

Data and Statistics for Children on the Move

Essential sources and good practices



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WHAT IS IDAC?

The International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) is a cross-sectoral global coalition that aims to improve data and statistics and support evidence-based policymaking for migrant and displaced children. Jointly led by Eurostat, IOM, OECD, UNHCR and UNICEF, IDAC brings

together governments (including experts from national statistical offices and migration- and displacement-related ministries), international and regional organizations, NGOs, think tanks, academics, civil society and youth.

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Counting the most vulnerable children

Children on the move are considered one of the most marginalized young populations around the globe, whether they live in emergency settings or high-income countries. Too often, they endure serious risks and severe deprivations in their day-to-day lives. There is an urgent need to better protect these children.

CHILDREN ON THE MOVE: A DEFINITION

Children on the move is a compound concept that has gained traction on the operational level in the international community. The term describes children who have been directly or indirectly affected by migration and displacement, either internationally across borders or within the same country. When referring to children on the move, IDAC includes child migrants; children in need of international protection, such as refugees and asylum-seekers; internally displaced children; children indirectly affected by migration and displacement, such as children who stay behind while parents or caregivers migrate; stateless* children and child victims of cross-border trafficking.¹

Better protection begins with better data.

Many of the key frameworks that protect children on the move – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement – stress the pivotal role that data play in upholding the rights of all children, especially the most vulnerable, and call for improvements to data collection, sharing and use. Member States' commitments to realizing these visions for a better world for all children are closely tied to their efforts to invest in, improve and utilize data and statistics for children on the move.

To identify the investments needed to improve the availability of data on these children, it is critical to understand the current landscape of data sources on migrant and displaced children and how the data are produced.

Estimates of migrant and displaced children are generated by the various United Nations bodies mandated to deal with migration and displacement issues, based on reports submitted by individual governments. These are considered to be the best global estimates available, are commonly cited and accepted as fact, and guide policies and programmes that promise to uphold children's rights. **But in reality, these data are far from complete and many children on the move are missing from the numbers. Why?**

The most recent estimates indicate there are approximately:



35.5 million

international migrant children globally



17.5 million

child refugees or asylum-seekers



29.7 million

children displaced within their own countries due to conflict, violence and disasters

These are the highest figures ever recorded.



Vast differences in the ways in which governments collect, analyse and use data result in inherent limitations and inaccuracies behind the numbers they produce. **When it comes to reporting on migrant and displaced children, the data gaps are particularly pronounced.** Incomplete data have led to substantial information gaps that render the actual count and situation of children who are on the move unknown. These challenges are further compounded by insufficient research and evidence that capture the well-being and integration experiences of these children.

Without quality, comparable and timely national-level data and statistics, regional and global estimates will fall short – and the rights of children on the move will remain ignored and neglected.

This brief aims to drive efforts to address these data gaps by taking a close look at the existing and emerging data sources behind the numbers. It describes the processes involved in producing data and statistics on child populations on the move and explores the challenges of collecting child-sensitive data in today's migration

and displacement context. Good practices from countries around the world are highlighted to demonstrate some of the noteworthy strategies and concrete efforts taking place at national levels to improve these data. An extensive list of databases and resource hubs that publish data and statistics on migrant and displaced children is featured in the Annex, providing details on these resources and the extent to which they are age- and child-sensitive.

Acting as a sister publication to IDAC's *Children on the Move: Key terms, definitions and concepts* and complementing its *Manual on Child-Specific Data Capacity Strengthening on Children on the Move*, this brief reaffirms the urgent need to invest in, build upon and enhance child-sensitive migration and displacement data ecosystems.

Data and Statistics for Children on the Move: Essential sources and good practices calls on key stakeholders to work together to capture more accurate counts of children on the move and their socioeconomic situations and aims to become a key reference for the general public, researchers, policymakers and advocacy organizations.

*IDAC's definition of children on the move only includes children who are stateless in the context of migration and displacement.

Today's data landscape for migrant and displaced children

Children on the move is a term that encompasses many subgroups of children defined within the policy fields of migration, displacement and human mobility in general.² Although progress has been made in the production, sharing and dissemination of data on migrant and displaced populations, when it comes to age- and child-sensitive data, much work remains.

Bringing together disparate sources of data and information about different populations of children on the move is vital to closing the gaps in the evidence base. While the need to improve data and evidence in policy domains relevant to children on the move is generally accepted, actual political will, capacities (e.g., technical, human and financial) and national priorities vary across contexts.

Data on children on the move are currently limited or compromised by:³

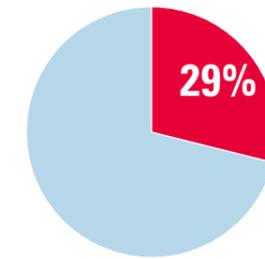
- **Lack of comparability**
Countries often use different definitions, methodologies and disaggregation dimensions

to compile data on migrant and displaced populations, thus limiting the comparability of data between national statistical systems. Within countries themselves, data producers may employ varying definitions or categories of migrant and displaced populations, which introduces challenges to the sharing and integration of data on particular groups of children. For instance, different government agencies may disaggregate data on migrant children by different age categories, limiting the comparability and potential utility of these data.

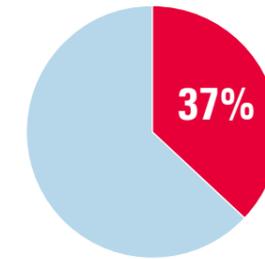
- **Lack of disaggregation**
Even though age-disaggregated data on migrant and displaced populations are crucial to developing child-sensitive policies and programmes that support children as they grow and mature, these data are unavailable in many countries (see Figure 1). Disaggregation of data by age, sex, migratory status, disability status and other key characteristics is needed to generate a more complete picture of the experiences of children on the move.



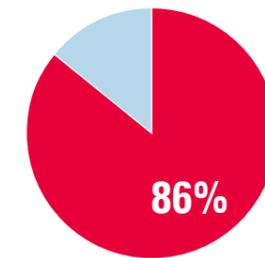
FIGURE 1 Gaps in disaggregated data on migrant, refugee and internally displaced populations



Nearly 3 in 10
countries and territories (29%)
do not have age-disaggregated
migrant stock data



Close to 4 in 10
countries with data on refugees
do not provide representative data
on age



About 9 in 10
countries and territories with
conflict-related internally
displaced persons do not
disaggregate the data by age

- **Gaps on the experiences of children on the move**
There are currently major gaps in the consistent and regular production of data on the integration experiences of many groups of children on the move, including data on their well-being, such as access to essential services like health care, education and housing. Lack of coordination between various entities – such as ministries of health and education and national statistical offices – may contribute to this challenge in cases where data are being collected on these groups but not shared, analysed or disseminated.
- **Gaps on highly vulnerable groups of children**
Children on the move is an umbrella term that includes many groups of children impacted by migration. Data are not regularly and

consistently generated on many of these children in highly vulnerable situations, such as unaccompanied children, separated children, stateless children, children who stay behind and irregular migrant children, among others.

- **Limited sharing and utilization**
In many contexts, data on children on the move may be available but not shared between government agencies or properly analysed to inform policy and programme design. This may be due to a range of factors – e.g., lack of coordination, bureaucratic challenges and competing or overlapping mandates across government agencies. In such cases, there is no system of accountability to determine who is responsible for collecting, producing, analysing, sharing and disseminating the data.

• **Lack of resources, political obstacles and competing priorities**

Data on children on the move can be expensive to produce. Low-income countries may not have the time or resources to produce child-specific data – particularly those impacted by conflict, violence or emerging crises like climate change or health emergencies, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴ In addition, States may face competing priorities and lack political will to invest in the capacity-strengthening needed to improve data on migrant and displaced children.

Addressing these challenges and data gaps is not an impossible task. New data initiatives and innovative approaches are increasingly being undertaken to inform humanitarian and development policy and programme responses. Many of the leading agencies involved in protecting migrant and displaced populations have produced important guidelines to strengthen the capacities of national data ecosystems (see Box 1). Around the world, governments and other agencies are working to improve data on children on the move and utilize existing data sources to capture the experiences of vulnerable groups of

migrant and displaced children, as seen in the 'From the Field' boxes throughout this brief.

Above all, utilizing a **whole-of-government** and **whole-of-society** approach that includes input from children and youth themselves is critical to overcoming challenges in the production and utilization of data on children on the move.



MYCP: INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN DATA PROCESSES

Quality, reliable data play an important role in upholding children's rights. They allow us to track the well-being of children and to hold governments accountable. Not only must these data be collected regularly and responsibly (see Responsible Data, p. 7), but they must also be inclusive and accessible to children themselves. This means involving children in data work – e.g., through informed consent, qualitative methodologies and participatory research methods – and engaging children to identify and explore the issues most relevant to their lives and well-being.

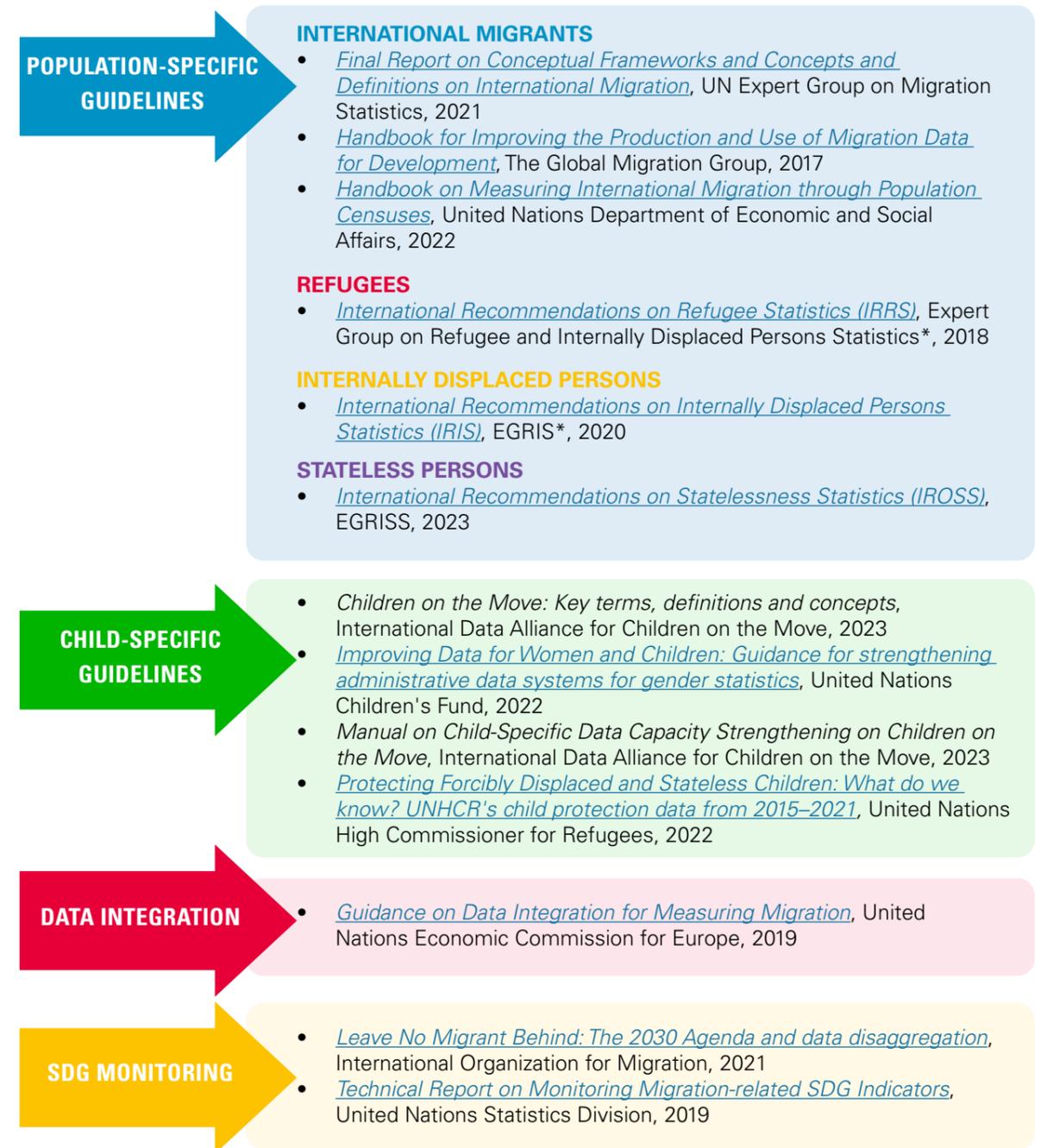
The **Migration Youth and Children Platform (MYCP)**, a self-organized space for children and youth to engage in migration policy processes and an IDAC partner, recognizes the power of

data to bring about positive change in children's lives and communities. MYCP actively advocates for the involvement of children and youth in data collection as a means to uphold their rights and bring attention to the realities they face.

As a MYCP member noted, "When we actively engage people, especially those who are marginalized and/or silenced, the data collection process has the capacity to enhance a population's agency and communication skills. ...By getting children and youth involved, for example, in the design process, the data being collected by governments should be interpreted in a way that better reflects the realities of their lives. This also means that whatever action comes out of it, it should be of greater benefit to young people and their communities."

BOX 1 Key documents and guidelines relevant to data on children on the move

To address the limitations of current data on migrant and displaced populations and lack of standardized data collection practices, a variety of guidance documents have been produced that offer governments and international organizations technical recommendations for improving relevant data sources and utilizing them more strategically. The documents listed below play a pivotal role in strengthening national statistical systems not only as a means to collect data on children on the move, but also as a whole.



* Now known as the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS) after the group's mandate was extended to include statelessness in 2021

Responsible data



Efforts to improve the availability of data on migrant and displaced children must be conducted using an age-sensitive and rights-centric approach, ensuring the Convention on the Rights of the Child is upheld. In today's complex digital data ecosystem, special precautions must be taken when it comes to handling data on children, who are inherently more vulnerable than adults and less able to understand the risks and long-term implications of data collection.⁵ When collecting data on children on the move, a particularly marginalized group of children, data collectors and users must handle data responsibly and ethically while always upholding the best interest of the child.

There are several key frameworks that guide responsible data collection relevant for children

on the move. They include the [Principles for Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action](#),⁶ published by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), and the [Responsible Data for Children \(RD4C\)](#) set of principles, practices and tools (see Box 2).

While these frameworks provide important guidelines for responsible data use, the international community still lacks comprehensive global governance on handling data responsibly for children. UNICEF's manifesto, *The Case for Better Governance of Children's Data*, calls for a new global data governance model that helps ensure that data on children can be leveraged for social good without putting their privacy, protection or well-being at risk.⁷



BOX 2

RD4C: 7 principles to uphold children's rights for data collectors

The [Responsible Data for Children \(RD4C\)](#) initiative is led by UNICEF in partnership with The GovLab at New York University. RD4C has produced a set of principles, practices and tools to promote the responsible handling of data for and about children. Given the unique risks that children face in today's age of 'datafication', it is critical that data collectors handle data on all children carefully and responsibly.

RD4C presents seven principles to uphold children's rights throughout all stages of the data collection cycle. The principles stress the importance of recognizing children's distinct needs and requirements; identifying legitimate purposes for data collected on children and ensuring there is a potential benefit to the child; actively engaging children, caregivers and other relevant stakeholders throughout all stages of data collection; and verifying that children and/or their caregivers have consented to data use and understand how their data will be collected and utilized.

RD4C provides user-friendly strategies for organizations and practitioners to put these seven principles into practice. For example, the tools develop an awareness of the breadth of data users generate and the network of stakeholders involved, while also providing a quick assessment of initiatives or systems that handle data in a manner that breaks with the principles. These tools ensure that the benefits of the data collection processes outweigh identified risks and that children and their needs are at the centre of data collection efforts.

When collecting data from any source discussed in this brief, the RD4C principles and steps provide a vital road map for the necessary duty of care to migrant and displaced children, a population in need of protection with the highest ethical standards.

Professionally accountable

Prevention of harms across the data life cycle

Participatory

People-centric

Proportional

Purpose-driven

Protective of children's rights

How are data and statistics on children on the move produced?

Governments are the leading producers of official statistics, with national statistical offices typically in charge of collecting and producing these data, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.⁸ However, when it comes to data and statistics on migration and displacement, the capacity of national governments and statistical offices can vary greatly, as does the availability and quality of data reported to concerned regional and international authorities, such as the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

These gaps in capacity are even more pronounced when it comes to collecting and producing data on migrant and displaced children specifically, and some national statistical offices may not yet be

sensitized to the need for these data to include children or may lack the resources to collect this information. Additional complications may be introduced when collecting data on children on the move in emergency and other humanitarian situations.

This section discusses the three major sources of official statistics on children on the move: **census data**, **sample survey data** and **administrative data**. **Alternative data sources**, including big data and operational or programmatic data, are also described; these play an important role in bridging data gaps and overcoming the limitations of data collected on children on the move through official statistics.



Census data



A **census** is a survey undertaken by governments to count the number of residents in a country and measure their spatial distribution and key demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. International bodies have been encouraging countries to conduct population and housing

censuses since the end of the nineteenth century, when they were officially recommended by the International Statistical Congress. An overwhelming majority of countries in the world conduct population and housing censuses at least once every 10 years.⁹

Key attributes

- Main source of official statistics
- Universal coverage
- Collect economic and demographic information
- Conducted at least once every 10 years
- Relative uniformity between countries
- Collect foundational migration-related data

A **population census** refers to surveys that collect economic and social data on all persons in a country at a specified period of time, whereas a **housing census** refers to surveys that collect data on the number and conditions of all housing units within a country at a specified period of time. These two types of censuses are closely linked and many countries carry out both at the same time.¹⁰

Censuses typically collect foundational migration-related data and are the most commonly available source of migration statistics to date. An individual census is most often used to measure migrant stock – or the total number of international migrants present in a given country at a particular point in time.¹¹ Data from two or more successive censuses can be used to measure net migration and long-term migration trends.¹²

A defining feature and key advantage of censuses is their universal coverage – censuses aim to collect substantial economic and demographic information on all residents within a country, including migrants.¹³ Capturing these demographic data allows for the specific identification of migrant and refugee child populations, while economic information on migrant families can highlight basic information about the potential needs and vulnerabilities of children in those households.

Census data as a source for migration statistics offer greater uniformity in the data collected as compared to other sources. This is in part due to international efforts to publish guidelines and promote the standardization of census questions. For instance, since 1958, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) has produced a regularly updated handbook, *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*.¹⁴ More recently, in 2022, UNSD published an updated [Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses](#), which provides specific guidance on measuring international migration trends through censuses.

Limitations

- Long interval between censuses does not produce timely data
- Costly to produce
- Limited space for migration-related questions
- Some groups of children on the move, such as migrants in irregular situations, may be excluded

CENSUS DATA: CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Because they are usually produced every 10 years, censuses do not provide timely data on migration trends. More recent or sudden migratory movements, such as migration and displacement in response to conflict, violence or disasters, are especially difficult to measure through census data. As only a limited number of questions can be asked in census surveys, they typically do not cover information related to the causes and consequences of migration and displacement nor the integration experiences and needs of children on the move. Migrants in irregular situations may not be counted, as these migrants may be reluctant to respond to census surveys out of fear of detection and deportation.¹⁵

Since many refugee populations meet the statistical definition of international migrant, they may be counted in migration-related international census questions (see p. 12).¹⁶ In practice, however, not all refugees are enumerated in censuses: In some cases, for instance, countries exclude refugees living in camp settings from their censuses. Even when refugees are included in census counts, few countries currently include questions that directly identify refugee populations.¹⁷ Similarly, while internally displaced persons are included in census data collected on the overall resident population, questions that can be used to identify internally displaced persons as a separate group are typically missing from these surveys. IRRS and IRIS provide guidance on how countries can collect more information specific to these displaced populations during census rounds (see p. 6).

Finally, given their large scale, censuses are costly and require significant budgeting, planning and resource mobilization. This can be particularly challenging for States impacted by conflict and instability – situations that often force the

displacement of children – where recent, reliable demographic data may be missing or incomplete.¹⁸ The high costs and universal character of censuses limit the number of migration- and displacement-relevant questions that can be included. Significant groups of the most vulnerable migrant and displaced children are thus at risk of being excluded in these circumstances.

Box 3 explores recommendations for the inclusion of specific migration-related questions in censuses and the extent to which these are being applied around the world. Notably, there are still significant gaps in the inclusion of the three core recommended migration-related questions in national censuses

and even wider gaps in the disaggregation of international migration census data by age.



BOX 3

Migration-related questions in national censuses

The third revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*, published in 2017, recommends that census surveys address three core topics to best capture international migrant populations:

1. Country of birth
2. Country of citizenship
3. Year of arrival in country for foreign-born populations¹⁹

In addition to these core metrics, UNSD's *Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses* recommends governments consider including additional migration-related questions, such as:

- Mode of citizenship acquisition
- Country of birth of parents
- Country of previous or next residence
- Reason for migration
- Ethnicity
- Language spoken in home of immigrant²⁰

These additional questions can provide critical details about migrant children and their potential needs. However, in many countries, even the core migration questions on international migration have not yet been included in their censuses. An analysis of the 2010 census round found that of the 149 countries for which data were available, 87 per cent integrated a question on country of birth yet only 66 per cent asked about both country of birth and country of citizenship and just 34 per cent asked all three core questions.^{21, 22}

Since the 2010 census round, these gaps and inconsistencies have continued: While 87 per cent of countries have at least one source of data on international migrants, only 71 per cent have reported age-disaggregated data on international migrants.²³ The availability of migration-related data remains particularly scarce in some regions: For instance, in the Central and Southern Asia region, 43 per cent of countries have not published updated international migration data since the 2010 census round and 57 per cent have not generated updated statistics on the age of international migrants.²⁴



Greater investments must be made in high-quality censuses that include the three core questions on international migration and that produce data that can be disaggregated by age, sex and migratory status, at a minimum.

Sample survey data



Data on migrant populations can also be collected through **sample surveys**, for which only a portion of the population is included. Two common types of surveys that can capture data on international migrant populations are **household surveys**,

including specialized surveys that focus on migrants, and **passenger surveys** administered at the border.²⁵ Given their narrower scope, sample surveys are considerably less costly to carry out than national censuses.

Key attributes

- Only a sample of the population is included
- Less costly than censuses
- Can target specific groups of children on the move
- Can capture more in-depth information on migrant and displaced children

Information on the integration experiences of migrants, such as their health, employment, income and living standards, can be captured in a range of sample household surveys, like the Labour Force Surveys (International Labour Organization), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) (UNICEF), Demographic and Health Surveys (United States Agency for International Development (USAID)) and the Living Standards Measurement Study (World Bank).²⁶ For instance, the most recent iteration of UNICEF's [MICS](#) (MICS 7) includes questions specific to refugee children. Because these surveys are regularly conducted in many countries, adding a few questions related to migration can be an opportunity for countries to gather pertinent information on migrant and displaced populations without requiring substantial additional resources.²⁷ However, it can be difficult to capture representative samples of migrant and refugee populations through these surveys, as discussed on p. 15.

Some sample surveys specifically focus on migrant and displaced populations. These specialized migration surveys have the advantage of being able to ascertain more detailed information on the causes and consequences of migration and target particular populations or groups of interest. They can also be useful for revealing more in-depth information about migrants' beliefs, attitudes, identity, motivations, behaviours and cultural integration experiences for targeted populations of interest, including children on the move.²⁸ However, these surveys are typically conducted less frequently and require additional funding and resources.

The **Italian National Institute of Statistics** has carried out surveys specifically focusing on the integration experiences of first- and second-generation immigrant children and youth, comparing their experiences to those of non-immigrant Italian national children and youth.²⁹ In 2008, the **Spanish National Institute of Statistics** carried out an ambitious survey targeting over 15,000 foreign-born households, with age-disaggregated data and questions specific to children and their integration experiences.³⁰ From the Field: Colombia (see p. 15) describes how a Quality of Life survey conducted

Limitations

- Difficult to capture representative sample of migrant and displaced children
- Specialized migration and displacement surveys are conducted less frequently and can be expensive

in Colombia broadened understanding of the integration experiences of Venezuelan migrants; the survey included age-disaggregated data and particular questions related to children.

In addition to sample household surveys, some countries also conduct passenger surveys, which directly target persons who cross or are about to cross international borders. These surveys are designed to sample a travel route or port within a given time period by systematically interviewing travellers. This method for identifying international migrants can be challenging given the sheer volume of international travel, the majority of which is unrelated to a change in residence. However, some countries, such as the **United Kingdom**, **Sri Lanka** and the **Republic of Korea** have successfully used passenger surveys to identify international migrants.³¹



FROM THE FIELD: Colombia uses household surveys to capture the needs of Venezuelan migrant children

At the end of 2020, there were over 1.7 million Venezuelans living in Colombia. Approximately 24 per cent of this population were children and 37 per cent were youth.³² In order to gather more data on the characteristics, needs and experiences of Venezuelans residing in Colombia, the Venezuelan Migration Project, in partnership with USAID, the Inter-American Development Bank, ACDI/VOCA, the Coalition for Venezuela and the Colombian Ministry of Health and Social Protection, carried out the [Survey on the Quality of Life and Integration of Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia](#) in 2020.³³

With responses from over 1,600 households representing over 7,000 individuals throughout the country, this survey provides a wealth of information on a range of topics impacting Venezuelan migrants, including their access to services, living conditions, well-being, health, employment, education, reasons for migration, experiences with family reunification, discrimination and levels of multidimensional poverty. The survey results also offer in-depth sociodemographic, age-disaggregated data on individuals in each household and questions specific to experiences of children, particularly in the area of education.³⁴



Colombia's initiative demonstrates the potential for common household surveys to generate in-depth information about the experiences and needs of children on the move in host communities. It also exemplifies how broad, multi-stakeholder partnerships can effectively bring together resources and capacity to carry out data collection and analysis on targeted groups of vulnerable migrants.

SAMPLE SURVEY DATA: CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Collecting survey data on children on the move entails significant challenges. First, given the usually relatively low proportion of migrant and displaced persons living in a host population, it can be difficult to capture a large enough sample size for meaningful analysis and disaggregation of data on migrant populations in general. Children on the move make up an even smaller portion of the population, are typically highly dispersed within the country and are often highly mobile, making obtaining a representative sample even more challenging.

In addition, creating a representative sample of migrant and displaced populations often requires the use of registration data, such as registers of migrants or refugees, which may not always be accessible. Finally, surveys that directly involve children as responders require informed consent from parents and legal guardians, which can further increase the complexity and time required to carry out surveys that specifically target children on the move (see Responsible Data, p. 7).

IDEAS: A tool to map national data sources

To help countries build their national data systems, UNICEF, IOM, UNHCR, UNSD and UNESCAP joined forces to develop the [Integrated Data Ecosystem Assessment and Strengthening \(IDEAS\)](#) tool. IDEAS aims to strengthen national data capacities and support countries in fulfilling their commitment to realize the promise of the 2030 Agenda, as well as to operationalize the GCM and the GCR. Countries that take advantage of the initiative – which to date include Thailand and Jordan – comprehensively map existing data sources – e.g., censuses, surveys, administrative data sources and alternative data sources – and identify the extent to which they capture migration and displacement data relevant to children. Using this information, countries are able to identify gaps and good practices and design strategies to sustainably enhance the collection, analysis and use of high-quality, timely and disaggregated data on children on the move.

Administrative data



Administrative data refer to data collected by government ministries, departments or agencies for administrative purposes typically related to legal or executive functions, such as authorizations,

registrations, permits and tax collection.³⁵ Although these data are not collected for statistical purposes, they can be used to help understand the needs or experiences of a given population.

Key attributes

- Collected to support administrative processes
- Typically collected by government agencies
- Can be used to measure stocks and flows of migrant and displaced populations
- Data collected on an ongoing basis

Major categories of administrative data include:

ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTERS

These registration systems continually collect data on individuals and families for administrative purposes. There are **three main sources of administrative registers used to generate statistics on migration**.

Population registers

Population registers are individualized data systems that regularly collect information on the size and characteristics of the resident population within a country.³⁶ While primarily used for planning, budgeting and taxation purposes, they can also be used to estimate international migrant stocks and flows and shed light on the integration experiences of migrant and displaced populations, such as their labour status or education level.³⁷

The effectiveness of population registers as a source for measuring international migration statistics depends on the registration rules in a country and the extent to which registration rules are followed.³⁸ UNSD notes that in cases where registration rules are generally followed, "...population registers offer one of the best sources of comprehensive statistics on international migration."³⁹

Registers of foreigners

Registers of foreigners are similar to population registers, but only include information on foreigners who are legal residents of a country. Similar to population registers, the particular rules for registration and deregistration and level of compliance with those rules impact the effectiveness of these registers as a data source for measuring international migration.⁴⁰

Limitations

- Quality of data depends on level of compliance with administrative rules
- Administrative rules can vary within and between countries
- Legal obstacles may prevent sharing and use of data
- Databases and data processes across agencies may not be compatible
- Refer to administrative records rather than individuals

Registers of asylum-seekers

Some countries also set up registers of asylum-seekers to monitor the status of asylum cases over time. Depending on the ability of countries to successfully track the entry and departure of asylum-seekers along with the status of their applications, these registers can be used to estimate the stock of asylum-seekers at a given time and the inflow of asylum-seekers within a given time period.⁴¹

BORDER CROSSING DATA

Border crossing data are collected at ports of entry and departure into and out of a country. They may refer to legal documents or statistical forms – such as embarkation and disembarkation cards – that passengers complete when arriving to and departing from a country. Although border crossing data have the advantage of reflecting timely information on the movement of people and their modes of transportation, it may be challenging to collect consistent, accurate estimates of migration flows using these data due to the large group of people travelling through ports and the difficulty verifying passenger forms.⁴²





registration permits granted in a given year may capture the number of households that applied for permits rather than individuals living in those households – and children, in particular, may be invisible in these statistics.⁴³ Administrative data are also unlikely to capture information on migrant children in irregular situations, as they reside in a host country outside of legal channels.⁴⁴

Despite these limitations, many have advocated for improving the availability and use of administrative data on migrant populations for statistical purposes.⁴⁵ This begins by improving cooperation and coordination across data producers within a system

– with national statistical offices taking a lead role – given that administrative records on migrant populations may sit within various agencies and ministries. Data integration can be particularly useful in leveraging disparate sources of administrative data to shed light on the experiences of migrant children, as described on p. 21–22.

Employing a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach can be highly effective in leveraging administrative data sources, as illustrated in the box below, From the Field: Republic of Moldova.

OTHER SOURCES OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

While the specific types of administrative data collected by individual countries will vary, a wide range of administrative data sources can be used to supplement censuses and sample survey data and provide more details on migrant and displaced populations. Sources with potential relevance for migration statistics include registers related to:

- Resident permits
- Work permits
- Study permits
- Asylum applications
- Records of taxes and social security
- Consular records
- Overseas voters records
- Deportations
- Insurance schemes for those working abroad
- Naturalization (citizenship acquisition)
- Visa applications

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA: CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Administrative data have the advantage of being customarily collected by various administrative bodies; hence, there are no substantial additional costs involved for the purpose of measuring migration. But challenges do exist in utilizing these data to produce accurate migration statistics. Administrative rules and systems vary significantly across countries – therefore, data collected from these sources may not be comparable between or within countries. Legal obstacles may prevent the sharing of personal data collected in administrative records, even between government agencies within the same country, such as the ministry of education and national statistical office.

Another drawback to using administrative sources for statistical purposes is that administrative data typically refer to administrative records rather than to individuals. For instance, the number of

FROM THE FIELD: Strategic use of administrative data for migration estimates in the Republic of Moldova

In 2019, the National Bureau of Statistics in the Republic of Moldova embarked on a project to make better use of administrative data for official statistics, including data on migrant populations. The goal of the initiative is to create a platform to exchange administrative data sources in a timely manner while reducing costs and providing more accurate, timely and detailed estimates of populations and subpopulations, including children on the move.⁴⁶

Since the project launch, the statistical office has assessed the quality of five administrative data sources, developed a legal framework to enable access to data contained in administrative registers and established the **Population and Migration Statistics Information System**, a platform built for the sharing and use of administrative data on migrant populations in official statistics.⁴⁷



Great progress can be made when national statistical offices take a leading role in coordinating government sectors to enhance data systems so that administrative data, including data on migrant and displaced children, can be leveraged for analysis and decision-making.

BOX
4

Data integration

UNECE defines data integration as: “a statistical activity on two or more data sets resulting in a single enlarged and/or higher quality data set.”⁴⁸ Most of the data sources discussed in this brief – censuses, sample surveys, administrative data and many alternative data sources – can be integrated with one another in many possible combinations.

Data integration can be a useful tool for enhancing the quality or scale of migration data at a national level and shedding light on the experiences of children. It can help capture the needs and experiences of migrant and displaced children, information not typically systematically collected in a single source. It can also facilitate disaggregation of a given data set, including disaggregation by age, which is crucial for identifying children on the move.⁴⁹ National statistical offices play a key role in facilitating the coordination and integration of these data.

Two key types of data integration:⁵⁰

- 1. Micro-data integration:** refers to the integration of data based on the linkage of individual records. Personal identification numbers (PINs) are the most common identifiers used to match up individual records related to migrant populations. If PINs are unavailable, statistical matching can be used.
- 2. Macro-data integration:** refers to the integration of data based on aggregates of individual-level records. This may be used when there are privacy concerns sharing data on individual records, particularly between countries.

UNICEF’s *Guidance Note on Strengthening Administrative Data for Gender Statistics* emphasizes the crucial role of cross-sectoral collaboration to support a “holistic approach to data for planning, innovation and service provision.”⁵¹ A similar approach is needed to enhance data specific to migrant and displaced children. In both cases, integrating administrative data into larger data ecosystems can strengthen the capacity of national statistical systems as a whole, not just data related to specific groups.



FROM THE FIELD: Georgia, Norway and the United States integrate data to cost-efficiently capture the numbers and experiences of children on the move

The State Commission on Migration Issues of **Georgia** established the **Unified Migration Data Analytical System (UMAS)** in 2014, a working group dedicated to improving data quality and management in the field of migration. UMAS consists of experts across nine intergovernmental agencies that have a role in generating data on migrant populations. Through this coordinated structure, the working group is integrating various data sources of migration-related data, including data from residence permits, visas, enrolment in educational institutions, international protection and tax data. This initiative demonstrates the critical role that effective intergovernmental coordination plays in carrying out data integration projects related to migration and displacement while enhancing data systems as a whole.⁵²

An initiative carried out by **Statistics Norway** merged data from disparate administrative data sources on unaccompanied children to better understand their needs and integration experiences. The national statistical office combined data from immigration authorities and administrative registers to create a robust database with information on the integration experiences of these children over time, including data on their access to education, income, employment and child welfare services. These data are crucial to informing policies and programmes to better support and empower this group of children.⁵³

The **United States Census Bureau** combined international flight data with data from two household surveys – the American Community Survey and the Puerto Rico Community Survey – to measure the effect of Hurricane Maria on movement between the United States and Puerto Rico. While the two household surveys are used to measure migration patterns annually, they do not register sudden mass movements of people. Combining these data with international flight data allowed the Census Bureau to generate more timely estimates of net migration rates following the hurricane. Demographic information was utilized from the household surveys to ensure the new estimates could be disaggregated by age and sex.⁵⁴



Efforts undertaken in Georgia, Norway and the United States provide concrete examples of how data integration can be a particularly effective strategy for identifying children on the move in existing data sets and expanding what is known about their needs and experiences. Cross-sectoral collaboration is a crucial component to the success of these initiatives.

Alternative data sources



Several **alternative sources of data** are being explored and used to produce migration and displacement-related data. This brief focuses on two types of these data sources

– **big data** and **operational or programmatic data** – and describes their potential to provide key information on children on the move.

BIG DATA

Key attributes

- Often generated through the use of technological devices
- Automatically generated and stored in real time
- Typically owned by private companies
- Particularly useful in humanitarian and emergency contexts

Big data refer to data that are automatically generated and stored in real-time through the use of mobile phones, social media, internet platforms and applications, and digital sensors and meters, such as satellites. Private companies, such as mobile phone operators or providers of social media platforms, usually own these data.⁵⁵ Big data are often described using the three “Vs”: **volume**, or the unprecedented amount of data automatically generated through technological devices; **velocity**, or the real-time speed at which data are generated; and **variety**, or the diversity of types of information being collected, including both structured data, such as payment records, and unstructured data, such as social media content.⁵⁶

As the development and use of technology expand globally, an unprecedented amount of complex real-time data are being generated on a substantial portion of the global population, including migrants and displaced persons. For instance, there are currently over 7 billion phone subscriptions globally, including 5 billion in developing countries,⁵⁷ and 4.9 billion internet users globally.⁵⁸

The unique nature of these data presents an opportunity to overcome some of the limitations of other migration-related data sources discussed in this brief: These data are generated in real time and can inform policy and programme responses in a timelier manner, particularly in emergency settings that lead to displacement; they are produced automatically and can be a relatively cheap alternative to costlier data collection processes; and they can cover hard-to-reach populations, such as migrants in irregular situations, who may easily be left out of censuses, sample surveys and sources of administrative data.⁵⁹ These data sources offer quick and nimble approaches to collecting data on mobile populations, which can be particularly useful for tracking displacement in emergency and humanitarian contexts, such as the ongoing war in Ukraine.⁶⁰

Limitations

- Ethical and privacy challenges
- Selection bias: Data not typically statistically representative
- May leave out vulnerable groups of children on the move with less access to technology

Common sources of big data that can potentially be leveraged for measuring migration trends can be grouped into three categories:

Mobile-phone-based data

These data are captured through call detail records (CDRs), which track the approximate location of a subscriber every time they make or receive a phone call, based on the nearest cellphone tower location. Phone companies automatically collect this information and it is stored as an anonymized digital record every time a call is made.⁶¹ Using this location data, CDRs can track the movement patterns of subscribers over time.

CDRs are especially helpful for measuring internal migration patterns and capturing sudden migratory movements in real time. Given the difficulties in tracking migration flows in emergency settings, CDRs can be a useful tool for measuring internal displacement following disasters. The advantages of CDRs are that they cover a large population, they can track otherwise hard-to-reach populations and the information is produced automatically, in real time.

However, CDR data are not typically representative of entire populations, and it is the most vulnerable groups, such as poorer women and children, who tend to be the least represented in these data sets.⁶² Using CDRs to track international mobility can also be more challenging and less reliable, as subscribers may switch services when they cross international borders. That said, CDR data have been used in combination with other data sources, including satellite data, census statistics and geolocated social media data, to track international migration patterns.⁶³

Internet-based data

Internet-based sources can cover a range of data passively collected based on internet activity. This can include:



- **Anonymized search records:** These records capture the frequency of particular terms that people may search. In some contexts, they have been used to estimate migration trends by examining the frequency by which a particular country is searched in Google. A challenge of this method is that search terms may vary by country and language and this approach may be hard to scale up or replicate in different contexts.⁶⁴
- **Internet Protocol (IP) address records:** Data on the IP addresses from which emails are sent or from which websites are repeatedly logged into can be used to track the location of individuals over time, as IP addresses typically correspond to an individual's physical location. Users' self-reported information can sometimes allow for the disaggregation of data by age and sex.⁶⁵
- **Social media:** Data produced from social media can offer a wide range of information potentially relevant for migration. Social media logins can be used to track users' locations and users often voluntarily tag their geographic location in a post or photo, which can be used to measure individuals' movements over time. Social media data can also be used to produce a sort of real-time census of a given population at a certain point in time. For instance, the Facebook advertising platform collects data

on the self-reported characteristics of users, including their age, sex, home country, current country of residence, educational background, occupation and interests.⁶⁶ These data have the potential to identify migrant populations and their demographic characteristics throughout the world. Finally, the content produced on social media itself can shed light on key migration-related topics. Interactions on social media have been analysed to better understand how transnational networks are formed and how they may further incentivize migration. Public conversations on social media have also been used to understand public attitudes toward immigration.⁶⁷

Sensor-based data

Another type of big data are those collected through digital sensors or meters. This includes earth observation data produced through satellite imagery. Satellite imagery data has been used to measure changes in populations over time, such as the number of tents, rooftops or population in a certain locality. Some governments and aid organizations have used satellite imagery to monitor the number of refugee tents and their sizes to estimate the number of refugees in a given area and target aid accordingly.⁶⁸ Satellite data have also been used to improve coordination and logistics of aid as seen in From the Field: Uganda, on the next page.⁶⁹

FROM THE FIELD: Mapping community needs with satellite imagery in Uganda

The Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT) creates open map data in areas that are vulnerable and where data are scarce. Since 2015, HOT has been working in Uganda, which hosts over 1.4 million refugees, and using satellite imagery to map buildings, roads and facilities in refugee communities. Efforts are collaborative, with HOT liaising with refugee communities to combine open-source technical tools and generate comprehensive data on the location of infrastructure and services where refugee communities reside.⁷⁰

Baseline maps have been created that can be used by government agencies and organizations to better design and implement policies and programmes to support refugees. The project also specifically collected data on the geolocation of schools, their access to water and electricity and the number of students and teachers attending school.⁷¹



Innovation is important when it comes to stronger data on migrant and displaced child populations: through smart and strategic use of alternative data sources and, vitally, through direct partnerships with stakeholder communities themselves.

BIG DATA: CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

There are immense challenges involved in the use of big data for tracking migrant and displaced populations. First, there are major ethical and privacy concerns: Data generated from mobile phone users and through internet-based platforms are often collected without users' knowledge or consent. In the context of migration, there is potential for governments to use big data to surveil population movements, which may threaten migrants' fundamental human rights and freedoms.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a [Human Rights Watch investigation](#) found that 49 governments endorsed education technology that tracked children's online activity outside of the online learning classroom and violated children's privacy and other rights.⁷² In the United States, for instance, this included the tracking of immigrant children or children of immigrants whose parents were undergoing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement hearings.⁷³

Researchers and policymakers using any source of big data need to take careful steps to guarantee privacy and confidentiality for migrant and displaced populations, particularly children (see Responsible Data, p. 7).⁷⁴ Moreover, international regulatory and legislative frameworks are urgently needed for the

collection, analysis and sharing of big data with special protections for children.⁷⁵

There are also methodological issues in the use of big data for migration research. Notably, there is inherent selection bias of users of mobile phones and internet-based platforms that may leave out critical groups of vulnerable migrants. For instance, the so-called digital divide has been well documented between regions, countries, income levels and the sexes. Globally, 37 per cent of the world's population – 2.9 billion people – are still offline and only one third of the population in Africa uses the internet.⁷⁶ Internet-based data sources, in particular, may not be representative of entire populations and may explicitly leave out some of the most vulnerable groups of children on the move urgently in need of protection.



OPERATIONAL DATA

Key attributes

- Collected to inform and monitor programming
- Typically collected by international organizations, NGOs and civil society organizations
- Can provide data on migrant and displaced children often not captured in traditional data sources
- Can be produced in real time or more quickly than traditional data collection methods

Operational data are collected to inform and monitor programming, often by international organizations, NGOs or civil society organizations. Although these data are not collected for statistical purposes and thus have inherent limitations, some operational data can help bridge major gaps in statistical data on migrant and displaced populations, including children on the move.⁷⁷

Several IDAC members, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) and IMPACT Initiatives, collect operational data relevant for children on the move. Examples of large-scale operational data systems that operate across multiple countries and contexts and regularly publish data on migrant and displaced populations include:

Displacement Tracking Matrix

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) was established in 2004 to monitor, track and conduct needs assessments of displaced populations during crises. DTM has four major components: mobility tracking, which systematically tracks the mobility and needs of those in need of assistance; flow monitoring, which tracks flows of populations at points of origin, transit and destination; registration, which includes data on vulnerable individuals and households targeted for assistance and programming; and surveys, which gather sample-specific data within a given population of interest.⁷⁸

Thematic surveys conducted by DTM offer a comprehensive analysis of specific topics, such as various socioeconomic and environmental aspects, giving an extensive understanding of the

Limitations

- Not subject to same rigour and validation as official statistics
- Not statistically representative of migrant and displaced populations



intricate issues facing people on the move. DTM has collected data in more than 80 countries in situations of conflict, natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies. Indicator data for children are typically disaggregated by age and sex and DTM has produced specific thematic reports on migrant and refugee children.⁷⁹ Through these mechanisms, DTM data shed light on a range of cross-cutting issues impacting migrant populations, thus generating information on both the number of migrants in various locations and also their needs, experiences and beliefs.

4Mi

The Mixed Migration Centre's 4Mi data collection platform has a large network of field enumerators working along mixed migration routes in over 15 countries. Enumerators are typically migrants and refugees themselves, who can help facilitate a sense of trust between interviewers and respondents and increase access to harder-to-reach populations, like irregular migrants. On a monthly basis, 4Mi collects over 1,000 interviews with migrants and refugees who are on the move or have recently arrived in their destinations. Enumerators conduct in-depth, standardized surveys, making data comparable across contexts within the 4Mi platform. Data collected include migrant profiles, reason for migration, protection risks, and experiences along the journey and in countries of destination. Standard 4Mi interviews are conducted with adults and include questions about children. In addition, 4Mi has conducted targeted child-specific projects, where children and youth on the move have been interviewed.⁸⁰

REACH

REACH is a joint initiative between ACTED, IMPACT Initiatives and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT) that aims to improve data collection, management and analysis in crisis contexts.⁸¹ REACH works in over 20 countries and generates data through field staff that are publicly available on its resource hub. These include rapid assessments in disaster contexts and large-scale multi-sectoral or sector-specific assessments.⁸² Assessments typically provide both age- and sex-disaggregated data. REACH has also conducted specific assessments focused on children, such as a joint study undertaken in partnership with UNICEF, which examined the experiences and needs of children on the move in Italy and Greece.⁸³



OPERATIONAL DATA: CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Operational data are typically not statistically representative. For instance, both DTM and 4Mi selectively choose locations to collect data, such as border crossings and transit hubs, which are not representative of entire countries. They also choose specific time periods based on high concentrations of mobility and target specific respondents, meaning individuals are not randomly sampled within a population.⁸⁴ Taking into account these limitations, however, operational data may be used to complement other data sources, or provide a baseline of information on migrant and displaced populations where no other information is available.

FROM THE FIELD: Save the Children's Predictive Displacement Initiative

Data collected in humanitarian contexts are often poor quality, ad hoc and incomplete. Although children make up over half of the world's forcibly displaced persons, humanitarian data are too often 'child blind' – that is, they do not reflect the numbers, needs and situations of children.⁸⁵

To respond to these immense data gaps and support humanitarian organizations and policymakers better prepare for migration and displacement crises, the Migration and Displacement Initiative (MDI) at Save the Children has launched the Predictive Displacement project. It uses predictive analytics

to leverage existing data sources, including big data, to make projections about future trends and events. Save the Children has developed models to predict the core characteristics of displacement crises – including the scale, geography and demographics of those being displaced. MDI is currently working to expand its modelling to include predictions about climate change-related migration and displacement, in addition to displacement due to conflict. Another key component of the project includes the development of an age- and gender-disaggregation methodology for displaced populations.⁸⁶



Save the Children's Predictive Displacement project demonstrates how alternative data sources can be used and analysed responsibly to bridge gaps in the humanitarian data sector, and to better understand, prepare for and respond to the needs of displaced children now and in the future.

A continued call to action

Regular, timely and accurate data are urgently needed to protect children on the move – but as this publication points out, there are many challenges involved in producing and improving these data. The International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) was formed to address these challenges strategically and efficiently. IDAC is continuing the [call to action](#) for countries, regions and international organizations to invest in, improve and expand the production of data on children on the move. The following **five action points** can help overcome the limitations of some of the data sources discussed in this brief while also taking advantage of the opportunities they present.

Key actions for better data for migrant and displaced children

1. Disaggregate data by age, sex and migratory status:

Regardless of the data source or tool, disaggregating data by age, sex and migratory status is crucial to capturing better information on children on the move.

2. Collect data on key issues related to children on the move:

Given the large gaps in data on the experiences of this population, the data sources discussed in this brief can be leveraged to gain a better understanding of key issues impacting migrant and displaced children, such as their access to health, education and shelter and their child protection needs.

3. Make better use of existing data, and share the data:

Data sources that generate data on children on the move – including administrative data, big data and operational data – are often not utilized or shared. Efforts should be made to make strategic use of these data to inform policymaking and programming to protect migrant and displaced children, while taking precautions to protect children and their families' privacy and rights.

4. Coordinate data collection efforts within countries and across borders:

Given the many existing sources of data on children on the move, improved coordination between data collectors and users can lead to better utilization of data for policymaking and programming. Data integration – or the combining of multiple sources of data – has great potential to uncover key elements of the experiences of children on



the move. Coordinating data collection efforts using a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach within and between countries is critical to integrating otherwise disparate sources of data on migrant and displaced children.

5. Make special efforts to collect and analyse data on children:

While reliable, timely and accurate data on migrant and displaced populations as a whole are limited, those on children on the move are even more scarce. Some countries are already making special efforts to collect and analyse data on vulnerable groups of migrant and displaced children. But more initiatives are urgently needed to understand the particular challenges, needs and risks that children on the move face in a constantly changing world.

BOX 5

Data partnerships and collaboration: The IDAC case

IDAC brings key data actors and policymakers at the intersection of child protection, migration, displacement, human mobility and development to the table. The alliance pools the individual resources and expertise of its diverse members to drive sustainable change and fosters the exchange of information, knowledge, experiences and good practices.

IDAC's main objective is to improve data and statistics for children on the move to support evidence-based policymaking that protects and empowers them. It also ensures the needs and voices of children are heard in discussions concerning statistical work – both by working directly with youth and by raising the concerns of migrant and displaced children at national, regional and global forums.

Specifically, IDAC seeks to:

1. Strengthen national data systems and capacities
2. Promote and establish collaboration and innovation around child-specific data work
3. Improve child-specific data visibility, availability, accessibility and usability

Through peer-learning and co-creating solutions, IDAC promotes a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to achieve better data for children on the move. IDAC was cited in the Secretary-General's report to the 77th UN General Assembly as a selected practice for improving migration statistics. The progress made by IDAC to date and its long-term goals are intimately tied to sustained partnerships and investments in data work.



Annex.

Key databases relevant for children on the move



Countries are the primary producers of data and statistics on migrant and displaced populations. Data from national sources are compiled by many international and regional organizations to produce publicly available estimates, derived from both the traditional and alternative data sources discussed in this brief. The following table provides a guide to key international databases that compile and publish data on migrant and displaced populations and that include data specific to migrant and displaced children.

These databases are important public resources that policymakers, international organizations, governments and other decision-makers can consult to ensure actions taken to uphold the rights of migrant and displaced children are guided by quality evidence.

In the following table, the databases are divided into three broad categories:

1. Core databases that report global stock and flow data on different groups of children on the move
2. Databases that report migration and

displacement data particular to a specific region or group of countries

3. Cross-cutting thematic data hubs that produce a variety of data about different groups of children on the move

Information contained in each database is summarized, including the main area of focus, key populations covered, disaggregation dimensions, age-disaggregation groups, data sources, and years for which data are available.

This overview acts as an important reference point for moving data collection efforts forward with the rights of children in mind. It captures the wide range of thematic focuses in today's data landscape on migrant and displaced populations, while also illustrating the need for a greater focus on child-sensitive data that can be disaggregated, at minimum, by age and sex, as many databases lack this specificity. When relevant databases are viewed together rather than in silos, IDAC and partners can more strategically identify where the data gaps lie and advocate for ways to improve the data landscape at national, regional and global levels.

KEY DATABASES RELEVANT FOR CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

1: GLOBAL STOCK AND FLOW DATA							
Institution	Database name	General database topic	Relevant populations covered	Disaggregation dimensions	Age disaggregation groups	Data sources	Year coverage
INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS							
United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UN DESA), Population Division (UNPD)	International Migrant Stock	International migration	International migrant stock estimates ⁸⁷	Age, sex, country of origin, country of destination	1–4, 5–9, 10–14, 15–19, 20–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39, 40–44, 45–49, 50–54, 55–59, 60–64, 65–69, 70–74, 75+	National census data, population registers, nationally representative surveys	1990–2020
United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UN DESA), Statistics Division	Demographic Yearbook System	Population statistics	International migrant stock measures: Foreign-born population, foreign population (non-citizens)	Age, sex, country of citizenship, country of destination, educational attainment (age 15+), economically active population (15+)	1–4, 5–9, 10–14, 15–19, 20–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39, 40–44, 45–49, 50–54, 55–59, 60–64, 65–69, 70–74	National census data	1948–2021
REFUGEES							
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Refugee Data Finder	Refugees and other displaced populations	Refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, Venezuelans displaced abroad, stateless persons, others of concern, Palestine refugees under UNRWA mandate	Age, sex, type of population, country of origin, country of destination	0–4, 5–11, 12–17, 18–59, 60+	Government data, UNHCR operations data	1951–2021
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Resettlement Data Finder	Refugee resettlement data	Refugees	Data portal: Age, sex, country of origin, country of asylum, country of resettlement, submissions for resettlement, departures for resettlement UNHCR Resettlement Handbook: additional disaggregation dimensions – children and adolescents at risk, unaccompanied children, and women and girls at risk	0–17, 18–59, 60+	UNHCR resettlement operations data (does not include those resettled outside of UNHCR processes)	2003–2022
United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)	UNRWA Statistics Bulletin	Palestine refugees	Palestine refugees	Age, sex, registration status, family size, field location	0–9, 10–19, 20–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, 60–69, 70–79, 80–89, 90+	UNRWA operations data	2016–2021
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)							
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)	Global Internal Displacement Database	Internally displaced people (IDPs)	IDPs, IDPs displaced by conflict and violence, IDPs displaced by disaster	Age, sex, country	0–17, 0–4, 5–14, 15–17, 15–24, 25–64, 65+	Government data, the UN, other international organizations, civil society organizations, research institutions, national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, and the private sector	2003–2021 (conflict and violence); 2008–2021 (natural disasters)
CROSS-CUTTING GROUPS							
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Data Warehouse	Child-specific data on migrant and displaced populations	Asylum-seekers, IDPs, international migrants, refugees	Age, sex, country of origin, country of asylum, country of destination	Under 18, total	UNHCR, IDMC, UNPD	2010–present

2: REGIONAL DATABASES

Institution	Database name	General database topic	Relevant populations covered	Disaggregation dimensions	Age disaggregation groups	Data sources	Year coverage
Eurostat	Migration and Asylum Database	International migration, asylum, managed migration, migrant integration and migrant children in EU countries	International migrants, asylum-seekers, unaccompanied children, returnees, irregular migrants	Age, sex, citizenship, country of birth, country of destination	Varies by data set	Administrative sources, interior ministries, statistical authorities, related immigration agencies, surveys in EU member states	1990–present (ranging by data set)
Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela	General R4V; Child Protection Sub-sector	Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean	Venezuelan migrants and refugees	Varies by data set situation report	N/A	Varies by data set, with over 200 contributing organizations	2018–present
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)	Database on Immigrants in OECD and non-OECD countries	Characteristics of international migrants, including integration indicators	International migrants	Age, sex, duration of stay, country of destination, place of birth, educational attainment, labour market outcomes (15+ population)	0–14, 15–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55–64, 65+, 15–64	Population censuses	2000–2016

3: CROSS-CUTTING THEMATIC DATA HUBS

Institution	Database name	General database topic	Relevant populations covered	Disaggregation dimensions	Age disaggregation groups	Data sources	Year coverage
Counter Trafficking Collaborative	Global Data Hub on Human Trafficking	Human trafficking	Victims of human trafficking	Age, sex, citizenship, country of exploitation, type of exploitation	0–8, 9–17, 18–20, 21–23, 24–26, 27–29, 30–38, 39–47, 48+	IOM case management, Polaris hotline	2002–2020
International Labour Organization (ILO)	Database on International Labour Migration Statistics	International labour migration	Foreign citizens, foreign-born population, returnee population	A range of dimensions across data sets, including: age, sex, country, education, place of birth, employment rate, inactivity rate, citizenship, native/foreign-born populations	15–24, 25–54, 55–64, 65+	Labour force surveys, household surveys, population statistics	2000–2021 (ranging by data set)
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)	Displacement and population mobility	IDPs, migrants, dead/missing migrants, mixed migration flows, returnees	A range of dimensions across data sets, including: age, sex, country of origin, country of destination, region of destination, access to shelter, access to health, access to education, access to income, reason for displacement, unaccompanied children, natural disaster types	Varies by data set	DTM-collected data, including surveys, baseline assessments and emergency assessments; government data; cluster member data	2004–present (ranging by data set)
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Missing Migrants Project	Migrants who have died or gone missing during a cross-border migration journey	Refugees, asylum-seekers, international migrants	Number of children, cause of death, location of death, number of survivors	Under 18	Official records from coast guards and medical examiners, media reports, NGOs, surveys and interviews with migrants, IOM, UNHCR	2014–present
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Migration Data Portal	Wide range of migration and displacement data and statistics	International migrants, asylum-seekers, IDPs, refugees, human trafficking, child trafficking	Age, sex, country of origin, country of destination	Varies by indicator, includes: <18, <19, 15–24, 20–64, 65+	Over 15 data sources, including UN DESA, IDMC, UNICEF, and ILO	1951–present (ranging by indicator)
Migration Policy Institute (MPI)	Migration Data Hub	International migration and remittance flows, integration data on immigrants in the United States	International migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, unauthorized immigrant population	Varies by data set, child-specific/age-disaggregated data on children of immigrants and young dual language learners available for US immigrant populations	N/A	UNPD, US Census Data	1950–2022 (ranging by data source)
Mixed Migration Centre	4Mi	Regular, standardized quantitative and qualitative data on mixed migration flows with information on the experiences of migrant and displaced populations during their journeys	International migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees	Age, sex, nationality, country of interview. [Note: Children typically not interviewed, but included in data collected from parents]	18–24, 25–34, 35–54, 55+ [Note: Refers to survey respondents, however data about children incorporated]	Surveys and interviews	2014–present
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Humanitarian Data Exchange	Humanitarian data across organizations	International migrants, IDPs, refugees, stateless persons, returnees, other populations of concern	Age, sex, country of origin, country of destination, other indicators across data sets	Varies by data set	Thousands of data sets from over 1,800 sources	Ranges by data set
United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UN DESA), Population Division (UNPD)	World Population Prospects (WPP)	Population statistics	International migrant flows: net migration rate, net number of migrants	Country of destination	N/A	National census data, population registers, UNHCR statistics	1950–2100 (projected)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS); SDG 4 Database	General database related to education, science, culture and communication; includes limited data on migrants related to education and SDG 4	International migrants	Varies by data set. Disaggregated data related to immigration status available for SDG indicator 4.1.1, which disaggregates by: sex, school location (rural/urban), socioeconomic status, immigrant status, language of the test at home	N/A	For education data: administrative sources, household surveys, educational attainment and literacy statistics, learning assessments	1970–2022 (ranging by indicator)
World Bank, the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD)	Migration and Remittances Data	Remittance flows and bilateral international migration	International migrants	Varies by dataset [Note: Disaggregation not applicable to global remittance flow data]	Varies by dataset	IMF Balance of Payments Statistics database, data releases from central banks, national statistical agencies, World Bank country desks, household surveys	1960–2022 (ranging by data set)

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