

Dynamic researcher with more than two years’ experience working on social protection research and policy analysis across the Middle East, North Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Currently serving as a Research Officer at Start Network, providing support and expertise in locally-led, anticipatory action and conflict research. Skilled at providing analytical support to in-depth reviews and situational analyses in close partnership with government ministries and other development partners (e.g., WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, ILO, FCDO, DFAT).

Experienced in conducting interviews for consultative research projects in various settings. Proficient in utilising statistical analysis and data visualisation to support evidence-based decision-making and policy recommendations. Adept at developing ToRs, managing research projects, co-designing research studies, and leading evidence-based policy analysis. Experienced in managing external consultants, overseeing research commissioning, contractual processes, and quality assurance to ensure outputs align with organisational priorities. Strong ability to work independently and in cross-functional teams, with a keen focus on ensuring methodological rigour, clarity, and policy relevance in research outputs.

KEY AREAS OF EXPERTISE AND SKILLS

- Qualitative and quantitative research methods
 - Project Management
 - Policy analysis
- Social Protection
 - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
 - Anticipatory Action

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

MA Intelligence and International Security	King's College London, (UK), 2022
BA (hons) History and Philosophy	University of Southampton, (UK) 2021

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Start Network: July 2024-Present: Research Officer (fixed-term)

Conduct research, interpret data, and communicate findings across various programmes and initiatives to evidence the impact and learning of Start Network activities. Regularly collaborate with cross-functional teams to co-design research studies, ensuring alignment with organisational priorities. Develop Terms of Reference for research projects, supporting the conceptualisation and structuring of studies. Provide guidance on methodological approaches, research design, and analysis, contributing to the development of innovative research ideas that strengthen locally led and proactive humanitarian action.

Proficient in literature reviews, qualitative and quantitative data analysis, and synthesis of findings for reports, presentations, and policy recommendations. Strong working knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, along with experience using data analysis, graphics, and presentation tools to communicate insights effectively. Adept at working independently to drive research projects while also collaborating in multidisciplinary teams to ensure findings are actionable. Known for strong attention to detail, ensuring research outputs maintain methodological rigour and clarity, as demonstrated through the key projects listed below:

Evidence Review: Anticipating Conflict within the Start Fund – Lead Researcher

- Led a systematic evidence review on anticipatory action (AA) for human-induced crises, responding to growing donor interest in conflict and violence forecasting and the lack of sector-wide evidence on this type of AA.

- Analysed primary and secondary sources, including Start Fund alerts and activation data, to assess how AA has been applied to conflict-induced displacement and election-based violence.
- Engaged with anticipatory action experts and humanitarian practitioners to validate findings and refine key takeaways.
- Findings challenged the reliance on quantitative triggers for AA, demonstrating the effectiveness of the Start Fund's adaptive, qualitative approach in fragile and conflict-affected settings.
- Research influenced global dialogue on integrating qualitative data into AA decision-making, shaping discussions within the Conflict Anticipation Working Group and presented at the International Anticipating Displacement workshop in Berlin, contributing to sector-wide learning on alternative approaches to AA.

Qualitative Evaluation of Smaller Grant Mechanisms – Lead Researcher

- Led an exploratory qualitative review of Start Network's smaller grant mechanisms to assess their long-term impacts on coordination, anticipatory action capacity, and collaboration among members and partners.
- Designed and conducted semi-structured interviews with grant recipients and stakeholders, allowing impacts to emerge organically without predefined evaluation criteria.
- Applied thematic analysis using a mix of inductive and deductive coding, identifying patterns in how grants shaped decision-making, adaptation, and organisational learning.
- Findings informed iterations of the grant mechanisms, improving grant design, accessibility, and reporting processes, while strengthening understanding of the role of small grant mechanisms for locally-led action.

Study on the perceptions of Cash Transfers - *forthcoming*

- Leading a collaborative mixed-methods research project to assess stakeholder perceptions of cash transfers, examining whether programme design and implementation uphold the right to dignity in humanitarian response.
- Piloting Q methodology, a structured approach to quantifying subjective viewpoints, to systematically explore how different stakeholders perceive autonomy, effectiveness, and social acceptability of cash assistance.
- Developing a research framework that includes qualitative interviews, surveys, and factor analysis, ensuring a rigorous and replicable approach to understanding diverse perspectives on cash transfers.
- Findings will generate critical insights to inform future cash transfer programming, ensuring stronger alignment with ethical humanitarian principles and the Do-No-Harm approach.

Consultant: ILO Palestine - Advisory on the design, operationalization, and delivery of social allowances in the Occupied Palestinian Territory – July 2024.

- Supported lead consultant to create a checklist of critical requirement related to the successful operationalization of social allowances, in line with international good practices and rights-based approaches.
- Reviewed programme design and delivery mechanisms of new social allowances and mapped against the ideal state to identify strengths, weaknesses, risks and opportunities with the current operational design.
- Developed a short action plan and roadmap on immediate and medium-term next steps to enhance quality of operational processes of social allowances in a rights-based manner, separately for both West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Development Pathways: August 2022- July 2024: Social Protection Officer

Actively delivering projects by providing background literature searches and reviews, desk-based research and primary data collection. Skilled in producing analytical reports; authoring blogs and other publications to **persuade and influence policy direction**; collaborating with the communications team to develop **high-quality communications products**; and supporting the development and delivery of Pathways' flagship training programme.

Selected projects include:

2023 – 2024 Technical Support to Strengthening Societal and Economic Resilience in Jordan [FCDO]

- Conducted research on economic inclusion of refugees in national social protection systems to aid their transition from cash assistance to self-reliance.
- Assisted in conflict analysis to comprehend societal grievances arising from increased economic inclusion of refugees in Jordan.
- Researched policy decision-making and public discourse on economic inclusion in Jordan, including supporting cost-benefit analysis of opening new sectors to refugees and assessed impacts on economy, tax receipts, and employment.
- Participated in consultations with government officials, national stakeholders and NGOs to discuss the possibilities for introducing a national social protection floor.
- Led stakeholder, donor, and technical assistance mapping of social protection programs in Jordan over several months through independently conducting in-country key informant interviews across government ministries and agencies in Jordan.

2023-2024- Gender Transformative Approaches to School Feeding [WFP]

- Conducted key informant interviews and focus group discussions in Laos and Sri Lanka.
- Systematically reviewed 20 country experiences to analyse the opportunities and barriers to integrating gender-transformative approaches to address gender inequalities, exploitation risks, and GBV within school feeding programs.
- Presented findings to WFP country office staff in Laos and Sri Lanka.
- Provided key inputs to a comprehensive inception report, including a proposed methodology for qualitative data collection and a detailed analytical framework for the study.
- Supported an online validation workshop with regional and country office staff to review the operational guidance for strengthening gender transformative approaches to nutrition in WFP supported schools.

2023– 2024 The Global Campaign for the Right to Social Security [Global]

- Represent Development Pathways in the "Right to Social Security" global campaign, a coalition of [71](#) organizations advocating for the right to social security worldwide. Moderate campaign meetings, organize events and discussions, and author influential communications to raise awareness and advocate for the right to social security. Organised launch of the Campaign: "Key Pillar for A New Eco-Social Contract", Development Pathways, Human Rights Watch, Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, et al., [Online](#), October 4, 2023

2024 - Inclusive Social Protection Training Course [Development Pathways]

Led the organisation and management of a comprehensive training course in Kenya, overseeing a team to ensure seamless execution. Played a lead role in developing the Terms of Reference. Worked with internal stakeholders to define clear, measurable objectives and deliverables that aligned with the project's overall goals.

2024 - Addressing vulnerability and crisis through inclusive social security [ISSPF]

Led research on how economic shocks and the existing social protection model in MENA have jeopardised national social contracts and stirred political and social instability. Utilised strong quantitative analysis and data visualisation skills to create compelling graphs and tables using World Bank and UNDESA data to analyse key development indicators, such as poverty rates, income inequality, and access to education and healthcare, across multiple countries. Created informative data visualizations, including charts and graphs, to highlight trends and disparities, strengthening the paper's argument on the link between inadequate social protection and social unrest.

2022 - Building the case for a lifecycle social protection system in Sri Lanka [UNICEF]

Conducted an in-depth literature review on social protection in Sri Lanka. Supported a paper presenting evidence on the potential impacts and feasibility of introducing a lifecycle social protection system in the context of economic crisis, presenting the findings of micro-simulations, CGE analysis, and fiscal space analysis. Drafted succinct policy briefs on key issues related to inclusive social protection in Sri Lanka, presenting evidence and recommendations in an accessible manner.

2022 - South Asia Disability Life Cycle Social Protection Report [ESCAP/UNICEF]

Support involved researching national legislative and policy frameworks for persons with disabilities in South Asia. Provided analysis on disability inclusion as part of countries' wider development agendas and cross-checked the research with national legislation.

2022 - Covering self-employed workers in inclusive social insurance systems [ILO/WIEGO]

Undertook desk research by reviewing ILO standards, national legislation relating to informal workers and provided insight into international experience of social insurance schemes.

2022 - Gender responsive diagnostic report on the informal economy [ILO Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan]

Carried out a literature review to inform and support organisational positioning and thinking on key debates including both tax-financed social assistance and contributory social insurance.

2022 - Steps to Universal Social Protection - Policy Brief [ESCAP]

Contributed to the drafting of policy brief that sets out 12 milestones for developing an integrated and sustainable social protection system.

In addition to my research expertise, I have significant experience in project management and business development. As a **Project Manager** at Development Pathways, I successfully managed high-impact projects with WFP and FCDO, coordinating external consultants and internal teams to ensure timely and on-budget delivery of deliverables. I oversaw project workplans, handled change requests, maintained detailed records, and cultivated strong relationships with clients and consultants. In my **Business Development** role, I identified and pursued new business opportunities, led bid development, and worked closely with technical teams to innovate and expand into new regions and markets. I also played a key role in fostering relationships with donors and clients to strengthen Development Pathways' presence and secure new funding.

BizGees: February-March 2022 Role: Intern

Conducted desk research and authored a report on the gendered impacts of PTSD among female survivors of the Yazidi Genocide, shedding light on the systemic lack of accountability for gender-based violence in post-conflict settings. Report published by organisation.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Howson., K. (*forthcoming*). Anticipating Conflict: An evidence review of the Start Fund's dynamic approach to anticipating the humanitarian impacts of conflict-induced displacement and election-based violence. Start Network.
- Howson., K. (*forthcoming*). Localisation, Equity and Transformative Justice: A Fraserian Analysis of Start Network. Development in Practice. 34:1.
- Ishak., S. and Howson., K. (*forthcoming*). Addressing Vulnerability and Crisis through Inclusive Social Security. Inclusive Social Security Policy Forum. London. United Kingdom
- Howson., K. (2024). [The Global Malnutrition Crisis: A Tragic failure to protect our children](#). Blog. Development Pathways. London. United Kingdom
- Howson., K. (2022). [Three reasons community-based targeting is a threat to social stability](#). Blog. Development Pathways. London. United Kingdom.
- Howson., K. (2022). [Protecting the Human Rights of Unemployed Persons during Economic Crises](#). Development Pathways. London. United Kingdom

Howson., K. (2022). [Weapons of Mass Migration: How has forced displacement been utilised as an instrument of coercion?](#)
Academia.Edu. London, United Kingdom.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND SHORT COURSES

2024: Group Facilitation Training – Happy Ltd
2024: Data Analytics with Excel and R Specialisation – IBM
2023: Project Management Training - Impellus

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND SHORT COURSES

Qualitative analysis software: Nvivo, Tagette

Computer and software skills: Highly proficient with Windows and Mac platforms; general word processing, presentation and spreadsheet software (e.g. Word, PowerPoint, Excel); SharePoint; Teamworks, Slack, Teams, Zoom, Strikingly, Canva, WordPress, MailChimp, Youtube, Asana.

REFERENCES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST
