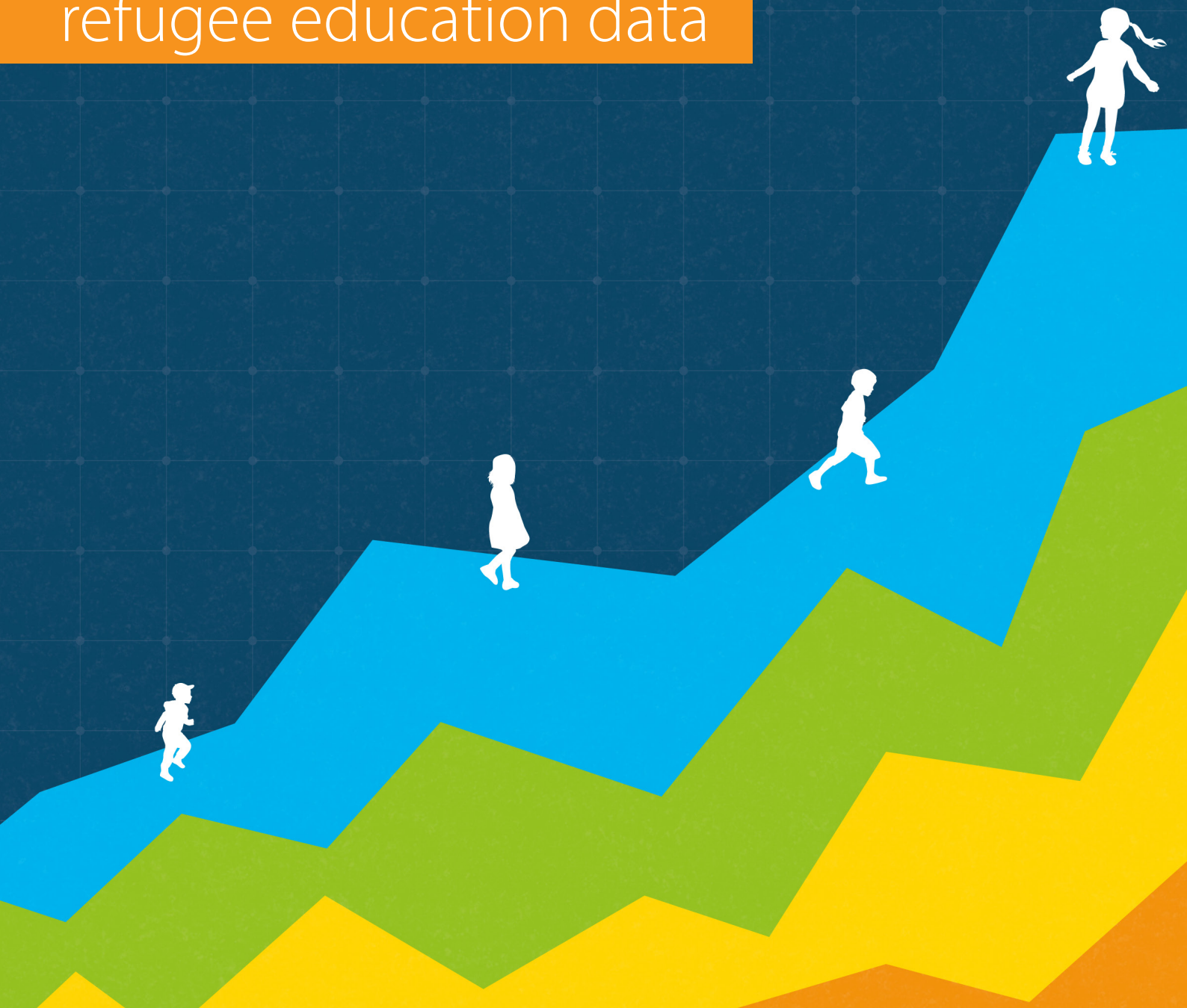Paving pathways for inclusion

A global overview of refugee education data

UNESCO – a global leader in education

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation for peace and sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education, providing global and regional leadership to drive progress, strengthening the resilience and capacity of national systems to serve all learners. UNESCO also leads efforts to respond to contemporary global challenges through transformative learning, with special focus on gender equality and Africa across all actions.

The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.

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Global insights into refugee education data

Refugee learners often navigate unpredictable educational journeys. However, their successful integration into national education systems can enhance learning, strengthen social ties, and pave the way for brighter futures. Such integration hinges on comprehensive data for effective planning and progress tracking, but significant data gaps have rendered refugee students largely 'invisible' in many national and international statistics.

In response to this challenge, UNESCO, in collaboration with UNHCR, has conducted a review of the state of refugee education data in the top 35 low- and middle-income refugee-hosting countries. This study examined 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data collection exercises, exploring the extent to which refugee identification questions were included, as well as questions about educational access, quality, and safety.

Only
38%
of questionnaires reviewed included any form of refugee identification questions.

This joint report identifies significant data gaps and proposes recommendations to enhance the availability and quality of refugee education data. This report aims to inform conversations among global education stakeholders about improving the accuracy and quality of refugee education data to ensure that no learner is left behind.

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"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"

unesco

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Paving pathways for inclusion

A global overview of refugee education data

Foreword

Education is a cornerstone of human development and a beacon of hope and opportunity for every learner. This is especially true for refugee learners, whose educational journeys are often marked by uncertainty. The potential of education to provide stability and a brighter future for these young minds is vast. However, realizing this potential hinges on our ability to craft and implement impactful educational policies shaped by comprehensive and reliable data, necessary for effective planning and resource allocation.

In our shared ambition to fulfil Sustainable Development Goal 4 commitments to ensure quality, equitable and lifelong learning for all, data plays an important role in driving progress. Despite its critical role, there exists a concerning oversight: we lack the full picture of available refugee education data, restricting our ability to design interventions that cater to the specific needs and challenges of these learners. Their experiences are often obscured in official statistics, undermining global efforts to create truly inclusive educational systems.

To address this critical gap, UNESCO, in collaboration with UNHCR, has embarked on a rigorous examination of the current state of refugee education data. By analysing and synthesizing over 1,000 questionnaires gathered from over 600 data collection exercises in key refugee-hosting countries, this study provides an unprecedented global picture of how well we are identifying and accounting for refugee learners. This investigation reveals that a significant proportion of data collection instruments do not adequately identify or capture comprehensive data on refugee learners, making a vast segment of this vulnerable population invisible in our current systems.

This report serves as a comprehensive guide and roadmap for stakeholders across the globe to bolster the accuracy, transparency, and inclusivity of refugee education data. It provides a blueprint for refining data collection methodologies, offering tangible and evidence-driven recommendations to bridge these existing gaps.

As global leaders in education, it is our duty to ensure that every learner has equitable access to quality, safe education and lifelong learning opportunities. With this report, we aim to equip policy-makers, educational planners, and advocates with the knowledge and tools needed to ensure that every refugee learner's journey is secure, stable, visible and acknowledged.

As we strive towards the achievement of the Education 2030 Agenda, data and evidence serves as our compass, pointing us towards actionable solutions and sustainable outcomes. We can and must uphold the right to education for every individual, including refugee learners. This echoes our collective commitment to leave no one behind and to further advocate for inclusive education for all.

Stefania Giannini,
UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education

Acknowledgements

Executive summary

The world is experiencing the most acute forced displacement crises, with more than 108 million forcibly displaced people (FDPs) worldwide at the end of 2022, the highest displacement figure ever recorded, of which around 40% were estimated to be children (UNHCR, 2023a). While reliable, accurate, consistent, and comprehensive data on refugee populations (including learners under 5 and over 18) are critical in guiding effective educational planning, policy-making, and resource allocation (Anselme, Ghosn, and Brug, 2019; Mendenhall, 2019; Hure and Taylor, 2019; Stewart, 2004), the extent to which these data are available is unclear. These education data gaps are not unique to refugee populations, but they are more pronounced (UIS, 2021; Stewart, 2004; UIS and UNHCR, 2021), with critical implications for monitoring progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) as well as against the pledges made towards the Global Compact on Refugees.

This report is based on a review of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data collection exercises (DCEs) in the top 35 low- and middle-income refugee-hosting countries in 2021, welcoming 20.58 million refugees. It aims to provide an overview of the extent to which refugees are included in education data systems but does not provide estimates of refugee inclusion of education based on these data. Overall, the number of DCEs that could contribute to refugee education data inclusion is limited due to the lack of questionnaires that simultaneously provide information on the protection status of respondents and their educational situation. There is an absence of questions that would allow for the identification of refugees with only 418 (38%) questionnaires (331 DCE or 45%) having any form of refugee identification questions. Further, only two questionnaires reviewed included the full set of questions recommended by the International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics developed by the Expert Group on IDO, Refugee and Statelessness Statistics.

On education, the findings echo earlier work, showing that data on access to education (e.g. 341 questionnaires with information on access to schools) is far more common than data on other aspects, such as safety (31 questionnaires) and quality (167 questionnaires) (summarized in Figure 1). Further, many of the data limitations on these aspects of education are a result of the absence of refugee identification questions and the lack of inclusion of refugees as a target population. The educational indicators covered differ depending on the target population of the DCE. However, indicators on educational attainment, attendance, and literacy are relatively common across DCEs, regardless of their target populations. In sum, there are low levels of inclusion of refugees in education data systems and steps to ensure wider inclusion – both within samples and by including refugee identification questions within existing surveys – would enrich our understanding of refugee education.

Figure 1: Overview of the number of questionnaires covering different education areas by target population and presence of refugee identification questions

There is very little data on refugee education beyond access to schools and quality learning conditions. However, inclusion in existing data collection exercises has the potential to increase the amount of data.
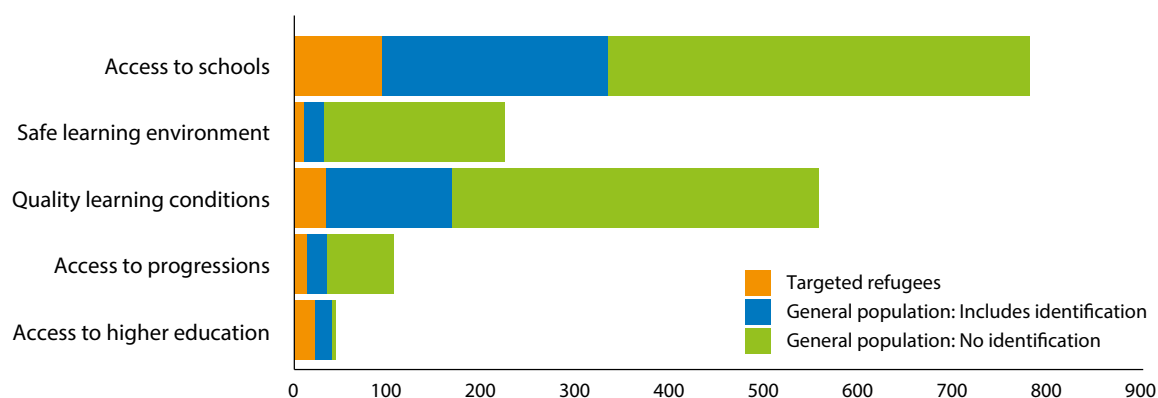
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources

Recommendations

While the review shows that there is still a long way to go to ensure refugee inclusion in education data systems there are some actionable ways forward to improve data availability for refugee education:

- **Include refugees within sampling frames and include refugee identification questions in existing data collection instruments.** Findings from this review show substantial gains in refugee education data could be made by wider inclusion in existing data collection, especially on access to schools, quality learning, and safety for refugees (see Figure 1). This inclusion is in line with the mandate of the Expert Group on IDP, Refugee, and Statelessness Statistics and their recommendations for refugee statistics (see the IRRS, p. 44-45).

  ‣ **To National Statistical Offices and Ministries of Education/Higher Education:** Work with and use the existing guidance and refugee identification standards developed by the EGRISS to include and disaggregate refugees and other FDPs by status within national data systems, including education data. For administrative data, disaggregating students by nationality or refugee status is easier where individual-level EMIS is already in place.

  ‣ **To organizations engaged in collecting or funding education data or funding data collection:** Advocate for the inclusion of refugees in sampling frames where contextually relevant and raise awareness of the EGRISS standards among national actors. Further, apply the EGRISS recommendations to include refugee identification questions in surveys, in addition to existing disaggregation by gender, age, and disability. For example, the report identified that including refugee identification questions in international and regional learning assessments could contribute to significant increases in data availability on the learning of refugees. The inclusion of refugees in the Multiple Indicators Cluster Surveys, the Demographic and Health Surveys and any other national-level surveys that are important sources of data for global education figures would also provide much-needed information on the status of refugee learners.

  While the inclusion of new questions can be costly, small additions within existing surveys could improve data availability in a more cost-effective way than standalone, ad hoc assessments. While robust sampling frames and population data are needed to ensure representativeness, collaboration between UNHCR and government stakeholders (national statistical offices) can facilitate progress in this regard. The inclusion of refugee identification questions requires considerable care and adherence to data privacy and protection protocols to ensure no harm comes to respondents, which are considerations that extend to standalone assessments as well.

- **Leverage the full potential of existing data sources through improved transparency and by making data, metadata and questionnaires publicly available.** Many microdata libraries already exist (e.g. World Bank Microdata Library, UNHCR Microdata Library, HDX, IPUMS International), bringing together existing data sources, but there are still many gaps in data availability, accessibility and documentation. While there are many protection concerns around making the data itself publicly available, good use of current recommendations on data protection (e.g. UNHCR's General Policy on Personal Data Protection and Privacy (2022), Policy on the Protection of Personal Data of Persons of Concern to UNHCR, United Nations Personal Data Protection and Privacy Principles, IASC Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action), and clarification of where these data should be stored, would facilitate uptake (IASC, 2023; UN HLCM, 2018; UNHCR, 2022b). Further, data need to be accessible and consistently documented with as few barriers to discovery as possible. Publicly available metadata, documentation, and questionnaires would allow actors to identify both areas of duplication and gaps in current DCEs with less effort and more precision than looking through datasets. It would also provide more information to assist in the evaluation of the process of data collection, the extent of sample coverage, and the type of questions and analytical methods used. This would facilitate the use of a diverse set of data sources and enhance the understanding of refugee education across actors.

▸ **To donors and partners both within and outside of education:** Leveraging the use of a diverse set of data sources can better enhance understanding of refugee education across actors. To reduce duplication and overall fragmentation of data production efforts within and across sectors, donors could continue to fund efforts to consolidate and improve the availability of existing datasets (e.g. UNHCR's Microdata Library, the World Bank's Microdata Library) and enhance and strengthen linkages between these data sources with more advanced Application Programming Interfaces (APIs – software intermediaries that allow two applications to connect). Further, building the capacity of national governments to conduct new DCEs, including refugees in these exercises, and making this information available to key stakeholders will be critical to the sustained and efficient use of existing resources.

▸ **To UNHCR:** Building on its mandate and its Data Transformation Strategy (DTS) 2020–2025 (UNHCR, 2019a), UNHCR has a clear role to become a leader in refugee-related data and information to enable actions to protect, include and empower refugees. In recent years, UNHCR has made significant efforts in data collection, aggregation, and curation, but data are still scattered over several platforms and are not always publicly available. Combining existing data, including those from UNHCR's population database, Microdata Library, upcoming Flagship Surveys, REMIS, camp-based data (see UNHCR, 2002), and other relevant sources, into a single searchable database and platform would be a significant step in the right direction. Including data on different sectors – including education data from national governments and partners – and coordination and cooperation with other microdata libraries would ensure broader coverage of refugee data beyond what is collected by UNHCR.

▸ **To National Statistical Offices and Ministries of Education/Higher Education:** Improving accessibility to existing questionnaires, metadata and other documentation on official government webpages is key. Official data from administrative sources and large-scale household surveys and censuses are critical elements in ensuring a comprehensive set of data on refugee education is made available. This is especially true for EMIS, which already acts as the main tool for education data regarding SDG 4. However, if questionnaires and metadata are not made publicly available, this hampers efficient allocation of resources and may create the illusion of data gaps and leads to the duplication of data collection efforts and inefficiencies in resource allocation.

- **Ensure data collection on refugee education goes beyond access to address the quality of learning and safety:** While understanding access to education is a critical first step to establishing learner needs, current estimates suggest this is out of reach for 48% of refugee children. Data on the quality of the school environment and the learning taking place in schools are what ultimately determine the ability of education administrators, including schools, to respond to learner needs and shape and nurture the overall development of children (UNHCR, 2022a). These conditions are even more relevant for vulnerable populations or in the context of educational disruption, which often affects refugees. For instance, having more data on the safety and well-being of refugee learners and the quality of learning is critical for supporting them in achieving their potential. This is in line with the SDG 4 goal to ensure safe and quality learning for all, and specifically with SDG 4 targets 4.c on qualified teachers, 4.a on safe learning environments, and indicator 4.1.1 on learning.

  ▸ **To international and regional learning assessments:** Incorporating refugee learners in existing learning assessments is a low-cost way to improve knowledge on the quality of refugee learners' education (a key indicator identified for SDG monitoring as identified by EGRISS). LLECE in Latin America is already piloting the way forward in its next round of ERCE in 2025 and their methodological notes will provide many opportunities for peer learning.

  ▸ **To Ministries of Education and National Statistical Offices:** Where refugees are already included in learning assessments and administrative data, reporting these data in a disaggregated way so that the needs of refugee learners may be clearly identified and better understood is critical. Where they are not included, collaborating with international partners to include refugees within existing assessments is crucial. Administrative data on teachers and school facilities can also fill critical knowledge gaps and should be made available to partners.

Develop shared definitions and indicators for both refugee identification and education-related indicators across the humanitarian development spectrum to improve data quality and ensure that the data collected is comparable across different DCEs. This would align with previous recommendations to continue to improve data quality and accuracy, strengthen the methodologies used to produce data, and improve the timeliness and usability of the data collected on crisis-affected learners (Montjourides, 2013, p. 85). The creation of common indicators for refugee education, with standardized definitions and methodologies for measuring these indicators (e.g. on attendance) used within national data systems and across partners, would improve both intra and inter-agency coordination while enabling the comparability of data and facilitating uptake into policy-making processes. This could also be facilitated by collaborative development of shared modular analysis tools, not only for refugees but also beyond.

Acronyms

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DCE	Data Collection Exercise
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment
DQAF	Data Quality Assessment Framework
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGMIS	The UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EGRISS	Expert Working Group on Internally Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Statelessness Statistics
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
ERCE	Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo
FDPs	Forcibly Displaced Persons
IDAC	The International Data Alliance for Children on the Move
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ILA	International Learning Assessment
INEE	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IPUMS	Integrated Public Use Microdata Series
IRIS	International Recommendations on IDP Statistics
IRRS	International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PASEC	Programme for the Analysis of Confemen Education Systems (Programme d'analyse des systèmes éducatifs de la CONFEMEM)
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
ProGres	Profile Global Registration System
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Key terms

Term	Definition
Asylum-seeker	'A general term for any person who is seeking international protection. In some countries, it is used as a legal term referring to a person who has applied for refugee status or a complementary international protection status and has not yet received a final decision on their claim. It can also refer to a person who has not yet submitted an application but may intend to do so, or may be in need of international protection. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum-seeker. However, an asylum-seeker may not be sent back to their country of origin until their asylum claim has been examined in a fair procedure, and is entitled to certain minimum standards of treatment pending determination of their status.'
Population Census (Census)	'A population census is the total process of collecting, compiling, evaluating, analysing and publishing or otherwise disseminating demographic, economic and social data pertaining, at a specified time, to all persons in a country or in a well-delimited part of a country.'
Data Collection Exercise (DCE)	Any attempt at systematic data collection through either quantitative or qualitative means. This can cover household surveys, census, learning assessments, administrative data, and others. These typically use measurement tools such as questionnaires and tests and include their instruction manuals or guides.
Education Management Information System (EMIS)	An EMIS can be defined as 'a system for the collection, integration, processing, maintenance and dissemination of data and information to support decision-making, policy-analysis and formulation, planning, monitoring and management at all levels of an education system. It is a system of people, technology, models, methods, processes, procedures, rules and regulations that function together to provide education leaders, decision-makers and managers at all levels with a comprehensive, integrated set of relevant, reliable, unambiguous and timely data and information to support them in completion of their responsibilities'
Forced Displacement	'The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence (whether within their own country or across an international border), 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.'
Hosting Country	The country in which a non-national stays or resides, whether legally or irregularly.
Household Surveys	'They are among the most flexible methods of data collection. In theory almost any population-based subject can be investigated through household surveys…. In sample surveys part of the population is selected from which observations are made or data are collected and then inferences are made to the whole population. Because in sample surveys there are smaller workloads for interviewers and a longer time period assigned to data collection, most subject matter can be covered in greater detail than in censuses.' (UN DESA, 2005, p. 1)
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	'A person who has been forced or obliged to flee from their home or place of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who has not crossed an internationally recognized State border.'
Inclusion	'A gradual approach to ensure refugees and other persons we serve have access to national systems and services in law and practice and without discrimination in accordance with international norms and standards.'
Inclusive Education	'An inclusive approach to education means that each individual's needs are taken into account and that all learners participate and achieve together. It acknowledges that all children can learn and that every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.'

International Migrant	'For the specific purposes of global statistics on international migration, the United Nations (UN DESA) defines an international migrant as any person who changes their country of usual residence (excluding short-term movement for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage)…[However, there is no universally accepted definition of the term migrant, and the term is not defined by international law.]'
International Learning Assessments (ILAs)	'…international assessments and surveys that aim to produce internationally comparable datasets. To ensure international comparability, large-scale international surveys are highly standardised for all phases of the study, ranging from framework and instrument development, translation and verification procedures, test design, sample design, field operations, scaling methodology, data processing and management to quality assurance' (Cresswell, Schwantner, and Waters, 2015, p. 38). For learning assessments, it is critical that they have common 'analytical framework for cross-national comparisons of subject-specific learning outcomes based on representative samples of students at different grade/age levels.' (Kamens and Benavot, 2011).
National Learning Assessment	'Evaluation of individuals' achievement of learning objectives, using a variety of assessment methods (written, oral and practical tests/examinations, projects and portfolios) during or at the end of an educational progr amme.'
Refugee	Someone 'who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted 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.' (UN, 1951). Regional definitions in Latin America and Africa also extend refugee status to those fleeing generalized violence, foreign aggression and occupation, internal conflicts, massive human rights violations, and events or circumstances seriously disturbing public order. Variations in national procedures for refugee status determination mean that in many countries of asylum, individuals are unable to gain formal recognition as a refugee according to the definitions above. For the purposes of this report, refugees may be defined as all those who fit the definitions above, regardless of legal recognition as such (UNHCR, 1969; UNHCR, 1984).
Refugee Camp	'A plot of land temporarily made available to host refugees in temporary homes. UNHCR, host Governments and other humanitarian organizations provide essential services in refugee camps including food, sanitation, health, medicine and education. These camps are ideally located at least 50 km away from the nearest international border to deter camp raids and other attacks on its civilian occupants.' (UNHCR, 2023a)
Refugee Status	'The formal recognition (whether by UNHCR or a State) of a person as fulfilling the criteria required to designate them as a refugee according to international, regional or national law.'
Returnee	'A former refugee who has returned from a host country to their country of origin or former habitual residence, spontaneously or in an organized fashion, with the intention of remaining there permanently and who is yet to be fully integrated. Returnees include those returning as part of the operationalisation of the cessation clauses in the 1951 Convention and regional equivalents. The High Commissioner has a protection and solutions mandate for returnees as former refugees.'
School-based survey	A survey that takes place in schools (either all schools in the case of school census, or a sample of schools in the case of sample surveys). They take place in the school setting and are representative of school environments.
Venezuelan refugees and migrants	Given the complex drivers of Venezuelan migration, not all individuals displaced from Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) fit into the category of 'refugee,' despite UNHCR guidance to provide Venezuelans with recognition as such (UNHCR, 2019d). The term 'Venezuelan refugees and migrants' is widely used by host governments and the international community to refer to the sum of displaced Venezuelans – including refugees, migrant and asylum-seekers – reported in host countries (R4V, n.d.)

Table of contents

Table of figures

Table of tables

Introduction and background

The world is experiencing one of the most acute forced displacement crises. According to UNHCR (n.d.), by the end of 2022, there were more than 108 million FDPs worldwide, of which around 40% were estimated to be under the age of 18. While international norms include provisions to secure school access regardless of migratory status (e.g. the Global Compact for Refugees), refugee children fleeing conflict and human rights violations are not always granted the right to education in host countries. Nevertheless, information about the education situation of refugee children is scarce, and when available, it has limitations that prevent practitioners, policy-makers, and others from having a reliable picture of their access to schools, learning outcomes, and safety in schools, among other aspects that could help us better understand and support their educational journeys.

Data shortages, especially on refugees, are not uncommon even in high-capacity countries such as the UK (Stewart, 2004). This extends even beyond the education space (Bozorgmehr et al., 2019) and can vary widely between countries (UIS and UNHCR, 2021). While education data gaps are not unique to refugee populations, with data gaps found in SDG 4 reporting, they are certainly more pronounced (UIS, 2021). Overall, a recent study noted that, thus far, 'tracking whether this group has access to quality education in line with SDG 4 has been next to impossible' (UNHCR, Oxford MeasureEd and Cambridge Education, 2023, p. 19). Reliable, accurate, consistent, and comprehensive data (and data management) on refugee or other crisis-affected populations at the national and subnational levels for all learners (including overlooked learners over the ages of 18 and under 5) are critical in guiding effective educational planning, policy-making, and resource allocation for both development and humanitarian actors (Anselme, Ghosn, and Brug, 2019; Mendenhall, 2019; Hure and Taylor, 2019; Stewart, 2004). However, the extent to which these data are available is less clear.

Further, while it is often stated that there is little (though growing) data on FDPs and their education, a comprehensive review of the state of data for refugee education globally has, to our knowledge, not yet been conducted. Two recent publications aiming to assess the extent of data availability have found that data on the education of FDPs are very limited (Cazabat and Yasukawa, 2022b; UIS and UNHCR, 2021), but neither comprehensively reviewed the data landscape globally. UIS and UNHCR (2021), covering the top 13 refugee-hosting countries in 2020, provides the most current overview of the state of education data for refugee populations. Yet, despite the contribution that this report has made, the full extent of data availability on various education inputs and outcomes (e.g. attendance, enrolment, learning, safety) or SDG 4 indicators does not clearly emerge. However, if actors are to improve data availability, then understanding exactly what data are available (or not) is critical to address this concretely.

This report seeks to address this gap by consolidating the findings of a comprehensive mapping of refugee education data in the top 35 low- and middle-income refugee-hosting countries, covering 20.6 million refugees (80% of the refugee population in 2021[1]). The review covered 1,109 questionnaires from 621 DCEs (with publicly available metadata, reports or data) in 2021 (covering a time period of 2000 to 2022[2]) assessing the extent to which the inclusion[3] of refugees in education can be measured across these contexts.

This report focuses solely on refugees and those in refugee-like situations. Nevertheless, good practices on the inclusion of refugee education data could potentially inform initiatives aimed at improving data availability for other FDPs, such as internally displaced people and asylum-seekers, who have also been neglected in formal data systems. The recommendations – and the applicability of the analytical framework available in this report – could also contribute to future analysis of the education status of IDP students with some minor modifications.

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1. Based on UNHCR data from 2021, including only refugees and other people in need of international protection which totalled 25.73 million.
2. This timeframe was chosen in order to narrow the scope of the research to the time when such profiling questions were more likely to be asked, but also to allow for some analysis of change over time e.g. before, during and after refugee inflows. This will also allow for links to policy changes in given contexts and the exploration of policy and data linkages over time.
3. While the report looks at data inclusion in general, financing data has been excluded from this review. This is the case for two main reasons: 1) we did not want this work to overlap with work being done on refugee financing and associated data, for example, from Save the Children (2023), as well as work from the World Bank and UNHCR (2021).; and 2) as a result, this review did not include an explicit focus on data on financing (e.g. government budgets, ODA, humanitarian aid allocations from sources such as OCHA Financial Tracking Services, the OECD Creditor Reporting Service, or International Aid Transparency Initiative data) in order not to expand the number of DCEs to an unmanageable level.

This report will present an analysis of this mapping by highlighting key data availability gaps at the global level and drawing on country examples where relevant promising practices are evident. This report will first address the concepts of inclusion in education and data inclusion before providing a summary of the methods used to conduct the review and mapping. It will then present key findings in four sections: 1) Disaggregation with a focus on data availability that allows the identification of refugees; 2) Access, which reports data on access to schools; 3) Quality, which addresses the quality of inputs and learning outcomes; and 4) Safety, which includes data on learner safety within and on the way to schools. Based on this, it will assess the extent to which data on refugee education in key education areas is available and will then move on to providing recommendations on how to improve data on refugee education to accurately understand and support their educational pathways.

Data inclusion

While definitions of data inclusion abound ('Inclusive Data Taskforce' 2023; UNDESA, 2016), all share the core principle of understanding, through information, the terms on which all individuals and groups take part in society.[4] For this study, this means focusing on ensuring that refugees and other displaced persons are represented in data systems. The present study uses the five principles of the Inclusive Data Charter (see Table 1) developed by the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (2022) as a guide for inclusion. In line with other work carried out at the international level to include and disaggregate various population groups in data systems,[5] the two critical principles of relevance for this study are first, that 'all populations must be included in the data' and second, that 'all data should, wherever possible, be disaggregated in order to accurately describe all populations' (Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, 2022).

The inclusion of refugees in education systems does not systematically lead to their clear and comprehensive inclusion in corresponding data systems. UIS and UNHCR (2021) highlighted that in the top 13 refugee-hosting countries in the world, data on refugee education beyond access is limited.[6] Further, the inclusion and disaggregation of refugee learners in national education monitoring systems such as Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) remains strikingly sparse.

Refugee exclusion or their misrepresentation in national data systems leads to oversights regarding their experience in national education systems, which in turn may perpetuate inequalities and hinder the design of effective policies and interventions addressing their needs. Including refugees in data systems can help:

- **Make refugees visible:** Inclusion in data systems provides timely and precise information on the presence of refugees in host communities and informs policy-makers of their specific needs.

- **Identify disparities:** Identifying disparities in access to quality social services may help policy-makers and advocates understand the extent of the problem and develop targeted interventions to address it.

- **Improve services:** By understanding the unique situations and living conditions of refugees, it is possible to develop services and programmes tailored to their needs.

- **Hold institutions accountable:** It becomes possible to hold institutions accountable for their actions and ensure that they are not perpetuating inequalities that could potentially harm refugees.

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4. This aligns with the World Banks SIAT tool, which notes that the availability of indicators to measure progress on social inclusion is critical (World Bank 2013).
5. Indeed, a recent review (Mazurana, Marshak, and Spears, 2023) shows that even on disaggregation such as gender and age, where there are already standards (e.g. in the Sphere Handbook (Sphere Project 2018)), there are still challenges in data collection, use and uptake.
6. Similar results have been found for IDPs (Cazabat and Yasukawa, 2022a).

Table 1: Inclusive data charter principles

Inclusive data charter principles		
1	All populations must be included in the data	We can only achieve the 'leave no one behind' goal by empowering the furthest behind. This means ensuring that their voices are heard and that their experiences are represented in data and analytics. We need to acknowledge all people, make them visible in the data to understand their lives, and include them in the development process.
2	All data should, wherever possible, be disaggregated in order to accurately describe all populations	We recognize that data should be disaggregated by sex, age, geographic location, and disability status and, where possible, by income, race, ethnicity, protection status, and other characteristics relevant to national contexts.
3	Data should be drawn from all available sources	We recognize the need to make high-quality, timely data from official and non-official sources accessible, and that these should include new data sources, where consistent with internationally accepted statistical standards.
4	Those responsible for the collection of data and production of statistics must be accountable	We will balance the principles of transparency – maximizing the availability of disaggregated data – confidentiality, and privacy to ensure personal data is not abused, misused, or putting anyone at risk of identification or discrimination, in accordance with national laws and the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.
5	Human and technical capacity to collect, analyse, and use disaggregated data must be improved, including through adequate and sustainable financing	We recognize that collecting and analysing disaggregated data requires the development of specific skills. We recognize the need to finance data collection, analysis, and use appropriately and sustainably so that high-quality data can be collected and used by governments as well as by businesses, civil society, and citizens.

Source: Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, 2022

One clear pathway for increasing the availability of data on refugees is intentionally including them in existing DCEs rather than conducting additional ad hoc DCEs or having them included in an unrepresentative way in larger DCEs covering their area of residence. Historically, the use of proxies in capturing refugee status has been common practice in research on refugees. Assessing the research landscape on economic integration, Donato and Ferris (2020, p. 24) state that 'most studies differentiate refugees from other immigrants without observing refugee status directly. Instead, they use national origin to approximate refugee status or create synthetic cohorts'. Similar methods have been used with OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data to distinguish between the performance of 'natives' and 'migrants' (Behr and Fugger, 2020), and nationality is also used in many EMIS as a proxy for refugee status (UNESCO, 2023; UIS and UNHCR, 2021). However, there are significant challenges in identifying specific migrant populations using this method (e.g. disaggregating refugees from other migrants, especially if there have been historical migrant flows). Further disaggregation efforts have been hampered by the lack of global frameworks for data collection and the lack of guidance on how to collect data in line with global normative and legal frameworks.

For inclusion in existing DCEs to be meaningful, standardization of migration, displacement, and profiling definitions and methods is needed. To this end, two high-level UN-mandated groups have provided relevant research and guidance. First is the UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics' (EGMIS) Final Report on Conceptual Frameworks and Concepts and Definitions on International Migration, which contains recommendations on classifications of the migrant population groups (UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics, 2021). Secondly, the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics has developed two key guidance documents to improve the collection of official statistics on FDPs: The International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS) and the International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (IRIS) (Eurostat, European Commission, and UN, 2018a; Eurostat, European Commission, and UN, 2020a).[7]

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7. This expert group is also currently working on a similar guidance document for statelessness statistics.

Box 1: Global initiatives to improve data on forcibly displaced learners

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In the last decade, international efforts have been implemented to improve conceptual definitions and data collection methods aiming to inform the situation of refugee children worldwide. Those initiatives also seek to understand the extent of FDPs data gaps. Most are developed by inter-agency consortiums, with the participation of international organizations with a mandate or mission to protect the rights of children and refugees.

- The International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) (UNICEF, 2020) is a 'cross-sectoral global coalition comprised of governments, international and regional organizations, NGOs, think tanks, academics, and civil society whose main objective is to improve statistics and data on migrant and forcibly displaced children with the goal to support evidence-based policy-making that protects and empowers them'.

- The UNHCR-UNICEF Blueprint for Joint Action for Refugee Children (UNHCR, 2021b) is an initiative to accelerate joint efforts, spanning education; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and child protection across ten countries (Bangladesh, Cameroon, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, and Rwanda).

- The UNSG Action Agenda on Internal Displacement aims to 'help IDPs find a durable solution to their displacement; better prevent new displacement crises from emerging; and ensure those facing displacement receive effective protection and assistance'. (United Nations, 2023)

- The UNESCO-led IDP Education Data Expert Working Group, comprised of a group of six organizations (Global Education Cluster GEC, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, International Organization for Migration, Joint IDP Profiling Service, REACH Impact, UNESCO), works to improve the standardization of education data for IDPs.

These groups[1] work cross-sectorally under the premise that FDPs are excluded from data systems. Indeed, the main issue across sectors is the lack of information that would allow disaggregation by FDP status, or that would make accurate proxies available. Further, a cross-sectoral approach that bridges the humanitarian-development spectrum is important for improving data availability as many DCEs are cross-sectoral and important at different phases of crises. However, it is also important to understand the nuances and challenges faced by each sector, identify their interactions, and find solutions that meet the needs of the stakeholders operating in those sectors.

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1. Importantly there are also many groups working outside the FDP space that focus on improving data. For example, the Collaborative on the Use of Administrative Data for Statistics, works to improve and share learning on the use of administrative data for statistics (UN Statistics Division 2023).

Inclusion in education

Equitable access to education is a necessary requirement for inclusive[8] education systems. More practically, for refugees this implies that refugees have access to 'no better, no worse' education than host communities in terms of teacher quality, school infrastructure, financing, access to learning materials and other resources (see UNHCR, 2022a; World Bank and UNHCR, 2021) and within the same system as host country populations[9] (Dryden-Peterson, Adelman, Bellino and Chopra, 2019; UNESCO, 2020). This is in line with SDG 4,[10] which aims to ensure safe, inclusive, and

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8. Inclusion overlaps with integration. While the terms do not have consistent definitions across the literature, refugee integration can be defined as a complex and multidimensional two-way process where refugees and host societies contribute by mutually adjusting (Castles et al., 2002; Ager and Strang, 2008; Phillimore, 2020), as opposed to earlier assimilationist approaches that assumed 'membership as unidirectional and spatially bound' (Bellino and Dryden-Peterson, 2018, p.6). On the other hand, 'inclusion can be understood as involving more limited and specific policies and practices' (Kelcey and Chatila, 2020 as cited in Marcus et al., 2023, p. 8). These definitions are intertwined with further conceptual distinctions such as the one between structural (the ability to access institutions and services) and relational integration (a sociocultural process, related to identity development and transformation from an individual-level sense of belonging, or connectedness to group-level social cohesion) which is a reminder of the complex layers that shape participation in and belonging to host communities (Dryden-Peterson et al.) In this report, our focus is on structural integration and inclusion (Rachel Marcus et al., 2023; Dryden-Peterson, Adelman, Bellino and Chopra, 2019).
9. While a useful shorthand, this is also too simplified and in practice this can take different forms. For example, even if refugees attend the same schools as host communities, they can remain separated (Dryden-Peterson, 2018; Dryden-Peterson, Adelman, Bellino, and Chopra, 2019) in two main ways: i) geographically, where 'refugees and nationals reside in different geographical areas and thus attend different schools' or ii) temporally, where 'refugees and nationals attend the same schools but at different times, often referred to as a "shift system"'(Dryden-Peterson, 2018, 19).
10. 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2015)

equitable quality education for all through lifelong learning, as well as the Global Framework for Refugee Education, which promotes the inclusion of refugees in national education systems (UNHCR, 2019b; Dryden-Peterson, Adelman, Bellino and Chopra, 2019). This represents a move towards durable solutions for refugees, whereby UNHCR considers a solution to have been achieved when refugees obtain a legal status that ensures protection of the same rights, responsibilities, and access to national services and systems as host country nationals.[11] This is despite education pathways for refugees being more complex than for their non-refugee peers as the protracted nature of exile and the uncertainties of displacement create 'unknowable futures' (e.g. staying in their host country, returning to their home country, and resettling in a third state) (Dryden-Peterson, 2017) which may change the purpose of education. However, inclusion 'provide[s] the most sustainable, cost-effective policy response to the education challenges presented by forced displacement' (Abu-Ghaida and Silva, 2020, p. 2). Nevertheless, the extent to which the right to education is granted at the local level can only be assessed if there is adequate data to do so.

Inclusion of refugees in education data systems: what do we know?

Refugee data: what is available and who is reporting?

The availability of data on refugee education varies from country to country, as do data collection methods, frequency, and the type of information collected. However, at the global level, systematic and institutionalized efforts to produce refugee education data may be observed. The primary reference for global refugee data is UNHCR's annual education report, which was first published in 2016 (UNHCR, 2016; UNHCR, 2017; UNHCR, 2018; UNHCR, 2019c; UNHCR, 2020a; UNHCR, 2021a; UNHCR, 2022a). UNHCR's efforts to collect data on refugee education have allowed for greater representativeness of these reports. As a result, in 2022, UNHCR provided information on global

refugee enrolment rates based on data collected in 44 countries. This represents a significant improvement with respect to the 2021 report, where estimations relied on data from a mere 12 countries. Furthermore, the 2022 report also contains out-of-school rates and refugee pass rates in a subgroup of countries, providing a more nuanced picture of refugee access, attainment and learning (see UNHCR, 2021a; UNHCR, 2022a). However, data is often aggregated at a global level, which limits understanding of variations across contexts. Further, the raw data are not made publicly available, and as a result, the quality of the data presented has been difficult to ascertain. Nor has the data been clearly benchmarked against SDG 4 monitoring requirements, even though some indicators do overlap. These additions would increase the utility of these global aggregations and provide credible insights into country-level work. Nevertheless, given relatively low levels of country and indicator coverage, supplementary data sources must be mobilized to complete the picture of the state of refugee education at all scales.

Another key reference for refugee data is the UNHCR Microdata Library, which contains microdata on persons of concern to UNHCR, including refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people (IDPs), stateless people and others. Microdata are unit-level data collected through censuses, registration/administrative exercises and surveys. All datasets include comprehensive metadata and supporting documents such as survey questionnaires and analytical reports (UNHCR, 2023b). However, while it currently hosts 573 datasets,[12] the extent of sectoral coverage for any given dataset is not completely clear without diving into the metadata,[13] nor is this a complete repository of all data on refugee education. Nevertheless, it is a useful starting point for exploring refugee education data at a global level. Lastly, the distribution of data across various repositories, including the World Bank Microdata Library, IPUMS, and others, hinders efforts in mapping data availability for refugee education globally.

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11. However, in practice this is still challenging. See UIS and UNHCR, 2021 for a more detailed discussion of inclusion in reference to UNHCR and refugees.
12. March 20, 2023
13. The extent of sectoral coverage in these datasets is not clear even though the API does allow you to filter through datasets by sectoral markers. Doing so, however, only provides an indication of whether a dataset covers education in any shape or form, rather than providing the specific questions associated to education. Using the API in this way provided us with 166 surveys from the library with some educational questions (98 of which were in the top 35 countries). It may not be realistic for APIs to return sectoral markers and automate the extraction of specific variables from questionnaires across sectors, and alternative solutions may be needed.

Refugee data gaps and quality issues

Beyond this, some literature on data for refugee education highlights a general dearth of data. This is also true in the broader education space at the global level as an analysis on SDG 4 reporting highlights significant levels of missing information for the countries included (see Appendix 3 for a full analysis). Further, Montjourides (2013) argues that the lack of data for education in emergencies, and the quality of it when available, could be considered as the 'fifth failure' (in addition to failures of protection, provision, reconstruction, and peacebuilding) that prevents children from making progress in education.

Ten years on, progress has been made, but as this report and others (UIS and UNHCR, 2021; UNHCR, 2022c; UNHCR, Oxford MeasureEd and Cambridge Education, 2023; Cazabat and Yasukawa, 2022) show, large data gaps remain. Further, relative to data on other population groups, refugee studies are an 'area of population research that [still] does not have a data feast' (Stewart, 2004, p. 29). This is compounded by data collected that does not make its way into the public domain – a finding that was confirmed by the background case studies undertaken as part of the larger research for this project (UNESCO, 2023).

A challenge for assessing the extent of data availability is that much of the current research (see UIS and UNHCR, 2021; UNHCR, 2022c, Oxford MeasureEd and Cambridge Education, 2023; Cazabat and Yasukawa, 2022a for exceptions) tends to use case studies. While case studies illustrate the need for more and better data, and highlight countries' promising practices, they remain localized evidence which is often not representative of refugees at the national level, for example in Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Türkiye, Zambia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan (Mert and Kesbiç, 2019; Hure and Taylor, 2019; Acar, Pinar-Irmak, and Martin, 2019; Pinna, 2020; UNHCR, 2022d; World Bank, 2023).

A key point from the literature is that data beyond access at the primary and secondary levels,[14] such as ECCE, pre-primary, vocational, and tertiary education, are largely missing (see Lobos, 2022; Mert and Kesbiç 2019; UNESCO, 2020; UIS and UNHCR, 2021). Based on UIS and UNHCR (2021) the most pressing information gaps lie in the domains of education quality (e.g. learning and teachers) and school safety (e.g. peer violence). On quality, a recent review of publicly available data on learning for refugees found that the availability of data is limited in scope and mainly produced to serve donor reporting needs, and that government data on refugee learners were not publicly available. Further, their critical appraisal was challenged by insufficient information on the research methods of the included studies (UNHCR, Oxford MeasureEd and Cambridge Education, 2023).

The number of countries that disaggregate their national assessments or examinations to allow insights into refugee learning is limited, and they often do so by using proxies for refugee status, such as nationality (e.g. Colombia, Chad). This may not be useful in contexts where refugees hold multiple nationalities or where there is a long history of migration between the countries. In addition to approaching learning outcomes through national assessments, some countries also use the information on students' nationality to analyse different progress indicators such as pass/fail rates. These approaches are valuable and reflect progress, but gaps remain in terms of making that disaggregation available in more countries and improving the precision in capturing the migratory status of the students to replace the use of proxies with official information.

In addition to learning data, a comprehensive understanding of refugee education requires corresponding information on the host country's education system and its resources. In that respect, data on teachers, teaching, and learning conditions within schools are also scarce, and this is a barrier to understanding the quality of refugee education. Moreover, when there are data – for example, on pupil-teacher ratios – they are not (and often cannot be) linked to the number of refugee learners in a school or classroom. This makes improving learning conditions difficult, as incomplete information affects policy development and planning.

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14. Even in contexts where efforts at data capture for displaced students are significant, actors are not capturing other relevant education indicators. Lobos (2022, p,32) notes that for the Latin American region there are data on enrolment of regular migrants, but the absence of good population data on irregular migrants has meant that the full scale of out-of-school children has been difficult to capture.

School safety – defined as the conditions that enable all users, including learners, teachers, and other educational personnel, to enjoy the right to education without fear of physical or psychosocial threat, danger, injury, or loss posed by natural and climate-induced events, conflict-related violence, instability, or violence by individuals (UNESCO, 2023a) – is also critical. Beyond protection from external and internal risks, such as attacks on education and interpersonal violence, safety also includes offering a secure, protective physical space and adequate conditions for health and well-being, including safe facilities and infrastructure, a positive socio-emotional environment, and health and nutrition services. Despite the importance of safe conditions for learning, no comprehensive review of safety indicators for refugee education was found. Similarly, UIS and UNHCR (2021) found poor coverage of safety indicators, even in large-scale international surveys that often aim to provide a comprehensive view of the national educational landscape. This is despite the research showing the relevance of safe environments to promote a positive school and community climate, which is critical for facilitating student learning and well-being (Kutsyuruba, Klinger, and Hussain, 2015; Chavez and Aguilar, 2021).

One aspect of school safety that is particularly relevantfor displaced student populations – and where data are almost completely absent – is discrimination and peer violence experienced by refugee learners. The literature suggests that children who are perceived as different from their peers, in terms of their physical appearance, socio-economic status (Elgar et al., 2009), school performance (Thornberg, 2011), or nationality (Alsharabti and Lahoud, 2016), are more likely to be bullied. However, some of these aspects are not systematically measured in the EMIS, and data availability mostly comes from studies on the school experiences of refugees that are limited to small samples (Cate and Glock, 2018; Liebkind, Jasinskaja-Lahti, and Solheim, 2004; D'hondt et al., 2016).

This report contributes to and advances efforts to quantify the extent of these challenges and data gaps. It will focus on showing the breadth and depth of refugee identification questions that are asked, including where and how they are asked, as well as looking at the spectrum of education indicators available for both refugee and non-refugee populations. The report concludes with key recommendations and actionable ways for data producers and users to improve the availability of refugee education data, and further inclusion of refugees in national data systems going forward.

Methodology

Building on existing work by UIS, UNHCR, EGRISS, IDMC and others (UIS and UNHCR, 2021; UNHCR, 2022c; UNHCR, 2022c; UNHCR, Oxford MeasureEd and Cambridge Education, 2023; Cazabat and Yasukawa, 2022a), this report focuses on understanding the data landscape on refugee education and the extent to which education stakeholders can measure the

inclusion of refugees in education data systems.[15] It does so by reviewing 3 of the 4 areas highlighted in Figure 1 to take stock of the extent to which refugees are included in existing DCEs, how refugee identification is implemented, and the education indicators used in these DCEs. This review process focuses largely on publicly available information.

Analytical framework

Figure 2: Framework for the inclusion of refugees in education data systems

Methodology and inclusion by design
- Inclusion in sample frame
- Representativeness

Disaggregation (Refugee identification)
- Self-identification
- Documentation
- Criteria
- Proxy

Disaggregation (Socio-economic)
- Age
- Gender
- Disability
- Socio-economic Status

Coverage of education
- Access
- Quality (Learning)
- Safety and Well-being
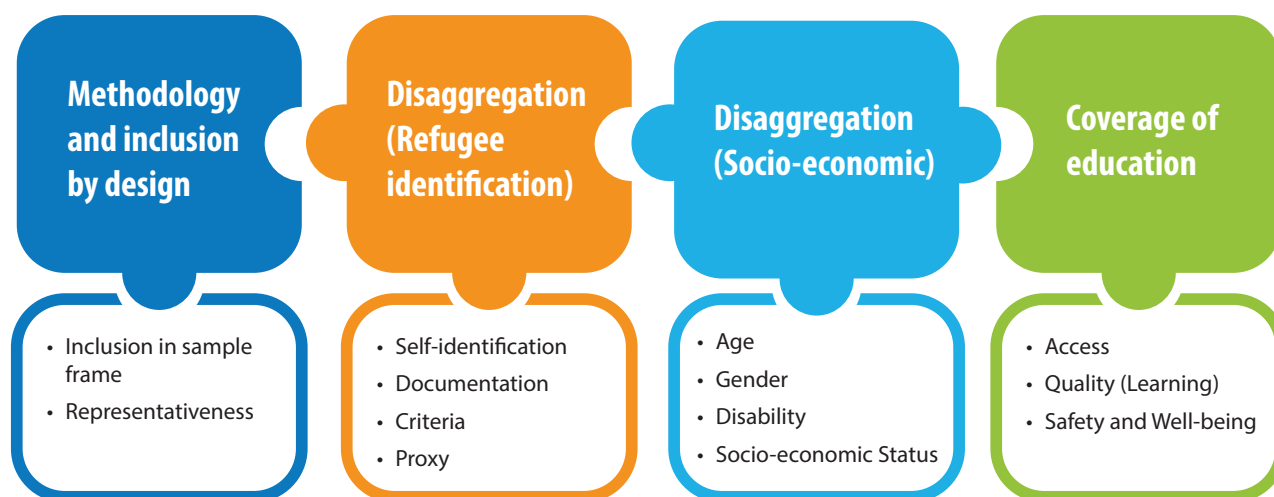
Source: Authors' own elaboration

While it is often stated that data on the education of FDPs are limited, there is a need to comprehensively measure the extent to which this is the case. Further, while the concept of inclusion is still debated, the operationalization of it is less so. This section proposes a framework for the inclusion of refugees in education data systems that is intended to act as a guide to assessing the extent to which actors can measure the inclusion of refugees in education data systems.

By focusing on the inclusion of FDPs in education data systems, this framework intersects with issues of refugee inclusion in education more broadly, though it does not completely overlap. For example, systemic

challenges may affect the inclusion of refugees in education data systems, regardless of whether refugee students are effectively included in national education systems (e.g. the division of responsibility across multiple ministries by levels of education, especially ECCE and higher education, which often have different data systems; policy and legal frameworks; etc.). However, these systemic issues and the levels of integration between policy inclusion and data production are not the focus of this framework. In contrast, the framework focuses on the finer details of inclusion in data systems.

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15. This resource is designed not only to provide a collection of data sources for both researchers and policy-makers, but also to bring together and present this information in a user-friendly way to estimate the progress towards SDG 4 indicators. The full dataset of reviewed DCEs will be made available soon on UNESCO's webpage. This work follows similar principles to the Data to Policy Navigator developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2023) in mapping data ecosystems and identifying gaps in refugee data but conducting this analysis at global level.

Each framework pillar will be discussed in turn below (see Figure 2), and it is important to keep in mind that each of them will have slightly different considerations depending on which DCEs the report is referring to. For instance, an administrative data system such as EMIS will have different methodological considerations than a household survey, and the potential refugee identification methods will also differ. Given that inclusion in data systems includes all data in a context, it is critical that a data inclusion framework allows for this flexibility of approaches.

Methodology and inclusion by design

The methodology and inclusion by design pillar of the framework aims to establish whether there is systematic inclusion of refugees in the DCE. The key point here is that forcibly displaced groups must deliberately be included in sample design, otherwise, any estimates made from those surveys will not be statistically representative of them. While this has implications for survey design and usually involves additional costs (as sample size must increase), it is the only way to ensure consistent coverage of this specific population group. In reviewing the extent of inclusion based on this dimension of the framework, there are two main areas of interest:

- **Inclusion in sample frames and samples:**
  By definition, census-like DCEs should include refugees and provide valuable data about their living conditions in the host country, including education aspects, as well as provide a useful sample frame for other types of DCEs. Censuses, however, have limitations in terms of frequency and scope. Consequently, sample-based surveys could contribute to refugee data inclusion if refugees are included in the sampling frame for the DCE. For example, was UNHCR registration data used as a sampling frame for registered refugees in a given country, or do the enumeration areas included in the survey cover those areas where refugees are located? This only applies to DCEs that are based on samples drawn from the population. In these DCEs, there is a need to understand where the sampling frame for refugees is drawn from and whether there has been an effort to include refugees explicitly or if their inclusion is just a by-product of their presence in an enumeration area that is being covered (e.g. urban areas with potentially high concentrations of refugees). When refugees are included in the sample, a stratified sample of refugees should be

drawn to ensure that the sample is representative. If a clear sampling frame was not present, have alternative measures been used to attempt to draw a representative sample of refugees? For administrative data such as EMIS, this sort of inclusion is not relevant as the system will only capture those participating in education, so the elements of disaggregation covered in the next section are more relevant.

- **National or geographic representativeness:**
  For sample-based DCEs, once refugees have been included in the sampling frame, there is the question of whether this sample is nationally representative of refugees in the country. This would also entail delineating what subsample sizes are available and if they are sufficient for statistically significant disaggregated inferences. This will include notes about whether there was deliberate oversampling used in the data sources identified. In addition, while inflows of refugees may be captured through registration data, which serve as a sampling frame for collecting data from refugee populations, the systematic documentation of refugee outflows (returnees or those transiting to a third country) remains an issue. Further, considering whether the different areas in which forcibly displaced groups are located are adequately covered in the sample (e.g. camp/non-camp, rural/urban) is critical.

Despite the relevance of this pillar to secure accurate information about refugees, DCEs targeted at refugees tend to be scarce, and accessing information to produce reliable sample frames for this population group is challenging, given their ongoing spatial mobility. Moreover, even when it is possible to have a sampling frame that allows statistical representation, access to information where those technical details are available is limited. Acknowledging those limitations, this report does not include an in-depth analysis of DCE methods and how they support inclusion by design. Nevertheless, the report identifies, based on publicly available information, whether the DCEs targeted refugees or just the general population and conducted analysis using that variable to present disaggregated results. It must be noted, however, that DCEs targeted at the general population could potentially include refugees.

Disaggregation - Refugee identification

A further step for ensuring DCEs can be used to understand any aspect of FDPs is the inclusion of migratory or protection status identification variables

within the survey. Thus, this dimension focuses on determining whether refugees and other forcibly displaced groups – such as IDPs and asylum-seekers – can be identified reliably within existing datasets, whether directly or indirectly. The reliability of the questions used for refugee identification can be tested against established international standards (e.g. EGRISS IRRS and IRIS). These standards seek to ensure that refugees and IDPs are accurately and consistently identified across a range of data sources globally by bringing international definitions into clear operational questions for DCEs (Eurostat, European Commission, and UN 2018b, 2020a).

Despite well-established refugee identification standards, there are significant challenges in identifying and distinguishing between different groups of migrants in existing data sources. For example, distinguishing refugees from other displaced persons and migrants is challenging if there are insufficient refugee identification questions in the data collection tools used. If the only information collected is 'country of origin', the chances of accurately identifying refugees are limited. Knowing where the person is coming from could be a proxy for displacement but says little about migratory status, though the addition of, for example, the date of arrival or reason for migration could facilitate this. It could also be misleading as refugees would overlap with asylum-seekers and voluntary migrants as they would all have a country of origin to report.

Further, the extent to which refugees are officially recognized varies by context (e.g. whether the hosting country is a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention), adding additional challenges to the task of refugee identification (see UNESCO, 2023 for more details). In much of Latin America,[16] for example, the term 'refugee' is not used despite regional conventions such as the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, 1984, which establishes a broad regional definition of 'refugee' that includes individuals impacted by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflict, violation of human rights, or other circumstances disturbing public order (Colloquium on the International Protection of Refugees in Central America, Mexico and Panama, 1984). Instead, there is a preference for using the term 'foreign migrants' or 'people on the move', which makes it impossible to distinguish between migratory statuses

unless there is individual-level data on the reason for migration. The latter, combined with other variables, constitutes a criteria-based approach to identification and can serve as a more reliable way to identify refugees in the absence of direct questions on status (JIPS, 2021a).

The challenge of refugee identification is also influenced by the type of data source. For example, the reliability of the refugee identification of refugees– and consequently refugee data collected–in a school census may vary significantly as the context may determine how aware schools are of the refugee status of students. In many cases, the person filling out the survey (usually the head teacher or principal) may not have information about the refugee status of students. In other cases, access is restricted due to privacy and data protection policies. Key resources, such as the 'ICRC Handbook on Data Protection in Humanitarian Action' (ICRC, 2020), 'Policy on the Protection of Personal Data of Persons of Concern' (UN, n.d.), or the 'General Policy on Personal Data Protection and Privacy' (UNHCR, 2022a) offer principles and operational standards for data management while protecting and respecting refugee rights. For example, in Uganda, where South Sudanese refugees are granted *prima facie* asylum,[17] it might be easier for teachers to identify refugees as the refugee status overlaps with nationality, though again, this may vary in urban and rural areas. This can work on two levels: It is more likely that more non-refugee non-nationals live in urban areas, but also that refugee status determination may be on a *prima facie* basis in rural areas and individualized in urban areas (Kagan, 2007). However, elsewhere, persons of the same nationality might be refugees or migrants, making it much more difficult for the school to report on the number of refugees unless there is individual-level data collection in place which links the learners to their unique registration number.[18]

Despite the challenges and shortcomings described above, there are four main ways to identify forcibly displaced groups in DCEs that are implemented to different extents:

- **Self-identification**, where the respondent is asked whether they identify as a member of a forcibly displaced group (e.g. Is the respondent/household member a refugee?) (JIPS, 2021b, p. 9);

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16. With Brazil and Costa Rica as notable exceptions here.
17. A *prima facie* approach means 'the recognition by a State or UNHCR of refugee status on the basis of readily apparent, objective circumstances in the country of origin or, in the case of stateless asylum seekers, their country of former habitual residence. A *prima facie* approach acknowledges that those fleeing these circumstances are at risk of harm that brings them within the applicable refugee definition'. (UNHCR 2015).
18. Further, this identification strategy could be limited – as some students with a South Sudanese nationality may not necessarily have refugee status.

- **Documentation**, more commonly used in administrative data where the identification of refugee status is based on the information available in the identification document provided by the respondent;

- **Criteria-based approach**, where a specific set of questions (e.g. country of origin, cause of migration, and length of displacement) is used to classify a person into forcibly displaced groups;

- **Proxy-based identification**, where some proxy indicators (e.g. nationality) are used when the above sets of questions are not possible (e.g. nationality) (JIPS, 2021b).

This framework will consider all four approaches, with the caveat that not all approaches are relevant for all DCEs, that some may work better for specific groups of FDPs, and that the 'best' approach may vary by context. For example, while the criteria-based approach is considered best practice (see Appendix 1) in household surveys, this would not be feasible to implement in administrative data, nor is it likely to be more reliable than documentation-based approaches. Alternatively, proxy-based approaches may work better in the context of Venezuelan displacement in Latin America, where there is little history of crossborder movements, than in some other contexts where criteria-based approaches may be necessary. For a more detailed discussion of each of these, please see Appendix 1.

Disaggregation - Socio-economic and other personal characteristics

Collecting data that allows for the disaggregation by personal characteristics such as gender, age, socio-economic status (e.g. assets, expenditure, income), religion, ethnicity, and other factors is common practice in many DCEs, especially household surveys. It is also critical to consider inclusion in understanding refugee data, as many overlapping inequities may affect subpopulations. This is in line with the Inclusive Data Charter that aims to ensure that 'all populations must be included in the data' and that 'all data should, wherever possible, be disaggregated in order to accurately describe all populations' (Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, 2022).

In EMIS, common disaggregation includes grade, gender, and disability status. Indeed, disaggregation is part of several data quality assessment frameworks for EMIS. For

example, the World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) and the UIS's Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) (World Bank, 2014; van Wyk and Crouch, 2020; World Bank Development Data Group and UNESCO-UIS, 2003) also allows for different degrees of disaggregation/aggregation (e.g. school region) by subcomponents (e.g. by gender, by level of education, by age, private and public, full-time and part-time). Further, UNICEF 'measures the proportion of EMIS able to produce disaggregated data on gender, urban/rural, wealth, and disability' (Global Partnership for Education, 2019). The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), in its EMIS Norms and Standards Assessment Framework, includes disaggregation by gender, disability, and location under its comprehensiveness norms (Education Management and Policy Support, 2011). However, as a recent review (Mazurana, Marshak, and Spears, 2023) shows, even on disaggregation of gender and age, where there are existing standards (e.g. in the Sphere Handbook (Sphere Project, 2018)), challenges in data collection, use and uptake prevail.

This disaggregation is in keeping with the goal of leaving no one behind and applies to intersectional inequalities. An important caveat is that greater levels of disaggregation within a population require sample sizes large enough to allow greater generalizability of estimates, which has implications on survey costs and design. Thus, a balance of disaggregation must generally be struck for any given DCE.

Coverage of education

After establishing that forcibly displaced groups are included in the data source and that it is possible to identify them, it is important to understand the extent to which existing data sources allow for a complete understanding of refugee education. The two main reference points for this are SDG 4 and the Global Framework for Refugee Education (UNHCR, 2019b). The Global Framework for Refugee Education's outcome areas tie into many of the SDG targets (see Appendix 3) and provide a fertile starting point from which to understand the inclusion of refugees (or any other forcibly displaced groups) in education systems. It highlights the minimum areas of education that need to be monitored in reference to the education of an FDP.

However, it is also important that education be put in a larger context of refugee policy. For this analytical framework, the structure of the report was built off the policy framework developed for a contiguous report looking at policy and data inclusion (UNESCO, 2023). However, given time and material constraints, this report focuses on the data review of the analytical framework of educational areas (see Table 2 below) outlined by that report. These educational areas form the key foundations for 'inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015) from a refugee perspective.

Table 2: Analytical framework - Educational areas

Term	Definition	SDG 4 Links[19]
Access to early childhood, primary, and secondary education (referred to as Access to Schools throughout)	Refugees may enrol in the national education system on the same basis as nationals at the primary and secondary levels, and may access early childhood development, care and pre-primary education.	4.1.2, 4.1.4, 4.1.5, 4.2.2, 4.2.4
Safe learning environment	Learning occurs in a secure, protective physical space that meets the physiological and psychological needs of users and promotes adequate conditions for health and well-being.	4.a.1, 4.a.2, 4.a.3
Quality learning conditions	Refugees may access the conditions in which high levels of student learning can occur across reading, math and other subjects aligned with the national curriculum. This requires ensuring a sufficient supply of trained teachers and access to learning support, including from school leadership and administrative staff. For refugees, this may also include granting access to language courses, academic support and psychosocial services that address their educational and socio-emotional needs.	4.1.1, 4.4.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.3, 4.5.2, 4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.7.1, 4.7.2, 4.7.4, 4.7.5, 4.a.1, 4.c.1, 4.c.2, 4.c.3, 4.c.4, 4.c.7
Access to progression	Refugees may advance through all stages of education on the same basis as nationals, including promotion from one grade to the next and transitions between levels (e.g. from primary to secondary education) (World Bank, 2008).	4.1.2, 4.4.3, 4.a.1a, 4.a.1b, 4.a.1f, 4.c.2, 4.c.1
Certification of learning	Refugees are eligible to obtain end-of-cycle leaving certificates, including primary and secondary leaving certificates, and may graduate and validate their studies.	
Access to technical, vocational, and tertiary education (referred to as Access to higher education throughout)	Refugees may enrol in technical, vocational, and tertiary education (including university) on the same basis as nationals and may access funding opportunities.	4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.b.1

Source: Adapted from UNESC0, 2023.

This report reviews each of these areas through a variety of sub-indicators (see Appendix 1 for details) to ascertain the extent of refugee education data across the spectrum of educational areas presented above. Specifically, the available questionnaires were manually reviewed in addition to other data sources (e.g. reports) searching for questions that could inform each sub-indicator that were then marked as either present or absent in the database. This review acknowledges that the information embedded in each sub-indicator can be asked in multiple ways and this was reflected in the classification of questions reviewed for this report. For example, in the case of 'access to schools' the review examined 10 sub-indicators, such as 'attendance in the current or previous year', 'enrolment', etc, each of which can be asked with different questions in different data sources. This was true for all the indicators in Table 2 (see Appendix 1 for more) and means that not all indicators on e.g. attendance may be comparable.

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19. The SDG 4 indicators within the table overlap with the analytical framework of the report.

Methods

Overview

Figure 3: Percentage of refugees hosted by selected countries of the total global refugee population, as of September 2021

Overview of the top 35 low-and-middle income refugee-hosting countries included in the data review
Percentage of refugees hosted by selected countries of total global refugee population, as of September 2021

- 15% - 20%
- 10% - 15%
- 5% - 10%
- 0% - 5%
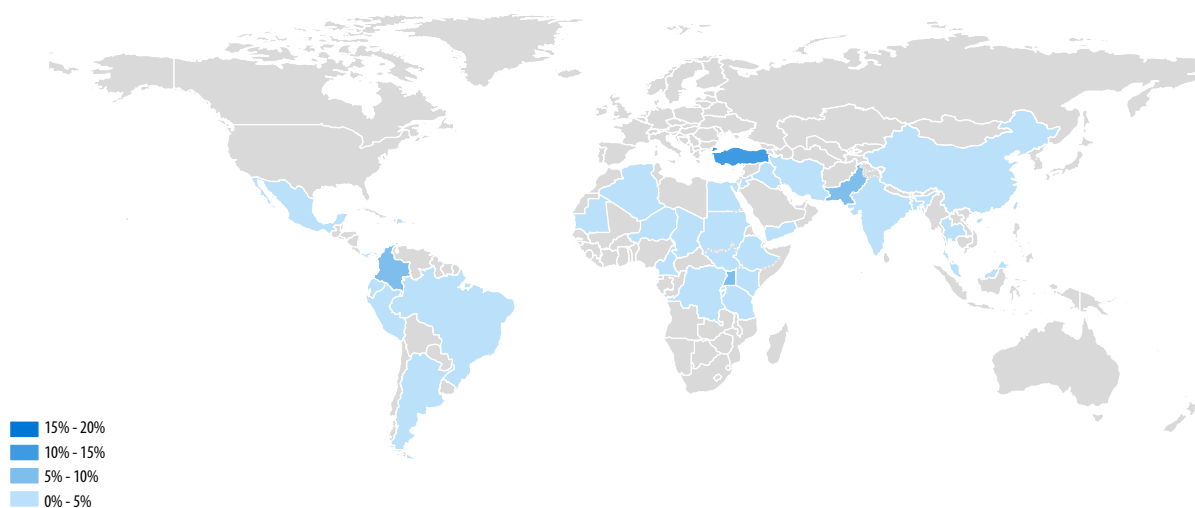
*The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties
*The final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. The final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined
The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Source: UNHCR 2022

This report is based on an open-source data review coming from different DCEs conducted in the top 35 low- and middle-income refugee-hosting[1] countries[2] in 2021, covering 20.58 million refugees (80% of the refugee population[3])(see Figure 3).[4] The report included a broad range of DCEs across the globe (see Table 3 for figures), some of them strictly focused on education (e.g. EMIS) and others focused on gathering data on broader population characteristics and thematic areas (e.g. national censuses). To simplify the reporting of results, the report classified the DCEs into seven categories of data source types: censuses, household surveys, international and regional learning assessments, national learning assessments, EMIS, school-based surveys, and other DCEs. Unless otherwise noted, all graphs and illustrations in this report are based on the analyses of all 1,109 questionnaires identified by the authors

The report reviewed questionnaires available in seven different languages.[5] To make this review exercise comprehensive, surveys produced by humanitarian and development actors, such as the World Bank, REACH Impact Initiative, UNHCR, and others, were also included. In addition, official data sources from government institutions in the 35 selected countries were reviewed. The analysis conducted for this report is based on the information provided by the questionnaires and other technical documents and did not involve access to microdata.

1. As the researchers selected countries based on the main population of interest, refugees, this review does not cover other categories of FDPs comprehensively. While the mapping exercise included coverage of IDPs in the DCEs reviewed, a comprehensive coverage of this group would require additional countries to be added (only 14 or 40% of the top 35 refugee-hosting countries were also in the top 35 IDP hosting countries, meaning an additional 21 countries would have to be covered to have equal country coverage of IDPs for a total of 56 countries) and was beyond the scope of this research (IDMC 2022; UNHCR 2020b).
2. UNESCO's Section for Migration, Displacement, Emergencies and Education has also conducted a similar data and policy mapping on the Ukrainian Regional Response covering seven of the Regional Response Plan countries (Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia). However, this review followed a slightly different protocol and so is not included in this analysis (UNESCO, 2023b).
3. Based on UNHCR data from 2021, including only refugees and other people in need of international protection which totalled 25.73 million.
4. High-income countries: Germany, France, United States of America, and Sweden were excluded from this list given the very different policy and data environment in these contexts. These rankings were constructed using UNHCR population figures and looked exclusively at refugees under UNHCR mandate and the number of 'Venezuelans displaced abroad' downloaded in early 2022. These figures have since been updated and, as of 13th April 2023 the category of 'Venezuelans displaced abroad' has since been merged with that of 'Other people in need of international protection'. The figures presented here represent the more update figures. UNHCR (2020a)
5. The seven languages of tools that were reviewed were Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Before proceeding further, the distinction between the DCE and its questionnaires, critical to this report, must be elaborated on. Although our search strategy focused on DCEs, our analysis considered all the questionnaires available for each DCE – when publicly available. The latter implies that the number of questionnaires is, in many cases, greater than the number of DCEs, as many surveys include different tools to collect information from various actors. This is particularly relevant in educational DCEs linked to learning assessments;

for example, in the case of PISA or ERCE, principals, teachers, students, and families are asked to respond to background questionnaires that contribute valuable information on factors associated with students' learning outcomes. These questionnaires are also relevant because they can provide information to identify the student's refugee status. In general, we focus our analysis on the questionnaires and refer to the DCE where relevant.

Table 3: Number of DCEs and questionnaires reviewed by region.

Region	Number of DCEs	Number of questionnaires	Average number of questionnaires per DCE[6]
Africa	167	224	1.3
Arab States	170	217	1.3
Asia and the Pacific	89	162	1.8
Europe and North America	29	46	1.6
Latin America and the Caribbean	166	460	2.8

Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

Data collection and analysis process

Our data collection process involved three strategies:

1. **Desk-based search focused on key global databases:** The report reviewed various online open-access international databases that were relevant to the goals of this report, including the following: UNHCR Microdata Library, World Bank Microdata Library, IPUMS, HDX, Reach Impact Initiative. As part of this strategy, the data team also searched the tools provided by international and regional learning assessments: PISA, PASEQ, SACMEQ, TIMMS, and ERCE. Finally, international household surveys were also included, such as the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, the Annual Status of Education Report, the Demographic and Health Surveys, and other one-time household surveys undertaken by organizations such as UNHCR (needs assessments), UNICEF, OCHA, the World Bank, national governments, and others.

2. **Desk-based search focused on official national databases:** The data team searched for data collection tools publicly available on different government websites that provide information on general population characteristics, migration, and education-related topics. As part of this strategy, the data team searched for information on the website of the Ministry of Education, the national statistical offices, and the national data transparency offices, among others.

3. **Data provided by partners and key informants:** The search strategy also included administrative data collected in collaboration with partners such as UNESCO and UNHCR regional and country offices. Those partners supported this work by providing access to questionnaires, databases, and reports. Colleagues working on the qualitative component of this research project provided critical information for Chad, Colombia, Ecuador, Jordan, Pakistan, Peru, and Uganda (For more on the qualitative case studies, see UNESCO, 2023).

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6. # questionnaires / # of DCEs

For the data analysis, the report classifies the indicators reviewed into the analytical categories discussed previously. It then sets out a descriptive analysis of the numbers of DCEs and questionnaires that cover each analytical category and the percentage of DCEs or questionnaires that cover each area (both in terms of the total number of questionnaires[7] and, for educational areas, in reference to the total number of questionnaires that cover a given educational area as well as refugees).

Limitations

- **Access bias:** As the review was limited to mostly online publicly available data sources, obtaining the metadata not already publicly available was challenging. This limitation applies most strongly to administrative data such as EMIS and national learning assessments, but also to other data collection types. It is unclear the extent to which the data collected is representative of the whole set of data that exists.

- **Type of DCE bias:** This review combines different data sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current state of inclusion and opportunities for refugee data inclusion. As a result of this broad inclusion criteria, it is likely that some types of DCE will provide more robust and detailed information on some of the areas of the analytical framework than others, given their focus and nature. Similarly, DCEs directly targeting refugees are more likely to provide information on refugee identification than DCEs aimed at collecting data from the general population.

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7. While not all DCEs are equally likely to cover all areas of education (e.g. censuses and school safety or learning outcomes), the report uses the total number of questionnaires as a baseline in order not to presume that these areas are not covered. The more nuanced analysis explores the type and areas covered by the DCEs, further breaking these down by DCEs targeting refugees or including refugee identification questions, to provide a more topic-specific analysis of inclusion.

Key findings

Overview of data mapped

This review identified a total of 1,017 DCEs. Public access to the questionnaires was available for 613 or 60% of the DCEs, leading to 1,109 questionnaires. Among the 404 DCEs that the data team did not have access to are 338 national learning assessments and 31 household surveys, with the rest spread over the other DCE types.

Of the questionnaires reviewed, only 146 (13%) explicitly targeted and sampled refugees. Despite these questionnaires representing a small proportion of the total number of questionnaires reviewed, their geographic coverage, 39 countries,[1] is broad (see Figure 4). Considering only the top 35 refugee-hosting countries, only 103 questionnaires targeted refugees in 23 (65.7%) of the 35 countries. The most frequent type of DCE was household surveys (344 DCEs, 381 questionnaires).[2] Critically, the report also reviewed 55 questionnaires from 31 EMIS,[3] providing insight into administrative data collection for refugee education. However, only 15 of the EMIS reviewed (48%) were from the top 35 refugee-hosting countries.[4] This was done to ensure broader coverage from EMIS in the review, which has been overlooked in previous work. For a more complete breakdown of the data reviewed please see Appendix 1.

Figure 4: Disaggregation of 621 reviewed DCEs by target population and type

While metadata and questionnaires for household surveys and international learning assessments were available to review, national level administrative metadata and questionnaires were not.
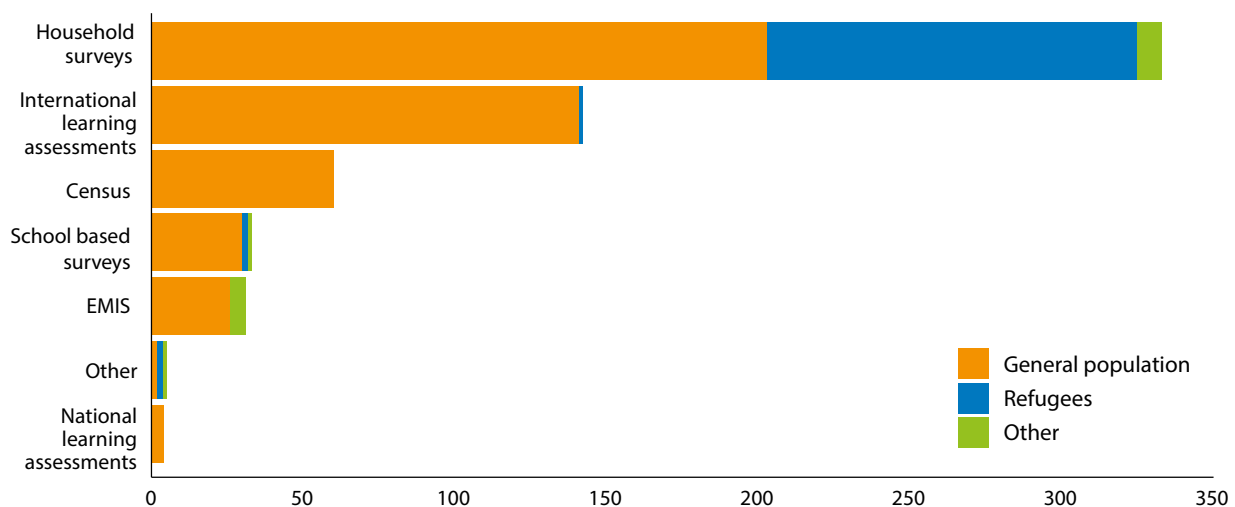
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources

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1. This is due to the coverage of specific DCEs, such as PISA, which go outside the top 35 refugee-hosting countries but also the mapping of all the surveys in the UNHCR microdata library with some education elements in them.
2. The over-representation of household surveys in this review is partly due to the review of the UNHCR Microdata library, which also represents most of the DCEs focused on refugees.
3. These have been reviewed even though some studies have pointed out that many countries lack a functional EMIS with which to collect basic education data (UNHCR, Oxford MeasureEd and Cambridge Education, 2023; UNESCO UIS and UNHCR, 2022a; UNESCO, 2020). Furthermore, it is important to recognize that EMIS do have limitations, especially around the indicators they can collect and the frequency of data collection, and that other types of data collection can complement EMIS, ideally through some form of interoperability (UNHCR, Oxford MeasureEd and Cambridge Education, 2023; UNESCO, 2020). Amidst the challenges of collecting information on refugee students, some countries manage to conduct the task by implementing approaches that mostly rely on proxy variables. Identifying whether the student is a foreigner/national, his/her/their nationality, and or protection status are some of the strategies used by government authorities. A further challenge to understanding the disaggregation within EMIS that could potentially inform refugee data inclusion is the lack of public availability of EMIS questionnaires. While UNESCO Institute for Statistics maintains a repository of EMIS questionnaires, as of May 2023, only 24 countries had questionnaires in this repository and there are no other repositories of EMIS known to the authors ('National EMIS Questionnaires – Educational Management Information Systems' 2020).
4. Publicly available EMIS questionnaires from outside the top 35 refugee-hosting countries were included in the review to ensure as broad a range of coverage of EMIS as possible as this is an often overlooked DCE in data mappings. A further 87 DCEs included in the review were not from the top 35 refugee-hosting countries, and mostly included household surveys (37) and international learning assessments (35

Disaggregation by refugee status, socioeconomic, and personal characteristics: What can we learn?

Disaggregation has become common practice in DCEs through the inclusion of questions that allow for identification by characteristics. However, the inclusion of questions that allow for identification by migratory status is a recently growing trend. This disaggregation holds the potential to make these populations visible in data systems, identify disparities in access to quality social services, improve services by tailoring them to the specific needs of populations, hold institutions accountable for their actions and ensure that they are not perpetuating inequalities (Mazurana, Marshak, and Spears, 2023; Eurostat, European Commission, and UN, 2018b, 2020a). Accordingly, the

report explored the extent to which disaggregation is possible in the DCEs in the dataset.

'Age' and 'gender' were found to be the top individual-level characteristics recorded by different DCEs. They are followed by 'location', which is commonly recorded in many DCEs even when not asked directly to the respondent (e.g. household surveys, population or school censuses usually include location as part of the identification data of the questionnaires) (see Figure 5 below). This was followed by 'household income' and 'expenditure', which tend to only be collected in household surveys (given the nature of the data) and as a result occur less frequently in the review.

Figure 5: Disaggregation by SES and personal characteristics

Gender, Age and Assets are the most common disaggregations for SES and personal characteristics.
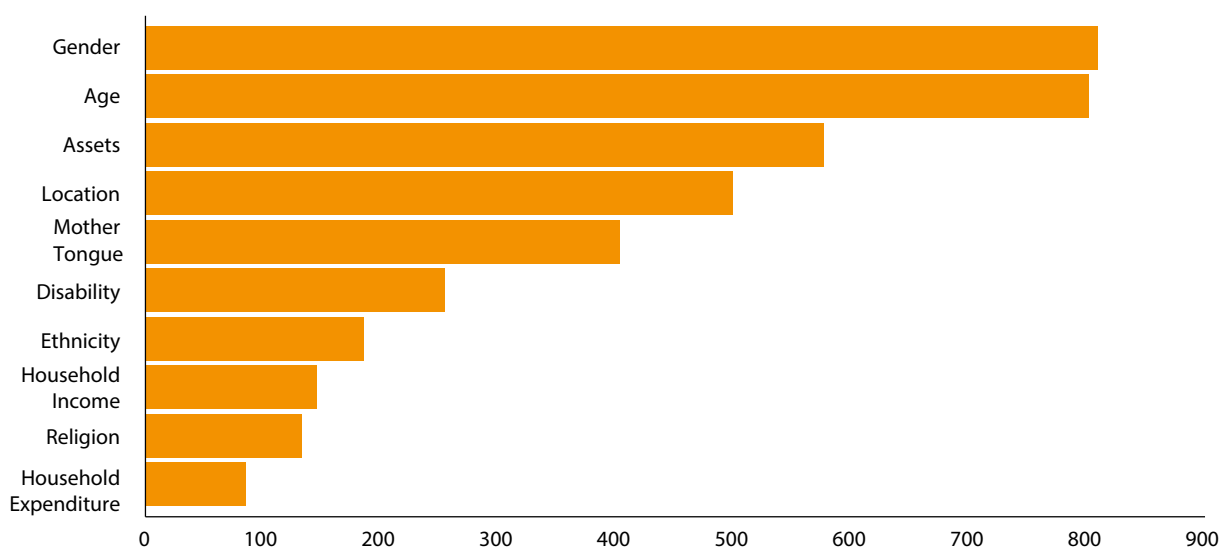
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources

There was much lower coverage of refugee identification questions in the data reviewed, limiting the potential to disaggregate by migration status. Only 418 (38%) of the reviewed questionnaires (331 DCEs or 45%) had refugee identification questions with proxy (n=375, 34%) and criteria-based (n=300, 27%) approaches dominating the dataset[5] (see Figure 6). However, only 272 (25%) had both proxy and criteria-based questions that would allow a more precise determination of migration status. Self-

identification and documentation were uncommon methods of refugee identification in the questionnaires. Breaking these down by data collection type, criteria and proxy-based approaches were well divided between household surveys, international learning assessments, and censuses, whereas self-identification and documentation questions were mostly prevalent in household surveys. In the case of EMIS, proxy-based identification, such as 'country of birth' or 'citizenship' were the most common indicators.

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5. It should be noted that percentages reported are independent of each other and are not meant to be summed together as the same questionnaire may have proxy and criteria-based questions.

Figure 6: Number of questionnaires containing refugee identification questions by type of question

Proxy and criteria-based questions are the most common refugee identification questions.

Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources

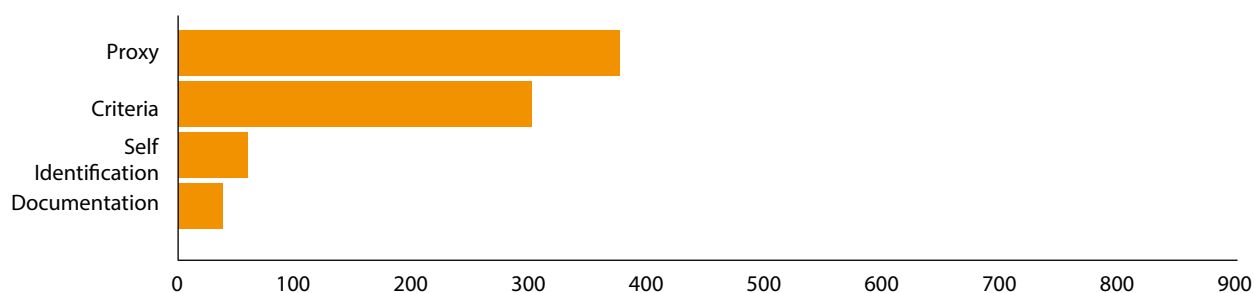**Greater inclusion of refugee identification questions is needed across the board.** Criteria and proxy-based approaches are more common in questionnaires targeted at refugees (relative to the number of questionnaires focused on them) than those for the general population.[6] While this is encouraging, rates of inclusion were still low across the board with indicators appearing in only 40% of questionnaires. Further, given that the bulk of DCEs are targeted at the general population, the absence of refugee identification questions in these exercises poses a significant challenge to data inclusion (see Appendix 2 Figure 2 for more).

A review of over 450 proxy questions (in 337 DCEs) highlights that there is little standardization across DCEs, leading to disjointed and non-comparable data. Country of birth is the most frequently asked proxy question (269 cases), followed by country of citizenship (130), and country of origin (56). While in some cases phrasing does not make a large impact on comparability, certain problems can arise even in these basic questions. For example, the question 'Were you born in [country]?',[7] where country refers specifically to the host country, limits disaggregation to citizens and foreigners (it does not account for individuals born outside the country who are citizens by descent or through naturalization). This occurs

in 26% of the questions related to country of birth, as in the Encuesta Nacional de Lectura of Peru in 2022, leading to the classification of individuals as either Peruvians or foreigners. This trend is also seen with country of citizenship (i.e. 'Are you a citizen of [country]') and country of origin with 25% and 15% of the questions sampled limiting disaggregation to a binary respectively.[8] This phrasing of the question severely limits the useability of these questions for the identification of refugees.

The lack of consistency in the phrasing of questions on the same indicators is a challenge for consistent identification. As many as 71% of questions relating to country of birth, 67% on country of citizenship, and 59% on country of origin are unique questions (see Table 4). This means that the majority of questions on these key indicators have different and sometimes non-comparable phrasings, as noted above. This trend of non-unified wording is present across many of the indicators, with 59% on country of origin being the best result found in the data, with this rate increasing all the way to 94% for unique questions for self-identification.[9] A lack of a unified or standardized system of question-building can impact comparisons across surveys, even within the same context.

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6. This was true for nearly all (93%) of the 15 sub-indicators that the authors reviewed. Indeed, profiling questions were only not included in 43 out of the 146 questionnaires targeted at refugees, or 41 out of 130 DCE.s
7. TIMSS Student Questionnaire Separate Science Subjects Question
8. Disaggregation across the regions varied. Africa had the highest percentage of questions on country of birth allowing respondents to answer with their country of nationality (in place of solely national or foreigner) with 95% of the questions allowing for disaggregation. The Arab States had the lowest percentage of disaggregation with 50% of questions allowing for disaggregation, the other 50% classifying respondents as nationals or non-nationals. Latin America and the Caribbean had a higher proportion of disaggregation with 76% for nationality. For country of citizenship, Africa again has the highest percentage of disaggregation by nationality with 94% followed by the Arab States with 84%; and the Latin America and the Caribbean with just 43% of disaggregation.
9. The calculation of the number of unique questions accounted for differing capitalization and similarly formatted questions. For example, a question worded 'Were you born in Peru?' and 'Were you born in Ecuador?' would be marked as the same and therefore not unique questions.

Table 4: Refugee identification questions and the percentage of unique questions and disaggregation within questions

Indicator name	Per cent of unique questions	Per cent non-disaggregation
Country of birth	71%	26%
Country of citizenship	67%	25%
Country of origin	59%	15%
Self-identification	94%	N/A[10]
Identification type	79%	45%
Protection status	60%	N/A[11]

Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

Going beyond proxies, there is insufficient use of criteria-based approaches to identify migratory status. There are many limitations when working with indicators that do not directly report the migratory or protection status of the respondent. As a result, it was necessary to combine the use of proxy questions (which also form the foundation of criteria-based questions) and criteria-based questions to understand the potential to accurately identify migratory status. Collecting evidence on multiple characteristics indicative of migratory pathways could improve estimates of refugee numbers and promote their data inclusion (as suggested by EGRISS in the IRIS and IRRS). 'Country of origin' was asked most often in conjunction with criteria questions. The criteria questions most often asked alongside 'country of origin' were 'year' or 'period of arrival', 'reason for migration', and 'country/place of previous residence', with each included in 40% or more of the questionnaires that asked for country of origin (though only six asked all three questions). A total of 58% of the DCEs analysed collected 'country of birth' along with 'year' or 'period of arrival' in the country, and 23% had 'place of previous residence' (see Figure 7). While these questions help narrow down migratory status, the key question of 'reason for migration' was asked only 14% of the time with 'country of birth', and 26% of the time with 'citizenship' (see Box 2 for more). Overall, the potential for the precise identification of refugee status is low across the questionnaires reviewed.

Figure 7: Percentage of questionnaires that ask proxy and criteria-based questions by question

Very few questionnaires ask both proxy and criteria–based questions. With year/period of arrival being the most common criteria question asked across proxy questions.
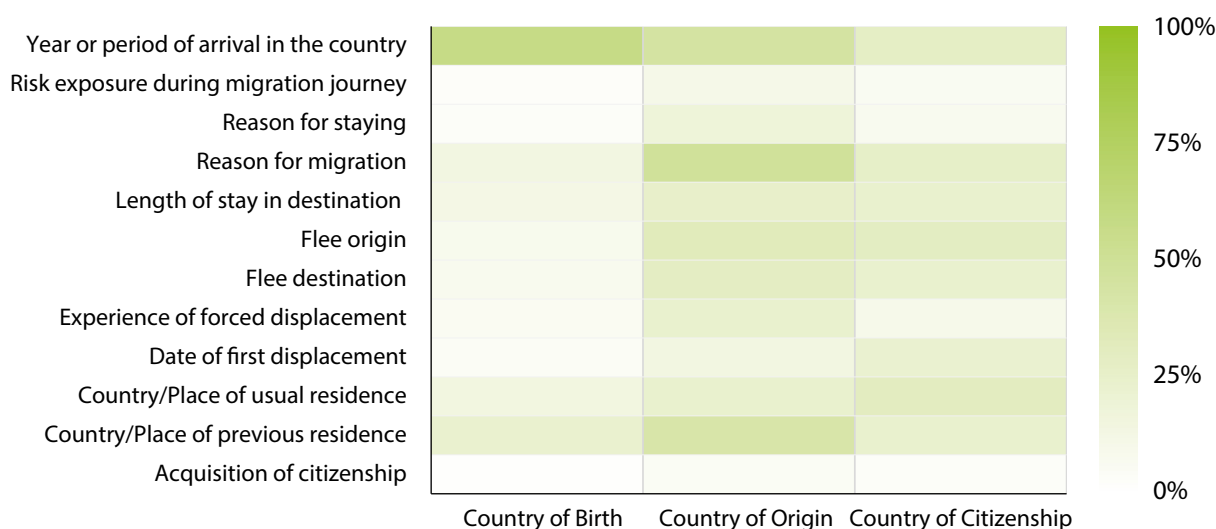
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

10. Binary question disaggregation not relevant
11. Binary question disaggregation not relevant

Box 2: EGRISS and best practices for refugee identification

The lack of a unified language surrounding these questions poses a problem to researchers wishing to combine or compare data across country surveys carried out by different organizations. This is especially important for countries where few surveys are carried out and the cost of data collection is high, especially in contexts of emergencies, and high levels of political instability, among others, which may impact the ability to collect data.

While complete standardization of questions across all DCEs is impossible or possibly even harmful to the quality of data collection, more effort should be made to verify that the type of data collected is compatible with both past and future surveys. A core list of indicators should be implemented across future DCEs, to ensure both flexibility and a baseline of comparable data. The International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics can serve as a model for this. While it does not provide a uniform set of questions, it lays out a core set of indicators for collection that would allow for disaggregation, regardless of question format (UN and Eurostat, 2018).

Basic classificatory variables (Eurostat, European Commission, and UN 2020):

a.   Age or date of birth

b.   Sex

c.   Country of birth

d.   Country of citizenship (including stateless, undetermined status and multiple citizenship)

e.   Date of arrival in country

f.   Reason for migration (harmonize responses as indicated in Chapter 4)

g.   Country of previous or last residence (for both refugees in the country and refugees returning to the country of citizenship)

h.   Date of first displacement/leaving previous country of habitual residence

i.   Parents' refugee statuses

j.   If an unaccompanied child (under age of 18 years and separated from both parents or legal guardian)

The EGRISS IRRS indicators should be considered best practice and should be used as a baseline for question creation. However, only 2 of the 1,109 questionnaires reviewed cover all the key questions (c-h), indicating that there is a need for more widespread adoption of refugee identification questions to achieve higher quality data on refugee education.

The use of proxy questions is critical within surveys for disaggregation purposes; however, these types of questions cannot replace the self-identification or documentation-based questions. In some situations, proxy questions may work sufficiently, however, this is not always the case. By including just one self-identification or documentation-based question (where feasible and in line with protection concerns) in surveys targeting general populations, a higher rate of refugee data inclusion could be achieved, enabling comparisons between general and refugee populations for data points such as enrolment.

While many DCEs disaggregate by the personal characteristics of the respondent regardless of their target population, this is not true for refugee identification questions. Refugee identification questions tend to be included at a higher rate in DCEs targeted at refugees, with only 'country of birth' included in more than 20% of questionnaires targeted at the general population. This means that in many

DCEs targeted at the general population there is no way to ascertain refugee status even if there is inclusion of refugees in the sampling frame. As only 292 (out of 924 or 32%) of the questionnaires which target the general population have refugee identification questions, there are many missed opportunities for this form of data inclusion. However, beyond the inclusion of refugee identification questions, it is also critical to include

refugees in the sampling frame in the first place, and to make the sampling methodology clear in all documentation.

## Access - Educational inclusion of refugees and displaced populations

Questions on access to education were found in 75% of questionnaires reviewed. In this report, access is understood as a measure of educational enrolment (access to schools) and progression (access to transitions and access to higher education).[12] The review examined questions within existing DCEs that could inform access-related aspects and found that while 517 DCEs (827 questionnaires) included such questions, only 96 questionnaires targeted refugees. This means that, of the total number of questionnaires reviewed for this report, 75% included information on educational access. Only a small difference was found when disaggregating by target population, with access questions included in 76% of the questionnaires targeting the general population and 66% of the questionnaires targeting refugee populations. This reinforces the relevance of educational background and access across a range of stakeholders. The report

grouped access questions under three categories: access to schools, access to progressions, and access to higher education. Access to schools had the most data, and the sub-indicators for this category were asked at a higher rate than those of access to transitions and higher education.

Despite broad coverage of access, only 41% (n=341) of questionnaires that included access indicators also had refugee identification questions, highlighting the challenge of producing estimates for refugee education. If analysed across the three access categories, 'access to schools' (n=332) is the most frequent, followed by 'access to higher education' (n=40) and then 'access to transitions' (n=35) (see Figure 8). The only category in which the number of questionnaires targeting refugees is higher than that of the general population is 'access to higher education', with 22 and 18 questionnaires respectively. The 685 questionnaires that do not include refugee identification questions are mostly household surveys (64%) and international learning assessments (24%). This remains largely consistent across the different education areas (see later sections).

Figure 8: Number of questionnaires with access questions that target refugees or include refugee identification questions

Access to schools is found in the largest number of questionnaires.
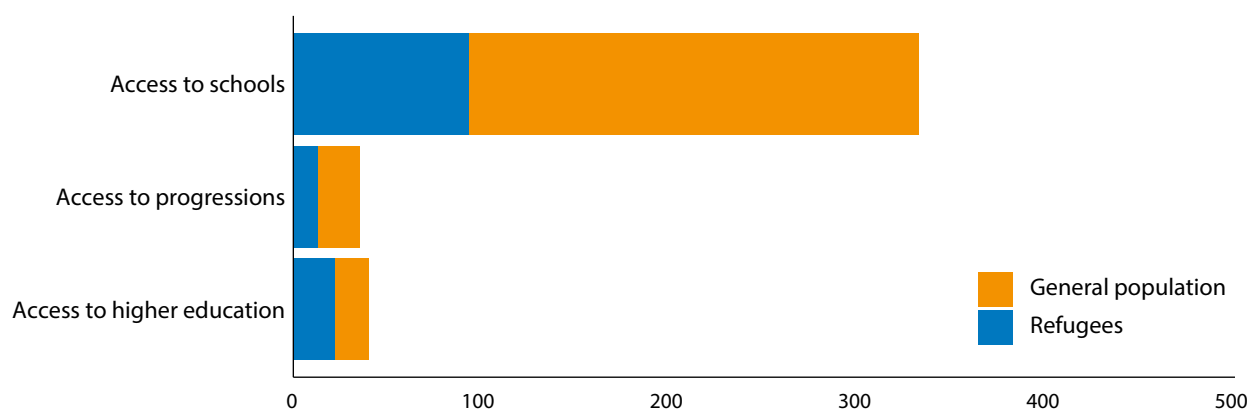
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources

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12. Some definitions of 'access' take a more comprehensive approach, such as Lewin's definition: 'Access to education includes: on-schedule enrolment and progression at an appropriate age, regular attendance, learning consistent with national achievement norms, a learning environment that is safe enough to allow learning to take place, and opportunities to learn that are equitably distributed' (Lewin, 2015, p. 29). The report takes a more traditional approach, sticking with the first part of the definition, and separates the other components into quality and safety to facilitate analysis.

Different indicators are used to acknowledge the various dimensions of educational access as well as to address diverse approaches to measuring access. Moreover, some access indicators have been found to vary according to the type of DCE, with household surveys capturing the greatest variety of information concerning access. Although not all household surveys capture information in every single domain, when analysed together the 381 household survey questionnaires (354 DCEs) included in the analysis cover the ten sub-indicators addressing access identified for this report. Despite EMIS being considered as a key source of educational data by many actors, public access to EMIS questionnaires is often restricted. The findings suggest that, in the absence of open access to EMIS data, household surveys hold the most potential to provide information about the educational situation of refugees.

Educational attainment, attendance, and enrolment are the most common indicators on educational access. The questions that were most covered across DCEs were those related to 'educational attainment'

of the respondent (n=515) or of the child or youth (n=318), followed by 'attendance in the current year' (n=356). As attainment questions typically ask about the highest level of attainment irrespective of where the education was attained, they are imperfect proxies for access in the host country and, depending on the length of the displacement and age of respondent, may reflect access in the sending rather than the host country. This means that questions on attendance and enrolment are those that can ensure that access to education in the host country is being captured. While educational attainment of the respondent is the most common access indicator among all questionnaires regardless of target population (over 40% for both), there are some differences in terms of the least covered. In the case of questionnaires targeted at the general population, 'access to remote learning' is the least common indicator (n=9, less than 1%), while for refugee-targeted questionnaires, 'access to language of instruction' is the least common (n=2, 1%) (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Number of questionnaires with access questions by sub-indicator and target population

Educational attainment, attendance and enrolment are the most commonly collected access indicators.
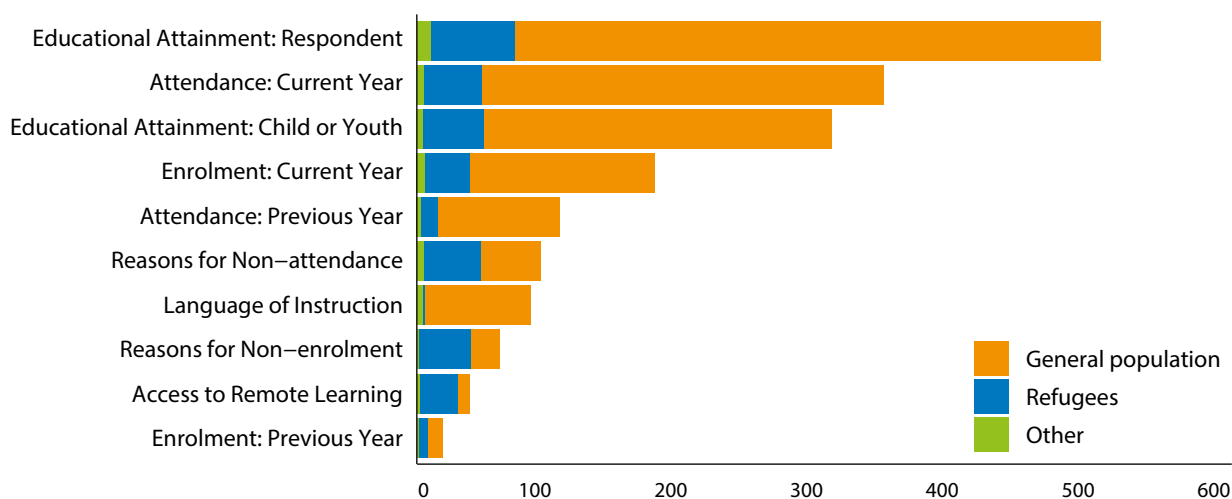
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

While attendance questions are equally common regardless of the target population of the DCE, questions on barriers to access are more common in those targeted at refugee populations. The report explored the rate of coverage of different indicators to identify if they were covered in DCEs targeting different populations. Attendance in the current and previous year were equally covered in questionnaires targeting refugees (32%) and questionnaires targeting the general population (29%). On the other hand, the indicators 'reason for non-attendance' and 'reason for non-enrolment' showed the largest gap; while 72 (49%[13]) of the refugee targeted questionnaires included questions on those reasons, only 58 (6%) of the questionnaires for the general population do so (See Appendix 2, Figure 5).

Refugee identification and access questions overlap more often in DCEs targeted at refugee populations than those targeting the general population. A total of 34% of the questionnaires targeting the general population were found to include questions on both refugee identification and access, rising to 88% for questionnaires targeted at refugee population. This finding is not surprising given that refugee identification questions are included at a higher rate in DCEs targeted at refugees.

Consistent with their overall prevalence, educational attainment and attendance were the most frequently asked access questions overlapping with refugee identification questions. The access indicator that most frequently intersected with refugee identification questions was that of the education attainment of the respondent. For instance, 86% of all questionnaires containing self-identification questions that cover access ask this, 46% for documentation, 56% for criteria, and 54% for proxy-based questions. The only other sub-indicator that is consistently high across the types of refugee identification questions is attendance in the current year, reaching between 40-50% or more across the groups (see Figure 10). This means that beyond historical attainment (a proxy for previous access) and current attendance, there is low potential for the availability of information on educational access for refugees, including on progression of studies and transitions.

Figure 10: Percentage of questionnaires asking refugee identification and access questions by refugee identification type and indicator

Attainment and attendance questions are high across refugee identification type. However, reasons for non–enrolment/attendance are much higher in questionnaires with self–identification and documentation questions.
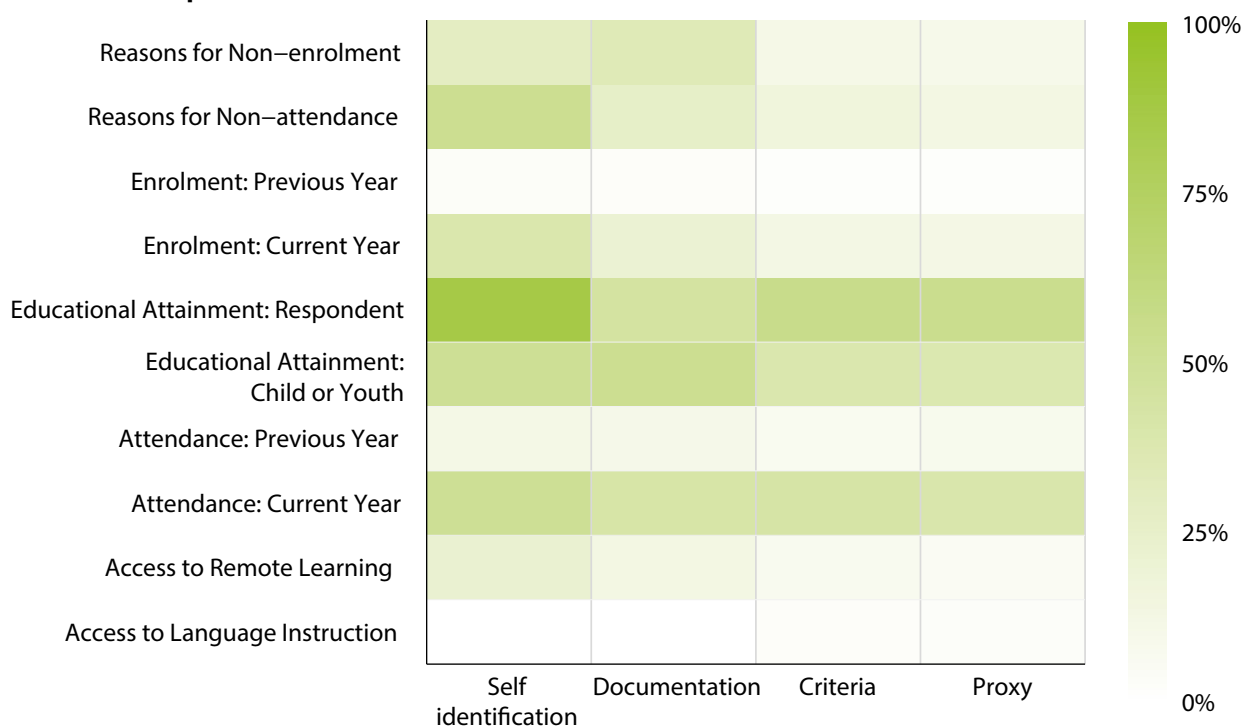
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

13. 42 for non-attendance (29%), and 39 (27%) for non-enrolment.

Box 3.1: Education Management Information Systems and data on access: An example from Colombia's SIMAT

Colombia provides an example of the adaptation of an education data system to accommodate policy changes and ensure data inclusion of Venezuelan refugees and migrants through the inclusion of 'country of origin' and 'document type' in the Integrated Enrolment System (Sistema Integrado de Matrícula, SIMAT). This modification allows for the identification of Venezuelan students within national education data by capturing information on refugee identification and access within the same data system as host country students.

Since 2015, the Colombian government has implemented various initiatives to include Venezuelan students in the national school system (UNESCO, 2022). This includes granting educational access to all Venezuelans, regardless of migratory status, and adjusting normative frameworks to facilitate access e.g. by providing school transportation. These initiatives are intertwined with data inclusion. Circular 1 (2017) provides clear guidelines on how these data on refugee access can be collected, by:

- Explicitly stating that all educational institutions must register Venezuelan students in the national education management and information system (SIMAT).

- Stating that Venezuelan students will be registered on SIMAT in the same way as any other student without a valid identification. However, in this case, parents must present the 'Salvoconducto de Permanencia para trámites de refugio' (safeguarding of residence for refugee application purposes) document, which will be valid until the migratory authority cancels it or its expiration.

- Establishing a mechanism for enrolling Venezuelan students and tracking their registrations in SIMAT, even without an official identification number, by creating an identity number established by the Secretary of Education (Número de Identificación establecido por la Secretaría de Educación, NES). The NES is a provisional identification number issued by the local educational authority for the purpose of school enrolment. The guidelines provided in Circular 1 stated that schools must include student information in SIMAT, inserting 'NES' in the field 'type of document', alongside the location where the document was issued, the student's place of birth, and the municipality where the student will attend school (see Table 5).

As other policies to regularize Venezuelans' migratory status in Colombia were developed, the SIMAT was adjusted to collect more detailed information, for example, about the type of document (see Circular 16 from 2018) (see Table 5).

Table 5: Circulars and SIMAT fields

SIMAT field	Circular 01, from 2017	Circular 16, from 2018
Document type	NES: Número de Identificación establecido por la Secretaría de Educación	PEP: (Permiso Especial de Permanencia)
Issuing post – Department and Municipality (2 fields)	Municipality where the student will attend school until he/she obtains regular migratory status in Colombia	Department and municipality that issued the PEP.
Birthplace – Department and Municipality (2 fields)	Department and Municipality where the child will study	Department and Municipality where the child will study

These adjustments have been supported by the introduction of the variable 'country of origin' as part of SIMAT. In practice, this means that when schools select Venezuela as 'country of origin', SIMAT automatically displays different types of documents for the school to select and continue the registration process. SIMAT's design includes validation flows to ensure internal consistency between 'country of origin'

and 'document type'. Interviews conducted with key informants revealed that the Ministry of Education is currently working on incorporating two new variables in SIMAT: 'nationality 1' and 'nationality 2' in 2023 (Lobos, 2023). This will contribute to a more detailed characterization of the students enrolled in the national education system, including Colombian returnees.

Box 3.2: Education Management Information Systems and data on access: Ongoing reform in Uganda

Top refugee-hosting countries are seeking solutions to better integrate refugees not only in their national education policies, but also in corresponding national data systems. Uganda provides a solid example of current attempts to include refugees in education data systems. Since 2017, ongoing reforms to Uganda's EMIS have shown promising developments towards the inclusion of refugees in national education data in the face of increasing refugee inflows. General enrolment data at the national level has been collected by the Ministry of Education and Sports' Ugandan Education Planning Department since 1963 to support policy-making and evaluation. Prior to the discontinuation of the former EMIS in 2017, the Education Planning Department conducted Annual School Censuses (ASC) (Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports 2019) reporting on total enrolment by class, enrolment by class and gender, total enrolment per year, total number of responding schools per year, and total number of teachers per year among other variables. However, while disaggregation by nationality was provided from at least 2012, disaggregation by legal protection status (including refugee status) was never a constituent part of Uganda's EMIS. Importantly, schools located in refugee settlements were excluded from ASC data (UNESCO, 2019).

As such, and in light of ever-increasing numbers of refugee learners in Uganda, ongoing reforms include plans to explicitly include refugees in an updated EMIS version. The MoES commissioned a Taskforce in 2017 to review EMIS and set plans for reform. While no policy document is publicly available as of June 2023, important reforms are expected. Specifically, the new EMIS is meant to shift from an annually conducted school census to an online, web-based monitoring of individual learner trajectories through a unique ID number accessible by all education institutions from pre-primary to tertiary education and other relevant stakeholders (District Education Offices (DEOs), MoES). All learners will be issued a Learner Identification Number (LIN), including refugees, for whom LINs will be linked to their national refugee number. Learners will keep this unique number throughout their education career, from ECD to higher education and/or TVET. This will allow for an enhanced tracking of individual educational trajectories. A key aspect of this reform is EMIS' expected interoperability with a variety of other systems. Specifically, the Second Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (2021/22–2024/25) highlights that EMIS should be directly linked and interoperable with the data systems of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), responsible for recording refugee presence and numbers in Uganda, and of the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB), which regulates exams at primary and secondary levels, for Index Number verification. Lastly, EMIS is expected to interoperate with the National Identification Registration Authority (NIRA) for National Identification Number (NIN) verification.

Overall, EMIS reform is expected to contribute to enhanced tracking of refugee learners at all levels of education and school types, thereby allowing for the formulation of informed and inclusive governmental education policies.

Achievement - how do educational assessments contribute to understanding the educational situation of refugees and displaced populations?

Overall, questions related to quality learning conditions appeared less often than access questions in the different DCEs, despite the inclusion of a deliberately large sample of learning assessments (142 international and 4 national assessments). The analysis found that 467 questionnaires from 228 DCEs included education quality questions, which represented 49% of the total number of questionnaires reviewed.

As with access, the number of questionnaires with information on quality and refugee identification fell sharply to only 167 questionnaires (see Figure 11). This represents 36% of the 467 questionnaires

or 15% of the total questionnaires. The number of questionnaires reported in this section is highly influenced by regional and international assessments that have taken place multiple times over the time window considered for this review. Thus, they contribute with multiple surveys targeted at different actors, all of them addressing quality-related variables. For example, for Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (ERCE), 15–19 countries are included (depending on the round) 4 times, with 1–5 questionnaires each round. For Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 15 countries are included 7 times, with 3–7 questionnaires in each round. For Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) (rounds 2–4), 3 countries are included 3 times with 3 questionnaires, and for Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 1 country is included twice.[14]

Figure 11: Number of questionnaires with quality questions that target refugees or include refugee identification questions

There are only 167 questionnaires with quality and refugee identification questions.
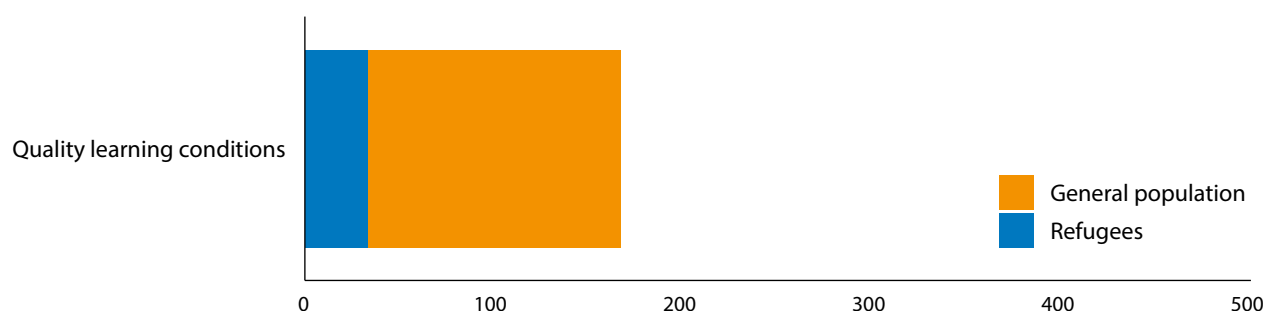
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources

Literacy is the most asked quality indicator across the dataset. Diving further into quality, the report identified 15 sub-indicators linked to educational quality. While some focus on learning outcomes (e.g. reading in Grades 2 and 3), others are related to quality of inputs, such as the number of teachers and their preparation (e.g. number of teachers that receive in-service training), and the availability of school supplies (e.g. textbooks). The indicator that is most frequently asked is 'literacy', with 287 questionnaires in 268 DCEs collecting this.

There are wide discrepancies between how often quality indicators are captured in questionnaires targeting different populations, but the primacy of literacy remains constant. For example, most questionnaires targeted at the general population covered indicators on 'literacy' (n=241, 26%). In contrast, fewer questionnaires covered indicators on 'knowledge of environmental and geosciences' (3), 'self-awareness' (4), 'global citizenship knowledge' (5), and 'maths at the end of secondary' (6). Among questionnaires targeted at refugee populations, only 'literacy' (n=32, 22%) appeared in more than 5 questionnaires (see Figure 12).

14. Multiple rounds of the assessments were included to be able to track change over time in the same assessment, and in this way, to show progress being made. It also provides the potential to be able to track responses to new refugee inflows. Due to time and space constraints this analysis is not included here but could be used in future reports.

Figure 12: Number of questionnaires with quality questions by target population

Literacy, textbooks, electronic devices and learning at grades 2 and 3 are the most common quality questions.
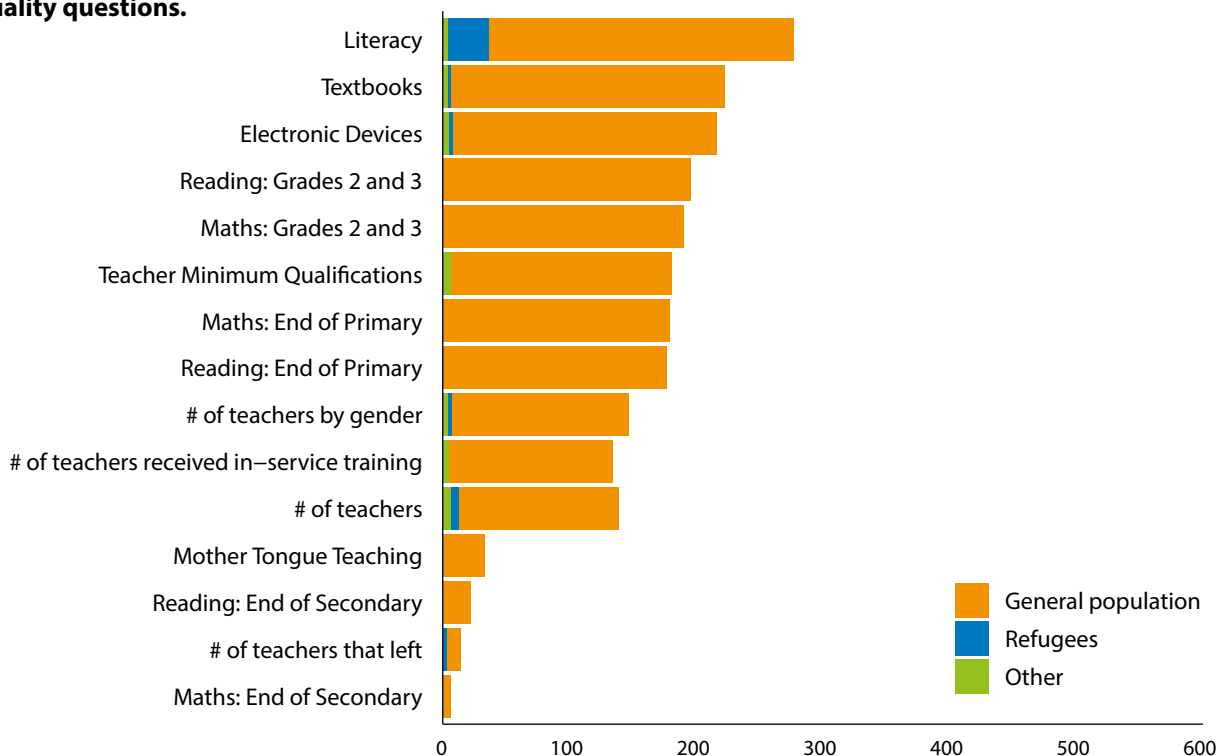
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

Consistent with the overall prevalence, literacy was the most frequently asked quality question overlapping with refugee identification questions, with all other sub-indicators occurring at very low levels. Looking at the overlap between refugee identification questions and quality, the report found large differences between the two target populations; 25% of the questionnaires targeting the general populations include quality and refugee identification questions, compared to 78% of those targeting refugees. Looking across the refugee identification types, literacy once again emerges as the most asked question across questionnaires, occurring in over 30% across the different refugee identification types (see Figure 13). Similar to limitations in equating highest level of education attained with access to school, the use of literacy as a measure of quality has limitations, particularly where respondents have completed their education outside of the host country. All other sub-indicators except for reading and maths at the end of primary (13% of questionnaires with refugee identification questions also have these) co-occur with refugee identification questions rarely.

Figure 13: Percentage of questionnaires asking refugee identification and quality questions by quality sub-indicators and refugee identification type

Questionnaires asking refugee identification and quality questions by:
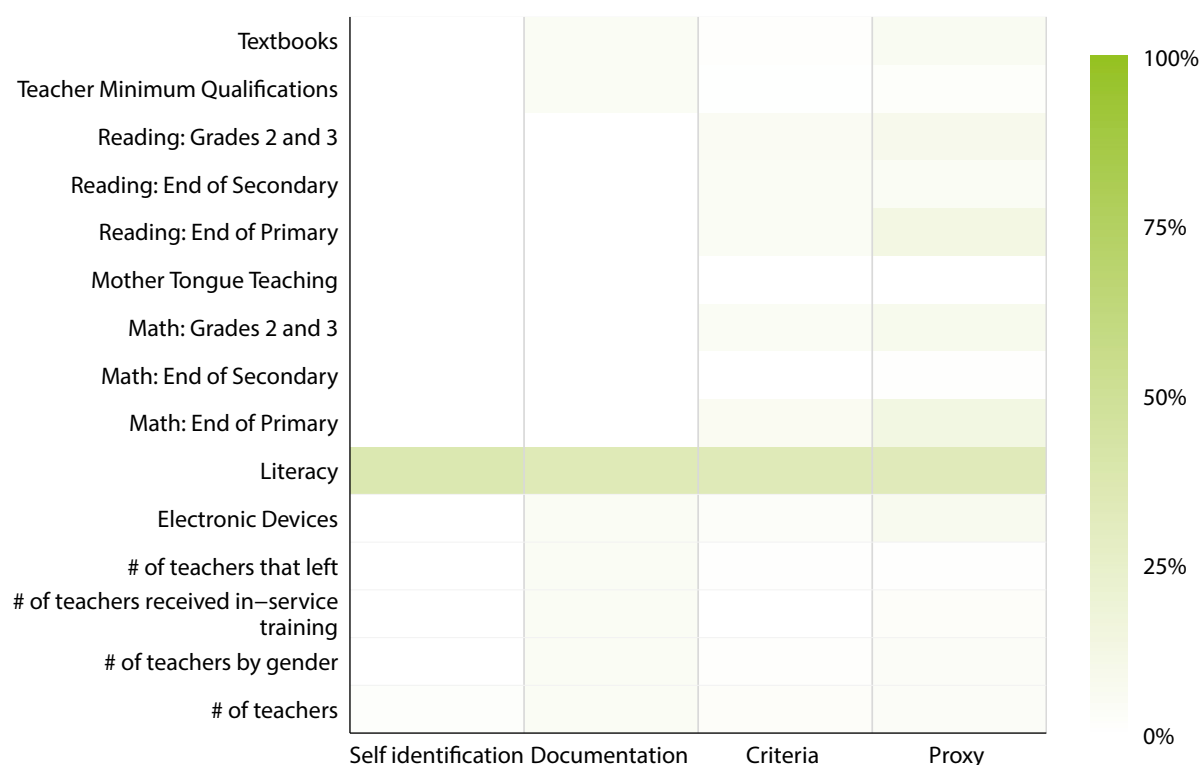
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

The quality indicators selected for this analysis include 'learning outcomes in reading and maths', information that is often produced through national examinations. While those examinations are country-level and implemented by national institutions, there have been international efforts to systematize what tests are being conducted and what information they are reporting.[15] However, less has been done to explicitly assess the degree to which refugees are included in those examinations and to analyse their performance.

15. One example of a global effort in this respect is the UIS Catalogue of Learning Assessment, which 'provides descriptive standardized and comparable information on public examinations, national and international assessments in primary and lower-secondary education programmes in countries across the world.' (UIS, 2016). Further, the Center for Global Development's Database on School Exams in Africa and South Asia compiles information on primary and lower secondary examinations for 63 countries, identifying the availability of national exams, the grades in which they are implemented, as well as country-level pass rates (Rossiter and Konate, 2022). While the geographical scope is limited, these databases are valuable resources to access information not only on learning outcomes, but also on educational opportunities (e.g. when national exams are high stakes and determine advancement to the next educational level). Moreover, this database can be used to track the evolution of national exams (e.g. frequency, purpose). However, it does not yet offer analysis or references to different population groups, a disaggregation that is relevant to promoting refugee data inclusion

Box 4: Monitoring learning and enabling educational pathways through certification.

The case of Colombia's Saber 11

Although a critical goal of the international education agenda, data on learning and its certification is limited, particularly for refugees. A total of 339 national learning assessments were identified across 26 of the 35 selected countries (13 per country, or half an assessment per year); however, only 4 background questionnaires were publicly available.[1] While there are legitimate reasons to justify partial item release practices (e.g. to protect questions for future years), the questions around learner characteristics that are commonly used as part of the registration process to take the test or the contextual questionnaires, could be made available to data users. This would allow us to understand what data exists and the extent to which refugee learners are having their learning assessed and certified. Given the limitations imposed by the small number of national learning assessments reviewed, this box presents a promising practice based on case studies conducted for this research and provides an example that can offer insights into the learning outcomes of refugee students and their opportunities to certify their learning.

Colombia's National Examination: Saber 11

In March 2010, the Ministry of Education of Colombia published its Decree 869 that regulates the implementation of a national examination at the end of secondary education. Saber 11 has since been implemented by the Colombian Institute for Educational Assessment (ICFES) to assess the competencies of eleventh-grade students and inform test takers, schools, and education systems about student attainment and educational quality (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2010). The assessment also acts as a certification instrument and is mandatory for enrolment in higher education (GIFMM & R4V, 2022).

Venezuelans are allowed to sit this exam thanks to changes in the normative frameworks that facilitate school enrolment, and to 'Resolución 298' from July 2020, which regulates the requirements for registering for this national exam (ICFES, 2020). According to Resolución 298, Venezuelan students without a Colombian identification document can register and sit for the test by presenting a Venezuelan identification document. Identity verification is required to claim test results; however, any document, certification, or administrative act issued by a Colombian or a Venezuelan authority that allows verification of the student's identity is accepted (ICFES, 2020).

From a technical perspective, the disaggregation of results is possible due to the efforts made by the Ministry of Education, through SIMAT, to identify Venezuelan students (see Box 2) and the interoperability between the Ministry of Education and the ICFES data systems. When Venezuelan students register for Saber 11, they do so through their educational institutions. The schools must use the ICFES platform, select the corresponding national test, and proceed with the registration. The existing interoperability enables the ICFES platform to automatically display the information of all students that qualify to take the test, in this case, Saber 11, according to the SIMAT enrolment records.[2]

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1. In this analysis, the report focused on the information provided by national learning assessments and, although not all of them provide end-of-cycle certificates, this can be a valid proxy for certification of learning.
2. In addition to test registration, the ICFES platform allows for validating the student's information, including among its options the possibility to update the type of documentation or document number, among other situations that need to be reported and that are then validated by SIMAT (ICFES, 2020). This reflects the ongoing government efforts to keep systems up to date while facilitating Venezuelan students' educational progress.

There are a couple of reports available that analyse the learning situation of displaced Venezuelans. One of them is available on the ICFES website and provides a characterization of participants and the number of Venezuelan test takers. Another report produced by R4V uses data from Saber 11 (2020)[1] (GIFMM & R4V, 2022) to emphasize the need to improve Venezuelan[2] participation in the test, finding that only 32% of Venezuelan students that could have taken it, did so. Furthermore, 39% of Venezuelan students that take the test do not have a valid identification document (those students with a NES, a provisory identification number provided by the Ministry of Education), which can limit their access to post-secondary education as, even though students with a NES can get their results, they cannot get their diploma. Furthermore, the average results of Venezuelan students in reading, maths, social sciences and citizenship, natural sciences, and English are below those of other students (including Colombian students and other nationalities) (GIFMM & R4V, 2022) (see Figure 14).

On SABER11 Venezuelan students score lower than students from Colombia or students from other countries.
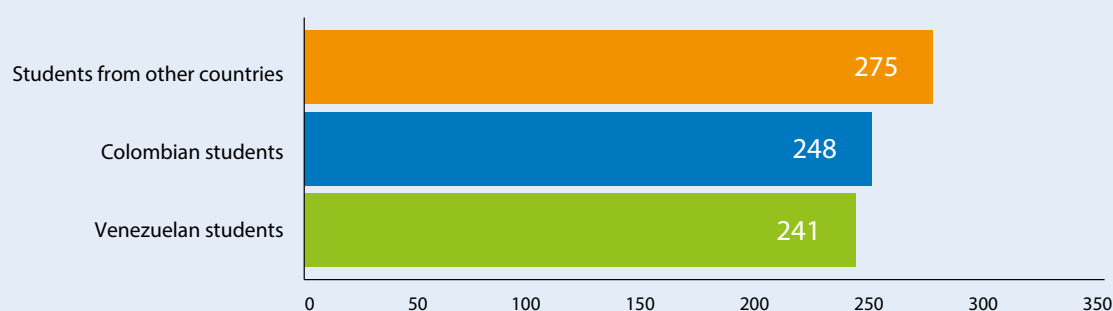
Source: GIFMM & R4V, 2022

While the test results present some challenges that deserve policy efforts, the opportunity to participate in the test and the ability to access their end-of-secondary education diploma is an example of good practice where:

- children on the move are allowed to participate in a high-stakes national exam that enables educational progression in Colombian post-secondary educational institutions;

- data systems work in conjunction to facilitate test registration and the identification of migratory status of test takers;

- data collection allows for disaggregation of results by nationality; and

- information is publicly available for analysis, discussion, and improvement.

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1. Which was publicly accessed through the Colombian government website: www.datos.gov.co
2. Based on a variable in the data that identifies nationality.

Box 5: International assessments as an opportunity for refugee data inclusion

The case of the Latin-American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE)

Large-scale learning assessments provide an opportunity for refugee data inclusion through two main mechanisms. First, the consortiums leading these studies can work with the participating countries to include refugee students in the sampling frame. This should allow assessments to deliver information on learning outcomes representative of the refugee student population. Secondly, assessments could use their contextual data collection instruments to identify refugees – in the absence of country-level data – to learn more about their educational situation. LLECE has worked since the 1990s to assess the learning outcomes of 3rd and 6th grade students in reading and writing, maths, and sciences. In recent years, there have been efforts to identify and include migrants in the exam:

- **TERCE 2013:** Questions on family background were included in the survey, including questions on the country of birth of the student and his/her parents (Was the child's father born in this country? Was the child's mother born in this country? Was the child born in this country? If the child was not born in this country, how old was the child when he came to this country?) which can be used as a proxy for migratory status in the absence of administrative data on that specific characteristic. However, the proportion of migrant students that participated in the study was small (approximately 1%), limiting the statistical analysis and the possibility of disaggregating results by this stratum.

- **ERCE 2019:** The same questions about country of birth were included in the family and student surveys. Asking students about their country of birth and that of their parents improved the availability of information and allowed disaggregating the test results by first- and second-generation migrants. Statistically significant differences were found in favour of students born in the country where they took the test for all the grades and subjects assessed (Treviño et al., 2015).

- **ERCE 2025**: LLECE is currently coordinating with the participating countries to develop technical guidelines and instruments to ensure the inclusion of children on the move in selected ERCE participating countries. In particular, the assessment design considers oversampling in schools with a high proportion of immigrant students to allow comparison based on that stratum. Additionally, the background questionnaires will include new modules, one of them explicitly focused on human mobility. This module will collect information that will allow access to more comprehensive data on the transnational mobility of the student, bullying and discrimination associated with student mobility, classroom diversity, and other associated factors that could be related to the learning outcomes of displaced students. The dimensions to be included in this new module will be confirmed after the pilot studies that will take place in all participating countries between August 2023 and June 2024.

The adjustments taken by LLECE to promote data inclusion of children on the move is a good practice that reflects a comprehensive technical effort to respond to the regional need to better understand the learning outcomes of children on the move, mainly displaced Venezuelans. Further, it highlights that international learning assessments hold the potential and technical capacity to promote refugee data inclusion, and to fill the global gap in information about refugees' learning outcomes.

Safety – what do we know about refugees' safety and well-being in schools?

The report identified only 171 DCEs (236 questionnaires) that included education safety questions (21% of all questionnaires), with even lower coverage when co-occurrence with refugee identification questions were also considered. This represents the lower coverage rate among the three areas analysed in this report (access, certification of learning, and safety). Moreover, only 31 questionnaires – 13% of questionnaires with safety indicators – also included refugee identification questions, which presents a challenge as it limits potential analysis of of

the safety conditions that refugee children experience at school (see Figure 15). Differences between the two target populations were also observed, with refugee identification co-occurring in 2% (n=21) of the questionnaires targeting the general populations compared to 7% of those targeting refugees (n=10). While the proportion was higher in questionnaires targeting refugees, in both cases, the co-occurrence was low, suggesting that refugee identification questions – or other mechanisms – could progressively be implemented to facilitate reporting on school safety conditions, specifically in contexts with refugee student presence.

Figure 15: Number of questionnaires with safety questions that target refugees or include refugee identification questions

Only 31 questionnaires had both safety and refugee identification questions.
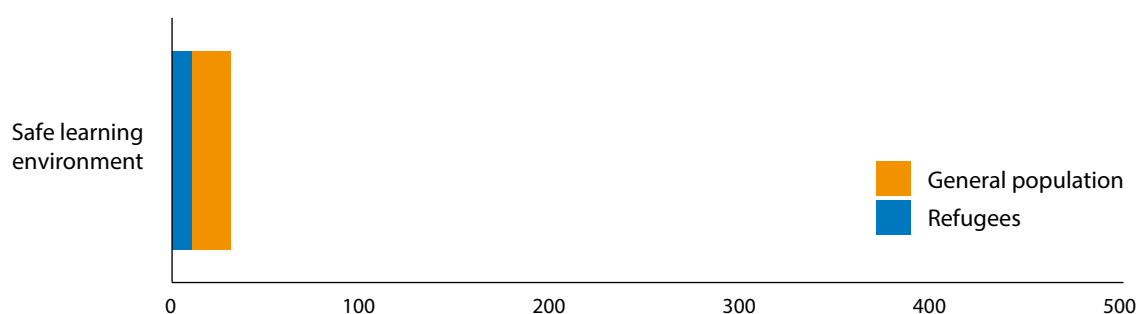
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

Peer violence and school facilities were the most common sub-indicators collected on safety. The analysis identified 18 sub-indicators of safety and resilience in school spaces, which were then organized into two main categories: school facilities and violence. Within the data collection tools that include safety questions, the most frequent indicators were related to 'peer violence' (n=226), 'internet' (n=132), and 'drinking water' (n=93). As expected, the most common safety indicators differ based on the type of DCEs. The

majority of the 'peer violence' questions were found in international learning assessments (185, representing 35% of all international learning assessments and 82% of all 'peer violence' questions); an 'electricity' question was most common in EMIS (n=26, 60% of EMIS); and household surveys collected information on the 'distance to school' most often than other types of DCEs (n=25, 7% of household surveys, 45% of all distance questions) (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Number of questionnaires with safety questions by safety indicators and target population

Peer violence and school infrastucture questions were the most commonly asked safety questions.
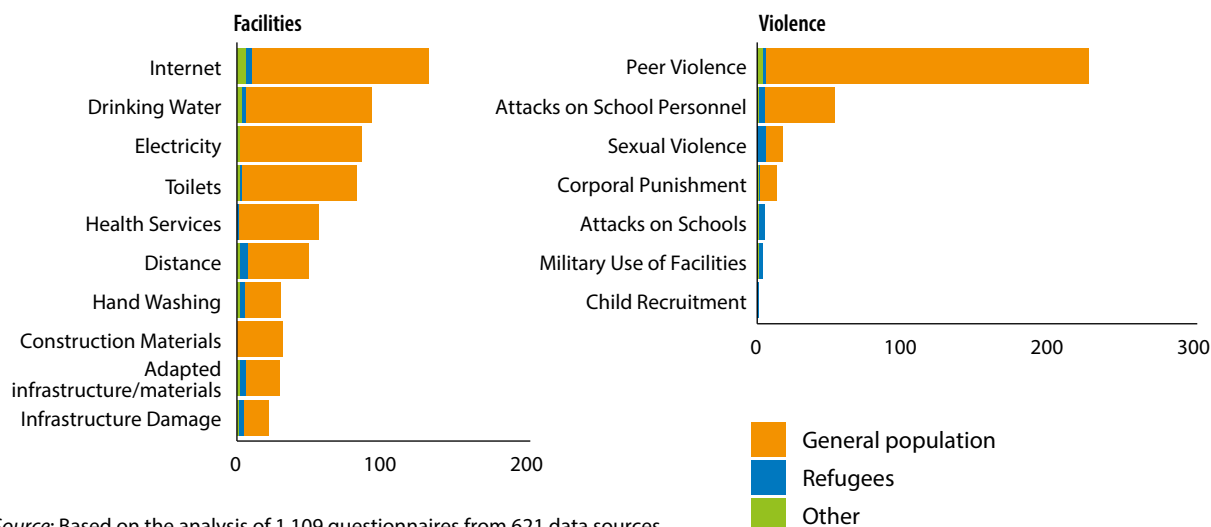
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

Further, there were often wide discrepancies between how often and which safety indicators were captured depending on the target group. The indicators on 'peer violence' (24%, n=220) were more prevalent in questionnaires targeted at the general population. 'Peer violence' was also where there was the largest gap between refugee and general population targeted questionnaires (22 percentage points in favour of the general population). Comparatively, for 'sexual violence',[16] only 4% of questionnaires (n=6) contained these questions for refugees. The indicators of 'attacks on schools', 'child recruitment',[17] and 'military use of facilities' were not found in those targeted at the general population; compared to 'construction materials' and 'electricity for refugees'. The sub-indicators that were less prevalent in questionnaires were on 'sexual violence and corporal punishment' (n=11, 1%) for the general population; compared to 'health services', 'toilets', 'child recruitment', and 'corporal punishment for refugees' (n=1).

Looking at the prevalence of safety sub-indicators among questionnaires asking proxy questions, there is no sub-indicator where this exceeds 5%, and most of these are found in documentation-based refugee identification, largely coming from

EMIS questionnaires (see Figure 17). This reflects the low levels of safety questions found throughout all questionnaires, especially when disaggregating by refugee identification approaches. While no evidence exists on why these questions are so uncommon overall, the sensitivity of questions around violence including the risks of re-victimization and trauma triggering, as well as the accompanying higher threshold for risk in order to protect learners' well-being, may contribute to this (Dickson-Swift, 2022; Pichon et al., 2022; Johnson, 2020; Howe, 2022). In combination with the already sensitive issue of refugee status, there may be many reasons these sets of questions are avoided altogether, even when good data management principles like personal confidentiality are followed (UNHCR, 2023c). The absence of data on facilities can more readily be explained by the lack of coverage of refugees in administrative data, and international and regional learning assessments.

Nevertheless, the inclusion of safety questions is important and supported by localized evidence that suggests associations between exposure to violence and educational outcomes more generally (Fry et al., 2018), and between school violence and educational outcomes more specifically (Akiba and Han, 2007;

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16. Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university occurs when armed forces, law enforcement, other state security entities, non-state armed groups, peers, or teachers sexually threaten, harass, or abuse students or educators of all genders. Sexual violence includes rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, forced abortion, forced circumcision, castration, genital harm, and any other nonconsensual sexual act, as well as acts that may not require physical violence or contact but include humiliation or shaming of a sexual nature, such as forced nudity. It also includes abduction for these purposes, which are counted as sexual violence, but not child recruitment or attacks on students or personnel. This definition is based on the definition of the GCPEA (GCPEA, 2022)
17. There is one questionnaire with indicators on child recruitment targeted at refugee populations.

Smith, 2003). Moreover, comparative studies have found that immigrant students are affected by school violence in ways that differ from how other populations experience such situations (Rutkowski et al., 2013). Finally, on facilities, research using the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey finds 'lower levels of resources, safety, and social inclusion for refugee students' which underlines the need to better understand this aspect of education for refugees (Cooc and Kim, 2023, p. 1). Therefore, it is imperative that more data on the safety of refugee learners be collected.

Figure 17: Percentage of questionnaires asking refugee identification and safety questions by safety indicators with refugee identification type

Refugee identification and safety questions co–occur infrequently.
No safety indicator occurs in more than 5% of questionnaires.
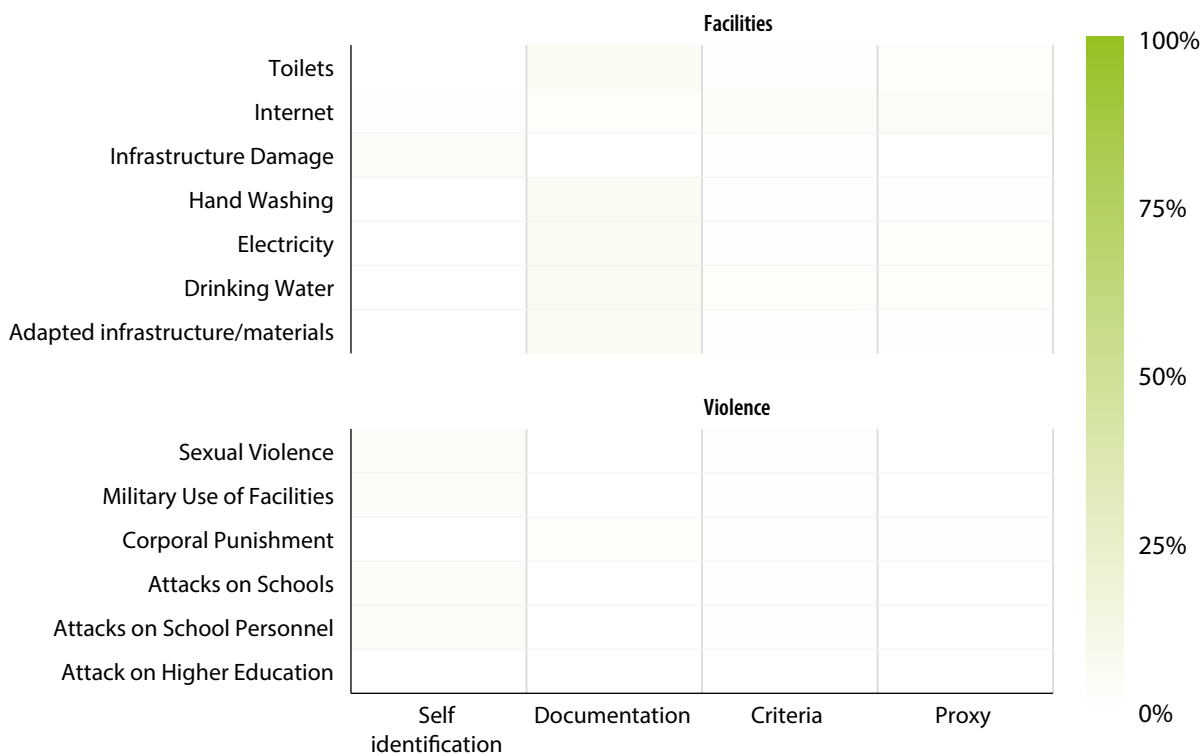
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

Box 6: Tools to report school violence and promote safe school environments.

The case of Peru's SíseVe Platform

As of December 2022, there were 1.5 million Venezuelans living in Peru (R4V, n.d.). While the Peruvian government has implemented different initiatives to support the integration of displaced Venezuelans, episodes of discrimination and xenophobia remain a challenge in many contexts, including educational institutions. Xenophobia and discrimination are a form of violence that can affect displaced children attending schools in their host countries and information about such violent situations is usually scarce.

In Peru, ENPOVE-2018 (INEI, 2019), a survey conducted to learn about the living conditions of Venezuelans residing in Peru, reported that 20% of Venezuelan children between 5 and 18 years of age had experienced discrimination. The study also found that among Venezuelans who experienced discrimination (of all ages), 7% of them reported that the event occurred at an educational institution (INEI, 2019). SíseVe, an online platform against school violence from the Peruvian Ministry of Education, provides an example of how those situations can be reported and monitored. SíseVe seeks to gather accurate and detailed data on school violence incidents at national, regional, and local levels to inform prevention strategies; provide early reporting, monitoring; to prevent the rehiring of teachers penalized for school violence; and to provide guidelines for prevention and access to support services to protect victims and ensure their safety (Ministerio de Educación, 2019a, 2019b).

While SíseVe aims to prevent school violence, the way cases are reported in the online system allows for the identification of episodes of violence that could be affecting displaced and migrant children. The reporting process of cases of school violence has five steps. First, the person filing in the case must identify the school where the episode of violence occurred. Then, the information of the alleged victim and aggressor must be recorded in the system. The consecutive stages of the reporting process collect information on the event itself, including details about the 'type of violence', 'number of violent episodes', and the reasons perceived to have caused the episode of violence. The latter is where information related to cases of violence linked to migration could be identified, as the possible causes include 'due to being from a different country', 'because of the skin color' and "because of the way of speaking'. To file a case in SíseVe, the person reporting must create an account where they select an identification document from three options: DNI – Documento Nacional de Identidad (national identification document); CE – Carnet de Extranjería (Foreign ID); PTP and Permiso Temporal de Permanencia (Temporary Protection Permit). The inclusion of Carnet de Extranjería and PTP makes it possible for non-Colombians to create an account and report their cases in the system (Ministerio de Educación, 2019a).

However, the way the system collects information about the alleged victim is insufficient to identify the nationality, country of origin, or migratory status of the affected student. To work around this limitation, Alcázar and Balarín (2021) explore the relationship between school violence and migration by analysing the number of cases reported in SíseVe by the number of Venezuelan children enrolled in school. They found that the average number of cases in SíseVe for the 10% of public secondary schools with the highest proportion of Venezuelan students was 2.84, compared to 2.31 for all secondary schools (Alcázar and Balarín, 2021). For primary education, the corresponding figures are 1.45 and 1.08. Further, UNESCO identified that, as of January 2020, 43 of the 39,315 cases in SíseVe indicated that 'being from a different country' as the cause for harassment/violence (Saffirio and Klenner, 2020). While this represents a very low proportion of cases, it provides indicative evidence that these differences can play a role in school-based violence. These analyses suggest that coming from a different country could constitute a risk of experiencing violence, but more research needs to be done to understand if and how these dynamics are at play.

Conclusions and recommendations

This report confirms previous evidence on the challenges of refugee data inclusion, emphasizing the limitations imposed by the fragmentation of information, which prevents data collection instruments to jointly report on refugee identification and education variables. Previous work has shown that the key challenges for education data for FDPs (Cazabat and Yasukawa, 2022; UIS and UNHCR, 2021) can be summarized as the non-inclusion of refugees in samples for key DCEs; absence of disaggregation by migration status in existing data sources, especially beyond using different proxies such as nationality (or similar) or native language; over-emphasis of data on access to education, especially enrolment and attendance, while excluding other measurements such as retention, drop-out, learning and safety; and

poor integration of refugee education data into national statistical frameworks.

Based on a mapping of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 DCEs in the top 35 low- and middle-income refugee-hosting countries in 2021, covering 20.58 million (80%) refugees, the report finds that these previous observations hold true. Overall, the number of DCEs that potentially contribute to refugee education data inclusion is limited given the lack of instruments that have questions on both the migratory status of the respondent and their educational situation. Indeed, there is an absence of refugee identification questions as only 418 (38%) of our questionnaires (331 DCEs or 45%) have any form of questions that would allow for the identification of refugees (see Figure 18 for an overview).

Figure 18: Number of questionnaires by status across all four dimensions of the analytical framework

Overview of findings against analytical framework
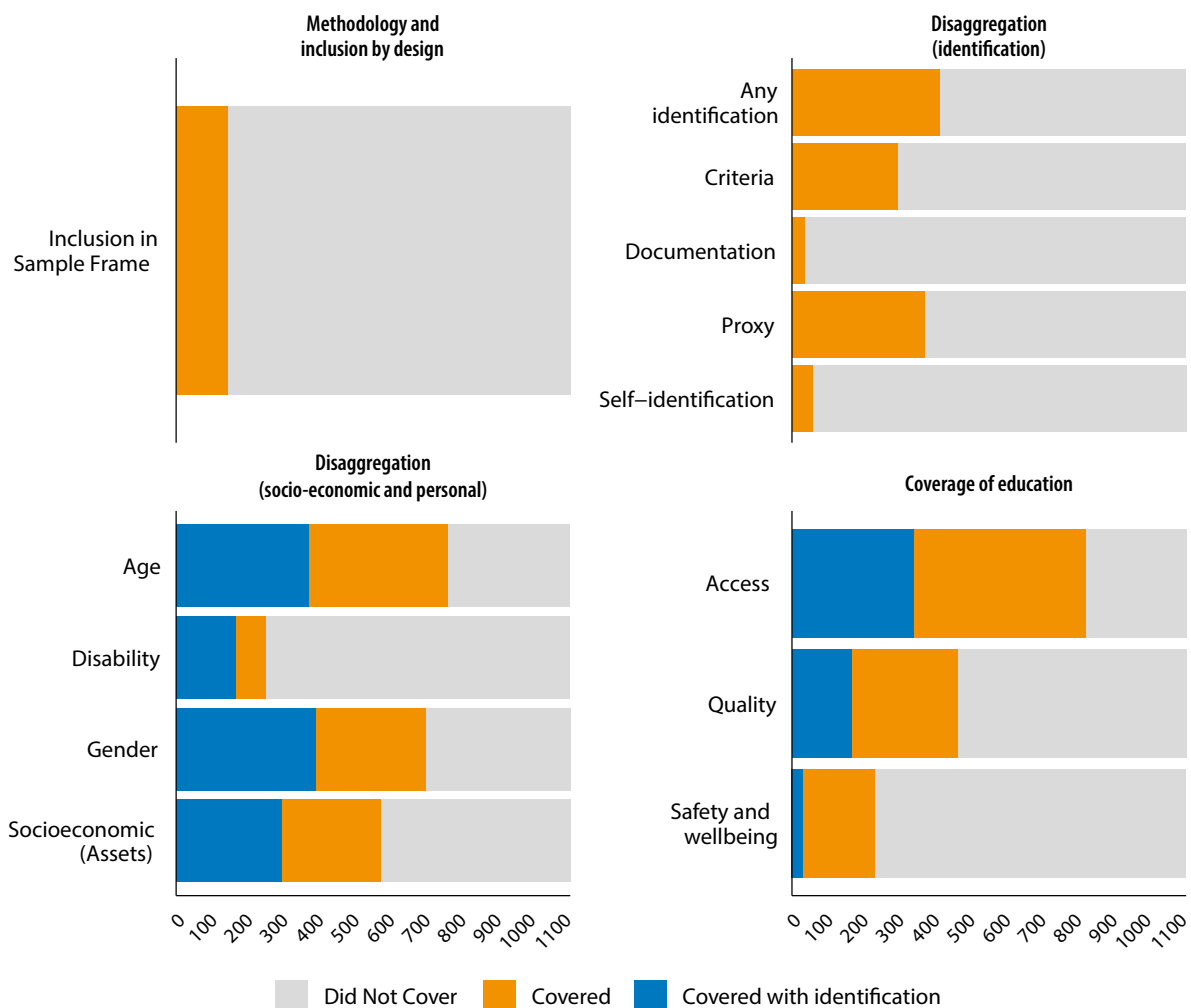
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

Findings show low and unequal levels of coverage of refugee education data, with access-related indicators being more common. On education, our findings echo earlier work that data on access to education are far more common than that on other aspects, such as safety and quality. The proportion of questionnaires that contain refugee identification questions or target refugees that also included questions on access to school was 30%; safe learning environment was 3%; quality learning conditions was 15%; access to transitions was 3%; and access to higher education was 4% (see Figure 19). Moreover, only a small subset of sub-indicators were covered within these broad categories and more work is needed to capture the different aspects of these education areas. Disaggregation by sub-indicators shows that the rate at which they were covered in the data collection tools varies, with some being common (e.g. literacy in the quality indicators or attainment and attendance in access to schools) while most others are rarely used..

Figure 19: Number of questionnaires by analytical areas and target population

There is very little potential data on refugee education beyond access to schools and quality learning conditions.
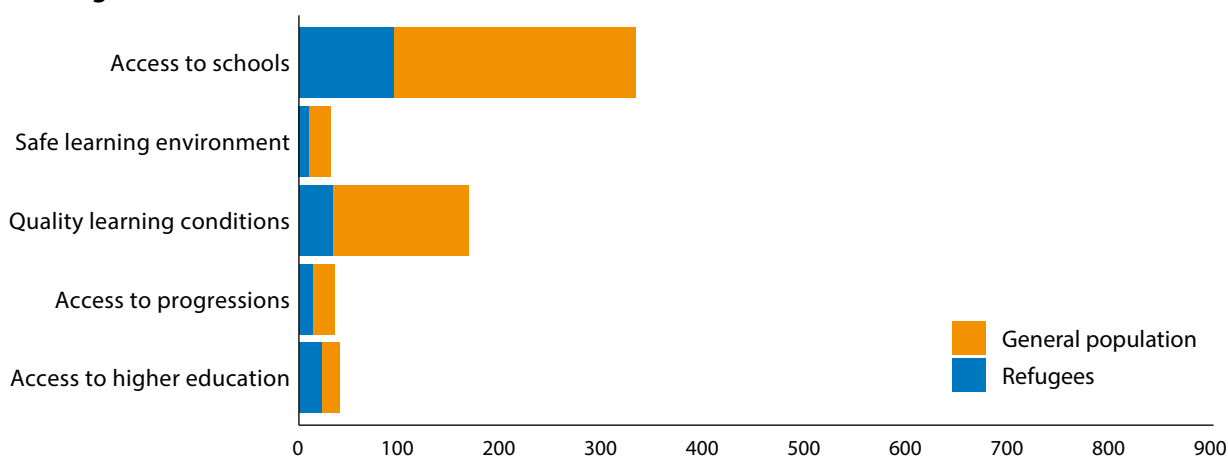
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

The absence of refugee identification questions across data collection tools exacerbates the challenge of linking educational situation and refugee status, requiring an over-reliance on proxy and criteria-based approaches to identify refugees. Proxy (n=375, 34%) and criteria-based (n=300, 27%) approaches dominate the data set,[1] but only 272 questionnaires (25%) have both proxy and criteria-based questions that would allow a more precise determination of migration status (see Figure 20).

Indeed, only 2 of the 1,109 questionnaires reviewed had the full set of refugee identification questions suggested by IRRS (see Box 2). In addition, there is a high degree of inconsistency in the phrasing of the question and response options of refugee identification questions, with a large percentage of unique questions within each sub-indicator (e.g. country of birth). This means that the presence of a proxy question does not necessarily guarantee that refugee status can be 'proxied' with any real certainty across countries.

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1. It should be noted that percentages reported are independent of each other and are not meant to be summed together as the same questionnaire may have proxy and criteria-based questions.

Figure 20: Percentage of questionnaires asking refugee refugee identification and education questions by refugee identification type and education area

Questions on access are the most commonly asked across refugee identification types
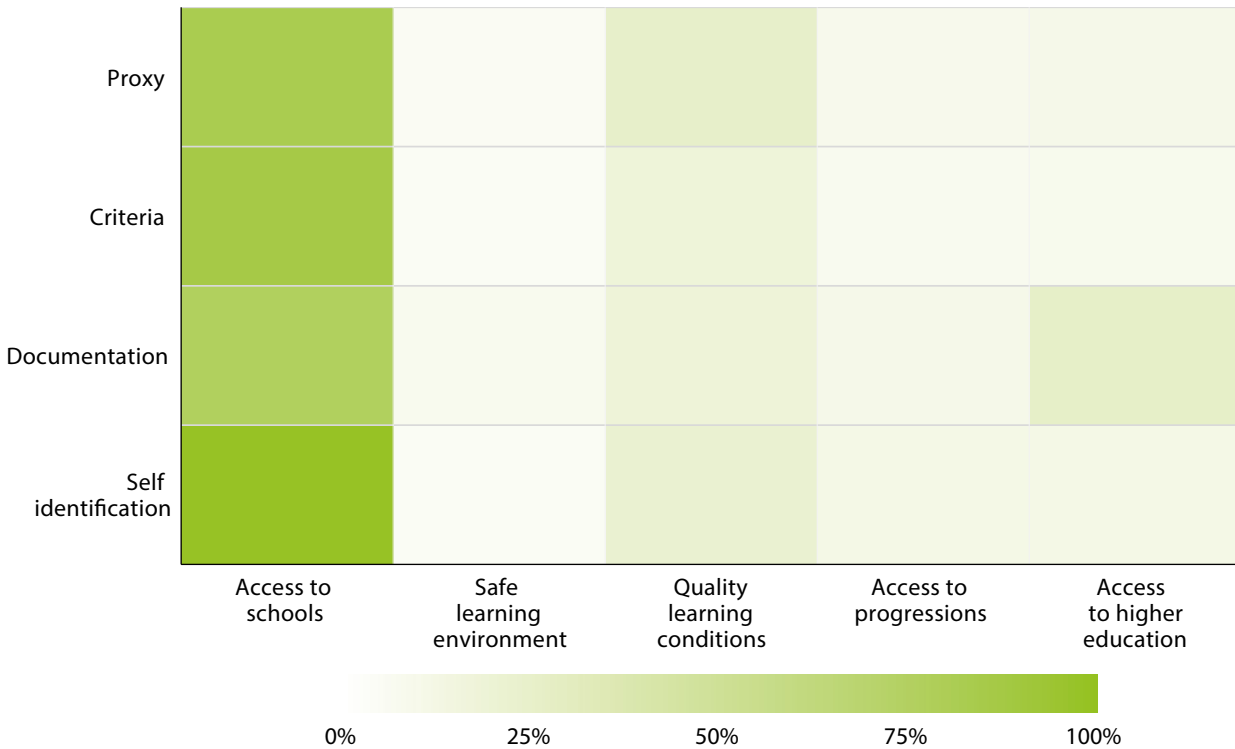
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

There are low levels of inclusion of refugees in education data systems (see Figure 21). Framing inclusion as the total number of questionnaires that refugees are included in (as defined by either targeting refugees or including some form of refugee identification question) as a fraction of the total number of questionnaires in each education area, a rough estimate of inclusion in data systems was made. This estimate is a best-case scenario as the quality of refugee identification and the extent of refugee coverage in the sample are not considered in this calculation. Even in this best-case scenario, there is only one education area, 'access to higher education', where refugees are included in more than 50% of DCEs[2] (see Figure 19). While 100% inclusion may not be desirable or feasible in all contexts, the current levels of inclusion, especially on quality and safe learning, leave much room for improvement.

2. Even here, this is also a function of the difficulty in obtaining any questionnaires and metadata with a higher education focus. Indeed, administrative data on higher education was very difficult to obtain so these high levels of inclusion are partially a function of the types of DCEs reviewed that covered higher education.

Figure 21: Degree of refugee inclusion in education data systems by education area

Overall low levels of refugee inclusion in education data, with access to schools and higher education as exceptions.
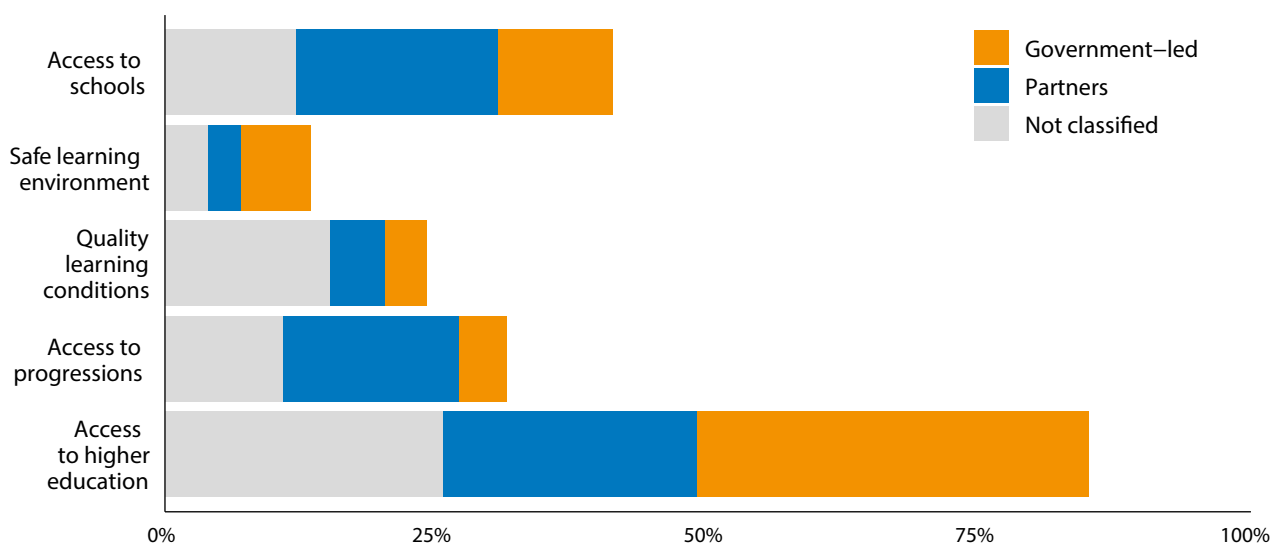
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

Recommendations

While the review shows that there is still a long way to go to ensure refugee inclusion in education data systems, there are some actionable ways forward to improve data availability for refugee education:

- **Include refugees within sampling frames and include refugee identification questions in existing data collection instruments (see Figure 22).** Findings from this review show substantial gains in refugee education data could be made by wider inclusion in existing data collection, especially on access to schools, quality learning, and safety for refugees (see Figure 21). This inclusion is in line with the mandate of the Expert Group on IDP, Refugee, and Statelessness Statistics and their recommendations for refugee statistics (see the IRRS, p. 44–45).

  ▶ **To National Statistical Offices and Ministries of Education/Higher Education:** Work with and use the existing guidance and refugee identification standards developed by the EGRISS to include and disaggregate refugees and other FDPs by status within national data systems, including education data. For administrative data, the disaggregation of students by nationality or refugee status is easier where individual-level EMIS is already in place.

  ▶ **To organizations engaged in collecting or funding education data or funding data collection:** Advocate for the inclusion of refugees in sampling frames where contextually relevant and raise awareness of the EGRISS standards among national actors. Further, apply the EGRISS recommendations to include refugee identification questions in surveys in addition to existing disaggregation by gender, age, and disability. For example, the report identified that including refugee identification questions in international and regional learning assessments could contribute to significant increases in data availability on the learning of refugees. Inclusion of refugees in the Multiple Indicators Cluster Surveys, Demographic and Health Surveys, and any other national-level surveys that are important sources of data for global education figures would also provide much-needed information on the status of refugee learners.

While the inclusion of new questions can be costly, small additions within existing surveys could improve data availability in a more cost-effective way than standalone, ad hoc assessments. While robust sampling frames and population data are needed to ensure representativeness, collaboration between UNHCR and government stakeholders (national statistical offices) can facilitate progress in this regard. The inclusion of refugee identification questions requires considerable care and adherence to data privacy and protection protocols to ensure no harm comes to respondents, considerations that extend to standalone assessments as well.

Figure 22: Potential gains to be made from wider inclusion of refugee identification questions

Large gains in refugee education data can be made by the inclusion of refugee identification questions in existing data collection exercises.

Where thinner and lighter orange bars represent gains through wider inclusion in education data collection exercises.
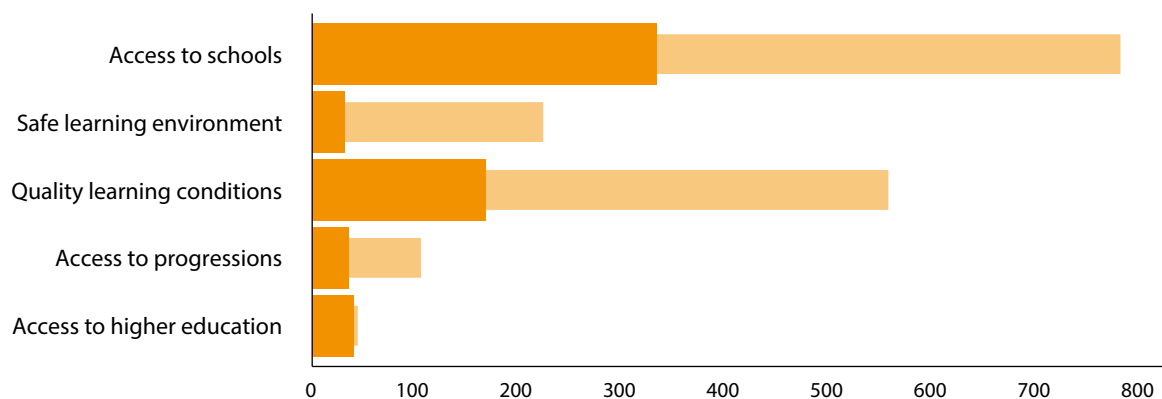
Source: Based on the analysis of 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data sources.

- **Leverage the full potential of existing data sources through improved transparency and by making data, metadata and questionnaires publicly available.** Many microdata libraries already exist (e.g. World Bank Microdata Library, UNHCR Microdata Library, HDX, IPUMS International), bringing together existing data sources, but there are still many gaps in data availability, accessibility and documentation. While there are many protection concerns around making the data itself publicly available, good use of current recommendations on data protection (e.g. UNHCR's General Policy on Personal Data Protection and Privacy (2022), Policy on the Protection of Personal Data of Persons of Concern to UNHCR, United Nations Personal Data Protection and Privacy Principles, IASC Operational Guidance on Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action), and clarification of where these data should be stored, would facilitate uptake (IASC, 2023; UN HLCM, 2018; UNHCR, 2022b). Further, data need to be accessible and consistently documented with as few barriers to discovery as possible. Publicly available metadata, documentation, and questionnaires would allow actors to identify both areas of duplication and gaps in current DCEs with less effort and more precision than looking through datasets. It would also provide more information to assist in the evaluation of the process of data collection, the extent of sample coverage, and the type of questions and analytical methods used. This would facilitate the use of a diverse set of data sources and enhance the understanding of refugee education across actors.

  ▸ **To donors and partners both within and outside of education:** Leveraging the use of a diverse set of data sources can better enhance understanding of refugee education across actors. To reduce duplication and overall fragmentation of data production efforts within and across sectors, donors could continue to fund efforts to consolidate and improve the availability of existing datasets (e.g. UNHCR's Microdata Library, the World Bank's Microdata Library) and enhance and strengthen linkages between these data sources with more advanced Application Programming Interfaces (APIs – software intermediaries that allow two applications to connect). Further, building the capacity of national governments to conduct new DCEs, including refugees in these exercises, and making this information available to key stakeholders will be critical to the sustained and efficient use of existing resources.

  ▸ **To UNHCR:** Building on its mandate and its Data Transformation Strategy (DTS) 2020–2025 (UNHCR, 2019a), UNHCR has a clear role to become a leader in refugee-related data and information to enable actions to protect, include and empower refugees. In recent years, UNHCR has made significant efforts in data collection, aggregation, and curation, but data are still scattered over several platforms and are not always publicly available. Combining existing data, including those from UNHCR's population database, Microdata Library, upcoming Flagship Surveys, REMIS, camp-based data (see UNHCR, 2002), and other relevant sources, into a single searchable database and platform would be a significant step in the right direction. Including data on different sectors – including education data from national governments and partners – and coordination and cooperation with other microdata libraries would ensure broader coverage of refugee data beyond that which is collected by UNHCR.

▶ **To National Statistical Offices and Ministries of Education/Higher Education:** Improving accessibility to existing questionnaires, metadata and other documentation on official government webpages is key. Official data from administrative sources and large-scale household surveys and censuses are critical elements in ensuring a comprehensive set of data on refugee education is made available. For education data, this is especially true for EMIS, which already acts as the main tool for education data regarding SDG 4. However, if questionnaires and metadata are not made publicly available, this hampers efficient allocation of resources and may create the illusion of data gaps and lead to the duplication of data collection efforts and inefficiencies in resource allocation.

- **Ensure data collection on refugee education goes beyond access to address the quality of learning and safety:** While understanding access to education is a critical first step to establishing learner needs, current estimates suggest this is out of reach for 48% of refugee children. Data on the quality of the school environment and the learning taking place in schools are what ultimately determine the ability of education administrators, including schools, to respond to learner needs and shape and nurture the overall development of children (UNHCR, 2022a). These conditions are even more relevant for vulnerable populations or in the context of educational disruption, which often affects refugees. For instance, having more data on the safety and well-being of refugee learners and the quality of learning is critical for supporting them in achieving their potential. This is in line with the SDG 4 goal to ensure safe and quality learning for all, and specifically with SDG 4 targets 4.c on qualified teachers, 4.a on safe learning environments, and indicator 4.1.1 on learning.

    ▶ **To international and regional learning assessments:** Incorporating refugee learners in existing learning assessments is a low-cost way to improve knowledge on the quality of refugee learners' education (a key indicator identified for SDG monitoring as identified by EGRISS). LLECE in Latin America is already piloting the way forward in its next round of ERCE in 2025 and their methodological notes will provide many opportunities for peer learning.

    ▶ **To Ministries of Education and National Statistical Offices:** Where refugees are already included in learning assessments and administrative data, reporting these data in a disaggregated way so that the needs of refugee learners may be clearly identified and better understood is critical. Where they are not included, collaborating with international partners to include refugees within existing assessments is crucial. Administrative data on teachers and school facilities can also fill critical knowledge gaps and should be made available to partners.

Develop shared definitions and indicators for both refugee identification and education-related indicators across the humanitarian-development spectrum to improve data quality and ensure that the data collected is comparable across different DCEs. This would align with previous recommendations to continue to improve data quality and accuracy, strengthen the methodologies used to produce data, and improve the timeliness and usability of the data collected on crisis-affected learners (Montjourides, 2013, p. 85). The creation of common indicators for refugee education, with standardized definitions and methodologies for measuring these indicators (e.g. on attendance) used within national data systems and across partners, would improve both intra and inter-agency coordination while enabling the comparability of data and facilitating uptake into policy-making processes. This could also be facilitated by collaborative development of shared modular analysis tools, not only for refugees but also beyond.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Detailed overview of methods

Data collection exercises by region

Table A1.1: Data collection exercises by region

UNESCO regions	Census	Household surveys	International learning assessments	EMIS	School based surveys	National learning assessments	Other
Africa	12	121	19	13	2	0	0
Arab States	10	122	11	1	20	3	8
Asia and the Pacific	12	47	16	7	7	0	0
Europe and North America	0	24	5	0	0	0	0
Latin America and the Caribbean	29	30	91	10	4	1	1

Education indicator overview

Table A1.2: Education indicator overview

Domain	Indicators	FII Indicator Name
Access to Schools	edattain_childyouth	Highest educational attainment of child-youth
	edattain_respondent	Highest educational attainment of Head of Household (HH) (HH - respondent)
	attend_currentgradeformal	School attendance (current-most recent)
	attend_previous	School attendance (previous; grade t-1) formal education
	enrol_currentgradeformal	School enrolment (current-most recent year)
	enrol_previous	School enrollment (previous; grade t-1) formal education
	reason_nonenrol	Reason for non-enrolment
	teachers_mothertongue	Number of teachers teaching in mother tongue
	facilities_distance	Distance to school
Safe learning environment	emis_school_conructionmaterials	School construction materials
	facilities_drinkingwater	Access to safe drinking water on school premises
	facilities_electricity	Availability of electricity at the school
	facilities_handwashing	Access to basic handwashing facilities at the school
	facilities_internet	Availability of internet connection at the school
	facilities_sne	Availability of facilities with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities
	facilities_toilets	Access to single-sex basic sanitation facilities
	facilities_healthservices	Access to health services at the school
	violence_attackshighered_post_secondary	Attacks on Higher Education
	violence_attackspersonal	Attacks on students, teachers and other education personnel
	violence_attacksschools	Attacks on Schools
	violence_militaryusefacilities	Military use of schools and universities
	violence_childrecruit	Child recruitment
	violence_corporalpunishment	Corporal punishment
	violence_sexualviolence	Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university
	infrastructure_damage	Damage to school infrastructure

Quality learn-ing conditions	math_endprim	Minimum proficiency in math at the end of primary education
	math_grades23	Minimum proficiency in math in grades 2 or 3
	reading_endprim	Minimum proficiency in reading at the end of primary education
	math_endsec	Minimum proficiency in math at the end of secondary education inpre primary education
	reading_endsec	Minimum proficiency in reading at the end of secondary education
	reading_grades23	Minimum proficiency in reading in grades 2 or 3
	teach_minprim	Number of teachers with the minimum required qualifications to teach primary education
	teach_minupsec	Number of teachers with the minimum required qualifications to teach upper second-ary education
	teachers_min_sne	Number of teachers with the minimum required qualifications to teach special needs education
	teachers_minlowsec	Number of teachers with the minimum required qualifications to teach lower second-ary education
	teachers_minpreprim	Number of teachers with the minimum required qualifications to teach pre-primary
	teachers_nationalstd	Number of teachers qualified according to national standards
	teachers_qualified	Number of qualified teachers
	supplies_electronicdevices	Availability of electronic devices (computers, notebooks, tablets, or mobile phones)
	supplies_textbooks	Provision of sufficient text books (by subject matter)
	access_langinstruction	Learners language of instruction
	access_remotelearng	Remote learning access
	sel_selfmanagement	Social and emotional learning, self-management
	sel_socialawareness	Social and emotional learning, social awareness
	sel_relationship	Social and emotional learning, relationship skills
	sel_decisionmaking	Social and emotional learning, responsible decision making
	knowledge_sexed	Life skills education including health education
	knowledge_globalcitizenship	Secondary education knowledge of global citizenship
	knowledge_sustainability	Secondary education knowledge of sustainability
	knowledge_environmentalgeosci-ences	Secondary education knowledge of environmental/geosciences
	knowledge_ict_skills	Secondary education knowledge of ICT skills
	knowledge_digitalskills	Secondary education knowledge of digital skills
	parentsupport_atschool	School-based parental involvement
	parentsupport_athome	Home-based parental involvement
Access to transitions	attend_currentgradeformal & attend_previous	School attendance (current-most recent year) & school attendance (previous; grade t-1) formal education
	enrol_currentgradeformal & enrol_previous	School enrolment (current-most recent year) & school enrolment (previous; grade t-1) formal education
Access to high-er education	enrolattend_postsec_techvoc	Enrolment or attendance in post-secondary non-tertiary and non-formal education
	enrolattend_postsec_tertiary	Enrollment or attendance in tertiary education

Detailed overview of refugee identification groups

Table A1.3: Pros and cons of refugee identification type

Type	Pros	Cons
Self-identification	Time-efficient during interview	Abstract
	Reduces respondent burden	Risk of gathering non-reliable and non-comparable data
		Increases respondent burden due to difficult interpretation of question and concept
		Exposes to biased reporting.
Criteria-based identification	Concrete and precise	Higher number of questions
	Yields objective responses	Higher number of error sources
	Provides detailed and quality data	Possibly adds to the length of interview and respondent burden.
	Reduces respondent burden due to easy-to-process questions	
Proxy Identification	Time-efficient during interview	Misses precise categorization.
	Low respondent burden.	

Source: JIPS, 2021

Self-identification

This approach requires the respondents to provide information by answering a question (usually only one) such as: 'Are you displaced?' (JIPS, 2021). JIPS (2021) recommends that it is not used as the only way to identify IDPs and that it may work better in camp settings. These suggestions are also applicable for refugees. One big challenge with self-identification questions is that there is very little standardization among them, which limits comparability. Some examples of these types of questions can be found below:

- 'Does the household member fall under any category of the following displacement categories? 1) Resident, 2) IDP, 3) Spontaneous Returnees, 4) Refugee (non-Syrian)?' – Education Needs Assessment, Syrian Arab Republic, 2017
- 'Is any member of the household a Syrian refugee? If so, how many household members are Syrian refugees?' – Iraq
- 'Have you applied for asylum or being recognized as refugee in this country?' – Protection Monitoring Survey, Brazil, 2020
- 'What is your migration status in Kenya?' Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on refugees – Panel Study, Kenya, 2022

Documentation

Documentation-based approaches are poorly documented, but the principle is that an ID of some sort – usually a national ID, passport, refugee ID, or temporary ID – is checked by the person filling out the form. This is done in some household surveys but is also the basic principle behind administrative data systems that require an ID to register and can track an individual through that system, e.g. individual-level EMIS that tracks a learner's progress through the education system. When it can be implemented safely, this method of identification provides the greatest degree of certainty in the identification of refugee status.

Criteria-based approaches
Migrants

According to the United Nations' Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses (UN and Eurostat, 2018, p. 209) the conditions in Table A1.4 must be met for a person to be considered an immigrant or emigrant:

To identify migrants in surveys, the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3 recommends three core topics on international migration characteristics: (a) country of birth; (b) country of citizenship; and (c) year or period of arrival in the country (UNDESA, 2017).

Table A1.4: Conditions to be met to be considered an immigrant or emigrant

Immigrant	Emigrant
Entering the country by crossing the border	Leaving the country by crossing the border
Having been a usual resident of another country before entering or not a usual resident of the country when entering	Having been a usual resident of the country
Staying or intending to stay in the country for at least one year.	Staying or intending to stay in another country or abroad for at least one year

Refugees

For refugees, despite clear international definitions on what constitutes a refugee, there are practical challenges in distinguishing between legal and de facto refugee status in data collection. A de facto refugee is a: 'Person not recognised as a refugee (within the meaning of Art. 1A of the Geneva Refugee Convention and Protocol) and who is unable or, for reasons recognised as valid, unwilling to return to their country of origin or country of nationality or, if they have no nationality, to the country of their habitual residence' (EU Commission Office of Migration and Home Affairs, 2016). Legal refugee status depends on the host country and the official granting of refugee status. Distinguishing between the two in data sources is extremely challenging unless protection status is collected as part of the tools of the DCE.

For the accurate identification of refugees in census data, EGRISS (Eurostat, European Commission, and UN, 2018a) recommends including a question on the reason for migration, with the following response categories: i) Employment; ii) Education and training; iii) Marriage, family reunification or family formation; iv) Forced displacement (refugees, asylum-seekers, temporary protected status, others). The question 'Reason for migration' should refer to the main reason that drove the respondent to undertake the most recent migration (UN and Eurostat, 2018). In this context, de facto refugee status can be identified as applying to someone who was forcibly displaced across borders. And if the specific options (refugees, asylum-seekers, temporary protected status, others) offered (in point iv above) are presented, then legal protection status may also be identified.

Table A1.5: Core questions suggested by IRRS

Census core questions	Household survey core questions
1. Age or date of birth	1. Country of birth
2. Sex	2. Country of citizenship
3. Country of birth	3. Acquisition of citizenship
4. Country of citizenship (including stateless, undetermined status and multiple citizenship)	4. Year or period of arrival in the country
5. Date of arrival in host country	5. Reason for migration, with response categories:
6. Reason for migration	a) Employment (including military service)
7. Country of previous or last residence (for both refugees in the country and refugees returning to the country of citizenship)	b) Education and training
8. Date of first displacement/leaving previous country of habitual residence	c) Marriage, family reunification or family formation
9. Parents' refugee statuses	d) Forced displacement (refugees, asylum-seekers, temporary protected status, others)
10. If an unaccompanied child (under age of 18 years and separated from both parents or legal guardian)	e) Other
11. Legal residential/international protection status as applicable to the national context	

Internally Displaced Persons

There is no legally binding framework to specify whether someone is an IDP or not. However, the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide an important framework for understanding IDP status. They define IDPs as '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 generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made

disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border.'

Operationalizing this further, IRIS, notes that the following conditions have been met:

- 'has been usually resident at the place where a causing event occurred, at the time of the event;
- has been forcibly displaced, including preventative movements, by:
  - ▸ **armed conflict;**
  - ▸ **generalized violence;**

> ‣ **violations of human rights;**
>
> ‣ **natural or human-made disasters;**
>
> ‣ **other forced displacements or evictions;**

- following this, has been physically living away from the dwelling in which he or she was living at the time of the causing event;

- is found within the internationally recognised borders of the country where he or she was displaced (even if he or she temporarily went abroad for a period of less than 12 months after the causing event); (Eurostat, European Commission, and UN 2020b, p. 29)

JIPS (2021a), building on IRIS, presents an updated set of questions for IDP criteria-based identification in surveys:

Table A1.6: JIPS set of questions for IDP identification

Question	Answer options
Have you ever been forced or obliged to flee?	Y/N
Does this apply to all member of the household? If not, which members? If yes, when was this?	Year/month or specific event
If yes, where did you move from? Where did you reside before you were forced to flee?	Higher administrative unit (e.g. municipality/commune); lower administrative unit (e.g. village/town)
Does this apply to all member of the household? If not, which members?	
If yes, where did you move to when you were forced or obliged to flee?	Higher administrative unit (e.g. municipality/commune); lower administrative unit (e.g. village/town) within the country, or abroad
If abroad, did you stay for more than 12 months?	
Does this apply to all member of the household? If not, which members?	
If yes, why did you move from where you resided? / What was the reason you had to move?	Answer options: reasons for forced displacement; other reasons for migration as relevant to the context (e.g. economic reasons).
Does this apply to all member of the household? If not, which members?	

Proxy-based approaches

Often it is not possible to collect criteria-based indicators for assessment of forced displaced status (indeed, this would not be possible in EMIS). Instead, many DCEs rely on proxies, such as nationality, for this. The use of proxies must be contextually rooted as the same proxy indicators will not be relevant in all countries.

Nationality is more commonly used than questions on protection status. When nationality is specified, these data can be used as a first step to explore refugee access to education in the absence of specific refugee data. An additional challenge of using data on nationality rather than refugee status is that it does not differentiate between refugees (those who have been forcibly displaced) of the same nationality as compared to those who may have migrated under different circumstances, nor does it differentiate between refugees with different legal statuses in the country (i.e. regular/irregular). In select contexts, it may be helpful to identify where

nationality (meaning specific country of nationality) can be used as an effective proxy for protection status, where refugees are granted *prima facie* recognition and there is not a history of migration between the sending and hosting country. It may be useful to combine nationality with date of registration to distinguish between waves or types of migration. In other very specific contexts, language spoken at home can also be a good proxy for identifying refugee populations within a survey.

Nevertheless, in some cases, this disaggregation is not useful for monitoring refugee education. For example, when the disaggregation is expressed as 'national of the country/non-national of the country', where the term 'non-national' covers multiple nationalities, this makes it difficult to distinguish which non-nationals could be refugees.

Other disaggregation traits may be a useful proxy in some contexts. For instance, research conducted by the World Bank using TIMMS and PISA data for

Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza, uses school type to identify differences between refugees and host community populations in learning. In this specific case, disaggregation by school type (between public and UNRWA-run schools) provides a reasonable proxy for refugee status (as nearly all students in UNRWA schools are Palestine refugees), with students in UNRWA schools consistently outperforming those in government schools, even when other factors are controlled for (Abdul-Hamid et al., 2016). However, this is limited in usefulness across contexts. Other proxies include location, especially in contexts of encampment where 'camp/non-camp' can provide a reasonable proxy of FDP status. Finally, it may also cover host country nationals who live in camps in refugee contexts. However, there are challenges with all proxy indicators. Indeed, proxies will often provide rough estimates of the FDP population and may not sufficiently disaggregate between the vulnerability of subpopulations.

Practical and quality considerations for reviewing data inclusion

While not part of the framework, the following are key elements to consider when mapping out the extent of data inclusion for any given population. These factors help access the potential for data use, who is involved in the production of data, and the quality of the data collected.

Frequency

Frequency of data is tied to the purposes and types of data collection. However, frequency of data collection determines the extent to which it may be useful for informing policy on migrants and FDPs.
The extent to which data can be collected and used for specific purposes depends largely on what the data collection is intended for. Censuses, for instance, cannot monitor the rapid movement of people as they are only done every 5–10 years. Recent work based on six country case studies (Chad, Ethiopia, State of Palestine, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, and Uganda) carried out by UNESCO on strengthening EMIS and data for increased resilience to crisis, found that current EMIS systems are 'limited because of challenges related to timeliness, quality and relevance, access and availability' (Pinna, Ndabananiye, and Akpabie, 2020). Other data sources may fill the gaps in EMIS by being more frequent and being released in a timelier manner. However, access and availability of data are persistent challenges both within and outside of the education of FDPs.

Access and availability

This area explores whether or not policy-makers and other stakeholders can access the data from the data source. This can be broken down into two main areas:

1. **Access to data:** Whether access to the full dataset is public. There are three possible answers to this: publicly accessible, permission required, not publicly available.

2. **Access to results in a user-friendly format:** Whether there is an easily accessible report on the data.

Classification factors

In line with Principle 3 of the Charter, the classification of data sources by several other factors will provide a clearer understanding of where these data are coming from and the type of data that are available. These factors are:

1. **Methods used:** To ensure that the review covers many types of data sources and that the type of data can be identified, the methods used in the DCE will be recorded. These might include KIIs, Surveys, Focus Group Discussions, etc.

2. **Type of data collection:** This will cover the type of DCE that is being conducted: Census, HH survey, School-based surveys, Learning Assessments, Evaluations

3. **Organizational information** about the extent to which data inclusion meets the criteria of inclusion more broadly on financing and management. This also aligns with the recommendations of the IRIS and IRRS on ensuring that national governments include these groups in national statistics by checking who is collecting these data. It will distinguish between:

   ▸ **Organization collecting the data:** To understand who the main actors for data collection are in each context as well as globally.

   ▸ **Organization funding the data collection exercise:** To understand the extent that inclusion in education data is funded nationally.

Appendix 2: Additional details on findings

This section provides more detailed charts for the findings of each section.

Refugee identification

Table A2.1: Profiling questions by type

Profiling questions by data collection type

Number of questionnaires asking profiling questions by type

	Censuses	Household surveys	International learning assessments	National learning assessments	EMIS	School based surveys	Other
Self identification	3	56					
Documentation		34	1		2		1
Criteria	60	120	112		2	2	4
Proxy	57	148	148	2	14	4	2
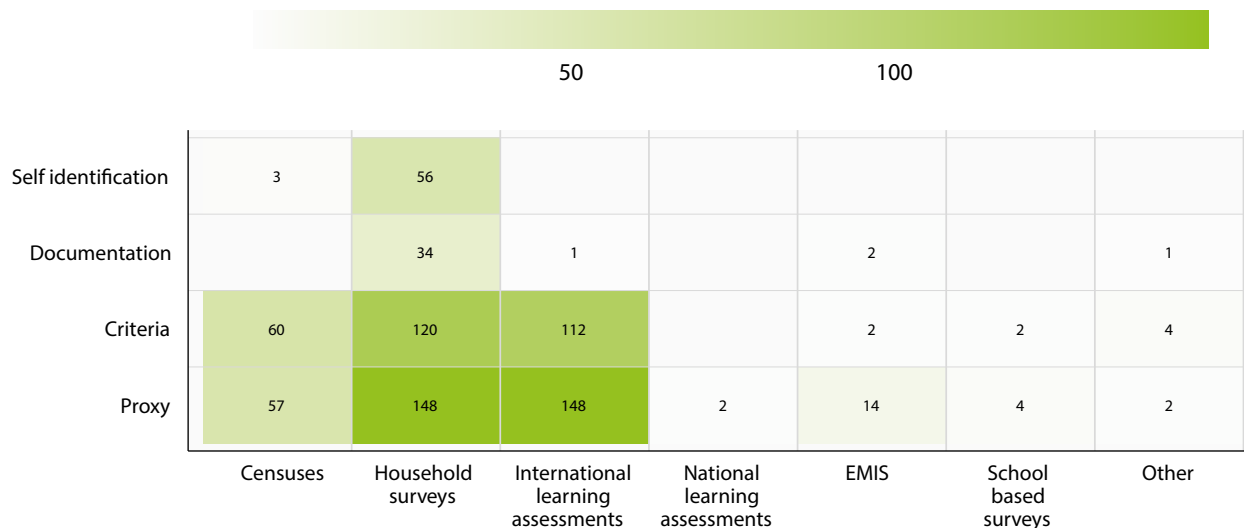
Source: Compiled by authors.

Table A2.2: Profiling questions by target population

Profiling indicators compared across target populations: refugees vs general population
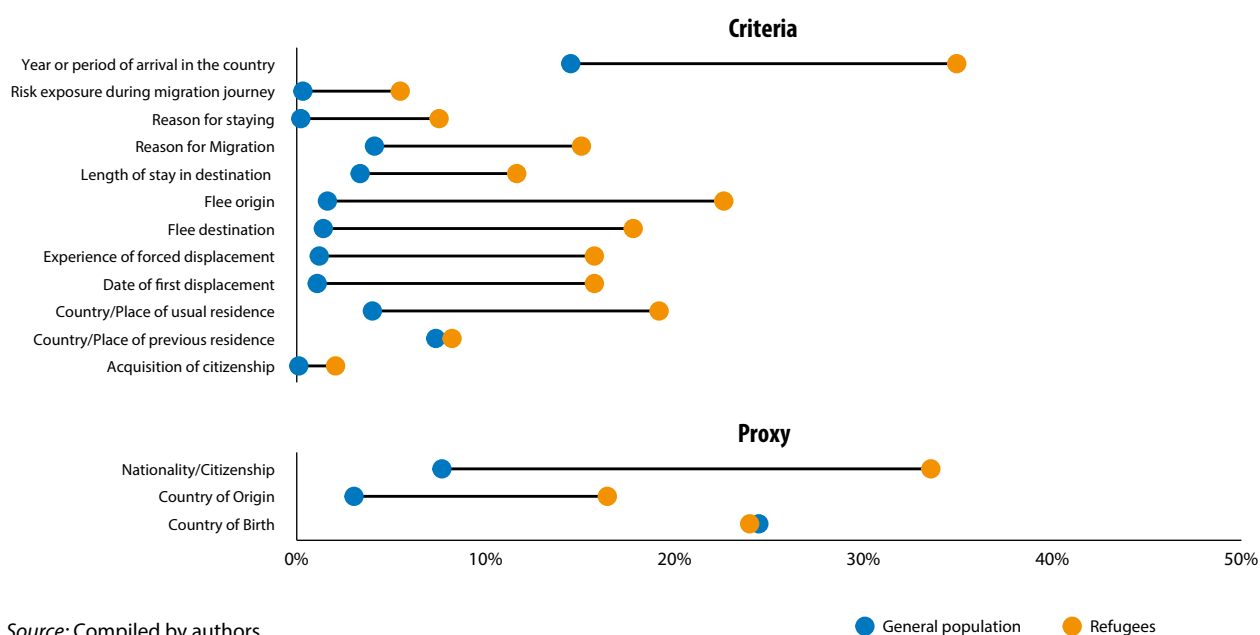
Source: Compiled by authors.

Access

Table A2.3: Access questions by data collection type

Access questions by data collection type

Number of questionnaires with access questions by data collection exercise type

	Censuses	Household surveys	International learning assessments	National learning assessments	EMIS	School based surveys	Other
Enrolment (211)	6	68	82		48	4	3
Barriers to Access (146)	2	114	6		5	16	3
Attendance (364)	6	202	140		11	3	2
Attainment (569)	57	294	186	7	18	4	3

Source: Compiled by authors.

Table A2.4: Access questions by target population

Access indicators compared across target populations: refugees vs general population
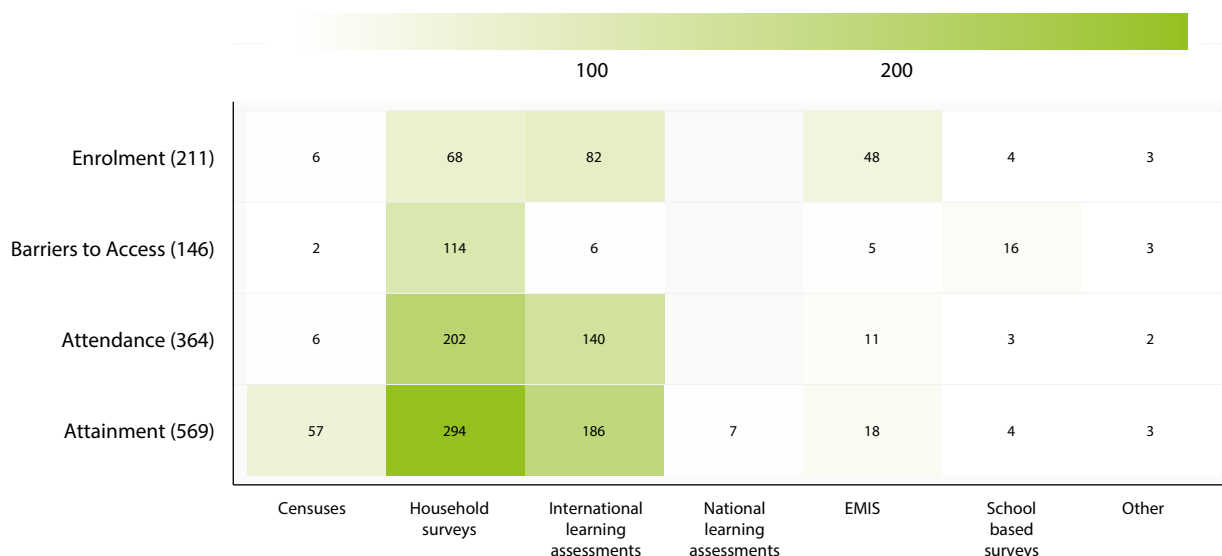

Source: Compiled by authors.
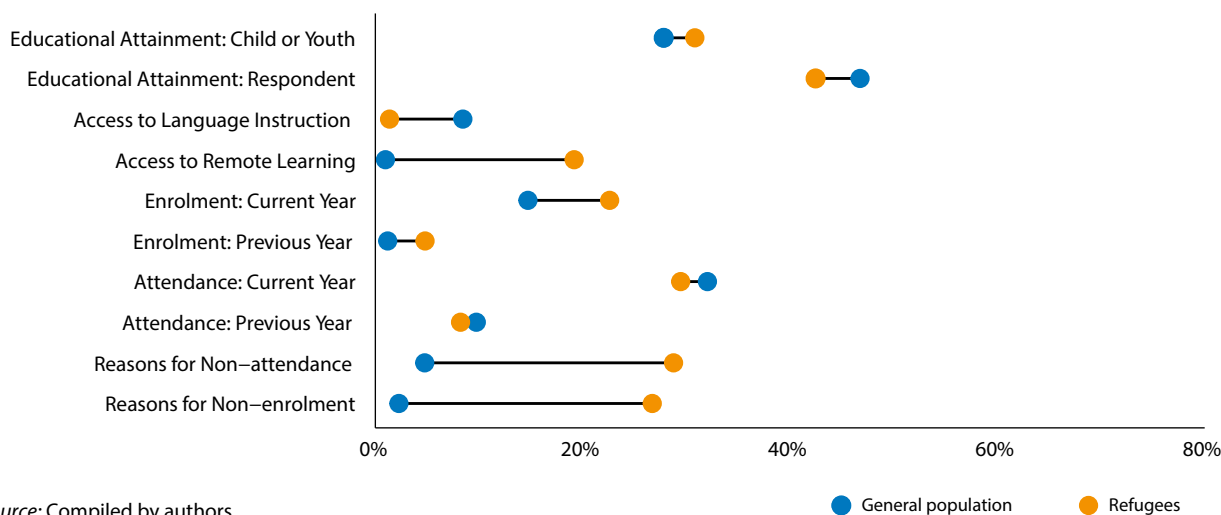
- General population
- Refugees

Quality

Table A2.5: Quality questions by type

Quality questions by data collection type

Percentage of questionnaires asking quality questions by type

	Censuses	Household surveys	International learning assessments	National learning assessments	EMIS	School based surveys	Other
Supplies							
Textbooks		9	174	1	34	5	
Electronic Devices	2	9	164	2	34	2	4
Teachers							
Teacher Minimum Qualifications	1	5	128	1	43	2	1
Mother Tongue Teaching			31		2		
# of teachers that left					11	1	2
# of teachers received in−service training		4	105	1	24		
# of teachers by gender	1		96	1	45	2	2
# of teachers	1	6	73		48	3	2
Learning							
Reading: Grades 2 and 3		2	188	3	1	2	
Reading: End of Secondary			16	4	2		
Reading: End of Primary			172	4	1		
Maths: Grades 2 and 3			186	3	1		
Maths: End of Secondary				4	2		
Maths: End of Primary			174	4	1		
Literacy	48	222	13	3		1	
Knowledge							
Sustainability			6		2		
Sexual Education		1	9		15	14	
ICT Skills	1	14	8		6		
Global Citizenship			5				
Environmental and Geosciences			1		2		
Digital Skills	1	14	6				

Source: Compiled by authors.

Table A2.6: Quality questions by target population

Quality indicators compared across target populations: refugees vs general population

Source: Compiled by authors.

● General population   ● Refugees
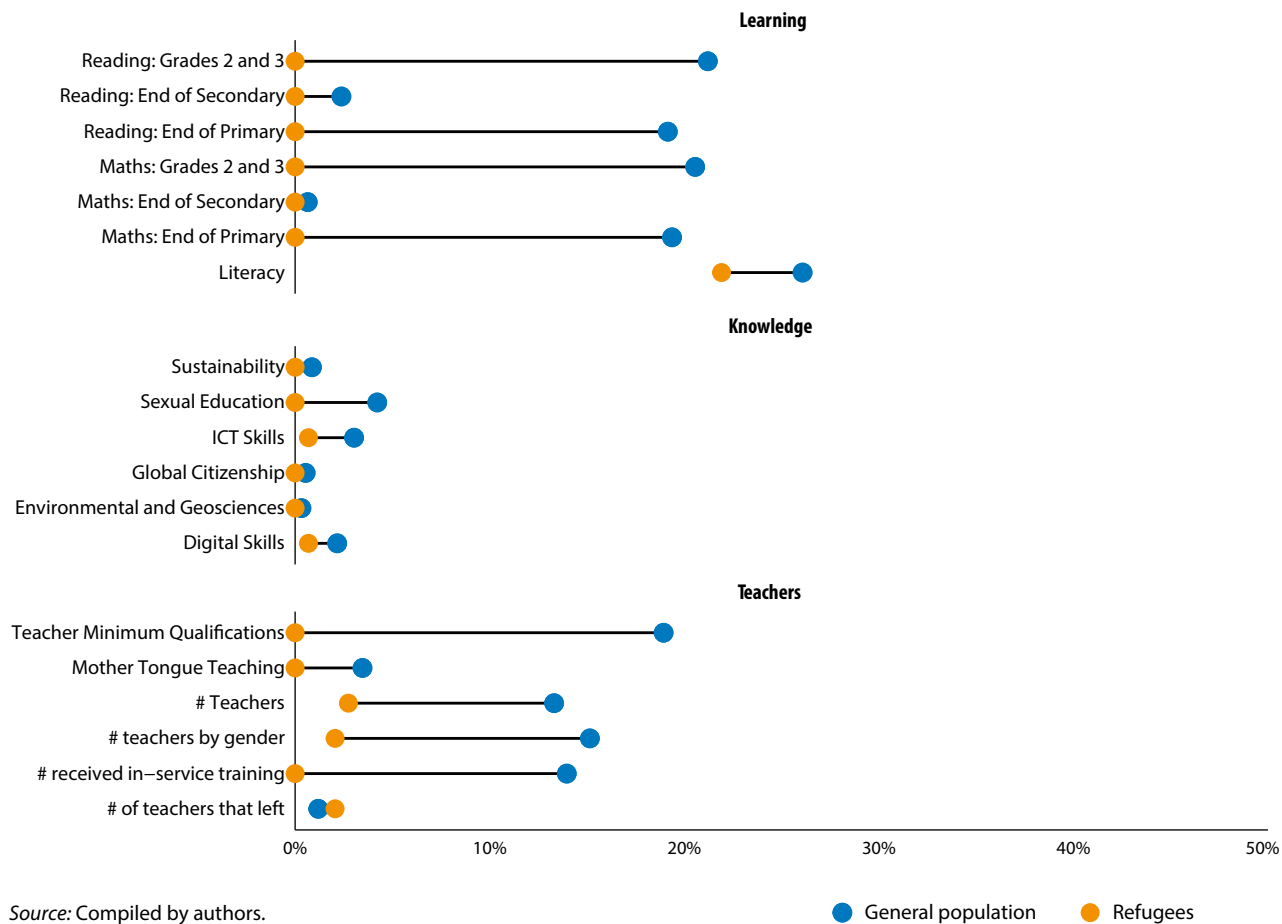
Safety

Table A2.7: Safety questions by type

Safety questions by data collection type

Percentage of questionnaires asking safety questions by type

Facilities

	Censuses	Household surveys	International learning assessments	National learning sessments	EMIS	School based surveys	Other
Toilets	1	3	37	1	33	8	
Internet	3	9	88	2	26	1	3
Infrastructure Damage		3	16			2	1
Health Services	1		37	1	15	1	1
Hand Washing		1		1	20	7	2
Electricity		5	41	1	38	1	
Drinking Water		8	37	1	37	8	2
Double−shift	1	3	14		14	2	1
Distance	3	25	9	1	10	4	3
Construction Materials			8		23		
Adapted infrastructure/materials		3	2		22	1	2

Violence

	Censuses	Household surveys	International learning assessments	National learning sessments	EMIS	School based surveys	Other
Sexual Violence		6	6		2	1	3
Peer Violence		8	185	2	5	26	
Military Use of Facilities		2				2	1
Corporal Punishment		7				5	1
Child Recruitment						1	1
Attacks on Schools		4				1	2
Attacks on School Personnel		4	46			2	1
Attack on Higher Education							

Source: Compiled by authors.

Table A2.8: Safety Questions by Target Population

Safety indicators compared across target populations: refugees vs general population

Source: Compiled by authors.
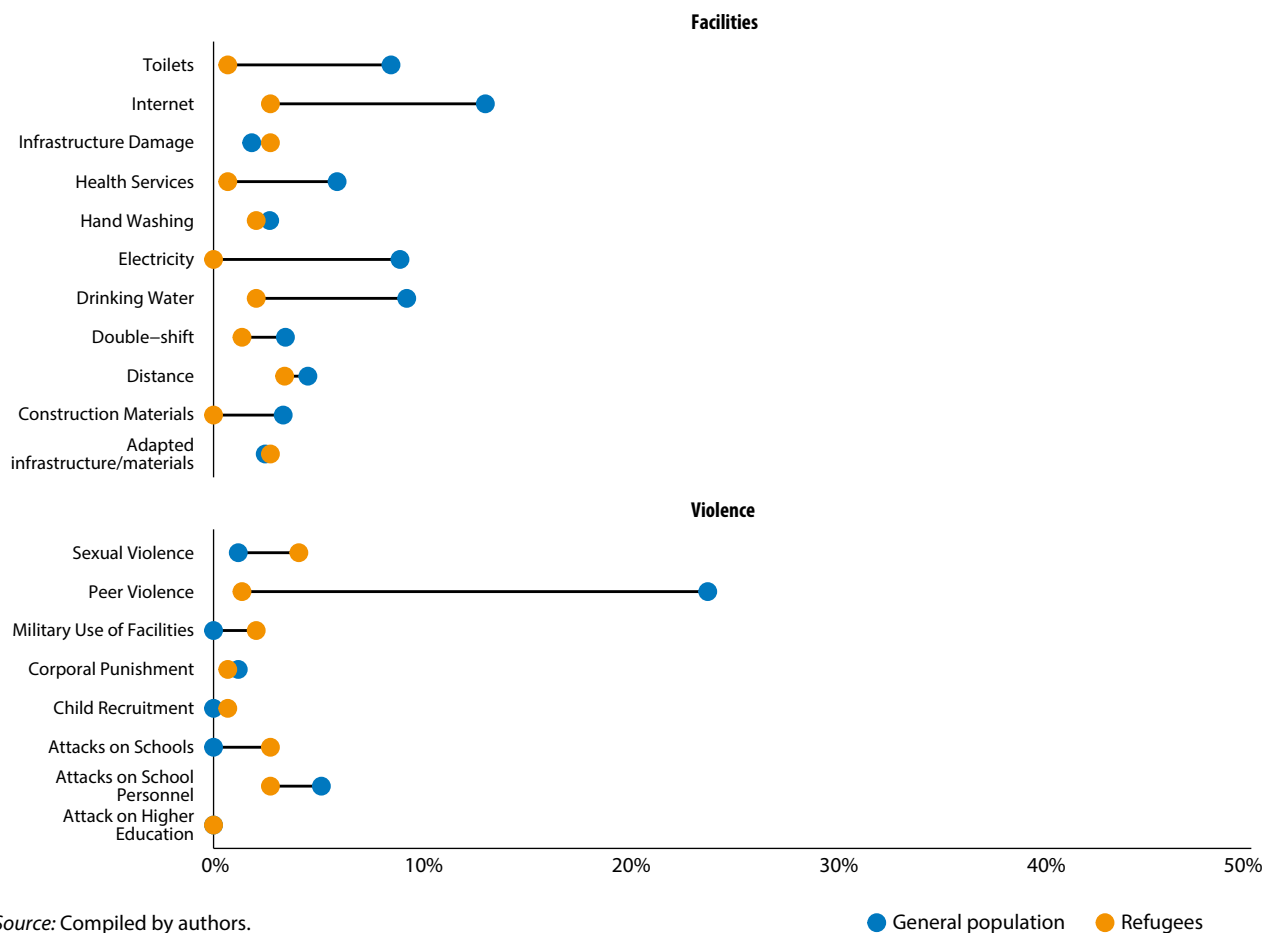
Appendix 3: UNHCR's Global Framework for Refugee Education and SDG Alignment

Table A3.1: UNHCR's Global Framework for Refugee Education and SDG Alignment

Outcome area	Goal	SDG 4 indicator	Other SDG indicators
Inclusion in national education systems	Equitable access to quality early childhood development and education in refugee-hosting areas for the benefit of all young children increased.	4.2.1, 4.2.4	2.2.1, 2.2.2
	Access and quality of public primary education in refugee-hosting areas for the benefit of all learners increased.	4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.1.5	8.7.1
	Access and quality of public secondary education in refugee-hosting areas for the benefit of all learners.	4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.1.4, 4.1.5	
Qualifications and skills for work	Access to demand led TVET increased and TVET systems strengthened, including improved recognition of prior learning and of foreign qualifications.	4.3.3	8.6.1
	Enrolment in accredited higher education is increased and barriers, including to recognition of prior learning and qualifications, restrictive policies and financing limitations, are eliminated.	4.3.2	
Emergency response	Timely and amplified education responses delivered, reducing the time refugee boys and girls spend out of education to a maximum of three months after arrival.	4.1.4	
Policy and planning	National and regional education policies, plans and programmes, as well as data management and monitoring systems, incorporate refugees and thus respond to the SDG 4 equity goal for education.	4.5.1	17.18.1
Financing and resources	More, better and multi-year financing provided for including refugee children and youth in national education systems and for strengthening the capacity of these systems.	4.5.3 (indirect)	10.7.2
Equity and inclusion	Investment in gender- and disability-responsive policies and interventions for all children and youth increased, including targeted actions to reach the most marginalized and vulnerable.		5 c.1
Innovation and connected learning	Innovative local evidence-based solutions scaled to support inclusion and increase the quality of education to meet the needs of refugee and host community learners.		

Source: https://www.unhcr.org/media/global-refugee-forum-pledging-guidance-global-framework-refugee-education

Paving pathways for inclusion

A global overview of refugee education data

With over 108 million people displaced globally and nearly half of them being children, accurate and comprehensive refugee education data is critical for designing interventions that specifically address the needs of these vulnerable learners. In response to this challenge, UNESCO, in collaboration with UNHCR, has conducted this unprecedented review of the state of refugee education data in the top 35 low- and middle-income refugee-hosting countries. Examining over 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data collection exercises, this detailed analysis reveals significant data gaps that render refugee learners largely 'invisible' in our current systems, hindering our ability to monitor their progress and craft policies that ensure targeted and effective educational support. Written for global education stakeholders, the report proposes recommendations to enhance the availability and quality of refugee education data to guide initiatives towards fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal 4 commitments, advocating for inclusive, equitable and quality education for all.

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4 QUALITY
EDUCATION

Sustainable
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Goals