

# Assessment of social protection systems for children in Libya

## Overall Findings Presentation



# Coordination Framework



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Grant holder in Libya:

**REACH**

Informing  
more effective  
humanitarian action



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**UNHCR**  
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مفوضية الأمم المتحدة لشؤون اللاجئين

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The background image shows a building with a sign in Arabic that reads 'مؤون الإجتماعية' (Social Welfare) and 'فرع سبها' (Sbha Branch). A black car is visible in the foreground. A large red semi-transparent rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the word 'Contents' in white.

# Contents

1. Context and methodology
2. Legal and administrative framework
3. Social protection programmes in practice
4. Role and capacity of social workers
5. Barriers and bottlenecks
6. Conclusion and recommendations





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# Context and methodology

Introduction to the objective and methodology of the assessment



## Objectives

- Understand existing **legal and policy framework** for social protection programmes in Libya, as well as **how these function in practice**.
- Determine **eligibility criteria, registration process, and bottlenecks and barriers** experienced by those enrolling.
- Consider **how these vary** in different regions of the country and among different population groups.

## Social assistance

One of the main components of social protection, that can be defined as all **non-contributory benefits financed by the government** and usually provided to those living under a defined threshold of income or assets (**means-tested**), or particularly vulnerable groups such as children, older persons, and persons with disabilities (**categorical**). These benefits can be in the form of cash or in-kind support.

## Assessed institutions

**Ministry of Social Affairs** (MoSA), and **Social Solidarity Fund** (SSoLF), an autonomous body of the MoSA.

**Main implementers of social assistance**, providing social services to vulnerable population groups and managing social care institutions. Although, **lack of cohesion** between both agencies and unclear division of labour.



# Organisational structure

Figure 1: MoSA organisational structure

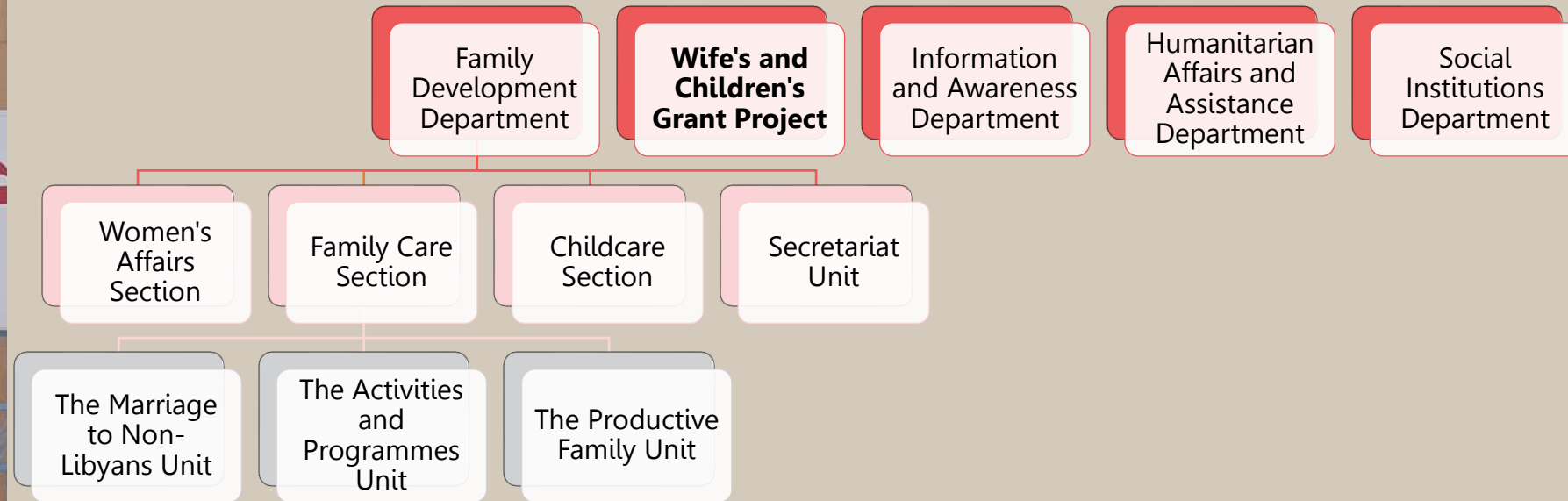
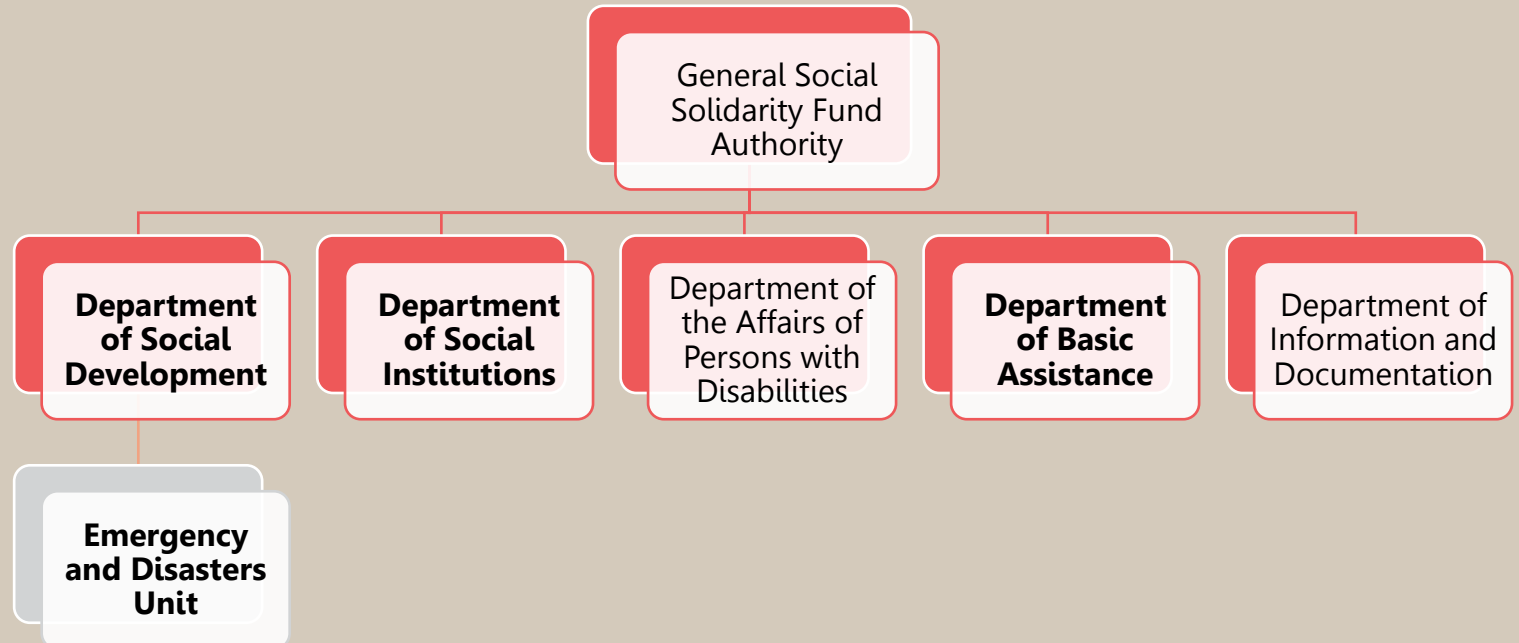


Figure 2: SSolF organisational structure



# Phased approach

## Secondary Data Review

### Phase 1

- Review of secondary data (reports, articles, websites of Libyan government institutions) on **global field of social protection** and social protection system in Libya.
- **Outcome:** selection of assessed programmes.
- **Output:** Literature review.

## Primary data collection

### Phase 2 & 3

- **Phase 2 - National level:** key informant interviews (KIIs), from August 16 to October 28, 2021.
- **Phase 3 - Municipal level:** KIIs and individual interviews (IIs), from September 23 to December 12, 2021.
- **Locations:** Tripoli, Benghazi, Sebha.
- **Outputs:** Report and Policy Brief.

## Methodology



# Methodology

## Zoom-in on primary data collection

Primary data collection methodology (including tools) designed based on Literature review (Phase 1).

## Phase 2: 37 KIIs with national-level experts

- Heads of departments and branches within the MoSA and SSolF at national, regional, and municipal level.
- Academics, university professors.
- Employees of the Ministry of Justice.
- **Objective:** understand existing social protection programmes in Libya, their legal framework, their geographic and demographic coverage.



## Municipal data collection phase (3)

### Social workers

- 53 KIs with social workers.
- **Sampling:** from MoSA working on the Wife's and Children's Grant (*no interview in Sebha*); from SSOLF working on Basic Assistance and Emergency Assistance; from care centres.
- **Objective:** understand capacity and role of social workers, registration process, outreach, grievance mechanisms.

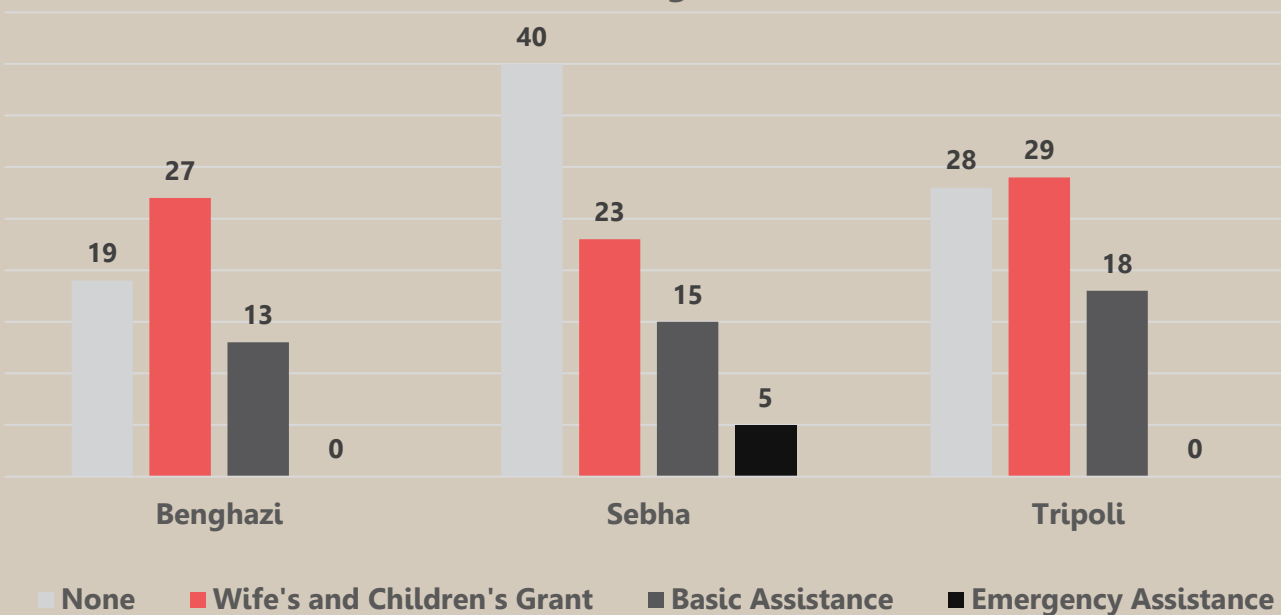
### Migrants and refugees

- 30 KIs with migrant and refugee (MR) community representatives from: Niger, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Nigeria, South Sudan, Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt, Syria, Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), and Bangladesh.
- **Sampling:** purposive to represent each region-of-origin group proportionally to their size in each location.
- **Objective:** understand alternative social safety nets for MR families.

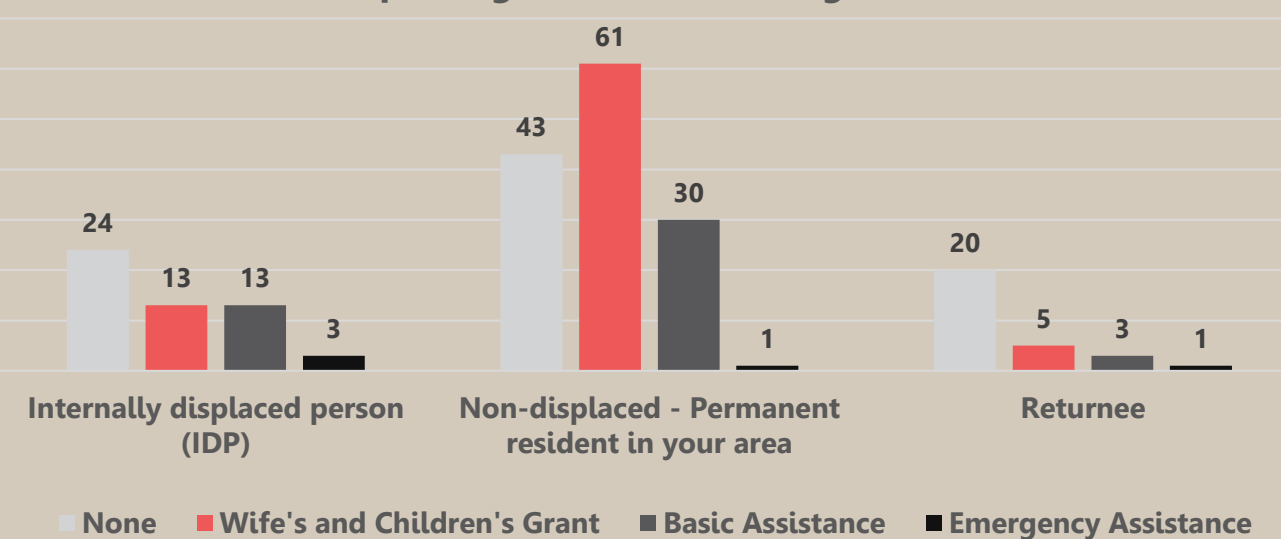
**Methodology**  
Zoom-in on primary  
data collection



**Figure 3: Number of Libyan parents per location reporting to have received grants (n=202)**



**Figure 4: Number of Libyan parents per displacement status reporting to have received grants (n=202)**



# Libyan service users (parents)

- **Sampling: 202 IIs with Libyan parents, 114 registered** with at least one of the assessed programmes, and **89 eligible but not registered**. Among group: single mothers, divorced mothers, parents of children with disabilities, Libyan mothers married to non-Libyan men, non-displaced and displaced.
- 79 registered with the Wife's and Children's Grant, 46 with Basic Assistance, 5 with Emergency Assistance.
- **Objective:** understand the registration process, bottlenecks and barriers, and operationality of grievance mechanisms from a service users' standpoint.



The background image shows a building with a sign that reads 'وزارة الشؤون الإجتماعية' (Ministry of Social Affairs) and 'دولة ليبيا' (State of Libya). There is also a sign that says 'قوة الوحدة الوطنية' (National Unity Force). A red semi-transparent box is overlaid on the image, containing the title and subtitle. The title is 'Legal and administrative framework' and the subtitle is 'Comprehensive legal framework that is largely unknown and ill-understood by implementing agencies'.

# Legal and administrative framework

Comprehensive legal framework that is largely unknown and ill-understood by implementing agencies



# International legal instruments



## International Convention on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Adopted in 1970

Article 9: everyone's right to social security

Article 10: families guaranteed right to protection and assistance

## Convention on the Rights of the Child

Adopted in 1993

Article 2: non-discrimination principle

Article 26: child's right to social security

Article 27: governments to assist and support families to meet their needs

## Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Adopted in 2018

Article 9: removal of all barriers to enable persons with disabilities access social protection programmes

# National legislation



A horizontal timeline on a light beige background. A dark grey vertical line on the left side connects a dark grey square at the top to a horizontal timeline line. Six white circles with dark grey centers are spaced evenly along the horizontal line. Below each circle is a year in bold dark grey text, and further below is the name of a law in dark grey text.

**1980**

Law No. 13 on  
Social Security

**1985**

Law No. 16 on  
Basic  
Assistance

**1987**

Law No. 5 on  
Persons with  
Disabilities

**1998**

Law No. 20 on  
Social  
Solidarity

**2006**

Law No. 5 on  
Child  
Protection

**2013**

Law No. 27  
Wife and  
Children's  
grant



# Targeted population groups

## Wife's and Children's Grant

- All Libyan boys and girls, aged 18 and under and residing in Libya
- All unemployed and married or unmarried Libyan women, not already receiving a salary, pension, grant or any other income from any party
- All children of Libyan mothers and foreign fathers, aged 18 and under

## Basic Assistance

- Libyan citizens residing in Libya
- Do not have breadwinner capable and legally obliged to support them
- No savings or capital to use or invest
- Being unable to work
- Not receiving any grant/pension from Social Security Fund
- Older persons, incapacitated, widowed women, orphans, divorced women, single mothers, families with head of family sick/imprisoned/missing/martyr

## Emergency Assistance

- Libyan citizens only
- Victims of natural disasters
- Loss of main source of income or livelihood OR death of head of family/breadwinner
- Unable to cover for damages (e.g. through insurance)
- Apply within 90 days following disaster



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# Social protection programmes in practice

Outreach, registration process, information  
management systems and grievance  
mechanisms





# Outreach

## Promoting awareness and understanding

### Means of outreach

- Reach out to **most vulnerable population groups**, including those **living in remote areas**.
- Mainly through **social media and implementing agencies' official websites**: especially for the Wife's and Children's Grant.
- For Basic Assistance and Emergency Assistance: mainly through **personal networks** (by word of mouth).
- Other means mentioned: television, radio (SSoIF station), leaflets distribution in registration offices, conferences/seminars.

### Coverage and efficiency

- Digital outreach: challenges to **access electricity and internet**.
- Libyan parents (IIs) were asked about outreach efficiency:
  - **Overall rated as sufficient, clear and easily accessible** (41/79 Wife's and Children's Grant, 16/46 Basic Assistance, 3/5 Emergency Assistance).
  - **Need for improvements**: diversification and frequency.
- **Service providers** reported **unequal outreach** across country (18/33 MoSA/SSoIF KIs), due to lack of coherent national strategy and lack of funding.

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

**Beneficiary of Head of Family Allowance**

Automatic registration through Civil Registry Authority (CRA): USD bank account linked with the NIN\* that is linked with the CRA

Beneficiaries can verify and edit their information (bank details, number of family members, phone number, etc.) through their personal account on the MoSA website platform, launched in May 2021

**Non-beneficiary of Head of Family Allowance**

Applicants must go to the closest MoSA municipal office

Eligible Libyan women have to fill out application form and provide their personal information (name, address, NIN, date of marriage, job status, etc.)

Provide an up-to-date: family book or family status certificate, passport or ID card with NIN, personal photograph, cancelled cheque or deposit voucher of the head of family's bank account

Libyan women married to non-Libyan men: need to be registered with the Foreigner's registry at the CRA and provide their children's passports and proof of residence in the country (both issued by the Passports and Foreigners Affairs Authority).

**Wife's and Children's Grant**

Irregular (every 3 months) cash transfer to bank account of head of family. Only paid to Libyan children for now.

Registration reportedly takes less than a month.

\*National identification number: unique number assigned to every Libyan citizen, main proof of identity.





## Basic Assistance

Monthly cash transfer to bank account of head of family or of child.

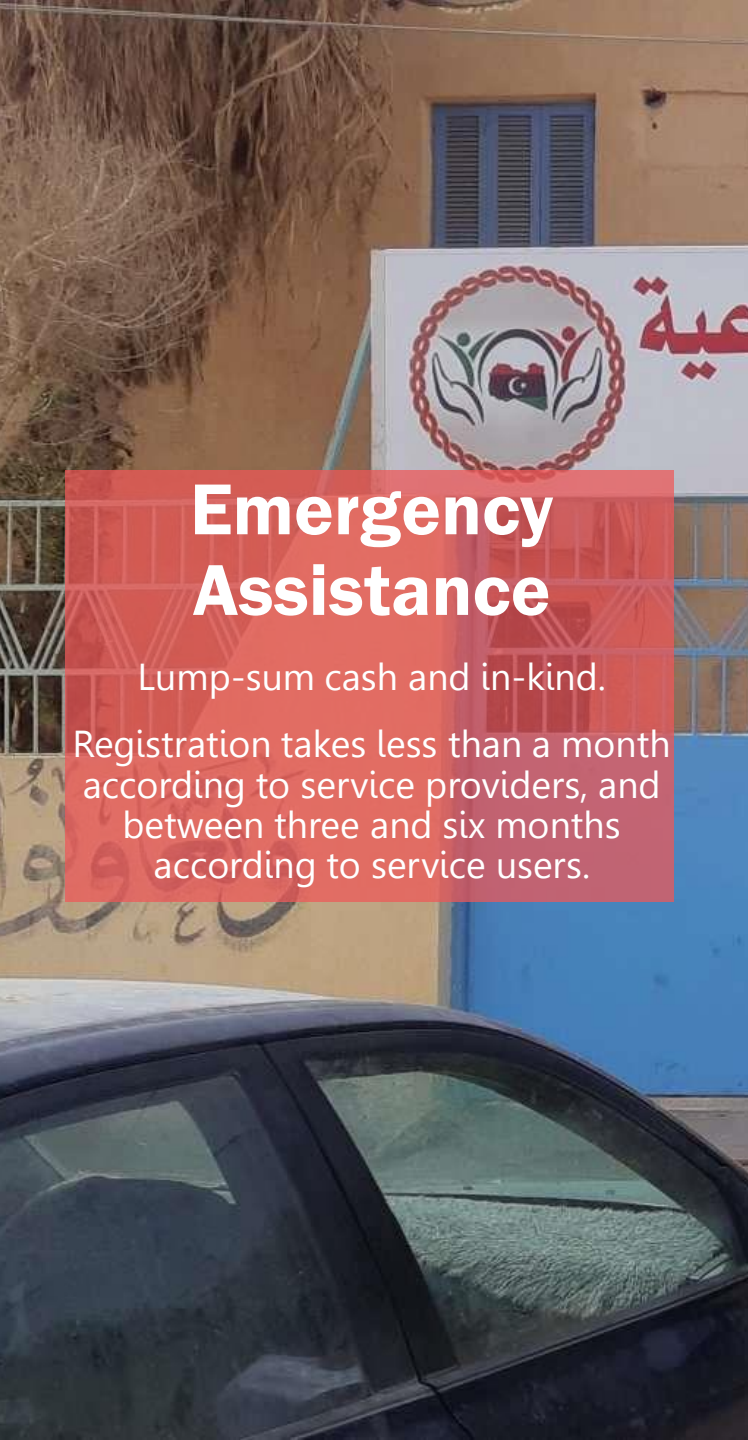
Registration reportedly takes between one and three months.

## Registration process

- Register at **SSoIF municipal office** (36/46 Libyan parents). 6 parents reported going to the MoSA municipal office: existence of some referral pathways.
- Applicants have to **fill out a form providing their personal information**, including their name and parents' names, NIN, address, date of birth, along the reason why they are applying for the grant.

## Figure 6: Documents required to register with Basic Assistance

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

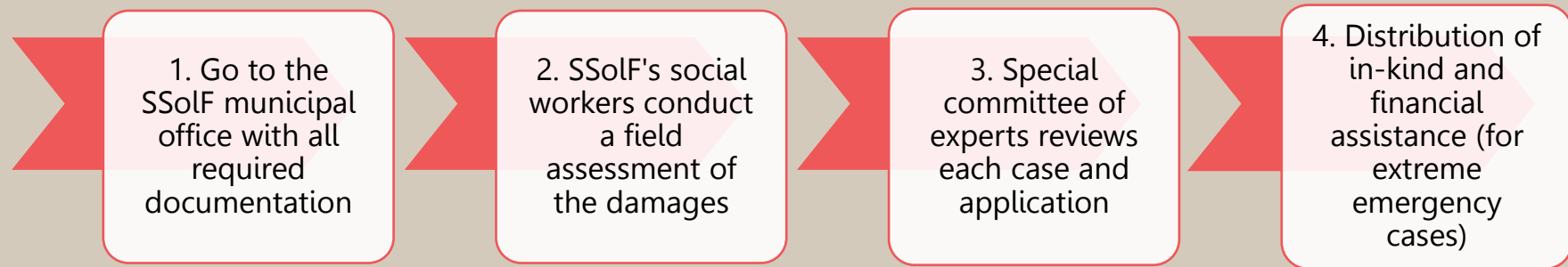


## Emergency Assistance

Lump-sum cash and in-kind.

Registration takes less than a month according to service providers, and between three and six months according to service users.

**Figure 7: Registration process for Emergency Assistance**



### Documents required to register

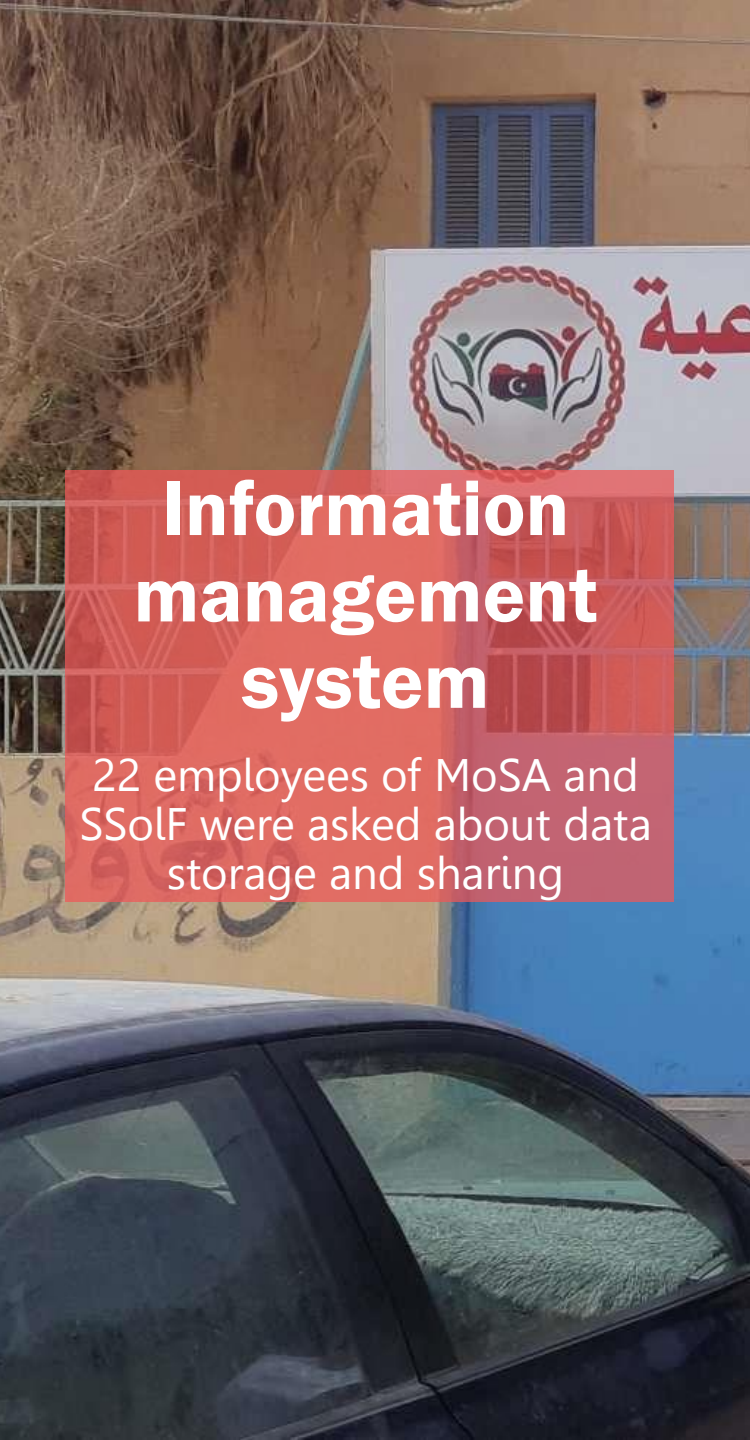
Application form, family status certificate, proof of residence from muhalla's mukhtar, certificate of salary, proof of property ownership or official house renting contract, proof of not receiving financial assistance from any party, police report of natural disaster in applicant's neighbourhood, Civil Safety Authority report by type of disaster assessing damages.

### Modality of benefit delivery

Cash distribution, bank transfer, cheque. Although the amount varies, it **cannot cover more than 75% of the cost** of the damages.

In-kind assistance: basic non-food items, food, medical supplies, and in rare cases shelter. Provided in SSOLF offices or door-to-door distribution.





## Information management system

22 employees of MoSA and SSOLF were asked about data storage and sharing

# MoSA: digital system

## Data storage

- Identification of beneficiaries through **CRA - NIN system** (since 2013). For children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers, identification through **Database for Foreigners (CRA)**. However, no families are registered with it yet.
- Each MoSA office has **unique access to database** in their jurisdiction.
- For registration in MoSA offices: **hard copies stored at municipal level**.
- **Lack of regular updates** of CRA database.

## Verification process

- **Committee triangulates information** provided by applicants **with the CRA** which is linked with the **Ministry of Finance**.
- Carried out at the **end of each month**, at the central level (Tripoli main office).



## Information management system

22 employees of MoSA and SSolF were asked about data storage and sharing

# SSolF: paper-based system

## Data storage and sharing

- **Information and Documentation Department** in charge of storing beneficiaries' files at municipal level (15/22 KIs).
- **Computer illiteracy of staff.**
- **Lack of funding** to buy equipment, including computers.
- Data shared between departments, offices and agencies through hard copies (18/22). But important **information gaps in communication** between agencies.

## Verification process

- **Information and Documentation Department** in charge of verification process, with the **National Information and Documentation Centre**.
- Cross-checks information with muhalla's mukhtar, police station, CRA, and hospitals' health registries.
- **No clear and standardised process** reported by KIs: due to lack of shared digital database or difficulties to access databases.



The background image shows a building with a sign that reads 'مؤن الإجتماعية' (Social Welfare) and 'فرع سبها' (Sbha Branch). A red semi-transparent box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title and a subtitle.

# Grievance mechanisms

Lack of clear, formal and nationwide mechanisms

- Few KIs from the MoSA and SSolF (5/20) reported **special committees** responsible for hearing and processing the complaints.
- Within the SSolF: **Dispute Resolution Committee**.
- **'Case by case' approach** widely reported: complaint boxes in registration offices.
- A KI reported the creation of a **hotline** and **website** page for the **Wife's and Children's Grant**.
- Mechanisms **free of charge** unless legal action involved.
- Only **15/202 Libyan parents reported being aware** of such mechanisms.
- **Facebook pages** dedicated to each programme where service users exchange information and advice.





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# Role and capacity of social workers

In the outreach, registration process, and in care centres





## Outreach

# Role of social workers during outreach

Majority of Libyan parents reported that they do not know what role social workers play (80/202) or stated that they do not play any role (26/202).

A minority reported several tasks and responsibilities of social workers, including organising seminars and workshops (47/202), informing legal guardians in schools (46/202), informing legal guardians in care centres (33/202), and conducting door-to-door outreach (37/202).

**Figure 8: Role of social workers in outreach according to social workers (n=27 SSolF, 12 MoSA)**



The background image shows a portion of a building with a yellow wall and a blue door. A white sign is mounted on the wall, featuring a circular logo with a green and red design and the Arabic word 'عيلة' (Eila) in red. A red semi-transparent box is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'Registration process' in white.

## Registration process

### Role of social workers in registration process

- According to KIs from MoSA/SSoIF, social workers **play a pivotal role** in the registration process, especially for the **Basic Assistance and Emergency Assistance**.
- For the **Wife's and Children's Grant**, 72/79 Libyan parents reported that they **do not play any role**: notably due to **automatic registration**.
- They are also responsible for **following up with residents of care centres**.

### Staff and social workers' capacity

- Majority of KIs from MoSA/SSoIF and Libyan parents reported that **number of staff and social workers is sufficient**, although noteworthy issue of **limited capacities and unqualified staff**.
- Especially, **computer illiteracy**, lack of qualified personnel in care centres, and **discrimination** practices (22/202 Libyan parents) mostly against displaced applicants.



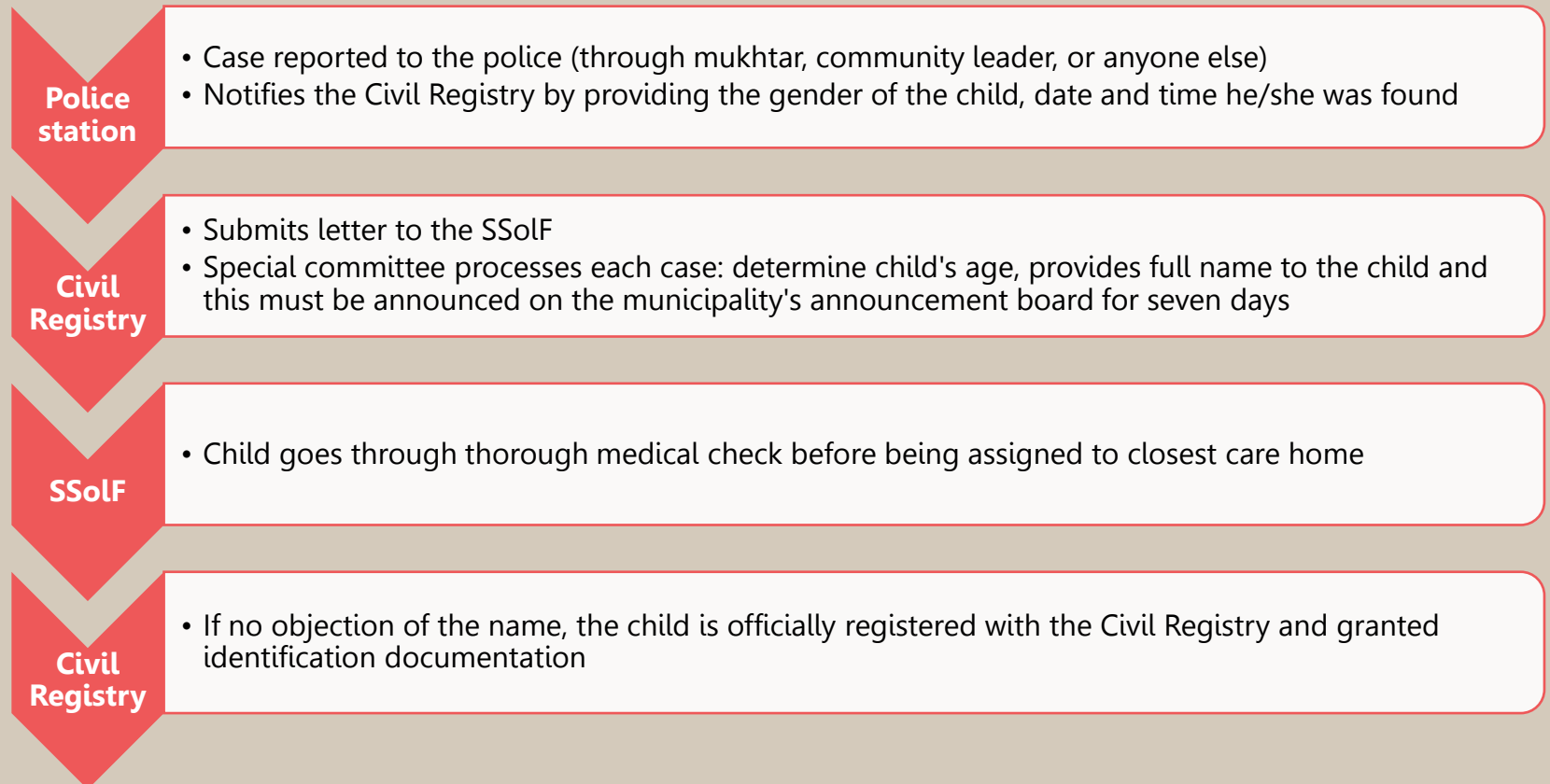


## Care centres (1/2)

# Overview

- Social institutions, managed by SSolF's Social Institutions Department: for vulnerable children groups such as **orphans, children with disabilities, children born out of wedlock, and juveniles.**
- Three types of **residential** homes in Libya, fostering **518 children overall.**

**Figure 9: Registration process in care homes for abandoned children**



# Registration process for social protection

## Assessed care centres:

- 2 in Benghazi: for children with disabilities (including MR children) and for Libyan children without legal guardians.
- 4 in Sebha: for children with disabilities, all hosting MR children.
- 2 in Tripoli: for Libyan children without legal guardians, and for juveniles (boys).

Overall findings show that **Libyan children in residential and non-residential care centres receive the Wife's and Children's Grant or the Basic Assistance.**

**Social workers** are in charge of registering children in residential homes, carrying out the verification process, and liaising with different institutions (care centre, SSolF, Civil Registry Authority, Ministry of Health, etc.).

According to half of the interviewed social workers, **registration process takes more than a month**, while a KI from the SSolF reported that it **takes less than a week.**

## Care centres (2/2)

14 social workers within  
care centres interviewed





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# Bottlenecks and barriers

Service providers and service users were asked about the barriers and bottlenecks faced by applicants when registering for social protection programmes, and by beneficiaries in the grant delivery process.





# Groups facing more barriers to accessing social protection (1/5)

## Children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers

- Widely reported as population group more likely to face barriers when trying to register (114/202 Libyan parents; 15/53 social workers).
- **Lack of documentation**, especially of a NIN.
- **Lack of law enforcement** and **gaps in programme implementation** strategy: **Cabinet Decision No. 322 of 2021** on Citizenship not applied.





# Groups facing more barriers to accessing social protection (2/5)

## People living in displacement

- Second most commonly cited group by Libyan parents (73/202).
- **Incomplete documents:** IDPs and returnees more likely to lose their identification documents, and to face obstacles when trying to retrieve them.
- Especially, **lack of valid proof of residence.**
- **Lack of awareness and understanding** about the Emergency Assistance.



# Groups facing more barriers to accessing social protection (3/5)

## Abandoned children and children born out of wedlock

- Reported by 12/53 KI social workers, and 53/202 Libyan parents.
- **Victim of widespread social stigma:** delays in registering their birth with Civil Registry, puts on hold issuance of civil documentation (NIN).
- **Law and policies:** major **obstacle**, what documents a child is entitled to depends on whether parentage can be proven and on recognition of children by their extended family.





# Groups facing more barriers to accessing social protection (4/5)

## Persons with disabilities

- Mentioned by 23% of Libyan parents and 18/53 KI social workers.
- **Lack of awareness and understanding** of social protection programmes and clear procedures to register. Notably due to **inaccessible means of communication**.
- Registration not accessible due to **mobility limitations and registration offices not equipped**.
- **Discrimination** from staff, especially against applicants living with mental health and intellectual disabilities.
- Lack of documentation: **medical report**.



# Groups facing more barriers to accessing social protection (5/5)

## Gender, disability, and registration

- **Principle of non-discrimination and equality** enshrined in Constitutional Declaration of 2011, but not implemented notably due to **weak law enforcement**.
- 21 Libyan parents reported that girls with disabilities are more likely to face barriers to accessing social protection systems.
- **Lack of awareness about girls and girls with disabilities' rights** from families' side, notably due to weak outreach.
- **Discriminatory social and cultural norms** against girls and women in general that impacts their **freedom of movement**.





## Causes of delays

### In registration process

- **20%** of registered Libyan parents interviewed reported having **experienced delays in the registration process**, almost all of which are **women residing in Benghazi**.
- Mainly due to **lack of required and up-to-date documentation**, mainly for SSolF's programmes.
- Impact of **COVID-19 restrictions**: office closure.

### In benefit delivery

- **Quite frequent, especially for the Wife's and Children's Grant**. About 57% of registered Libyan parents reported having experienced delays.
- Mainly due to **liquidity shortage**.
- Also, delays in **transfer of the budget from the state (Ministry of Finance) to implementing agencies**.
- **Lack of sustainable sources of funding**.

# Zoom on Sebha

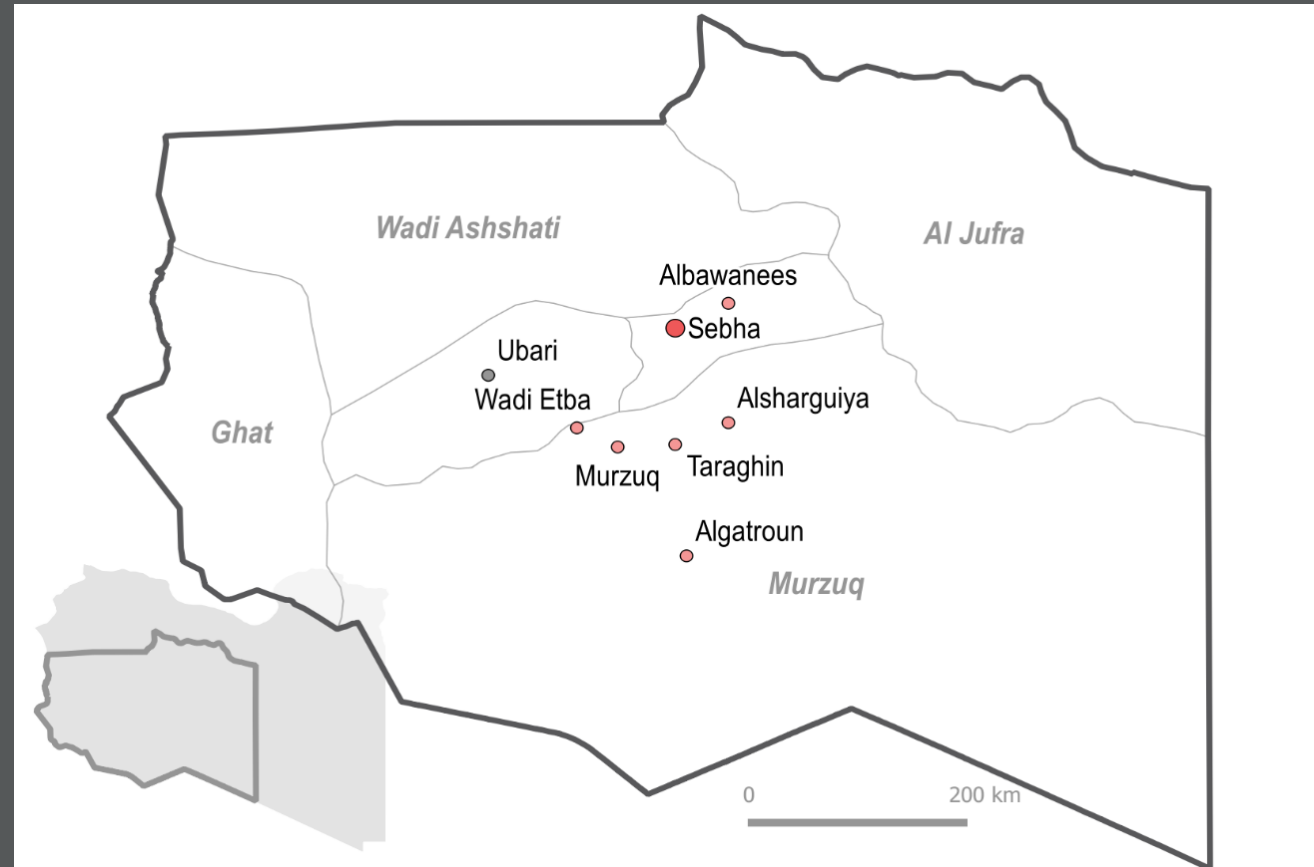
## Lack of human and financial means

- Weaker outreach, lack of sufficient and qualified staff, insecurity, poor coverage of MoSA and SSolF offices.
- Value of grants lower in Sebha: less than 1,000 LYD for the Emergency Assistance.

## People of Undetermined Legal Status (ULS)

- 30% of the population in the South do not have civil documentation (NIN).
- Group more likely to face barriers to accessing social protection.
- Further challenges with intersecting identities: ULS and disabilities.

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



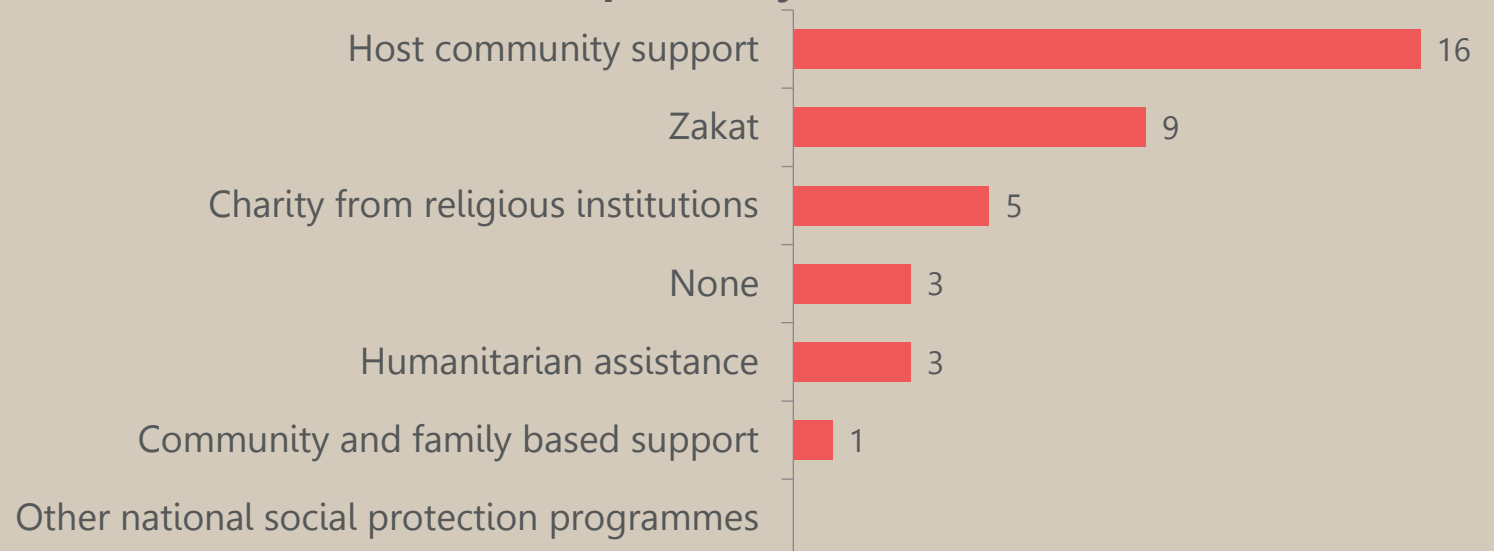


# Including MR children in social assistance systems

## Good practices from other countries

1. Adoption of **comprehensive legal framework**: example of Turkey with Law on Foreigners and International Protection.
2. Focus on **regularisation** and **naturalisation** processes.
3. Aligning **humanitarian action** and **government systems**.

**Figure 10: Alternative support networks for migrant and refugee families reported by MR KIs (n=30)**



**Migrant and  
refugee  
children**



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# Conclusion

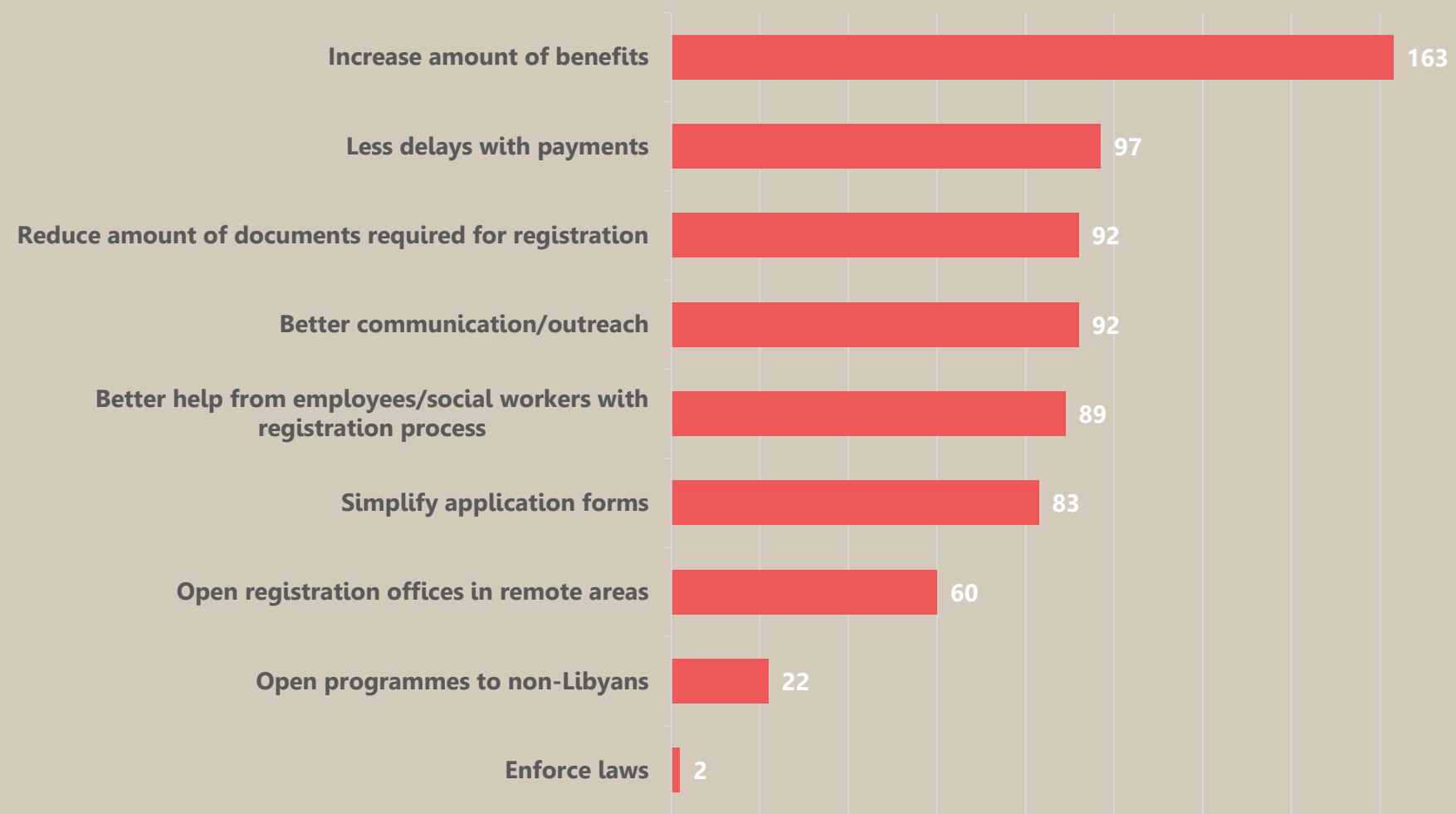
Key takeaways – Recommendations jointly developed with UNICEF and UNHCR



# Ideas for improvement (1/2)

**Libyan parents** were asked the following question: "In your opinion, how could the coverage of social protection programmes be more inclusive and improved?"

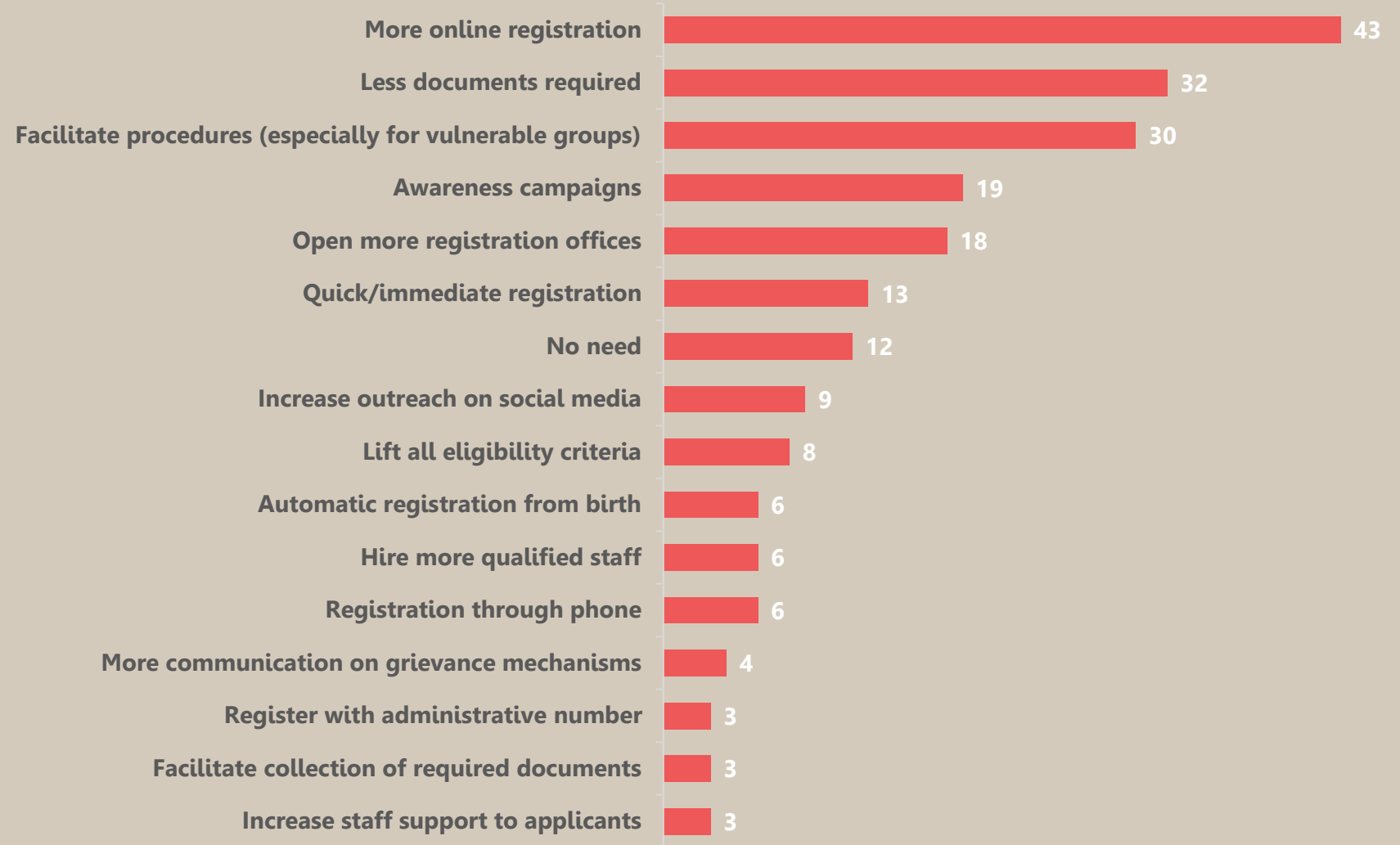
**Figure 11: Recommendations to improve coverage provided by Libyan parents (n=202)**



## Ideas for improvement (2/2)

**Libyan parents** were asked the following question: "In your opinion, how could the registration process be improved?"

**Figure 12: Recommendations to improve registration process provided by Libyan parents (n=202)**





# Recommendations for MoSA and SSolF

## Short-term

### Enhance accessibility of registration process

- ❖ Create mobile teams and open offices in remote areas.
- ❖ Diversify outreach means to accommodate lower levels of literacy.
- ❖ Create 'priority' registration desks.

### Expand current outreach to vulnerable groups

- ❖ Build focused strategy targeting vulnerable population groups.
- ❖ Conduct mass media campaigns.
- ❖ Develop information materials specifically about the Emergency Assistance in high-risk zones.

### Enhance collaborations

- ❖ Between MoSA/SSolF and **INGOs/NGOs**: disseminate information through humanitarian programming, participate in effort to reduce stigma around accessing assistance from the state.
- ❖ Between MoSA/SSolF and **CSOs**: disseminate and clarify information to intended groups.

# Recommendations for MoSA and SSolF

## Mid-term

### Capacity building

- ❖ Hire more staff especially in Sebha.
- ❖ Train social workers and staff on ethical considerations.
- ❖ Improve staff's computer literacy.

### Law enforcement

- ❖ Promote awareness within institutions about laws and policies and train staff to enforce them.
- ❖ Allocate more human and financial means.

### Referrals

- ❖ Create clear referral mechanisms in all municipal offices.
- ❖ Train staff on these mechanisms.

### Clear grievance mechanisms

- ❖ Set up multiple channels to ensure widespread access.
- ❖ Standardise procedures and train staff.
- ❖ Conduct mass media campaigns.



# Recommendations for MoSA and SSolF

## Long-term

### **Digitising Management Information Systems (MIS)**

- ❖ Buy necessary equipment, including computers and softwares, in all offices.
- ❖ Create a national database to facilitate identification, registration and verification processes.

### **Allow online procedures**

- For registration: would reduce fraud and errors.
- For grievance mechanisms.
- Especially in context of COVID-19 pandemic and fuel shortage.

### **Create operational SSolF and MoSA hotlines**

- ❖ For enquiries about registration process.
- ❖ For grievances for applicants who got their application rejected.

# Recommendations for vulnerable population groups (1/2)

## Displaced

- ❖ **Facilitate administrative procedures for IDPs and returnees** to rapidly retrieve their civil documentation.
- ❖ Possibility of **allowing delays** to displaced applicants to provide a **proof of residence** in current baladiya or an alternative document to the proof of residence.

## Children of Libyan mothers and non-Libyan fathers

- ❖ **Strengthen efforts** to enforce national legal acts that include these children in the social protection system: enforce **Cabinet Decision No. 322 of 2021** on Libyan citizenship; **Law No. 27 of 2013** on Allowances for Children and Wives 2013.
- ❖ **Increase awareness of CRA Database for Foreigners:** use mass media campaigns targeting families with a Libyan mother and a non-Libyan spouse.

## People of ULS

- ❖ Strengthen efforts, especially in the South, to **help determine the status of children of ULS and grant them full Libyan nationality** and all the documentation that it affords.
- ❖ **Amend legal acts** to allow children of ULS to use their **administrative number** to register with social protection programmes.



# Recommendations for vulnerable population groups (2/2)

## Children born out of wedlock

- ❖ Amend the law to **allow abandoned children and children born out of wedlock unhindered access to citizenship and registration**, regardless of the circumstances at the time of their birth.

## Persons with disabilities

- ❖ Remove **physical barriers** to access social protection.
- ❖ Remove **attitudinal barriers** to access social protection:

## Migrant and refugee children

- ❖ **Building on lessons learnt** in other countries, investigate further into potential **pathways for including migrant and refugee children and families:** adopt comprehensive legal framework, make regularisation and naturalisation processes accessible, align humanitarian action and government systems.



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**THANKS FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION**