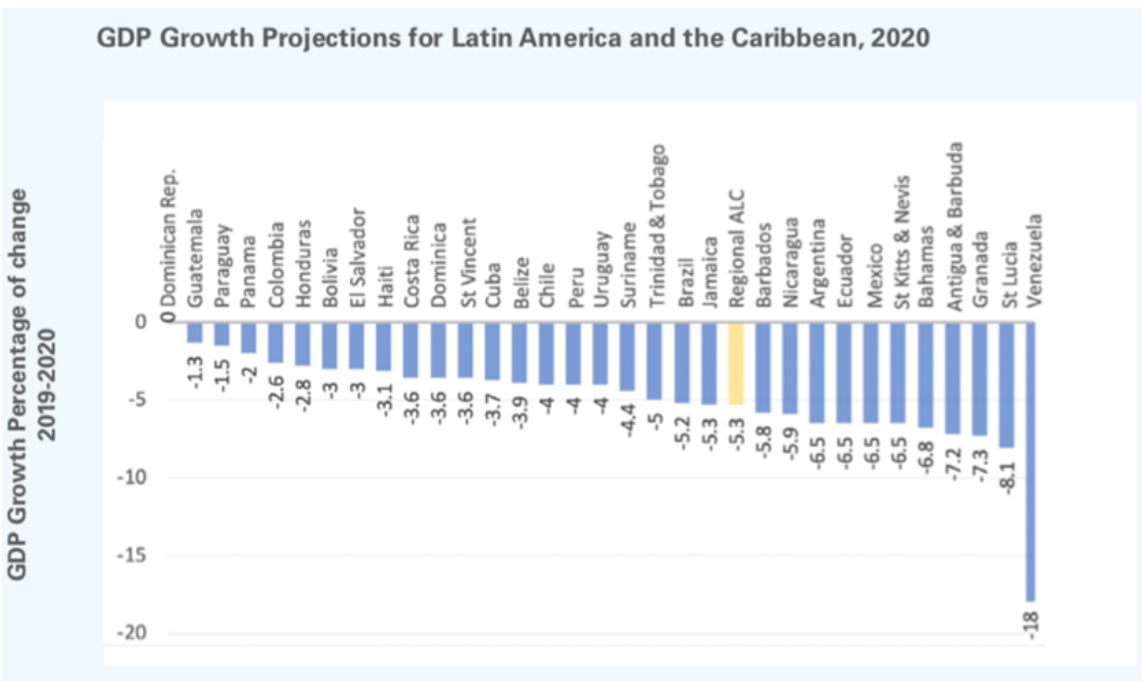
Major global and regional shocks over the past decade have negatively affected the GDP of OECS Member States, reducing investments in tourism, and curtailing expenditure in the social sector areas such as health, education, and public assistance for vulnerable groups (OECS, 2020). Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a global health and economic crisis, from which a rapid rebound and economic recovery seems unlikely. The pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities and created new ones (Archibald et al., 2020). Likewise, existing challenges around funding regular and shock

-responsive social protection have been aggravated by a significant economic contract and concurrent pressure to use and expand social protection programmes to address the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19.

In the Caribbean region, COVID-19 has had a profound impact on lives and livelihoods as a result of the global economic downturn. Governments across the Caribbean have responded with a variety of social protection interventions including adjusting and scaling up social assistance and social pension programmes, extending unemployment schemes and reducing social security contributions, providing wage subsidies, and creating new temporary programmes to meet additional and unanticipated needs (see sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2, and Annex D). The most frequent intervention has been the use of existing or

*“There hasn’t been enough focus on the social side of mobility in the OECS. It is generally accepted that freedom of movement hasn’t made national situations worse, but it unknown if it has made them better ”*

FIGURE 7: GDP GROWTH PROJECTIONS FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 2020



Source: CEPAL Informe Especial COVID-19 No. 2 - Abril 2020 (ECLAC-COVID-19 Special Report No. 2 - April 2020), cited in Rubio et al., 2020

new cash transfer programmes to reach the most vulnerable or unprotected, including those not covered by any contributory social security schemes (Cejudo et al., 2020).

However, governments' responses across Latin America and the Caribbean have been limited by the current coverage and capacity gaps of existing programmes and information systems, in a context where the right to healthcare is not universal, household income is insufficiently protected against declines in economic activity, and the needs of very vulnerable groups are at risk of being overlooked, including for migrants who generally do not benefit from existing programmes for a variety of reasons (Cejudo et al., 2020).

Migrants working in employment sectors such as seasonal tourism or construction were particularly impacted by the impacts of COVID-19, with widespread income and job loss, the impacts of

*“COVID-19 presents a chance to disrupt and innovate”*

which were exacerbated by their limited access to social protection benefits (see section 4.1). Loss of livelihoods and income from COVID-19 are likely to affect regular or irregular migration as people move in search of work, with associated risks of insecure or unsuitable employment, or of leaving vulnerable family members behind (see section 4.5).

As COVID-19 continues to impact livelihoods and economic activity, there is a need to define the role that social protection systems can play beyond the immediate response to COVID-19 in addressing the medium-term impacts of the pandemic and creating a more robust systemic architecture that can flexibly reach different target groups, including non-nationals, in need. Lessons from the crisis can be used to build more flexible and sustainable shock-responsive social protection systems and address future covariate shocks more holistically and in a manner that is inclusive of both nationals and non-nationals.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

OPPORTUNITIES  
AND LESSONS  
LEARNED



# 5. Opportunities and lessons learned

Global experience shows that a whole-of-government approach is needed for effective and comprehensive migration management, which is even more pertinent when looking to provide social protection to migrants. Such an approach involves the development and implementation of standards, plans, programmes, strategies, management instruments and decentralised capacity that are tailored to the needs of different migrant groups, as well as coordination within the government and between the government and other stakeholders.

Migration in the OECS is broadly understood and welcomed, facilitated by regional protocols and agreements. But as noted, it is also subject to noticeable knowledge and data gaps, and shortfalls in terms of the provision of support to non-nationals. While the response to COVID-19 is challenging for all Member States of the OECS, it also provides an opportunity to gain new insights to improve access to social protection in the context of shocks, including for migrants. The notion of ‘never wasting a crisis’, was highlighted in the interviews with government stakeholders conducted for this study and underscores the importance of learning from past events to invest wisely in shock-responsive social protection systems. It reflects the move from reactive to comprehensive risk management approaches that are at the heart of the regional agendas of the OECS, CARICOM and CDEMA. This section identifies some of the key opportunities for advancing shock-responsive social protection in the region, with a focus on strengthening linkages to migration and displacement.

## 5.1 BUILDING POLICY COHERENCE FOR COMPREHENSIVE MIGRATION MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

As noted above, there does not yet exist a formalised regional approach to displacement and migration in the OECS. At the regional level, the drafting of the OECS Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategy (2021-2030) has provided a basis for improving shock-responsive social protection planning and coordination in general, and for strengthening linkages to comprehensive migration management in particular. While the draft strategy refers to a ‘

special application in humanitarian situations’ for coordinating the provision of contributory benefits in the OECS Member States, more consideration could be given to the different shock-responsive social protection options, including how to reach nationals and non-nationals with flexible support. In this regard, the strategy could also provide the basis for national processes of review, revision, or the development of much needed protocols and action plans for mass migration/displacement events. Particular attention should be paid to the provision of non-contributory social assistance, which holds significant potential for scalability and alignment with disaster risk management in addition to being an area where access for non-nationals appears the most limited.

## 5.2 LEARNING FROM COUNTRY EXPERIENCE

Supporting a whole-of-government policy approach to migration management also means building on existing country experiences and solutions. This study has highlighted some of the ways in which national governments in the OECS have provided social protection support to non-nationals in response to covariate shocks, or have created tools and processes that could enable such responses in the future (see section 3.2.2). Drawing on this experience would provide the framing to enrich policy discussions at national and regional levels, and the context for more practical measures, some of which are outlined in this section.

Much more could be learned from the experiences of front-line staff in terms of identifying and addressing migrant needs, especially in and around displacement events. While more research is available at a regional level, country case studies are sparse. While various partners interviewed for this study mentioned that work had been done in specific countries, it has not always been published (e.g. in Dominica and Saint Lucia). Increasing and enhancing the available literature around migrants’ experience, needs, access and barriers to social protection, as well as obtaining the views of front-line governmental staff, non-government organisations (NGOs) and international organisations, would be an

important step to framing the gaps and solutions necessary to adjust policy and programmes.

### 5.3 EXPLORING OPTIONS OF SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

Shock-responsive social protection entails a multitude of potential options for systems and programmes to be created, utilised, or adapted based on a specific country context, type of shock, and target groups. Options include measures such as increasing the benefit amounts provided to existing beneficiaries in times of a shock, extending existing programmes to new beneficiaries, and adjusting design features of a programmes such as temporarily removing conditionality at the peak of a shock (O'Brien et al., 2018).

In the Caribbean we are seeing a diversity of shock-responsive social protection approaches across social protection, disaster risk management and humanitarian programmes to address different shocks (for more details see a synthesis in Beazley et al., 2020). Specific shock-responsive measures mentioned in the OECS Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategic Framework include temporary increases of benefits to existing beneficiaries (vertical expansion) and temporary scale-ups to assist new beneficiaries (horizontal expansion) through cash transfers, psychosocial responses and other services as part of a social protection strategy lifecycle approach (OECS, 2021). The framework, which has guided the drafting of the OECS Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategy, offers an important conceptual foundation to work from, and will be complemented by an implementation document.

The questions of how and when to incorporate irregular migrants and displaced persons into national social protection programmes is new territory – not just in the Caribbean but globally. This process could entail several steps, from aligning existing support to migrants into a more coherent approach, to building up the capacity of a government to address migrants within national systems and creating a transition plan and referral methodology for transferral onto national systems.

Finally, shock-responsive social protection is about both enhancing and scaling up programmes. Accompanying social assistance with additional services such as psycho-social support and trainings, capacity building, linkages to social services, is critical to enrich and transform beneficiary lives and livelihoods as it is to support and save them in times of shock. This aspect is perhaps even more important for those displaced from their home countries in the context of a disaster, potentially facing violence or prejudice, as well as for unaccompanied minors and single parent families, who deserve special attention (see section 4.4 and 4.6).

### 5.4 STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND CROSS-SECTORAL COORDINATION

Specific tools and mechanisms are needed for migration management in the context of shocks, to facilitate cross-partner assessments and capacity building, coordination and referral of migrants, amongst other factors. Development partners such as IOM, through regional consultations with governments including in Latin America and the Caribbean, have developed principles and operational frameworks, such as the and Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) and Migrants in Countries of Crisis (MICIC) to assist in the planning and implementation of strategies for assisting migrants pre- and post-crisis, including top-line guidance on connecting them to social services.<sup>24</sup> Importantly, such tools emphasise the need to include migrants in the planning process. Other tools supported by international partners include WFP's Shock-Responsive Social Protection Handbook for the Caribbean (forthcoming), which provides a more detailed guide to operationalising shock-responsive social protection, and UNICEF's tool for assessing responses to COVID-19 through social protection systems (under development).

Implementing migration-sensitive policies around emergency management requires the ability to coordinate effectively, both across government departments and down to the local level. Developing inter-ministerial committees on migration, as has been done in Grenada, Antigua, Dominica, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with support from IOM,

<sup>24</sup> In the Caribbean region, both the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas have undertaken the MICIC training.

can help create coherent visioning, policy guidance and action plans and work towards a whole-of-government approach to migration that includes social protection as a core component.

Despite the importance of inter-government coordination in crisis management, regional research shows that the connections between DRM and immigration ministries and departments are generally either non-existent or ad hoc (Aragon and El Assar, 2018). Links to social protection/development ministries are generally also rare. Therefore, the creation of inter-ministerial emergency management committees inclusive of immigration and social development/protection focal points, can assist with clarifying roles and responsibilities and improve coordination, communication and collaboration, also enhancing efficiency gains in crisis management.

Replicating such emergency coordination structures at decentralised levels is just as, if not more, important. In this respect, countries such as Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have established community disaster committees to promote inter-sectoral collaboration. Much can be learned from these countries in how to formalise mechanisms and clearly outline coordination channels and procedures in order to reduce the incidence of arbitrary decision-making in emergencies (Aragon and El Assar, 2018). At the same time, local coordination structures should actively engage migrants to ensure that emergency preparedness and response interventions are migrant-sensitive. This process can be accompanied by capacity building measures to enable committees and front-line staff to better identify and manage the needs of vulnerable migrant groups.

Part of the formalisation of coordination mechanisms includes developing SOPs for different elements of disaster risk management, that are inclusive of a migration and displacement dimension. While most countries in the OECS have SOPs in place for the management of evacuations and shelters, officials have expressed the need to strengthen their

mechanisms to track evacuees and displaced persons (Aragon and El Assar, 2018). Likewise, developing protocols and tools to assess and provide an integrated picture of needs (in areas such as health, protection, food security) can help give front line staff the information necessary to respond and refer migrants and displaced persons appropriately across government and non-governmental service providers.

## 5.5 IMPROVING DATA AND ENHANCING INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Data-driven approaches to delivering assistance in crises is a new frontier and at the forefront of thinking around shock-responsive social protection. When it comes to migration and the linkages with social protection, data is the cornerstone to guide policy design and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection programmes.

In the OECS, quantitative data on migration – overall numbers, demographics, and their contributions to national economies - is lacking. Combining core data collection (who, what, where, and when) with the more qualitative dimensions (the lived experience of migrants, the why and the how) will help to clarify the broader picture on migration movements as well as the socio-political perspective of migration to help policy makers answer key questions that remain unaddressed. These include: How is a regular / irregular migrant defined? How many migrants do countries host? What are their needs? How do they contribute to national economies? Is migration a net-positive? Can governments justify the cost of extending social protection to them? A lack of sufficient quantitative and qualitative data has been as a key issue to answering these questions.

In addition to enhancing data on migration in general, there is a need to better understand the linkages between covariate shocks and migration. The OECS is already investing in enhanced data collection and analysis on the links between climate change, disasters and migration, including through the 'Regional Dialogue to Address Human Mobility and Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean' launched in October 2021. Under this

initiative, IOM, in collaboration with the OECS Commission, are publishing a series of reports on 'Migration, Environment, Disasters and Climate Change Data in the Eastern Caribbean' to provide a better understanding of the linkages between climate change and human mobility. The regional overview report, the first in the series, looks specifically at national data systems in six OECS Member States to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improved collection, analysis, management, and dissemination of data on human mobility in the context of climate change and disasters (Andreola Serraglio et al., 2021). Initiatives such as these provide an excellent foundation for further research and decision-making on social protection in the context of migration, displacement, and covariate shocks.

Components of a data-driven approach to shock-responsive social protection can entail elements such as inter-operable data management systems (including social registries and beneficiary databases), national IDs and unique identifiers, and integrated delivery systems. At the regional level, the OECS has prioritised improving data collection and management through the Human and Social Protection Technical Advisory Committee. As part of its upcoming Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategy (2021-2030), the OECS has also commissioned a consultant to help strengthen social protection data management systems, specifically to provide a gap assessment on data systems in the region (across different ministries), devise minimum conventions for data quality, build capacity around data management, and improve system interoperability. There is further discussion about creating a unique identifier across the region, and the OECS is piloting a process with Member States to create a common data capture format to collate information, which could be replicated across other sub-sectors and categories of information.

When it comes to data collection and management in the context of shock-responsive social protection and migration, there is also clear potential to learn from countries that have devised strategies to assess risk multi-dimensionally. For example, Antigua and

Barbuda and Saint Kitts and Nevis have developed capacities to conduct comprehensive multi-hazard risk and vulnerability assessments, which provides an opportunity to discuss how a migration dimension could be integrated into these methodologies. There is also potential to build on the experiences of countries that have created data sharing protocols and agreements to explore how these could be broadened to include actors working in migration management. For example, Saint Kitts and Nevis already has a data-sharing act (passed in 2018) and the British Virgin Islands has a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Health, Social Development and the British Red Cross supporting housing assistance programmes.

Further efforts to enhance data collection, management and sharing could focus on improving data protection awareness, guidance, policy and training, especially in the relevant sectors of disaster risk management, immigration and social protection. This process could be started through undertaking Data Protection Impact Assessments that help flag adjustments needed to existing policies, programmes and systems, and ways to enhance capacity at different levels.<sup>25</sup>

## 5.6 EXPLORING INNOVATIVE DISASTER RISK FINANCING FOR SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has usefully demonstrated the role of social protection systems and programmes in delivering assistance in response to covariate shocks, with all countries in the region having introduced, adapted or expanded programmes to respond to increased needs (see Annex D). At the same time, existing challenges around funding regular and shock-responsive social protection have been aggravated by a significant economic contraction and concurrent pressure to use and expand social protection programmes to address the socioeconomic impacts of the crisis.

Governments are using various innovative disaster risk financing tools to address shocks and avoid the conventional reallocation of existing resources after a shock, which can be damaging to longer term

<sup>25</sup> For examples of DPIAs see - <https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/handbook-data-protection-humanitarian-action> / [https://edps.europa.eu/data-protection/our-work/publications/guidelines/data-protection-impact-assessment-list\\_en/](https://edps.europa.eu/data-protection/our-work/publications/guidelines/data-protection-impact-assessment-list_en/) / and <https://www.cnil.fr/en/privacy-impact-assessment-pia>

planning and financial sustainability. Disaster risk financing entails a range of budgetary and financial mechanisms designed to pay for different risks, arranged before a potential shock, and based on a suitable policy, planning, coordination and delivery architecture (Centre for Disaster Protection, 2020a). Risk financing examples already existing in the Caribbean include the weather-indexed insurance programmes CRAIC and CCRIF SPC, the Catastrophe Draw-Down Options (CAT-DDOs) from the World Bank, and budgetary repurposing mechanisms. Likewise, forecast-based financing follows a similar approach, utilising climate and weather forecasting techniques to provide support before and after a shock occurs (Wilkinson et al., 2021).<sup>26</sup>

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, Caribbean heads of government adopted a collective approach to requesting assistance from International Financial Institutions. As borrowing is not feasible, they are calling instead for debt relief, disaster clauses in sovereign debt contracts and changes to the international aid rules, with the Prime Minister of Barbados leading calls for a vulnerability index to be used to determine needs (Wilkinson, 2020). There are also ongoing discussions around building national and regional reserve funds, as well as possible regional parametric insurance products, to improve financing for disasters (before and after a shock), pool resources, sidestep bureaucracy, and avoid harmful budgetary reallocations for response to shocks within government (Wilkinson et al., 2021b). Discussions at the regional level are complex, and more efforts are needed in terms of risk analytics, policy dialogue, as well as the strengthening of public financial management in key areas. Likewise, opportunity costs for such regional funds, as opposed to investing in CDEMA or strategically capitalised national reserve funds, would need to be carefully considered.

International financial institutions such as the World Bank are supporting a range of measures including fast-tracking budget support loans (known as development policy operations (DPOs), which are linked to policy reform requirements on the part of governments), technical support to re-designing

disaster risk financing strategies to better incorporate emerging health risks, or providing emergency reallocations of International Development Association finance using the Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC).<sup>27</sup> International donors and agencies such as the European Union and WFP are helping extend the coverage of risk pooling mechanisms such as CCRIF by supplementing the premium payments to discount the overall cost of premiums and increase beneficiary reach (Scott, 2020).<sup>28</sup> Regional financial institutions such as the Caribbean Development Bank have moved from sectoral and project-based finance towards a more synergised approach, requesting partners to ensure that financing for social protection is provided in a less fragmented fashion. Such an approach also relies on building national capacity and ensuring greater communication within national governments and across regional financial bodies.

Linking disaster risk financing to social protection is a subject gaining traction in the Caribbean. While the cost-benefits of investing in early action, resilience and shock-responsive social protection systems, as opposed to conventional and cyclical humanitarian responses, have become increasingly clear in global literature, these benefits are yet to be fully realised (Hallegate, 2012; Clarke and Vargas Hill, 2013; Cabot Venton, 2018). Social protection can play an important role as a delivery channel for disaster risk finance, yet few examples exist of linking disaster risk financing instruments to social protection systems in practice. This area offers significant growth potential, though more evidence is needed on the cost-benefits and trade-offs of such systems investments in the Caribbean. Disaster risk finance can help deliver assistance in a more timely manner in the event of shocks, once social protection systems have the adequate infrastructure, including coordination arrangements, delivery channels, targeting and monitoring and evaluation, allowing them to scale up in response to a shock (Centre for Disaster Protection, 2020b).

Countries in the OECS are considering the bigger picture of how to cover the compound risk posed by

<sup>26</sup> The 'Improving Access to Insurance among Vulnerable Individuals through the Climate Risk Adaptation and Insurance in the Caribbean' (CRAIC), and the 'Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Segregated Portfolio Company' (CCRIF SPC).

<sup>27</sup> The Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC) is a financing mechanism available to Governments to allow rapid reallocation of uncommitted funds from Bank financed projects to other urgent needs during a disaster. A CERC is typically embedded within a project but with zero funds allocated to it. Once activated, funds can be mobilised very quickly (as long as the project still has uncommitted resources available).

multiple shocks, through the best use of different financial instruments, while also being financially over-exposed with little domestic revenue and budget reserves to draw on. This situation means that countries may not always draw on disaster risk finance options even if they are open to them, based on a calculation of risk posed by current and future shocks, and the best use of scant resources. When considering the use of those limited resources, the plight of migrants may get lost or de-prioritised, yet working around objective, needs-based approaches can help ensure their inclusion when designing disaster risk and other financing instruments for (shock-responsive) social protection.

## 5.7 ADDRESSING THE INTERFACE BETWEEN BORDER CONTROL, DATA CAPTURE AND SOCIAL PROTECTION REFERRAL

The fact that the Caribbean sits at the intersection of a busy migration corridor to the United States, as well as its ties to former colonial countries such as France, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, means that border control has always been a focus for OECS Member States. This issue has gained added relevance due to COVID-19 and official border closures, as well as the pressure exerted on border authorities in the event of covariate shocks, the latter being well documented (see IOM, 2017; Aragon and El Assar, 2018). The following elements have been highlighted as priority needs in the context of border control in the region (cited from Aragon and El Assar, 2018):

- Updating protocols and action plans implementing a regional approach to irregular migration
- Developing national responses to combat transnational organised crime and people trafficking, and strengthening legislation allowing the penalization of the migrant smuggling
- Developing dedicated units or taskforces to the investigation of smuggling of migrants
- Creating a Border Management System linking states across the Caribbean, which can track entry

and exit, flag the use of fraudulent travel documents, highlight visa overstays, and integrate with international and national watch lists

- Improving inter-agency mechanisms for sharing locally collected data
- Developing alternatives to migrant detention and/or a dedicated detention centre for migrants in compliance with international standards

These issues are particularly relevant in the event of covariate shocks like natural hazards which can increase the number of people on the move and overwhelm the capacities of border authorities. They point to potential solutions in addressing major challenges such as data collection and referral processes for migrants and displaced persons in the event of a shock. For example, more data on migrants could be collected at the port of entry, creating a form of 'social profile' which could then be used for other service providers to target support, including social protection, to migrants and those displaced by a disaster.

Given the heightened interest and investment in border security in the context of COVID-19, such initiatives could create a 'win win' for improving the information picture and helping countries better adapt their support to non-nationals. However, the link between immigration and social services is clearly also a sensitive one, as irregular migrants may be hesitant to divulge information that could lead to their penalisation or deportation, even if they have a right to support from the state. Information firewalls would be essential, along with good collaboration and division of responsibility between immigration and social development workers. Nevertheless, the process could offer a point of entry for joint work to further enable the safe, orderly and appropriate treatment of migrants moving between and beyond OECS Member States.

## 5.8 LEVERAGING THE DIASPORA AND RETURNING NATIONALS

<sup>28</sup> In 2020 the European Union offered to contribute to the premium costs for Caribbean countries looking to access CCRIF, with the 11 million USD grant enabling member countries to either discount their total gross premium or increase their policy coverage. Member countries can choose to utilise the EU-funded discount during either the 2020/21 or 2021/22 policy years based on projections of low or negative growth (Scott, 2020).

Engaging the global diaspora and returning nationals presents an apt opportunity for countries in the Caribbean to make use of various resources and connections, including for strengthened emergency preparedness and response. Global experience shows that migrants can play a key role in disaster response by leveraging their financial resources, networks, technical skills and knowledge (IOM, 2021).

In 2021, the International Organization for Migration launched a project to identify best practices and develop and pilot a framework for diaspora engagement in humanitarian assistance (IOM, 2021). National governments and regional actors in the Caribbean can build on this emerging global evidence to explore how they can best leverage the Caribbean diaspora to support disaster planning, response and recovery. Facilitating discussions and consultations among relevant stakeholders, such as the first regional dialogue on diaspora engagement in the Caribbean in Grenada in 2019, represent a first step to identifying activities and capacities of diaspora engagement for shock preparedness and response, which should be followed by more specific policy actions and investments.

Measures to involve the diaspora in emergency preparedness and response can also build on broader regional efforts for strengthening diaspora engagement. The Diaspora Mapping Project, launched by the OECS and IOM in 2021, aims to identify OECS overseas diaspora associations as well as needs and capacity for dialogue with national and regional government entities in home countries to inform regional policy on diaspora engagement. Once the project is completed, information on diaspora associations in the United Kingdom, United States, and Canada will be made publicly available.

Involving the diaspora and people returning to the region, including through dialogue and mapping

exercises, provides an opportunity to collect insightful data on migration and remittance flows, as well as migrants' needs and profiles, and how these elements change in the context of covariant shocks. In the longer term, regional policymakers should explore the possibility of developing central portals where such data could be accessed by all OECS Member States.

Economic contributions, such as remittances, are one of the resources offered by the Caribbean diaspora that can be leveraged by home countries to prepare for and respond to shocks. Remittances provide important benefits to households and to the overall national economy of home countries and thereby can play a key financing and stabilizing role in disasters. A study on the Caribbean found that the average remittances-to-GDP ratio tends to increase in years of a disaster, as emigrants send additional funds to cushion the economic impact (Wong, 2017). Governments in the Caribbean have different options to support remittances, including through policies focused on reducing the transfer cost of remittances. Such measures should be part of broader efforts by policy makers to create an enabling environment for free movement of goods, services and technologies in times of disasters.

In addition to remittances, the diaspora and returning nationals also provide a source of expertise, experience, and networks that countries can leverage for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, for example, as they seek to recover from an economic shock. Forming partnerships between overseas diaspora organisations and government actors and NGOs working on disaster preparedness and response could provide the basis for leveraging resources offered by the diaspora in the context of disasters and crises.

# RECOMMENDATIONS



## 6. Recommendations

Building on the gaps, challenges and opportunities presented in the previous two sections, this report makes recommendations to help strengthen migrants' access to social protection, with a focus on improving the management of risks posed to people by covariate shocks such as natural hazards and economic crises. The recommendations are organised along four areas aligned with global evidence around shock-responsive social protection (O'Brien et al., 2018). These four areas – which reflect the cross-cutting nature of migration management – are policies and institutions, data and information management, programmes and delivery systems, and finance.

The recommendations are divided into country-specific and regional recommendations, the latter being oriented towards measures and initiatives that the OECS could support in cooperation with Member States. While many of them speak directly to addressing issues and opportunities around migration, they also retain a wider view on building better shock-responsive social protection systems overall. Put another way, existing weaknesses and

oversights in social protection policies, systems and programmes, of which migration and displacement are clearly one clear issue of concern, tend to be aggravated in times of disasters. Building more risk aware, flexible and end-user-tailored systems and programmes will create co-benefits for everyone and can help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of overall preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

It is clear from many of the consultations held for this study that the broader socio-economic-political benefits of improving migrants' access to social protection need to be elaborated and presented to national governments to illustrate how expanding access through rights-based approaches can benefit everyone as part of a progressively improved social contract. The recommendations presented below are also intended to support this goal. The recommendations will have different levels of priority and will be implemented over different timeframes, depending on countries' contexts, the enabling environment and the maturity of systems and programmes.

## Policies and Institutions

Country-level recommendations	Regional recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop an inter-ministerial/inter-agency committee on migration</b>, building on country experiences from the region, to support a coherent vision, policy guidelines, and action plans on migration, and to work toward a whole-of-government approach to migration that includes social protection as a core component.</li> <li>• <b>Ensure that SOPs and similar documents for disaster risk management include the issues of migration, displacement, referral mechanisms to social protection</b>, or develop such documents where they are missing, building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 response.</li> <li>• <b>Assess relevant national legislation and policies to identify legal barriers that may restrict the access of non-nationals to social protection</b>, including in emergency situations, and explore policy options to ensure improved access for migrants and displaced persons in emergencies, with due consideration for the rights articulated in the OECS Contingent Rights Policy.</li> <li>• <b>Facilitate consultations among relevant stakeholders to identify opportunities for diaspora engagement</b> for shock preparedness and response, building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing regional efforts in diaspora mapping.</li> <li>• <b>Establish linkages among national disaster risk management, immigration, and social protection/development ministries to improve coordination and cooperation on displacement in disasters</b>, including referral of displaced persons to social protection services, for example through inter-ministerial emergency management committees.</li> <li>• <b>Review, revise, or develop protocols and action plans for mass migration/displacement events</b> to ensure they include considerations on social protection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Enhance the OECS Social Protection and Social Inclusion Policy by adding a migration and displacement perspective.</b> Build on this process, support a review of national social protection and disaster risk management policies to highlight recommendations related to migrants and their access to social protection, particularly in the context of displacement.</li> <li>• <b>Mainstream migration into social development at OECS level.</b> In this process, create a dialogue with relevant stakeholders such as the OECS Human and Social Protection Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Economic Union Working Group on Movement of Persons (EUWGMOP) and national inter-ministerial migration committees. Use this process to promote a joint regional approach to the management of displacement resulting from shocks, including its implications for national social protection systems.</li> <li>• <b>Ensure that consideration is given to social protection as protocols for displacement are developed</b> at the regional level. This process could take advantage of the work of national inter-ministerial migration committees and other nationally developed tools.</li> <li>• <b>Facilitate regional consultations among relevant stakeholders to identify opportunities and activities for diaspora engagement</b> for shock preparedness and response, building on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> </ul>

## Data and information management

Country-level recommendations	Regional recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage social protection ministries and disaster risk management agencies to identify gaps and needs related to disaggregated data on migrants that would help inform migrant-sensitive policies and actions related to shock preparedness and response.</li> <li>• Develop standardized tools for registering persons displaced by shocks upon arrival in the country and for assessing needs and ensuring referral to social protection and other services. Involve relevant government and non-government actors in this process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the disaggregated data needs for migrants, including both core quantitative demographic data, as well as data to understand migrant origin/destination, and supporting a better understanding of intersectional needs and vulnerability. Identify and map key data sources held at country level that could contribute to a better data picture.</li> <li>• Building on the work of the OECS Human and Social Protection Technical Advisory Committee, create and test a harmonised approach to data collection for migrants in the event of a covariate shocks.</li> <li>• Conduct research with a regional focus on the needs, vulnerabilities, and challenges faced by migrants in the context of shocks and crises, and how their experiences might inform future social protection policy and programme design.</li> </ul>

## Programmes and delivery systems

Country-level recommendations	Regional recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on existing evidence and experience, map financial, human and material capacity gaps of frontline workers, including social protection service providers in regard to managing migration and displacement around disasters.</li> <li>• Implement sensitization campaigns for migrants and vulnerable groups with a focus on areas such as legal protections and rights, the right to access social services and education, including specialized services such as medical care, legal assistance and psychological services.</li> <li>• Involve migrants in disaster planning and implementation, including at the local level, to ensure that emergency plans and systems are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate a discussion on a standardised methodology and process to support the integration and referral of migrants/displaced persons into national social protection systems. Map country level experience in integrating migrants into national social protection programmes, with a particular focus on support provided around disasters, with a view to moving from discretionary to systematised approaches.</li> <li>• In parallel to discussions around harmonising databases and creating a regional approach to data sharing and a regional database, review capacity of existing programme databases, such as those for social assistance, to integrate migrants, and how to link these programmes and databases through referral methodologies.</li> </ul>

## Financing

Country-level recommendations	Regional recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Ensure a comprehensive approach to financing social protection to meet regular need and address shocks when they arise.</b> Explore financing options and strategies that could support the provision of assistance to migrants linked to social protection.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Enhance policy dialogue around the establishment of disaster risk financing policies and strategies</b> at national and regional level <b>and develop financial protection policies and instruments</b> against interconnected risks.</li><li>• <b>Build the evidence base around the cost-benefit of using social protection systems</b> to deliver assistance for shocks.</li><li>• <b>Develop policy options to support remittances from the diaspora</b>, including through measures focused on reducing the transfer cost of remittances, and provide relevant guidance to national governments.</li><li>• <b>Adopt financing options to support the provision of social protection to migrants</b>, for example through international donors and international</li></ul>

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

# REFERENCES

# 7. References

- Al Hassan, A., Burfisher, M., Chow, J.T., Ding, D., Di Vittorio, F., Kovtun, D., McIntyre, A., Otker-Robe, I., Santoro, M., Shui, L. and Youssef, K. 2019. Is the Whole Greater than the Sum of its Parts? Strengthening Caribbean Regional Integration. IMF Working Paper WP/20/8
- Andreola Serraglio, D., Adaawen, S. and Schraven, B. (2021). Migration, Environment, Disaster and Climate Change Data in the Eastern Caribbean – Regional Overview. International Organization for Migration Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (IOM GMDAC). Berlin.
- Antigua and Barbuda. 2019. Social Protection Bill.
- Archibald, E., Barca, V., Wylde, E., Alfors, L., and a. 2020. SPACE Social Protection in the COVID-19 Recovery: Opportunities and Challenges. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://socialprotection.org/discover/publications/space-social-protection-COVID-19-recovery-opportunities-and-challenges-0>
- Aragón, E., and El-Assar, A. 2018. Migration Governance in The Caribbean - Report on The Island States Of The Commonwealth Caribbean. Costa Rica: IOM.
- Astles, J. 2016. How to gender mainstream migration policies. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://rosanjose.iom.int/site/en/blog/how-gender-mainstream-migration-policies>
- Barca, V., Hebbbar, M., Malik, M. and Le Quesne, F., with Ciardi, F. 2019. Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean: Literature review. Rome: WFP / Oxford: OPM.
- Beazley, R. 2018. Study on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean. Dominica case study.
- Beazley, R., Barca, V., and Bailey, S. 2020. Shock responsive social protection in the Caribbean – synthesis report. Rome: WFP / Oxford: OPM.
- Bowen, T., del Ninno, C., Andrews, C., Coll-Black, S., Gentilini, U., Johnson, K., Kawasoe, Y., Kryeziu, A., Maher, B., and Asha Williams. 2020. Adaptive Social Protection: Building Resilience to Shocks. International Development in Focus. Washington, DC: World Bank
- CAB. 2020. COVID-19 Pandemic: The Economic Impact on Caribbean Economies. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://cab-inc.com/COVID-19-pandemic-the-economic-impact-on-caribbean-economies/>
- Cabot-Venton, C. 2018. Economics Of Resilience To Drought In Ethiopia, Kenya And Somalia. [ONLINE] Available at - [https://www.usaid.gov/default/files/documents/1867/Summary\\_Economics\\_of\\_Resilience\\_Final\\_Jan\\_4\\_2018\\_BRANDED.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/default/files/documents/1867/Summary_Economics_of_Resilience_Final_Jan_4_2018_BRANDED.pdf)
- CDEMA. 2014. The Caribbean Hazard Landscape in the Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM): Strategy & Results Framework (Summary 2014-2024). Barbados: CDEMA.
- CDEMA. 2021. What is CDEMA? [ONLINE] Available at - <https://www.cdema.org/about-us#which-states-are-members-of-cdema>
- CDERA. 2003. Status of Hazard maps Vulnerability Assessments and digital maps in the Caribbean. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/35C55AFA44647D97C1256FAF00326F42-cdera-disred-18feb.pdf>
- Cejudo, G., Michel, C., and de Los Cobos, P. Policy Responses to the Pandemic for COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Use of Cash Transfer Programs and Social Protection Information Systems. UNDP LAC C19 PDS No. 24. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/dam/rblac/Policy%20Papers%20COVID%2019/undp-rblacCD19-PDS-Number24-transferencias-EN.pdf>
- Centre for Disaster Protection. 2020a. Glossary of Terms. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://www.disasterprotection.org/glossary>.
- Centre for Disaster Protection. 2020b. Disaster risk financing: A guide to our quality assurance service. Centre for Disaster Protection: London.
- Chaplin, D., Twigg, J., and Lovell, E. 2019. Intersectional approaches to vulnerability

- reduction and resilience-building. London: ODI
- Clarke, D. and Hill, R. 2013. Cost-Benefit Analysis of the African Risk Capacity Facility. IFPRI Discussion Paper 01292. [ONLINE] Available at - [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2343159](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2343159)
- CNN. 2017. For first time in 300 years, no one is living on Barbuda. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/09/15/americas/irma-barbuda-population-trnd/index.html>
- CSME. 2014. Get a Skills Certificate. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.csmeonline.org/en/get-my-skills-certificate>
- CSME, 2021. Right of Establishment. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://csme.caricom.org/faqs/regimes/right-of-establishment>
- Cubas, D., Gunasekera, R., and Humbert, T. 2020. Guidance note - Disaster Risk Finance for Adaptive Social Protection. Washing DC: World Bank.
- Francis, A. 2019. Free Movement Agreements & Climate-Induced Migration: A Caribbean Case Study. New York: Columbia Law School
- Hallegate, S. 2012. A Cost Effective Solution to Reduce Disaster Losses in Developing Countries - Hydro-Meteorological Services, Early Warning, and Evacuation. Policy Research Working Paper 6058. Washington DC: World Bank.
- GIZ. 2020. Cooperation with UNHCR in International Displacement Contexts. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/78682.html>
- Government of Anguilla. 2018. Anguilla National Social Protection Policy. The Valley, Anguilla: Government of Anguilla.
- Government of Barbados. 2021. Elsa Relief Fund Now Accepting Donations. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://gisbarbados.gov.bb/blog/elsa-relief-fund-now-accepting-donations/?fbclid=IwAR28kuBjw2QxFezmSuliVU9ghpiE8bOSb9NOc3cvoBjJdK-2qSnqeEEuQ-g>
- Government of Grenada. 2020. National Insurance (Unemployment Assistance Benefit) Regulations. St. George, Grenada: Government of Grenada.
- Government of Montserrat. 2021. SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.gov.ms/government/ministries/ministry-of-health-and-social-services/social-services/>.
- Government of Montserrat. 2020. COVID-19 SOCIAL BENEFIT SUPPORT PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTED BY SOCIAL SERVICES. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.gov.ms/2020/04/23/COVID-19-social-benefit-support-programme-implemented-by-social-services/>
- Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands. 2013. Public Assistance Act. Charlotte Amalie, U.S. Virgin Islands: Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Hagenlocher, M., Cotti, D., Cissé, J.D., Garschagen, M., Harb, M., Kaiser, D., Kreft, S., Seifert, V., Sett, D., Reith, J. and Zwick, A. 2020. Disaster risk and readiness for insurance solutions in Small Island Developing States. Bonn, Munich, Germany: UNU-EHS, MCII, LMU, BMZ, GIZ.
- Holmes, R. 2019. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in shock-sensitive social protection. Overseas Development Institute.
- IDMC. 2017. Global Disaster Displacement Risk - A baseline for future work. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/201710-IDMC-Global-disaster-displacement-risk.pdf>
- ILO. 2015. World Social Protection Report 2014-15 - Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice. Geneva: ILO
- ILO. 2017. World Social Protection Report 2017-19: Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Geneva: ILO
- ILO. 2020. ILO: COVID-19 eliminates the equivalent of 1.5 million jobs in the Caribbean. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/caribbean/>



- newsroom/WCMS\_744643/lang--en/index.htm
- IMF. 2016. National Insurance Scheme Reforms in the Caribbean. IMF Working Paper WP/16/206. Washington: IMF
- IMPACS. 2013. Crime and Security Strategy. Republic of Haiti: CARICOM
- IOM. 2010. World Migration Report 2010. The Future of Migration: Building Capacities For Change. Geneva: IOM.
- IOM. 2017. Migration in the Caribbean – Current trends, opportunities and challenges. IOM Working Papers on Migration. Costa Rica: IOM.
- IOM. 2019. Glossary on Migration. Geneva: IOM
- IOM. 2021. Migrants Play Key Role in Disaster Response, IOM Explores Diaspora's Engagement in Humanitarian Assistance. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.iom.int/news/migrants-play-key-role-disaster-response-iom-explores-diasporas-engagement-humanitarian>
- Kirton, M. 2013. Caribbean Regional Disaster Response and Management Mechanisms: Prospects and Challenges. Washington DC: Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement
- Kumar, N., & Quisumbing, A. 2014. Gender, shocks, and resilience. Building Resilience For Food & Nutrition Security. 2020 CONFERENCE BRIEF.
- Magnan, A.K., Garschagen, M., Gattuso, J. P., Hay, J.E., Hilmi, N., Holland, E., Isla, F., Kofinas, G., Losada, I. J., Petzold, J., Ratter, B., Schuur, T., Tabe, T., and van de Wal, R. 2019. Cross-Chapter Box 9: Integrative Cross-Chapter Box on Low-Lying Islands and Coasts. In: IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate. In press.
- Marazita, J. 2020. Displacement In Paradise - Hurricane Dorian Slams The Bahamas. IDMC Thematic Report. Geneva: IDMC.
- Marzi, M., Bailey, S. and Ciardi, F. Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean. Saint Lucia Case Study. (Unpublished draft)
- Nevis Pages. 2020. Online Application To The Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP). [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.nevispages.com/online-application-to-the-poverty-alleviation-programme-pap/>
- Nicholls, A. 2019. CARICOM Protocol on Contingent Rights: An important Step to CSME Consolidation. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://caribbeantradelaw.com/2019/03/05/caricom-protocol-on-contingent-rights-an-important-step-to-csme-consolidation/>
- OAS. 2015. Analysis of Bilateral and Multilateral Social Security Agreements as they Relate to Pensions. Preliminary version for comments. [ONLINE] Available at: [https://www.oas.org/en/sedi/dhdee/labor\\_and\\_employment/pages/documentos/iacml/18IACML/WG\\_2015/GT1\\_CISS\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.oas.org/en/sedi/dhdee/labor_and_employment/pages/documentos/iacml/18IACML/WG_2015/GT1_CISS_ENG.pdf)
- OECS. 2008. Economic Union Treaty. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Saint Lucia: OECS.
- OECS. 2009. Final Report. OECS Social Safety Net and Social Strategy Framework. Saint Lucia: OECS
- OECS. 2016. Revised Treaty of Basseterre Establishing the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union. Saint Lucia: OECS
- OECS. 2016a. Terms of References for OECS Social Protection Technical Committee. Saint Lucia: OECS
- OECS. 2020. About the OECS. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.oecs.org/en/who-we-are/about-us>
- OECS. 2020a. OECS Human and Social Protection Technical Advisory Committee to Meet Virtually. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://pressroom.oecs.org/oecs-human-and-social-protection-technical-advisory-committee-to-meet-virtually>.
- OECS. 2020b. Frequently Asked Questions. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.oecs.org/en/who-we-are/faq>

- OECS. 2020c. OECS Hosts 6th Council of Ministers of Human and Social Development Meeting Virtually. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://pressroom.oecs.org/oecs-hosts-6th-council-of-ministers-of-human-and-social-development-meeting-virtually>
- OECS. 2021. Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategic Framework. Saint Lucia: OECS
- OECS. 2021a. Implementation of the OECS Policy on Contingent Rights: A Legislative Review and Comparative Frameworks.
- OHCHR. Nd. Principles and Guidelines, supported by practical guidance, on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations. Geneva: OHCHR
- Paddison, O. 2007. Social protection in the English-speaking Caribbean. CEPAL review 92. pp. 101-120.
- Panhuis, C., Kazi-Aoul, S., and Binette G. 2017. Migrant access to social protection under Bilateral Labour Agreements: A review of 120 countries and nine bilateral arrangements. ESS – Working Paper No. 57. Geneva: ILO
- Perez Montas, H. 2013. Sinopsis de los sistemas de seguridad social en el Caribe Anglo. Centro Interamericano de Estudios de Seguridad Social (CIESS).
- Platform on Disaster Displacement. 2021. Key definitions. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://disasterdisplacement.org/the-platform/key-definitions>
- Platonova, A., and Gény, L. 2017. Women's empowerment and migration in the Caribbean. Santiago: ECLAC/IOM
- RDV. 2021. Coordination Platform For Refugees And Migrants From Venezuela. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://r4v.info/en/situations/platform/location/7496>
- Red Cross, 2018. British Virgin Islands Joint Cash Platform - Case study for learning on collaborative cash programmes. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/1541608778.BVI-JCP-General-Case-study-1.pdf>
- Rubio, M., Escaroz, G., Machado, A., Palomo, N., and Sato, L. 2020. Social Protection And Response To COVID-19 In Latin America And The Caribbean, 2nd Edition: Social Assistance. Panama: UNICEF
- Schipke, A., Cebotari, A., Thacker, N. (2013). Chapter 15: The Role of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. In The Eastern Caribbean Economic and Currency Union: Macroeconomics and Financial Systems. Washington: IMF
- Scott, J. 2020. EU grant to reduce Caribbean countries' insurance premiums. Caribbean Business Report. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://caribbeanbusinessreport.com/news/eu-grant-to-reduce-caribbean-countries-insurance-premiums/>
- Segura, G. 2016. Empowering Caribbean women through migration. [ONLINE] Available at <https://rosanjose.iom.int/site/en/blog/empowering-caribbean-women-through-migration>
- SPIAC-B. 2016. Collaborating For Policy Coherence And Development Impact. [ONLINE] Available at - [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@nylo/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_644769.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@nylo/documents/genericdocument/wcms_644769.pdf)
- Thomas-Hope, E. 2005. Migration In The Caribbean – What Do We Know? An overview of data, policies and programmes at the international and regional levels to address critical issues. [ONLINE] Available at - [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/events/pdf/expert/10/P09\\_ECLAC\(Port%20of%20Spain\).pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/events/pdf/expert/10/P09_ECLAC(Port%20of%20Spain).pdf)
- TRANSFORM. 2020. Shock Responsive Social Protection – Manual for Leadership and Transformation Curriculum on Building and Managing Social Protection Floors in Africa. [ONLINE]. Available at: <http://transformsp.org> and <http://socialprotection.org/institutions/transform>. Accessed - 28/11/20
- UNDP. 2011. Caribbean Implementation of the Hyogo Framework For Action. Mid-Term Review. Cuba: UNDP

- UNDRR. 2017. Terminology. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology#letter-d>.
- UNHCR. 2006. Master Glossary Of Terms. Geneva: UNHCR
- United Nations. 2018. Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for
- Refugees Part II - Global Compact on Refugees. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://www.unhcr.org/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>
- UNWOMEN. 2016. Women refugees and migrants. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-refugees-and-migrants>
- WFP. 2020. Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security & Livelihoods Impact Survey Regional Summary Report – July 2020. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000118438/download/>
- Wilkinson, E. 2020. COVID-19: a lesson in leadership from the Caribbean. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://www.odi.org/blogs/16959-COVID-19-lesson-leadership-caribbean>
- Wilkinson, E., Caroca Fernández, A. and Quevedo, A. 2021. Special Report on Human Mobility and Disaster Risk in Latin America and the Caribbean. Panama: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Wilkinson, E., Weingärtner, L., Arvis, B., Mendler de Suarez, J., and Kruczkiewicz, A. 2021b. Enhanced preparedness for extreme weather across the Caribbean - A joint work plan. London: ODI
- Wong, J. 2017. Emigration and Remittances in the Caribbean. Unleashing Growth and Strengthening Resilience in the Caribbean, 315.
- World Bank. 2019. Beyond Borders: A look at the Venezuelan Exodus. The World Bank Press Release. [ONLINE] Available at - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/04/12/us315-million-to-help-improve-services-for-migrants-from-venezuela-and-host-communities-in-colombia>

ANNEX A

LIST OF  
INTERVIEWEES

# Annex A List of interviewees

This annex contains a list of persons interviewed for the purpose of this study. The interviews were conducted remotely between November 2020 and February 2021.

## OECS Member States

Country	Name	Title	Ministry
Anguilla	Dr. Bonnie Richardson-	Permanent Secretary, Social Development &	Ministry of Social Development
Antigua and Barbuda	Ms Sandra Joseph	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Social Transformation & the Blue Economy
Antigua and Barbuda	Mr Pascall Kentish	Deputy Labour Commissioner	Department of Labour, Ministry of Public Safety & Labour
British Virgin Islands	Ms Tasha Bertie	Deputy Secretary (Acting PS at time of the interview)	Ministry of Health and Social Development
British Virgin Islands	Ms Annie Malone-Frett	Social Development Officer	Ministry of Health and Social Development
Commonwealth of Dominica	Ms Sylvanie Burton	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Youth Development and Empowerment, Youth at Risk, Gender Affairs, Seniors Security and Dominicans with Disabilities
Saint Lucia	Ms Tanzia Toussaint	Deputy Director, Social Transformation	Ministry of Equity, Social Justice, Empowerment, Youth Development, Sports, Culture and Local Government

## International Organisations

Name	Title	Organisation
Dr. Annett Fleischer	Advisor	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Ariel Pino	Social Protection and OSH Specialist	International Labor Organization (ILO)
Robert Natiello	Regional Coordination Officer for the Caribbean and Chief of Mission, Guyana	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Brendan Tarnay	Programme Support Officer for the Caribbean (IOM)	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Estela Aragon	Lead Research Officer	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Briana Mawby	Lead Researcher for the Caribbean region	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Emily Wilkinson	Senior Research Fellow, Global Risks and Resilience Chief Scientific Adviser Co-Director	Global Risks and Resilience (ODI) Climate Resilience Execution Agency for Dominica (CREAD) Caribbean Resilience and Recovery Knowledge Network (CRRKN)
Dr. Grace-Ann Cornwall	Head of the Social Development Unit	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
Dr. Carlene Radix	Head of the Human and Social Division	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
Dr. Clarence Henry	Senior Technical Officer, Regional Integration Unit	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
Neranda Maurice	Consultant	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ANNEX B

RESEARCH  
QUESTIONS



# Annex B Research questions

This annex contains the list of research questions that were used to guide the mapping of stakeholders, the literature review, and the interviews with representatives from OECS Member States and international organisations. The list does not represent a questionnaire but overarching questions that guided the interviews and the literature review. These research questions were identified jointly with the OECS.

Theme	Questions
<b>Migration and displacement in the eastern Caribbean</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the key migration trends in the Eastern Caribbean (e.g. main receiving/sending countries; main profiles of migrants)?</li> <li>• What trends have been observed after major shocks in terms of migration and cross-border displacement (e.g. COVID-19, Hurricane Maria)?</li> <li>• What migration trends can be expected in the future (e.g. related to climate change)?</li> <li>• What data is available on regular migration (documented migrants) and irregular migration (undocumented migrants)?</li> </ul>
<b>Legal and policy social protection framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What role does social protection play in the context of regional integration in the Eastern Caribbean?</li> <li>• What is the multilateral legal and policy framework underpinning social protection in the Eastern Caribbean (e.g. Treaty of Basseterre, OECS Safety Net and Social Protection Strategic Framework, CARICOM Agreement on Social Security, CARICOM Protocol on Contingent Rights)?</li> <li>• What provisions does the legal and policy framework contain with respect to migrants and displaced persons' rights to social protection (e.g. portability of social security entitlements)?</li> <li>• What are the gaps in the legal and policy framework related to migrants and displaced persons' rights to social protection (e.g. absence of common law in the treaty; provisions to "third parties")?</li> </ul>
<b>Migration, displacement and access to social protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some of the common risks and vulnerabilities facing migrants today and what national strategies are in place to address them? How do they apply to migrants arriving from non-protocol Member States?</li> <li>• To what extent do migrants from OECS Member States have access to national social protection programmes, and where are the main gaps (e.g. health, social assistance, unemployment insurance)?</li> <li>• What are some of the key limitations with respect to the provision of social protection to migrants at the national level (e.g. from a policy, legislative and system-design level)?</li> <li>• What are the main gender issues with regard to the access of migrants and displaced persons to social protection (e.g. protection risks; access to social services as safeguarding against human trafficking)?</li> </ul>

Theme	Questions
Experiences with shock-responsive social protection in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the experiences of OECS Member States in supporting migrants and displaced persons through national social protection sector after major shocks (e.g. Hurricane Maria, COVID-19)?</li> <li>• What are the main lessons of regarding migrants that emerge from social protection responses to the COVID-19 crisis in OECS Member States?</li> <li>• What are the implications for national social protection programmes of large-scale shocks that cause wide-spread displacement and create long-term vulnerabilities?</li> </ul>
Towards more integrated and shock-responsive regional social protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are opportunities to strengthen social protection systems in the region to ensure that people migrating between countries have access to adequate social protection?</li> <li>• What measures can be implemented (including at regional level) to strengthen the capacity of Member States to assist migrants and displaced persons through social protection systems following a major shock?</li> <li>• What are the financial aspects of improving migrants' access to social protection during normal times and after major shocks (e.g. supplementary budgets for shocks)?</li> <li>• How can data on social protection, migration and displacement support national and regional policies, and how can data availability and sharing among Member States be improved?</li> </ul>

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ANNEX C  
GLOSSARY

# Annex C Glossary

This annex contains definitions of terms and concepts that are relevant in the context of migration, displacement, shock-responsive social protection and disaster risk management. Not all these terms are used in the report, but they can provide the reader with an overview of key terminology and concepts relevant for the topic of this study.

**Alignment** – The development of one or more elements of a parallel humanitarian response that aligns as best as possible with those used in a current or possible future social protection programme or DRM system. This is distinct from piggybacking on elements of a system, as it uses a parallel infrastructure rather than the same system (O'Brien et al., 2018a).

**Asylum seeker** – An asylum-seeker is an individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum-seeker (UNHCR, 2006).

**Contributory schemes** - Scheme in which contributions made by people directly determine entitlement to benefits. These are often referred to as social security or social insurance schemes. The most common form of contributory social security schemes are those covering workers in formal employment and, in some countries, the self-employed. Other common types of contributory schemes include national provident funds, which usually pay a lump sum to beneficiaries when particular contingencies occur (typically old age, invalidity or death). In the case of social insurance schemes for those in employment, contributions are usually paid by both employees and employers (though in general, employment injury schemes are fully financed by employers). Contributory schemes can be wholly financed through contributions, but often are partly financed from taxation or other sources (ILO, 2015).

**Design tweaks** – The design of social protection programmes and systems can be adjusted in a way that takes into consideration the crises that a country typically faces (O'Brien et al., 2018a).

**Disaster** – Broadly similar to the term 'crisis', and related to shocks. Disasters are defined as a 'serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity' (UNDRR, 2017). They are often distinguished from a shock by exceeding local or national capacity to cope using their own resources, thus requiring some form of external assistance.

**Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) / Disaster Risk Management (DRM)** – DRR is the policy objective of disaster risk management, and its goals and objectives are defined in disaster risk reduction strategies and plans. DRM is the application of disaster risk reduction policies and strategies. DRR/DRM aims to prevent new disaster risk, reduce existing disaster risk, and manage residual risk, contributing to the strengthening of resilience, reduction of disaster losses, and the achievement of sustainable development (UNDRR, 2017).

**Disaster displacement** - Refers to situations where people are forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of a disaster or in order to avoid the impact of an immediate and foreseeable natural hazard. Such displacement results from the fact that affected persons are (i) exposed to (ii) a natural hazard in a situation where (iii) they are too vulnerable and lack the resilience to withstand the impacts of that hazard (Platform on Disaster Displacement, 2021).

**Displacement / Forced displacement** - According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), forced displacement, or simply 'displacement', refers to 'the movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters (IOM, 2019, p. 55; UNHCR, 2006). It is used to describe the movements of refugees, internally displaced persons, and, in some instances, victims of trafficking.

**Environmental migrant** - Although international law provides no definition for a climate migrant, climate-induced migration falls within the sub-

category of environmental migration. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines an environmental migrant as “persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad.” International Organization for Migration, Discussion Note: Migration and the Environment, MC/INF/288 (Nov. 1. 2007), para. 6, available at <https://perma.cc/8SY6-4T72>. Like environmental migration, climate-induced migration can describe movement that is temporary or permanent, voluntary or forced, internal or cross-border (Francis, 2019).

**Hazard** – A dangerous phenomenon that may cause losses to life, property, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation, etc. (UNDRR, 2017). It is the possibility of something occurring. Not every hazard leads to a shock or disaster (for instance, very heavy rains could be hazardous, but may not lead to flooding).

**Horizontal expansion** – Temporary inclusion of new beneficiaries from disaster-affected communities in a social protection programme (O’Brien et al., 2018a).

**Host communities** - Communities that host large populations of refugees or internally displaced persons, typically in camps or integrated into households directly (UNHCR, 2006).

**Humanitarian assistance** – Humanitarian assistance aims to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity during and after man-made crises and disasters associated with natural hazards, as well as to strengthen preparedness for when such situations occur. It is rooted in the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence (Sphere Association, 2018; Development Initiatives, 2018).

**Internally displaced Persons (IDPs)** - Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made

disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (IOM, 2019).

**Migrant** - At the international level, no universally accepted definition for ‘migrant’ exists. The term migrant was usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate was taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of “personal convenience” and without intervention of an external compelling factor; it therefore applied to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family. The United Nations defines migrant as an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. Under such a definition, those travelling for shorter periods as tourists and businesspersons would not be considered migrants. However, common usage includes certain kinds of shorter-term migrants, such as seasonal farm-workers who travel for short periods to work planting or harvesting farm products (IOM, 2019).

**Migration** - The movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification (IOM, 2019).

**Non-contributory schemes** - Non-contributory schemes, including non-means-tested and means-tested schemes, normally require no direct contribution from beneficiaries or their employers as a condition of entitlement to receive relevant benefits. Social assistance and social safety net schemes are forms of social assistance. The term covers a broad range of schemes, including universal schemes for all residents (such as a national health services), categorical schemes for certain broad groups of the population (e.g. for children below a certain age or older persons above a certain age), and means-tested schemes (such as social assistance

schemes). Non-contributory schemes are usually financed through taxes or other state revenues, or, in certain cases, through external grants or loans (ILO, 2015).

**Piggybacking** – Use of part of an established system or programme by a new programme response (either by government or partners) (O'Brien et al., 2018a).

**Refugee** (adapted from the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees) - A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (IOM, 2019).

**Resilience** – The ability of a system, community, or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform, and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management (UNDRR, 2017).

**Return migration** - The movement of a person returning to his or her country of origin or habitual residence usually after spending at least one year in another country. This return may or may not be voluntary. Return migration includes voluntary repatriation (IOM, 2011).

**Risk** – while there is no universal definition of risk, the DRM and climate change adaptation communities generally define it as the interaction of three factors: a hazard (or more broadly a 'shock'), levels of exposure to the hazard (or shock), and levels of vulnerability/coping capacity (economic, social, environmental, political etc.).

**Shock** - As 'hazards' and 'disasters' tend to be understood by the DRM community to be weather- and climate-related events the wider term 'shock' is often used to denote other events that can cause severe disruption to lives, livelihoods, infrastructure etc. However, there is no consensus across different sectors on what

the term 'shock' constitutes. For the purposes of this paper, it is used to denote the wide array of events (e.g. natural, economic, epidemiological, conflict-based etc.) that households, governments, and international actors address through humanitarian assistance, DRM, social protection and other systems and programmes (TRANSFORM, 2020). They can affect the individual or household (idiosyncratic) or a large number of people simultaneously (covariate). A disaster refers to a situation when the impacts of a shock are widespread and often overwhelm local and national capacities (UNDRR, 2017).

**Shock-responsive social protection** - Shock-responsive social protection is concerned with how social protection programmes and systems can be adapted, prepared and used to mitigate the impacts of shocks (e.g. natural hazards, economic crisis, conflict and forced migration) that affect people's wellbeing, including by building resilience to shocks. Some use the term 'adaptive social protection' to describe the role of social protection in building resilience and responding to covariate shocks (Beazley et al., 2020). Both aim to enhance (and not detract from) the coverage, comprehensiveness and adequacy of support provided to the most vulnerable, three criteria outlined in the concept of universal social protection (TRANSFORM, 2020)

**Social assistance** - Involves transfers to households or individuals that are non-contributory, direct and regular (mostly monthly or bi-monthly). Can be delivered in cash or in-kind, through subsidies, tuition fee waivers, etc. It can be implemented by government, NGOs, or financial service providers (FSPs), and is usually funded through taxation or donors (Roelen et al, 2018). Other terms include 'social transfers' or 'social safety nets'.

**Social protection / Social Security** - The two terms 'social protection' and 'social security' are used interchangeably by the ILO to encompass a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion throughout their lifecycles, with a particular emphasis towards vulnerable groups. Social protection can be provided through a broad variety of instruments, including contributory social insurance, social assistance (in cash or in-kind),

targeted through categorical, poverty-based or other methodologies, can include universal measures such as ensuring effective access to health care, as well as those that build human capital, productive assets, and access to jobs (SPIAC-B, 2016; ILO, 2017).

**Vertical expansion** – The benefit value or the duration of a social protection programme is temporarily increased for some or all beneficiaries (O'Brien et al., 2018a).



THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

# ANNEX D

## SOCIAL PROTECTION RESPONSES TO COVID-19 IN OECS COUNTRIES

# Annex D Social protection responses to COVID-19 in OECS countries

This annex provides an overview table of social protection responses to COVID-19 that have been adopted by OECS countries. The information is based on the authors' compilation of secondary data obtained through web research and relevant documents. The table reflects the information found online and does not aim to provide a comprehensive overview. It should be highlighted that these countries may have adopted additional measures since the compilation of the information in February 2021.

Country	Response measure	Type of response	Type of social protection	New or existing programme
Anguilla	Reintroduction of a temporary unemployment benefit to provide financial assistance of up to XCD1,000 per month for 3 months to social security contributors who have become unemployed or underemployed (i.e. currently earning less than XCD1,000 month) as a result of COVID-19	Unemployment benefits	Social insurance	New Programme
Anguilla	Direct financial support of up to XCD800 per month for 3 months to those who do not qualify under the temporary unemployment assistance through the Social Security Board and who have been laid off or terminated or who have become underemployed (ie. earning less than XCD800 a month)	Unemployment benefits	Social assistance	New Programme
Anguilla	Top-up cash assistance for beneficiaries of the Public Assistance Programme (PAP), including for children in foster care as well as children under the school feeding programme	Expansion of social assistance programmes to new	Social assistance	Existing programme
Anguilla	Direct financial support of up to XCD800 per month for 3 months to self-employed persons, who have not contributed to Social Security or who have contributed to Social Security for less than fifty (cumulative) weekly payments, and whose business has closed or is earning less than \$800 XCD as a result of COVID-19. Direct financial support of up to XCD1,000 per month for 3 months to self-employed persons whose business	Income support to self-employed	Social assistance	New Programme
Antigua and Barbuda	Relief packages of food and medication provided by the Ministry of Social Transformation during the 24-hour curfew to elderly living alone, persons with	In-kind assistance	Social assistance	New Programme
British Virgin Islands	Allocation of USD1 million from the Social Security Grant to assist persons with social needs arising out of COVID-19, including through expansion of social services (e.g. home deliveries of groceries and essential supplies, distribution of vouchers and care packages, feeding programmes)	Cash transfers	Social assistance	Existing programme
British Virgin Islands	USD6.5 million in government allocations to provide support to businesses that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and government-enforced closures to help keep staff employed, including through the newly established Small Business Sector Grant Relief Programme	Other	Labour markets	New Programme

Country	Response measure	Type of response	Type of social protection	New or existing programme
British Virgin Islands	USD2 million allocated to registered farmers and fisherfolk under the government's Stimulus Plan to purchase much needed supplies for business continuity	Other	Social assistance	New Programme
British Virgin Islands	Establishment of a USD10 million COVID-19 Unemployment Relief Fund to provide support to residents financially impacted by the pandemic and who have made social security contributions, with benefits amounting to 50% of insurable earnings up to a maximum of USD1,000 and a minimum of USD500 a month during a period of up to 3 months	Unemployment benefits	Social insurance	New Programme
British Virgin Islands	Introduction of a COVID-19 income support programme	Cash transfers	Social assistance	
Dominica	Self Employed Grant offering monthly financial assistance for a period of 3 months to self-employed individuals with minor dependents under the age of 18 (XCD600 monthly) and individuals with no minor dependents under the age of 18 (XCD400 monthly) whose businesses have been suspended as a result of the pandemic; under the condition that the individual is registered with the Dominica Social Security (DSS) before or at the time	Income support to self-employed	Social assistance	New Programme
Dominica	Unemployment Grant providing income support in the amount of XCD600 and XCD400 per month to individuals with minor dependents under the age of 18 and individuals with no minor dependents under the age of 18 respectively who have either been laid off or whose employment have been terminated as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic or government response measures, and whose total monthly employment income does	Unemployment benefits	Social assistance	New Programme
Dominica	Support to existing beneficiaries of the Public Assistance Programme (PAP) through two top-ups of EC 225 each, over the course of two months, for a total value of EC 450	Additional/increased cash transfers to social assistance	Social assistance	Existing programme
Dominica	Temporary expansion of the Public Assistance Programme to new beneficiaries affected by COVID-19 who receive two payments of EC 450 each, over the course of two months	Expansion of social assistance programmes to new	Social assistance	New Programme
Dominica	Cash grants valued at EC\$3.5 million will be disbursed to 2500 crop farmers	Cash transfers	Social assistance	New Programme
Dominica	Financial assistance to small contractors and merchants	Cash transfers	Social assistance	New Programme

Country	Response measure	Type of response	Type of social protection	New or existing programme
Grenada	Income support to public bus operators, taxi drivers, tourist vendors and other such identified hospitality-based business persons	Cash transfers	Social assistance	New Programme
Grenada	Payroll support to hoteliers, restaurants, bars, small travel agents under the government's economic stimulus package to avoid layoffs and loss of livelihoods in the tourism sector	Wage subsidies/ payroll support	Labour markets	New Programme
Grenada	Unemployment benefits package of about XCD10 million rolled out by the National Insurance Scheme under the government's stimulus package to support workers who have become unemployed as a direct consequence of COVID-19 and who have been contributing to the NIS, with eligible workers receiving XCD330 per month over a period of six months	Unemployment benefits	Social insurance	New Programme
Montserrat	Wage subsidies of up to XCD3,200 per month to businesses in the tourism sector that have closed or ceased to operate to allow them to continue to make salary payments and keep staff employed during the crisis	Wage subsidies/ payroll support	Labour markets	New Programme
Montserrat	XCD25,000 allocated to fund a grocery delivery service in conjunction with the Red Cross, and additional funding of XCD50,000 provided to the Meals on Wheels service to	In-kind assistance	Social assistance	New Programme
Montserrat	Provision of additional food packages top ups by Social Services to vulnerable low-income earners and other low-income groups	Additional/ increased transfers to social assistance	Social assistance	Existing programme
Montserrat	Monthly Unemployment Benefit worth XCD900 a month provided for a period of 3 months provided to persons who do not have any work and are unable to access other	Cash transfers	Social assistance	New Programme
Montserrat	Introduction of a 'discretionary leave provision' to allow employees the time and flexibility to make alternate arrangements for the supervision of school-aged children	Special leave	Other	New Programme
Montserrat	Monthly Food Packages for persons who are low income earners, and persons who are in quarantine who are unable to access food, for 3 months, in the first instance	In-kind assistance	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Under the XCD15 million special fund created by the Social Security Board, income support of up to XCD1,000 per month is provided to registered self-employed persons whose income is impacted by COVID-19 and for whom social security contributions were made	Income support to self-employed	Social insurance	New Programme
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Under the XCD15 million special fund created by the Social Security Board, income support of up to XCD1,000 per month is provided to employed persons whose income is	Unemployment benefits	Social insurance	New Programme

Country	Response measure	Type of response	Type of social protection	New or existing programme
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Horizontal expansion of the PAP	Expansion of social assistance programmes to new beneficiaries	Social assistance	Existing programme
Saint Lucia	Distribution of fresh produce from local farmers and fisherfolk to vulnerable families as part of the government's Social Stabilization Plan under the "Good Food" boxes initiative	In-kind assistance	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Lucia	Rollout of the National Meals Programme by the Ministry of Agriculture to provide meals to 5,000 underprivileged persons on a daily basis	In-kind assistance	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Lucia	Distribution of daily meals and food boxes with fresh produce from local farmers and fisherfolk to vulnerable families as part of the newly established National Meals Programme under the government's Social Stabilization Plan	In-kind assistance	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Lucia	Income support to National Insurance Corporation (NIC) contributors that have become unemployed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic through monthly payments between XCD500 and XCD1,500 relative to the salary for a period of up to 6 months	Unemployment benefits	Social insurance	New Programme
Saint Lucia	Income Support Programme (ISP) providing XCD500 monthly for 3 months to persons who have experienced loss of employment or income as a result of COVID-19 and who have not been contributing to the NIC, under the condition that they must sign up to the NIC	Unemployment benefits	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Lucia	Expansion of the PAP to 1,000 new households who received USD 101 (XCD 275) per month for a total of 6 months	Expansion of social assistance programmes to new beneficiaries	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Lucia	Additional monthly top-ups of USD 74 (XCD 200) for a period of six months to 100 people living with HIV already registered under the PAP and increase of cash transfers to households receiving the Child Disability Grant and Foster Care Grants from USD 74 (XCD 200) to USD 111 (XCD 300) monthly	Additional/increased cash transfers to social assistance beneficiaries	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Establishment of an altered regime for the granting of sick leave for employees with flu-like symptoms, respiratory problems or COVID-19 infections for central government employees	Special leave	Other	

Country	Response measure	Type of response	Type of social protection	New or existing programme
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Pre-payment of 2 monthly benefits of the non-contributory pension by the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) so as to facilitate upfront costs of pensioners	Anticipated payment of pensions	Social assistance	Existing programme
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Interim Assistance Benefits in the amount of XCD300 for a maximum of three months provided to workers in the informal sector, particularly vendors in towns and those who traditionally dependent on trade adjacent to schools	Cash transfers	Social assistance	Existing programme
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Implementation of the COVID-19 Temporary Unemployment Benefit by the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) for workers who have been laid-off or become unemployed as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and who have paid NIS contributions, providing XCD75 per week	Unemployment benefits	Social insurance	New Programme
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Displacement supplementary income in the amount of XCD300 per month for persons in the hospitality sector, whether or not they have ever made National Insurance Scheme (NIS) contributions	Unemployment benefits	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Income support to minivan operators in the amount between XCD450 and XCD500 dollars a month for two months; a one-off payment of XCD2,000 and XCD500 to bus owners and taxi drivers, respectively	Cash transfers	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Income support through the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to cultural and creative artists who forego income due to cancellation of cultural events	Cash transfers	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Monthly financial assistance to 600 vulnerable Vincentians comprising the elderly, disabled and those affected financially	Cash transfers	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Distribution of food packages to vulnerable families with produce bought from local farmers	In-kind assistance	Social assistance	New Programme



Country	Response measure	Type of response	Type of social protection	New or existing programme
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	One-off income support payments of \$500, \$300 and \$2,000 respectively to operators of taxis, water taxis and tour buses who are registered with the SVG Tourism Authority	Cash transfers	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Grant support to entrepreneurs and small business owners through the PRYME and PRYME+ programmes	Income support to self-employed	Social assistance	New Programme
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Provision of input support of \$500 to an additional 200 farmers through the Zero Hunger Trust Fund	Cash transfers	Social assistance	New Programme



**World Food Programme**  
**Caribbean Multi-Country Office**

UN House, Marine Gardens,  
Christ Church  
Barbados

**Tel:** +1 246 467 6085

**Email:** [wfp.barbados@wfp.org](mailto:wfp.barbados@wfp.org)

**Website:** [www.wfp.org/countries/caribbean](http://www.wfp.org/countries/caribbean)