



Humanity Link 

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From Registration to Onboarding: Reimagining How We Serve Displaced Communities

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Every year, millions of people are displaced by conflict, disaster, or climate change. Many cross multiple borders and encounter multiple aid organizations along the way. Each time, they are asked to register again — to prove who they are, where they came from, and what they need.

This repetition slows everything down. It drains resources and forces people to relive trauma. It also creates duplication across agencies: studies show that humanitarian data is often collected multiple times by different organizations serving the same population, with no shared cost framework for coordination or reuse (see *Guidance for Calculating Humanitarian Data Collection Costs*, 2021, [Academia.edu](#)). The International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) also notes that duplication in registration and data capture “remains a notable challenge” in cash and aid coordination contexts ([IFRC Interoperability Deduplication Brief, 2024](#)).

What this means in practice is staggering. If even a fraction of the estimated 130 million people in need of humanitarian assistance are registered more than once, the sector wastes millions of staff hours and hundreds of millions of dollars annually on duplicated processes that add little value to those being served.

How Blockchain Changes the Equation

Most people think of blockchain as a financial tool, but its real power is as a trust infrastructure. It allows verification without

exposure, confirming that something is true without revealing the underlying data.

Here's how that works in a humanitarian setting:

1. When someone is first identified, their information; name, household details, skills, needs, is verified by a trusted organization and issued as a *verifiable credential*.
2. That credential is stored in a digital wallet on the individual's phone or a community device. It is encrypted and belongs to them, not to any agency.
3. When another organization needs to verify eligibility, the person can share a cryptographic proof derived from that credential. The agency sees that the person qualifies, but never the raw data.
4. These proofs are validated and recorded immutably, creating a transparent audit trail without exposing sensitive information.

This process replaces the repetitive “collect, store, verify” cycle with a consent-based exchange of trust. Information can move safely across organizations while ownership stays with the individual.

From Identity to Livelihoods

The same approach can help people rebuild their livelihoods.

Imagine a camp where residents onboard their skills, services, and vulnerabilities. A carpenter, teacher, or nurse could onboard their skills so that others; community members, NGOs, or local businesses, can find and hire them. A family could onboard its vulnerabilities, like a medical condition or loss of income, so that authorized agencies can identify and respond without running new assessments.

Each person contributes to a living, privacy-preserving registry of capabilities and needs that can be queried securely. Instead of collecting data repeatedly, organizations can spend their time connecting people to training, jobs, and services.

A 2022 *BMJ Global Health* study found that data sharing among humanitarian agencies improves the effectiveness of response and reduces duplication of services and research ([BMJ Global Health, 2022](#)). The potential is clear: a more connected data ecosystem doesn't just save resources — it transforms how assistance is delivered.

The Art of the Possible

If just **10 million displaced people**, less than one-sixth of those displaced globally, were onboarded into such a system, the humanitarian community could:

- Save hundreds of millions of dollars in duplicated registration and verification costs.
- Cut processing times from months to minutes.
- Reallocate up to a quarter of field staff time from data entry to community engagement.
- Unlock a living database of verified skills and capacities representing billions in untapped economic potential.

These figures are illustrative, but they show what's possible when privacy-preserving digital systems replace redundant ones.

A System Built on Trust

This is not about turning refugees into data points. It is about giving people ownership of their own story. Blockchain enables that by separating verification from disclosure. Agencies no longer need to hold sensitive data to deliver support, and communities can decide what to share and when.

The result is faster, safer, and more respectful coordination, a humanitarian model built not on extraction, but on connection.

To be registered is to be entered into someone else's system.
To be onboarded is to be recognized within one you can own.

That is the direction we need to move, away from duplication, toward trust.

Want to learn more? DM me on LinkedIn!