



BRIEF 1

A profile of forcibly displaced populations and their hosts ¹

Leveraging Harmonized Data to Improve Welfare among Forcibly Displaced Populations and their Hosts: A Technical Brief Series

World Bank Poverty and Equity Global Practice

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Context and Motivation

This is the first in a series of three technical briefs produced by the World Bank's Poverty and Equity Global Practice to share results of a multi-country data harmonization exercise concerning forcibly displaced populations (FDPs) and host communities. The work aims to produce knowledge to inform policy and operational decisions in countries affected by forced population displacement. The briefs rely on a data harmonization exercise covering 10 countries across five regions that hosted FDPs in the period 2015 to 2020. This, the first brief in our series, explains the context and goals of the data harmonization work; describes the types and sources of data included and the methods used; then draws on the harmonized data to develop a profile of FDPs and host communities across country and regional contexts, considering: basic demographic variables; household composition and the timing of displacement; living conditions and assets; and access to education and employment. Subsequent briefs in the series will look in detail at policy regimes and labor market outcomes and at evidence and strategies to improve welfare.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme poverty was concentrated in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCS). Moreover, as recent trends have shown, fragility and violence are becoming increasingly relevant to welfare outside the poorest parts of the world – in the Middle East, for example, and now in Europe. Internal and external displacement of populations is one of the primary manifestations of severe insecurity, with wide-ranging implications for the welfare for those forcibly displaced and the communities hosting these populations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare how humanitarian systems are overstretched in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where most refugees reside (Grandi and Van Trostenburg 2021; Vishwanath et al. 2020). With needs largely exceeding resources allocated toward protection of FDPs, inclusion policies allowing refugees to contribute to national economies are emerging as a necessary component of the response to the global refugee crisis, in the economic recovery ahead and in the longer term. However, the design of such policies is constrained by a dramatic lack of evidence about how the influx of FDPs influences hosting economies, how service delivery systems hold up to the strain, and how different policies perform in improving outcomes for affected populations.

Forced displacement disproportionately affects developing countries, but evidence to guide response in these settings is scarce

Forced displacement is a development challenge and disproportionately affects developing countries and their populations. Three-fourths of all refugees, refugee-like, and stateless populations are hosted in only 19 countries, of which all but two are developing countries. Six developing countries alone host more than half of the world's internally displaced populations, and 97% of UNHCR's host communities of concern are in a handful of developing countries.²

The responsibility of hosting most displaced populations falls on neighboring countries, who also bear the wider socio-economic consequences of conflict and violence in their neighborhood. Of the three possible durable solutions for forced displacement (voluntary repatriation, third country resettlement and integration into the hosting country), the de facto outcome for most displaced populations has been some degree of local integration in hosting countries, often in response to a protracted displacement situation. This implies a triple challenge for hosting countries: an immediate humanitarian response, which eventually transitions to development and integration policies, ultimately including liberalization of refugee policy regimes in some contexts.

However, the bulk of evidence on the impact of hosting displaced populations; on the efficacy of different humanitarian, development, and integration policies; and on the costs and benefits of integration of FDPs comes from the developed world.³ In large part, this is due to the lack of adequate, timely, and regular systems for generating data to measure and monitor these features in LMICs. In addition, many developing countries that host FDPs are simultaneously affected by the potentially destabilizing consequences of fragility and violence in neighboring countries. Often, these host countries face waves of displacement with little ability and time to prepare. As a result, there is a lack of evidence on the efficacy of integration policies, especially in complex and long-lasting refugee-hosting contexts (Devictor and Do, 2017).

The lack of systematic data collection on FDPs also hinders the tracking of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and policy responses. For instance, global poverty numbers typically exclude refugees and forcibly displaced immigrants, as highlighted in “Fragility and Conflict: On the Front Lines of the Fight against Poverty” (Corral et al., 2020), a companion report to the World Bank’s FCS strategy. This data gap is a potential source of bias in tracking progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG1) globally. These data gaps also extend to other SDGs and limit the monitoring of socio-economic conditions, human capital and assets, and livelihoods of the displaced and how they interact with and influence the local hosting economy. This also impacts the ability of development partners and humanitarian agencies to design policies that support long-term development responses in countries affected by protracted population displacement.

This brief series is an important first step to provide a harmonized profile of FDPs vis a vis their hosts.

This brief builds on a data harmonization exercise to describe elements that are common across key displacement contexts, as well as features which are distinct across each. The analysis relies on a harmonized dataset of representative surveys of forcibly displaced populations and host communities from multiple refugee contexts and hosting countries. It incorporates survey findings from 10 countries across five regions that hosted FDPs in the period 2015 to 2020. The goal of this exercise is to be able to establish a comparative profile of forced displacement in key developing country settings.

The remainder of this brief is structured as follows. The next section touches on some aspects of the harmonization process, describes the data included in the harmonized dataset, and provides details on the specific country contexts and surveys from which these data are derived. The ensuing sections then draw on the harmonized dataset to provide a comparative description of forcibly displaced populations along key axes: basic demographic variables; living conditions and assets; and access to education and employment.

Data sources and methodological considerations

In this landscape of data scarcity, there have been recent efforts to close data and evidence gaps in a representative way by including displaced populations in national household surveys (for instance, in Chad, Niger, and Uganda) or by generating data on specific populations and displacement events (for example, Syrian refugees in the Mashreq or Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh). Since 2015/16, some 12 countries have sought to systematically include refugees and other forcibly displaced populations in key surveys.

Building on these country-level efforts, investing in creating comparable data through an ex-post harmonization is an important step to help cross-country comparisons and support analytics that can inform policies at the global level. Recognizing this need, the World Bank Poverty and Equity Team has engaged in a data harmonization effort across 10 countries, designed to support analytics that can highlight how country conditions, including diverse refugee policies and programs, may shape outcomes. The results obtained can orient future policy. The data harmonization effort builds on important seed investments, while recognizing that an adequate evidence base on forced displacement remains an aspirational goal.

Countries and surveys included in the ex-post harmonization exercise

The datasets included in the harmonization effort cover key recent displacement contexts: the Venezuelan influx in Latin America's Andean states; the Syrian crisis in the Mashreq; the Rohingya displacement in Bangladesh; and forcible displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa (Sahel and East Africa) (Figure 1). The harmonization exercise encompasses 10 different surveys. These include nationally representative surveys with a separate representative stratum for displaced populations; sub-national representative surveys covering displaced populations and their host communities; and surveys designed specifically to provide insights on displacement contexts. Most of the surveys were collected between 2015 and 2020 (Table 1).

Figure 1. Displacement contexts and populations included in the data harmonization exercise

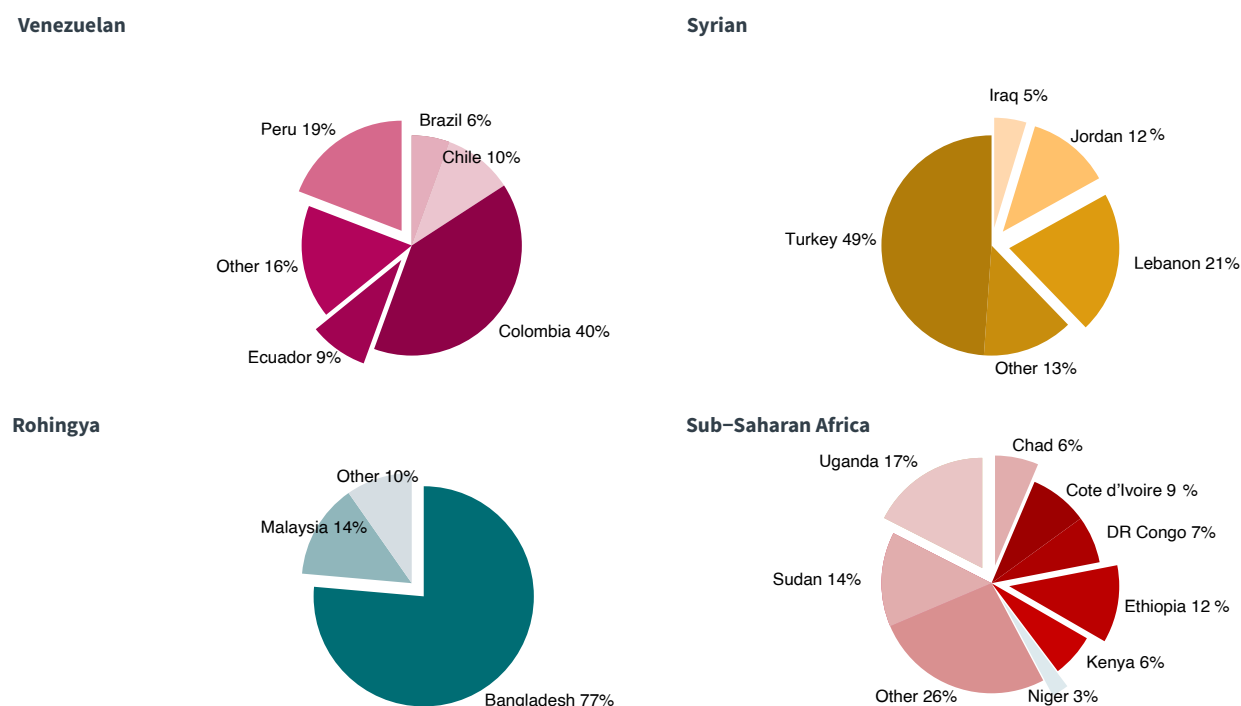
Venezuelan	Syrian	Rohingya	Sub-Saharan Africa
Peru Ecuador	Lebanon Jordan Kurdistan - Iraq	Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh	Chad Niger Ethiopia Uganda

Table 1. Surveys contributing data to the harmonized dataset

Country	Year	Survey name	Displaced household's countries of origin	Representativeness	Number of households surveyed	
Ecuador	2019	Encuesta a Personas en Movilidad Humana y en Comunidades de Acogida en Ecuador (EPEC)	Venezuela	Venezuelans and hosts	Venezuelan:	665
					Host:	1,206
					Total:	1,871
Peru	2018	Encuesta Dirigida a la Población Venezolana que Reside en el Perú (ENPOVE)	Venezuela		Venezuelan:	3,697
					Total:	3,697
Lebanon	2015 – 2016	Syrian Refugee and Host Community Survey (SRHCS)	Syria	Refugees and nationals	Refugee:	1,079
					Host:	1,786
					Total:	2,865
Jordan	2015 – 2016	Syrian Refugee and Host Community Survey (SRHCS)	Syria	Refugees and hosts	Refugee:	1,328
					Host:	1,024
					Total:	2,352
Iraq (Kurdistan region)	2015 – 2016	Syrian Refugee and Host Community Survey (SRHCS)	Syria, Iraq	Refugees, IDPs, and hosts in Kurdistan	Refugee:	724
					IDP:	800
					Host:	756**
					Total:	2,280
Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar)	2019 – 2020	Cox's Bazar Panel Survey (CBPS)	Myanmar	Rohingya and hosts in Cox's Bazar district	Rohingya:	2,493
					Host:	2,527**
					Total:	5,020
Chad	2018	Refugees and Host Communities Household Survey in Chad (RHCH)*	Central African Republic, Sudan	Refugees, hosts, and nationals	Refugee:	1,195
					Host:	598
					National:	7,493
					Total:	9,286
Niger	2018	Enquête Harmonisée sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages (EHCVM)	Multiple	Refugees and nationals	Refugee:	1,113
					IDP:	471
					Host:	364
					National:	6,007
Ethiopia	2017	Skills Profile Survey (SPS)	Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan	Refugees living in camps	Total:	7,955
					Refugee:	3,629
					Host:	1,691
Uganda	2018	Uganda Refugee and Host Communities Household Survey (URHS)	DR of Congo, South Sudan, Somalia	Refugees and host	Total:	5,320
					Refugee:	879
					Host:	1,122
					Total:	2,001

Countries considered in the harmonization exercise are highly illustrative of regions hosting populations displaced by the most recent displacement crises as well as some key protracted crises. Countries included in the harmonized database host a substantial part of displaced populations in each context (Figure 2). Figure 3 presents the cumulative percentage of displaced populations leaving their countries of origin over time based on data from the harmonized surveys. This provides a useful visualization of the different starting times for the diverse displacement events and contexts considered, with the Venezuelan crisis and the Rohingya displacement in Bangladesh as the most recent events. Venezuela is going through one of the deepest economic crises in history. Its Gross Domestic Product per capita halved between 2013 and 2018 and by then 9 out of 10 people lived in poverty.⁴ A combination of factors led to the mass exodus of Venezuelans out of their country. Three countries in Latin America host 72 percent of displaced Venezuelans: Colombia (1.4 million), Peru (1 million), and Ecuador (400 thousand). However, Venezuelan migrants represent only between 2 and 3 percent of the local populations in those countries. In 2017, many Rohingya displaced arrived in the Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh, fleeing violence from Myanmar. Within a period of four months, some 724,000 newly arrived persons joined other Rohingya who had fled earlier waves of violence. By the end of 2018, nearly 2,000 campsites in Cox's Bazar hosted around 912,000 Rohingya, more than doubling the population living in the Cox's Bazar sub-districts of Teknaf and Ukhia.

Figure 2. Share of displaced people in different countries of asylum, by context

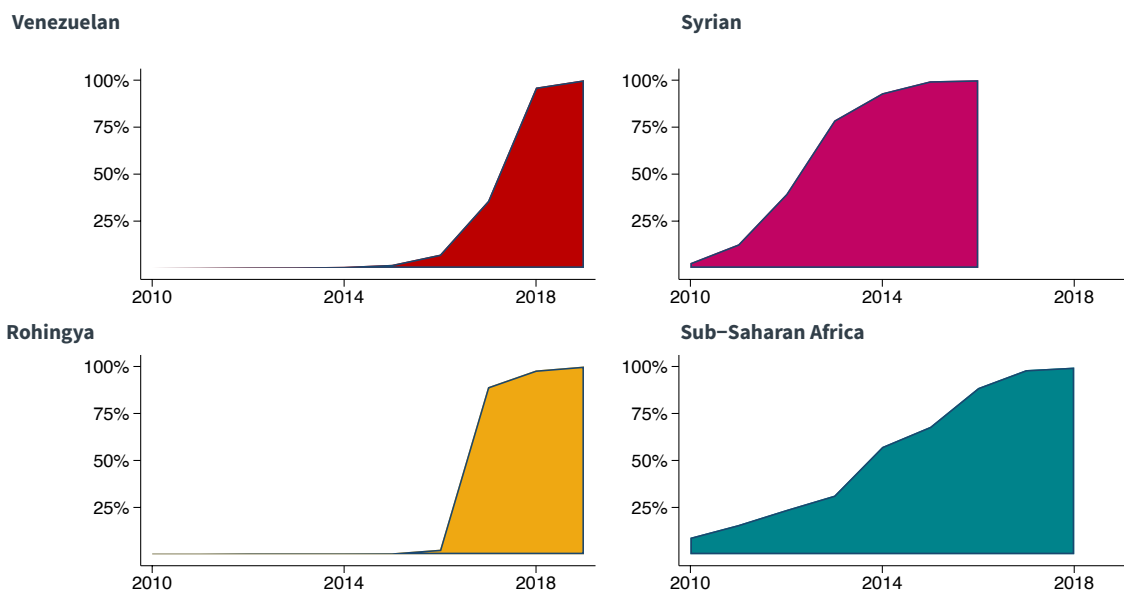


Source: UNHCR Refugee Data Finder.

Note: Includes refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other people in need of international protection, according to UNHCR definitions. Year varies across regions to match the year of the surveys included in the harmonized data. Years of data used are: 2019 Venezuelan, 2015 Syrian, 2019 Rohingya, and 2018 Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the protracted crisis worsened in the years 2013 and 2015. With refugee populations of more than one million each, Uganda and Ethiopia are currently the third and sixth largest refugee-hosting nations in the world. In Sub-Saharan Africa, most refugees settle in camps located in areas bordering their country of origin, some of which also suffer from domestic conflict. While some displacement crises in the region date from decades ago, the influx of displaced people between 2014 and 2018 almost doubled the number of asylum seekers in Eastern Africa. By contrast, the number of Syrian households in the three countries of origin covered in this exercise has remained stable since 2013. The Syrian crisis has caused one of the largest episodes of forced displacement since World War II. In effect, more than half of Syria's prewar population has been forcibly displaced. As of 2016, five years from the start of the conflict, almost 5 million Syrians were registered as refugees in other countries, a number that has increased to 5.4 million by 2023. A handful of Syria's neighbors, like Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon, continue hosting the bulk of Syrian refugees.

Figure 3. Cumulative percentage of arriving displaced households



Note: Year of displacement not available for Chad. Percentages are computed using the year of displacement of household heads and their sampling weights

Variables used in the harmonization

The selection of variables included in the harmonized dataset is oriented toward building the evidence needed to support the pivot from the humanitarian to development response in refugee policy. As with any harmonization effort, there is a substantial tradeoff between broadening the set of variables included and the ability to compare across many settings. In this case, the variables selected for harmonization may be considered a minimum common denominator which would be needed to be able to contrast different displacement contexts. The harmonized variables include key demographics (e.g., age, gender), welfare indicators (e.g., housing and access to basic services), human capital indicators (education), and economic variables (e.g., labor, sources of income, assets). Such indicators are important for the design of policies oriented toward the protection and self-sufficiency of FDPs and to mitigate real and perceived risks to hosts.

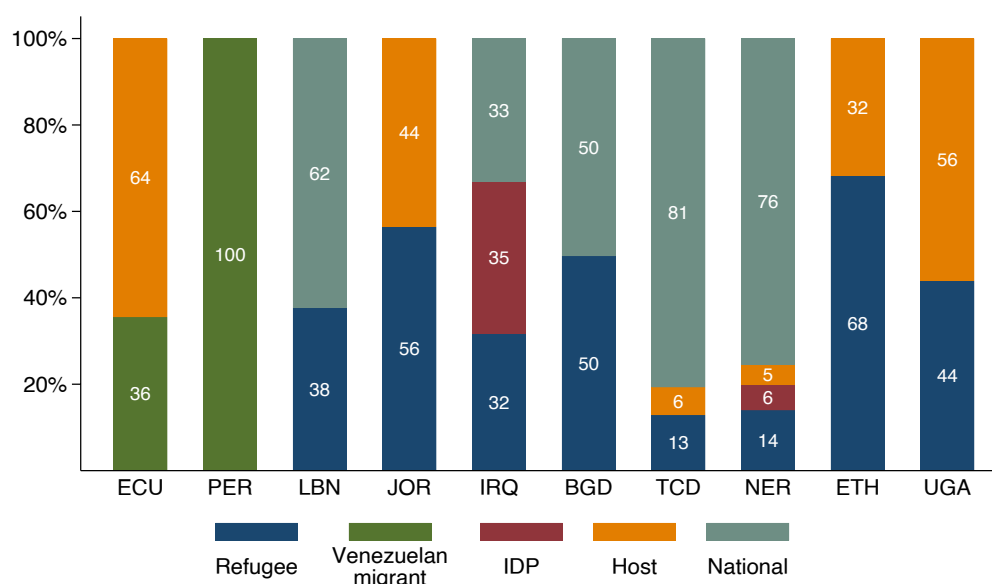
This type of harmonization exercise conducted ex-post poses substantial challenges because of the diversity of displacement contexts considered and the differing strategies for generating statistics from appropriate surveys. The surveys included in this exercise differ in their objectives at the time they were implemented. For instance, while some were designed to understand the implications on crises as they were ongoing (Syria, Venezuela, Rohingya), others were designed to include displaced populations into national data collection efforts (such as in sub-Saharan Africa). Just as there is significant heterogeneity within FCS, so there is also heterogeneity among forcibly displaced populations. As shown before, we observe substantial variation in legal status and protection; pre-displacement socio-economic characteristics; policy environments and other contextual conditions in the hosting country; and the potential for integration in the host society and/or for return to FDPs' home country.

While variables such as demographics and labor market participation have been harmonized across numerous datasets globally, standard definitions are lacking for some categories related to forced displacement. For example, the definition of "host" can range from designating only persons who live near a refugee camp to including any national of a country hosting refugees. The notion of forcible displacement is also relative to the specific country context. In working to harmonize the dataset, this complexity calls for particular attention to the way we categorize households and individuals as hosts, refugees, asylum seekers, displaced immigrants, or internally displaced people (IDPs). Finally, certain survey modules, such as those on consumption expenditure, are not harmonized. Beyond the harmonization of variables across datasets, understanding patterns across displacement contexts requires some adaptation of sampling weights (Box 1).

Group categories used in the harmonization

We classify households into five categories, namely: (1) refugees (including populations in refugee-like situations or covered under UNHCR’s stateless mandate); (2) Venezuelan migrants; (3) internally displaced populations (IDPs); (4) host population (defined as living close to displaced populations, not nationally representative); and (5) national sample (nationally representative). Each survey covers different categories of households. The surveys from Chad, Niger, Lebanon, Iraq (Kurdistan Region), and Bangladesh (Cox’s Bazar) include explicit strata of displaced populations, a separate stratum for IDPs where relevant, and nationally or sub-nationally representative samples of national populations. Chad and Niger also include a stratum of host communities. In Cox’s Bazar, the district population is further stratified into “high exposure” (akin to host community) and “low exposure” (district populations living further away from the Rohingya camps). The surveys from Ecuador, Ethiopia, Jordan, and Uganda do not include nationally representative samples, but include strata for host and displaced populations. The survey from Peru included only Venezuelan migrants. Table 1 presents the number of households by category in each country that are present in the dataset. Figure 4 displays the (unweighted) sample composition in each of the 10 surveys by the percentage of households in each category.

Figure 4. Sample composition in the harmonized dataset by country and household category



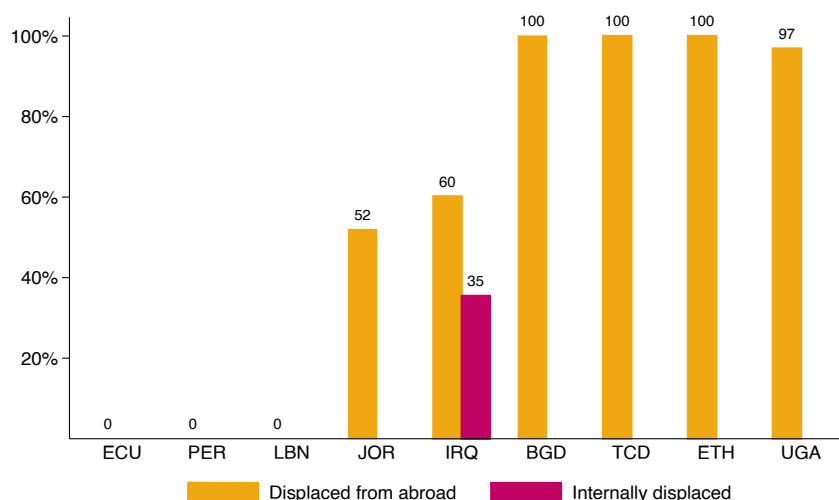
Note. Unweighted percentages.

The displaced populations in the dataset can also be distinguished by their type of settlement in the country of hosting. For instance, the sample of displaced populations in Chad, Bangladesh, Uganda, and Ethiopia live almost entirely in camps, in contrast with migrants and displaced populations in Peru, Ecuador, and Lebanon (Figure 5). In Jordan and Kurdistan-Iraq, displaced populations both within and outside camps are included in the sample.

The focus of these briefs is on refugees, stateless people, and Venezuelan migrants, and excludes Internally Displaced populations. We consider refugees and Venezuelan migrants as displaced households, and host and national population groups as non-displaced. For an easier exposition, in the analysis we restrict attention to refugees, stateless people, and Venezuelan migrants. In other words, we do not include IDPs. Summary statistics are computed at the regional (context) level and by displacement status.¹⁰ The annex at the end of this document presents summary statistics for all variables referred throughout the text, for both countries and regions, by displacement status.¹¹

The next section presents a comparative profile of FDPs and their hosts across the varied displacement contexts reflected in the dataset. The data allow us to investigate three key dimensions: basic demographic variables; living conditions and assets; and access to education and employment.

Figure 5. Percentage of displaced households in the dataset living in camps



Note: Data for Niger are missing.

Demographics

The demographic characteristics of displaced populations reflect the type of households and individuals who were forced to leave their country of origin and how they might differ from the types of households in the hosting country. In this section, we offer some insights into forced migration patterns in each context by comparing the age and gender of individuals and the household composition across displaced and non-displaced populations. Similarly, we look at the timing of arrival to the host country of different household members. In making those comparisons, we assume that demographic patterns are broadly similar across countries in the same region (e.g., Uganda, a host country, and South Sudan, an origin country). Therefore, within-region differences between refugees or Venezuelan migrants and host populations suggest that specific types of individuals or households are more likely to arrive in neighboring countries because of the subjacent conditions in their country of origin and their socioeconomic conditions.

In three of the four contexts considered, the presence of children is substantially higher among refugees. The age profile of displaced and non-displaced populations shows that only in one region, Sub-Saharan Africa, do the two population groups present a similar age distribution (Figure 6). Among the age differences between displaced and non-displaced populations by region, we note the relatively higher proportion of children (0-14 years old) among displaced households relative to non-displaced households in the same region. Given this demographic profile of the displaced populations, there is a critical need to ensure access to education for the large influx of children to ensure continuity to schooling at the outset and to avoid a permanent negative impact on the achievements of children in the long term.

Figure 6. Population pyramids by displacement status and gender

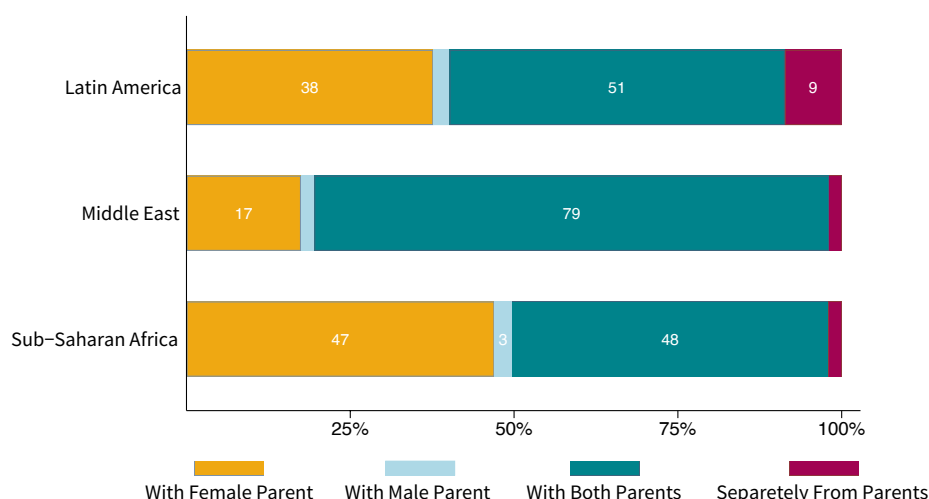


Note: Peru was omitted due to missing data for the local population.

Forcibly displaced women and children tend to precede the family when leaving their home country. In all regions but Latin America, the percentage of female household heads is larger among displaced than non-displaced populations. While this difference is minor in the Middle East, the share of female household heads among refugees is twice as wide in Sub-Saharan Africa and 60% higher in Cox's Bazar relative to their host communities and the national population. Cultural differences or intra-family dynamics might not explain these differences. Instead, while women represent roughly 50% of the displaced population in all contexts analyzed, females constitute 57% and 63% among individuals of ages 30 to 44 in Cox's Bazar and Sub-Saharan Africa, respectively. Moreover, we observe that, across contexts, husbands are not present in more than 8 out of 10 displaced households with a female head. By contrast, the percentage of displaced households where wives are absent is relevant only in Latin America. At the same time, women are the ones who typically take children with them to their destination. We find a substantial fraction of children migrating with their mothers but not their fathers, ranging from 17% in the Middle East to 47% in Sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 7). These two facts could be explained by a broader trend in which women and children tend to precede the family when leaving the home country, especially when the risk to life is a fundamental determinant of fleeing.

The demographic profile of displaced populations in Latin America substantially differs from other displaced populations, reflecting the economic nature of the Venezuelan crisis. In contrast with the other three regions, the most relevant age disparity between Venezuelans in Latin America and their hosts is the relatively larger presence of youth and young adults among the former. About 66 percent of Venezuelan migrants in Peru and Ecuador are individuals between 15 and 44 years of age, by far the highest share across displacement contexts. This figure is more than 10 percentage points higher for Venezuelans in Ecuador than is for Ecuadorians. Moreover, among Venezuelan between the ages of 15 and 59 who migrated between 2015 and 2017, the share of men was 56%, suggesting that men may have been the first to arrive in many families. For instance, since 2018, following a large influx of Venezuelan female migrants, the population shares for these age groups are balanced across genders. Still, by 2019, the wife had yet not migrated into the hosting country for 2 in every 10 Venezuelan displaced households. These demographic patterns are explained by the fact that, in the early years of the crisis, most Venezuelans left their country because of economic hardships, and a third of the men migrated before their families to find a job in neighboring countries (World Bank, 2020).

Figure 7. Share of children migrating with a single parent, both parents, or separately from parents



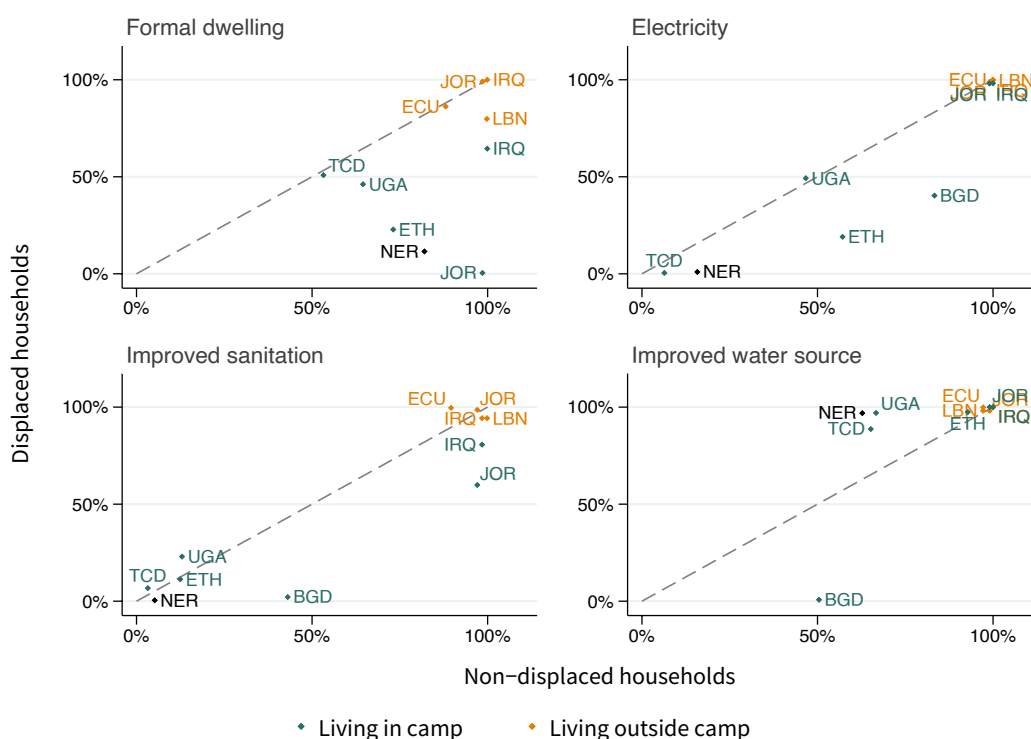
Note: Year of displacement not available for Bangladesh or Chad

Living conditions and assets

Displaced populations fare substantially worse than hosts, on average, and inequalities within a country are exacerbated for refugees living in camps.

With respect to housing conditions and access to basic services, displaced populations generally lag behind with respect to host communities. Figure 8 contrasts the living conditions of displaced and non-displaced households along four dimensions: formal housing (i.e., not living in a tent, caravan, worksite, or abandoned building); access to electricity in dwelling; improved sanitation facilities (toilet or latrine in the house connected to sewage or septic tank); and improved water source (piped, bottled, tanker trucks, or community tanks). For each dot in these plots, the vertical axis represents the percentage of displaced households with access to a given amenity. The horizontal axis expresses the same quantity for host and national households. The dashed diagonal lines indicate an equal distance to the vertical and horizontal axes, or in other words, parity in access between the hosts and the displaced. Dots closer to the line represent countries in which the two populations experience similar conditions. The plots further distinguish countries where displaced households are settled in camps from those where they live outside camps. Because of that, two sets of points appear for Iraq and Jordan, where both settings exist.

Figure 8. Housing and access to basic services



Notes: Peru was omitted due to missing data for the local population. Data on formal house is missing for Bangladesh. Data on camp situation is missing for Niger.

Displaced households experience poorer access to basic services, especially those living in camps. Broadly speaking, host populations are better off than the group of refugees and Venezuelan migrants in every aspect, as indicated by the large number of dots in the bottom right portion of the plots. The only exception in that instance is access to improved water sources in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the fact that most displaced households live in formal camps may play a role. In Latin America and the Middle East, where public service coverage reaches most people in our sample, the living conditions of host households and displaced people living outside of camps are similar and better than those of all populations in the other two regions. On the other hand, 40 percent of Syrian refugees living in camps in Jordan lack access to improved sanitation, and nearly all of them live in improvised dwellings, in sharp contrast with the living conditions of refugees living outside camps in the same country. Those differences are also noticeable in Iraqi Kurdistan, although to a lesser extent. Displaced households in the African countries more often live in improvised dwellings. In addition, these households suffer from precarious access to basic services, although this fact is explained for the most part by the low coverage of such services in the host countries. When comparing displaced and non-displaced populations in the same region, Rohingya people present the most notable disadvantages for all available variables.

In addition, refugees typically arrive in the host country with very few assets, as forcibly displaced persons flee without much time to prepare, and fixed assets (land, home, and durables) in their home country are usually lost. Asset ownership in the host country for displaced households is low. Except for Latin America, where asset ownership data was not collected, the most frequently owned asset among refugees across regions is cell phones. Ownership of this item ranges from 34% of displaced households in Ethiopia to 97% in Jordan. In the Middle East, refugees in the dataset own items such as refrigerators, cookstoves, televisions, and radio in proportions similar to those of the local population. Conversely, ownership rates among refugees in Bangladesh and Sub-Saharan Africa are close to zero for those same items. In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, we additionally find that hosts are as deprived as the displaced populations, especially in Chad and Niger.

The overall living conditions and future prospects of displaced populations, however, depend on factors other than access to basic services and asset ownership: among others, access to education and jobs. Although the measures presented above are useful, they miss important dimensions that are key for understanding and implementing development policies in displacement contexts. These include displaced populations' opportunity to attend school, participate in the labor market, and, overall, make independent choices to achieve their desired outcomes. While a full analysis of these dimensions is beyond the scope of this brief, in what follows we discuss the education and employment outcomes of displaced individuals in their respective host countries.

Education and employment

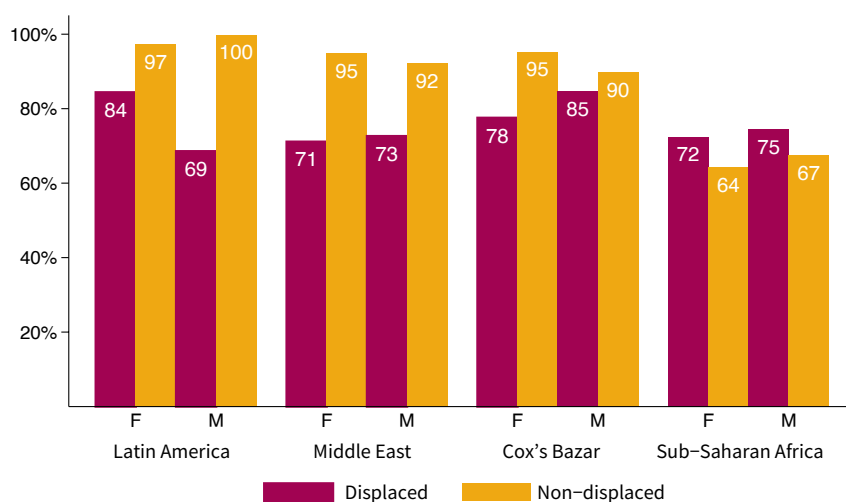
In terms of school attendance, displaced children lag behind host and national populations by several percentage points in 3 of the 4 regions. Figure 9 and 10 present school attendance rates for children across settings. In Latin America, the Middle East, and Cox's Bazar school attendance for displaced children is significantly below their hosts. The fact that school attendance is higher for displaced children in Sub-Saharan Africa is explained by the existence of international assistance programs providing education in camps. For instance, 7 in every 10 refugee children between 6 and 18 years of age living in camps in Ethiopia attend schools run by NGOs, which contrasts with children in host community households who overwhelmingly attend government schools (World Bank, 2018). Schooling is particularly lower for displaced children between 12 and 18 years of age when compared to national and host children. In addition, a pronounced educational gender gap exists for displaced teenagers in all regions but the Middle East, which is not observed among locals nor children in primary school.

Displaced adults are generally less educated than hosts; Venezuelan migrants are a notable exception. Figure 11 compares the distribution of education across displaced and non-displaced working-age populations (ages 20 to 60). Adults who eventually sought asylum in three of the four host regions generally appear to be less educated compared to the local population. The exception is Latin America, where the population of Venezuelan migrants is highly educated: virtually all attained at least secondary education and half of the Venezuelan migrants had some type of schooling beyond secondary education.

These educational gaps may be the result of differential migration patterns across the socio-economic status of displaced people in their home country if, for example, only wealthier (more educated) displaced individuals can afford the journey to developed countries. For instance, the educational level of Syrian refugees in the Middle East differs from that of the Syrian asylum seekers in Europe: 21% of the Syrian asylum seekers who arrived in Germany in 2013–14 reported having tertiary education, which is close to the average of the host population (Aiyar et al., 2016).

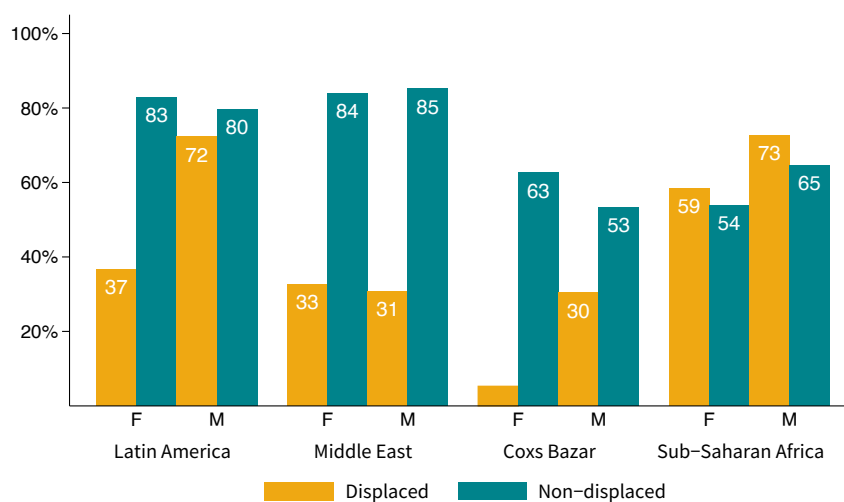
Despite their origin, these disparities may hinder the labor market integration of refugees in host countries, as educational and training skills are critical determinants of employment rates and wages. Simultaneously, refugees and Venezuelan migrants face institutional and legal obstacles to fully participate in the labor market, regardless of their education. In Ecuador, for example, 60% of employed Venezuelans work in the informal sector, 72% have temporary jobs, and they often do low-skilled labor (World Bank, 2020).

Figure 9. Children's school attendance by gender (ages 6-12)



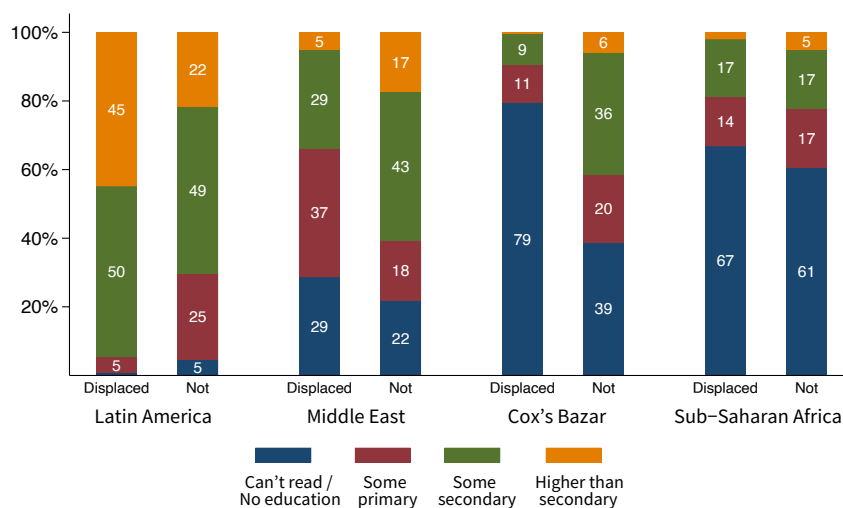
Note: Peru was omitted due to missing data for the local population.

Figure 10. Children's school attendance by gender (ages 13-18)



Note: Peru was omitted due to missing data for the local population.

Figure 11. Adult educational attainment



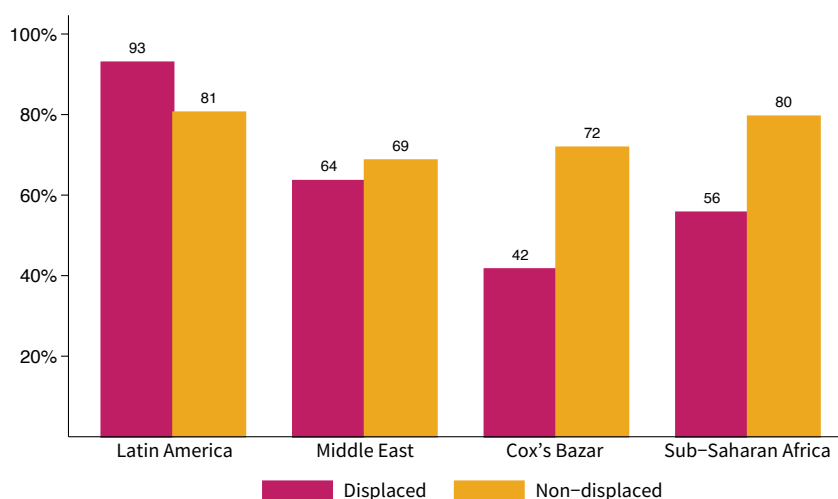
Note: Peru was omitted due to missing data for the local population.

Displaced populations face challenges in accessing employment

Employment rates for male adults (18 years or older) are more or less uniform for locals and are substantially higher than those for refugees in almost every region. Larger differences with the local population are observed in countries with camp policies for refugees, such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Such differences are also evident when refugees in camps and outside camps are compared; among refugees in Iraq and Jordan, the employment rate is roughly 20 percentage points lower for those living in camps. These data, however, do not distinguish between paid jobs and those performed in camps for an in-kind or a low monetary remuneration, possibly explaining the high employment rate for refugees living in camps in Chad in when compared to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

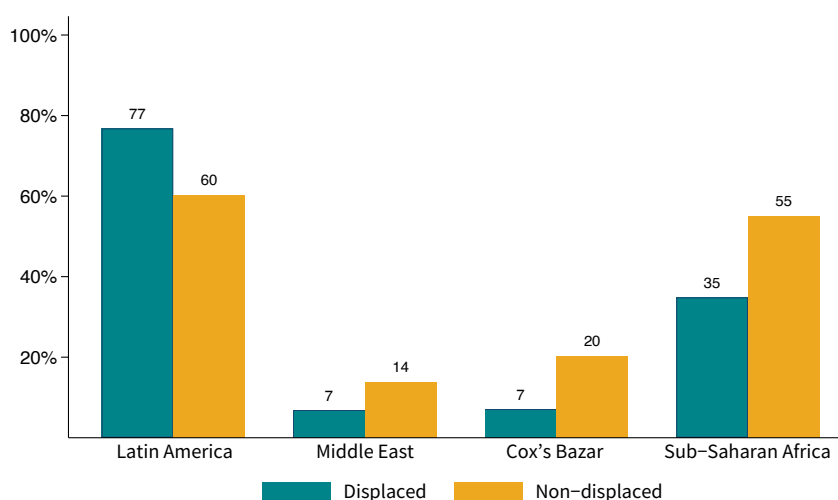
Women's employment shows marked regional contrasts but gaps between displaced and non-displaced individuals are more pronounced in the case of women. With the exception of Chad and Ecuador, women's employment rates are substantially lower among refugees. The disparities between displaced and non-displaced woman are markedly larger than those between men. The lowest employment rates for women, whether displaced or not, correspond to the Middle Eastern countries, but the largest difference is observed in Cox's Bazar. Countries where woman refugees live in camps do not exhibit larger employment gaps, except for Ethiopia. Regional differences in women's employment are pronounced. It is worth noting that the fraction of displaced women out of the labor force is as high as 90% in Bangladesh and 50% in Sub-Saharan Africa, while it amounts to only 25% in the Middle East and 2% in Latin America.

Figure 12. Employment rate for male adults



Note: Peru was omitted due to missing data for the local population.

Figure 13. Employment rate for female adults



Note: Peru was omitted due to missing data for the local population

Conclusions

This is the first in a series of three technical briefs building on a multi-country data harmonization exercise concerning forcibly displaced populations and host communities. The briefs are designed with different objectives in mind. This brief is designed to provide a quick overview of the harmonized dataset and explains the sources of data and the methods and principles used in the data harmonization exercise. In addition, it draws on the harmonized data to offer a profile of FDPs and host communities across regional contexts. The brief presents a series of descriptive statistics on demographic characteristics, access to basic services and asset ownership, schooling and educational attainments, and labor market outcomes. In general, these findings confirm descriptive patterns on the socio-economic characteristics of displaced and hosting populations from country level analysis. The second brief demonstrates how such harmonized data can be used to draw inferences that are of broad relevance, and can be combined with other multi-country datasets, while the third brief provides more detailed analysis and comparisons of distinct displacement contexts, and the implications for measuring wellbeing among the displaced. This series of briefs are an important first step to provide a broader picture of FDPs and their hosts with the aim of producing policy-relevant knowledge, motivate future analyses that rely on this harmonized data, and encourage more systematic data collection in fragile and displacement settings.

The harmonization effort incorporates representative survey data from 10 countries across five regions that hosted FDPs in the period 2015 to 2020. The construction of the ex-post harmonized dataset posed substantial technical challenges given the diversity of displacement contexts considered, the differing strategies for generating statistics across surveys, the lack of standard definitions for some categories related to forced displacement, among others. As with any harmonization effort, decisions on which variables to harmonize and how to make them comparable had to be made. In addition to expanding the set of surveys included in the harmonization, the core harmonized dataset could provide a template for collecting consistent data in future surveys. The contexts included in the database cover some of the most recent displacement crises and some protracted ones that have intensified in the last decade: the Venezuelan influx in Latin America; the Syrian crisis in the Mashreq; the Rohingya displacement in Bangladesh; and forcible displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa.

We find that the demographic characteristics of displaced populations differ in several aspects from those of their hosts. Displaced households from Syria, Myanmar, and Sub-Saharan Africa are composed of a larger number of children under 14 years of age. For these three contexts, women and children preceded male adults in arriving to the host country, and for almost half of cases, husbands of household heads were not present with the household at the time of the survey. In contrast, the Venezuelan migrant population is characterized by a large share of youth and young adults who arrived in Ecuador and Peru seeking jobs and were later joined by their families.

In terms of housing conditions and access to basic services, displaced populations generally lag with respect to host communities, except for Venezuelan migrants in Ecuador, where no substantial differences exist vis-à-vis Ecuadorians. In the Middle East, the gaps in housing and access to basic services depends on whether they are in camps or outside; while displaced households living outside camps in the Middle Eastern countries experience living conditions similar to those of the local population, refugees living in camps in Jordan and Iraq are generally worse off, with up to 40 percent of them either living in poor quality dwellings or without adequate sanitation facilities. Countries where the bulk of FDPs live in camps (in Sub-Saharan Africa and Bangladesh) present the biggest gaps in terms of access to services and assets. This is especially marked in Bangladesh, where virtually none of the Rohingya households have access to improved sanitation or water and less than half of them have access to electricity. Lastly, the ability to accumulate assets in the host country appears to be very limited in Bangladesh and Sub-Saharan Africa, where the main asset owned by refugees is a cell phone.

Regarding education, there exist substantial gaps in schooling rates for displaced children compared to their hosts in all regions but Sub-Saharan Africa. Attendance gaps in Ecuador contrasts with the widespread access to other public services. One important reason could be limited capacity in nearby schools, as reported by half of the Venezuelan respondents with children in the survey. Education for refugee children in Sub-Saharan Africa is mostly administered by NGOs and humanitarian agencies, which may explain the higher rates of schooling observed among this population group compared to their hosts. Moreover, across the board displaced adults are significantly less educated than their hosts. The exception is Latin America, where Venezuelan migrants are a relatively highly educated group.

Employment rates among male and female adults are substantially lower for displaced individuals in almost every region. Employment gaps are especially pronounced in for displaced men living in camps. As for women, a large heterogeneity exists across regions, but employment gaps for displaced females are more pronounced than those observed for men.

Against this backdrop and considering the complex nature of designing and implementing development policies in displacement contexts, the accompanying two briefs of this series explore in detail some of the aspects only briefly highlighted here. Displaced individuals often struggle to integrate into host countries, and to find employment. Accordingly, the second brief uses data from a recently created legal database, the Developing World Refugee and Asylum Policy (DWRAP), to investigate whether legal restrictions affect education and labor market outcomes. Finally, the third brief examines the appropriateness of using standard economic indicators to monitor the wellbeing of displaced populations.



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Bibliography / End Notes

1. Front page photo by World Bank / Tanvir Murad Topu. Last page photo © World Bank.
2. In this series of briefs, the term “host community” refers to a community that hosts large populations of refugees or internally displaced persons, whether in camps, integrated into households, or independently.
3. For instance, Brell, et al 2020.
4. Based on Venezuela’s national poverty line with data from Encuesta Nacional de Condiciones de Vida 2018 (Universidad Católica Andrés Bello).
5. Details about the sampling strategies for each survey can be in the following references. Bangladesh (See Endara et al., 2022.), Chad (Nguyen, Savadogo, and Tanaka, 2021), Ecuador (World Bank, 2020), Ethiopia (World Bank, 2020), Jordan, Lebanon, and Kurdistan - Iraq (Krishnan et al, n.d.), Niger (Niger’s National Institute of statistics, 2021), Uganda (World Bank, 2019).
6. Aguilera et al (2020).
7. See Endara et al., 2022.
8. World Bank. 2019. Informing the Refugee Policy Response in Uganda. Results from the Uganda Refugee and Host Communities 2018 Household Survey.
9. See Munoz, Munoz, and Olivieri (2020).
10. Since the ENPOVE survey does not cover nationals or hosts, Peru is omitted from all comparisons at the region level between Venezuelan migrants and the local population.
11. All three reports in this series use the most recent version of the harmonized data set as of February 2023.

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Table A.1. Summary statistics at the household level, by country and displacement status

Country	Ecuador		Peru		Lebanon		Jordan		Iraq	
Displaced	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Observations	665	1,206	3,697		1,079	1,786	1,328	1,024	724	756
Living in camps	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%		0.0%	0.0%	52.0%	1.4%	60.2%	0.1%
Female household head	22.2%	33.2%	30.1%		9.7%	12.8%	17.2%	12.8%	9.7%	6.7%
Housing and services										
formal dwelling	86.2%	88.0%	100.0%		79.8%	99.8%	48.8%	98.5%	78.9%	99.9%
electricity in dwelling	99.9%	99.9%	99.7%		99.8%	100.0%	98.5%	99.0%	98.9%	100.0%
improved sanitation	99.6%	89.6%	100.0%		94.3%	99.8%	78.9%	97.1%	86.2%	98.4%
improved water source	99.9%	97.2%	100.0%		98.1%	97.2%	99.1%	99.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Asset ownership										
motor vehicle					27.3%	80.0%	2.6%	49.6%	23.9%	65.3%
refrigerator			12.8%		74.6%	99.7%	60.0%	98.0%	88.4%	92.3%
cookstove					98.0%	99.4%	93.7%	97.5%	97.1%	99.8%
television			55.4%		93.3%	99.9%	82.5%	98.7%	96.7%	99.9%
radio					10.5%	25.9%	6.1%	13.0%	12.0%	19.6%
cell phone			90.4%		89.4%	93.7%	97.6%	98.2%	97.5%	99.2%

Table A.1. Summary statistics at the household level, by country and displacement status

Country	Bangladesh		Chad		Niger		Ethiopia		Uganda	
Displaced	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Observations	2,493	2,527	1,195	8,091	1,113	6,371	3,629	1,691	879	1,122
Living in camps	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.6%			100.0%	0.0%	96.9%	95.1%
Female household head	24.5%	15.0%	52.0%	24.2%	29.4%	17.3%	66.2%	34.6%	53.0%	29.4%
Housing and services										
formal dwelling			50.8%	53.2%	11.5%	82.0%	22.8%	73.1%	46.2%	64.5%
electricity in dwelling	40.3%	83.3%	0.5%	6.4%	1.0%	15.8%	19.0%	57.1%	49.3%	46.7%
improved sanitation	2.1%	43.1%	6.7%	3.2%	0.5%	5.2%	11.3%	12.4%	23.0%	13.0%
improved water source	0.7%	50.4%	88.7%	65.2%	96.9%	62.8%	97.4%	92.8%	97.0%	66.7%
Asset ownership										
motor vehicle	0.0%	9.6%	2.0%	10.0%	0.1%	12.3%	0.0%	0.6%	2.0%	8.7%
refrigerator	0.0%	26.9%	0.1%	1.0%	0.1%	2.5%	0.1%	10.0%	1.3%	2.2%
cookstove	73.1%	48.5%	2.2%	0.5%	7.1%	4.7%	1.0%	4.8%	0.8%	0.5%
television	0.0%	27.3%	0.3%	5.0%	0.5%	10.4%	1.5%	24.5%	2.9%	9.3%
radio			2.4%	20.0%	3.2%	17.4%	5.3%	14.3%	10.7%	36.2%
cell phone	82.1%	96.1%	48.1%	58.6%	61.1%	68.4%	34.0%	64.8%	51.2%	67.0%

Table A.2. Summary statistics at the individual level, by country and displacement status

Country	Ecuador		Peru		Lebanon		Jordan		Iraq	
Displaced	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Age distribution female										
0-14	23.5%	28.1%	17.3%		42.8%	19.9%	46.0%	35.1%	41.3%	35.4%
15-29	33.9%	27.0%	44.0%		29.4%	31.8%	25.8%	27.2%	27.3%	28.6%
30-44	27.5%	19.2%	26.5%		17.6%	21.5%	17.6%	19.1%	20.8%	19.5%
45-59	11.6%	15.3%	9.6%		6.6%	16.9%	7.4%	11.6%	7.8%	10.6%
60+	3.6%	10.4%	2.6%		3.6%	9.9%	3.2%	7.0%	2.8%	5.9%
Age distribution male										
0-14	30.1%	30.0%	17.4%		42.9%	22.7%	50.4%	36.3%	42.4%	38.9%
15-29	30.6%	28.2%	42.7%		25.7%	29.3%	24.6%	29.3%	28.0%	26.0%
30-44	25.9%	19.7%	31.9%		19.9%	19.1%	15.9%	17.2%	19.8%	19.3%
45-59	8.4%	12.8%	6.5%		8.6%	18.7%	6.5%	11.5%	7.4%	9.6%
60+	5.0%	9.3%	1.5%		2.8%	10.2%	2.6%	5.6%	2.4%	6.1%
Children 6-12 in school										
girls	84.4%	97.4%	48.1%		58.4%	98.5%	80.8%	93.9%	74.9%	92.1%
boys	68.6%	99.9%	42.6%		62.3%	97.2%	78.2%	92.3%	76.9%	87.5%
Educational level female 20-60										
no education	0.7%	4.5%	0.1%		25.6%	7.3%	28.3%	12.6%	45.2%	60.2%
some primary	4.8%	24.5%	0.0%		32.1%	13.3%	52.4%	16.8%	24.2%	12.4%
some secondary	39.7%	50.5%	27.0%		40.7%	64.2%	15.4%	46.0%	19.9%	15.2%
higher than secondary	54.8%	20.5%	72.9%		1.6%	15.3%	3.9%	24.6%	10.7%	12.3%
Educational level male 20-60										
no education	0.8%	4.8%	0.2%		20.1%	5.0%	20.4%	7.5%	32.6%	37.9%
some primary	4.4%	25.6%	0.0%		28.6%	24.5%	55.7%	19.1%	31.7%	19.6%
some secondary	61.1%	46.8%	36.6%		48.9%	55.5%	18.4%	51.2%	29.5%	27.6%
higher than secondary	33.7%	22.8%	63.2%		2.5%	14.9%	5.5%	22.2%	6.2%	15.0%
Employment rate (18 and older)										
female	76.8%	60.3%	90.2%		8.7%	18.0%	4.8%	11.8%	7.1%	11.6%
male	92.9%	80.5%	96.8%		78.2%	76.9%	41.3%	59.1%	69.4%	70.0%

Table A.2. Summary statistics at the individual level, by country and displacement status

Country	Bangladesh		Chad		Niger		Ethiopia		Uganda	
Displaced	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Age distribution female										
0-14	43.7%	32.2%	45.7%	50.8%	51.5%	51.7%	55.4%	47.9%	52.8%	47.5%
15-29	32.4%	35.5%	25.0%	24.6%	23.0%	23.3%	22.8%	26.5%	25.8%	26.9%
30-44	11.3%	16.3%	16.3%	14.4%	17.3%	14.5%	15.8%	15.0%	13.3%	13.5%
45-59	8.8%	10.2%	8.4%	6.4%	5.3%	7.2%	3.9%	6.4%	4.5%	6.9%
60+	3.7%	5.9%	4.6%	3.7%	2.9%	3.4%	2.1%	4.2%	3.7%	5.2%
Age distribution male										
0-14	48.5%	32.6%	54.4%	55.8%	59.1%	56.2%	62.0%	51.5%	61.5%	49.9%
15-29	29.7%	33.9%	23.8%	19.0%	14.5%	17.9%	22.8%	20.6%	23.1%	27.4%
30-44	8.9%	15.5%	9.2%	13.1%	13.0%	12.4%	9.0%	15.5%	9.1%	11.5%
45-59	7.6%	9.0%	7.7%	7.3%	8.6%	8.0%	4.1%	7.0%	3.1%	6.9%
60+	5.3%	9.0%	4.9%	4.8%	4.8%	5.5%	2.1%	5.4%	3.2%	4.2%
Children 6-12 in school										
girls	77.6%	95.3%	79.0%	44.7%	38.7%	46.7%	78.8%	72.1%	93.7%	94.1%
boys	84.7%	89.8%	83.0%	50.2%	37.1%	51.8%	83.9%	74.3%	93.8%	93.0%
Educational level female 20-60										
no education	90.3%	45.2%	76.4%	83.1%	98.6%	87.3%	73.6%	64.2%	57.8%	41.7%
some primary	7.5%	15.6%	9.5%	5.7%	0.9%	4.7%	15.1%	14.3%	27.0%	34.8%
some secondary	2.1%	36.6%	13.6%	9.7%	0.5%	7.0%	10.8%	16.8%	13.2%	16.9%
higher than secondary	0.1%	2.6%	0.5%	1.5%	0.0%	1.0%	0.6%	4.7%	1.9%	6.6%
Educational level male 20-60										
no education	66.8%	32.2%	56.8%	63.4%	91.0%	75.7%	37.4%	40.7%	21.6%	20.5%
some primary	15.3%	23.8%	12.3%	9.3%	5.8%	9.3%	15.0%	18.3%	32.8%	43.9%
some secondary	17.2%	34.7%	28.3%	21.7%	3.0%	12.4%	41.9%	29.8%	38.3%	26.9%
higher than secondary	0.7%	9.3%	2.6%	5.7%	0.3%	2.7%	5.7%	11.2%	7.3%	8.7%
Employment rate (18 and older)										
female	7.1%	20.3%	51.5%	51.9%	34.7%	47.9%	18.7%	49.6%	34.0%	71.4%
male	41.6%	71.8%	66.2%	77.8%	81.8%	81.3%	30.0%	78.7%	43.4%	80.2%

Table A3. Summary statistics at the household level, by region and displacement status

Region	Latin America		Middle East		Cox's Bazar		Sub-Saharan Africa	
Displaced	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Observations	665	1,206	3,131	3,566	2,493	2,527	6,816	17,275
Living in camps	0.0%	0.0%	37.4%	0.5%	100.0%	0.0%	99.0%	31.9%
Female household head	22.2%	33.2%	12.2%	10.7%	24.5%	15.0%	50.2%	26.4%
Housing and services								
formal dwelling	86.2%	88.0%	69.2%	99.4%			32.8%	68.2%
electricity in dwelling	99.9%	99.9%	99.1%	99.7%	40.3%	83.3%	17.4%	31.5%
improved sanitation	99.6%	89.6%	86.4%	98.4%	2.1%	43.1%	10.4%	8.5%
improved water source	99.9%	97.2%	99.1%	98.7%	0.7%	50.4%	95.0%	71.9%
Asset ownership								
motor vehicle			17.9%	65.0%	0.0%	9.6%	1.0%	7.9%
refrigerator			74.3%	96.7%	0.0%	26.9%	0.4%	3.9%
cookstove			96.3%	98.9%	73.1%	48.5%	2.8%	2.6%
television			90.8%	99.5%	0.0%	27.3%	1.3%	12.3%
radio			9.5%	19.5%			5.4%	21.9%
cell phone			94.8%	97.0%	82.1%	96.1%	48.6%	64.7%

Table A4. Summary statistics at the individual level, by region and displacement status

Region	Latin America		Middle East		Cox's Bazar		Sub-Saharan Africa	
Displaced	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Age distribution female								
0-14	23.5%	28.1%	43.4%	30.1%	43.7%	32.2%	51.2%	49.5%
15-29	33.9%	27.0%	27.5%	29.2%	32.4%	35.5%	24.2%	25.3%
30-44	27.5%	19.2%	18.6%	20.0%	11.3%	16.3%	15.7%	14.3%
45-59	11.6%	15.3%	7.2%	13.1%	8.8%	10.2%	5.6%	6.7%
60+	3.6%	10.4%	3.2%	7.6%	3.7%	5.9%	3.3%	4.1%
Age distribution male								
0-14	30.1%	30.0%	45.2%	32.7%	48.5%	32.6%	59.3%	53.4%
15-29	30.6%	28.2%	26.1%	28.2%	29.7%	33.9%	21.0%	21.2%
30-44	25.9%	19.7%	18.6%	18.5%	8.9%	15.5%	10.1%	13.1%
45-59	8.4%	12.8%	7.5%	13.3%	7.6%	9.0%	5.8%	7.3%
60+	5.0%	9.3%	2.6%	7.3%	5.3%	9.0%	3.7%	5.0%
Children 6-12 in school								
girls	84.4%	97.4%	71.4%	94.8%	77.6%	95.3%	72.6%	64.4%
boys	68.6%	99.9%	72.5%	92.3%	84.7%	89.8%	74.5%	67.4%
Educational level female 20-60								
no education	0.4%	4.5%	33.4%	25.0%	90.3%	45.2%	77.1%	69.2%
some primary	2.2%	24.5%	35.8%	14.1%	7.5%	15.6%	12.6%	14.6%
some secondary	33.0%	50.5%	25.3%	43.6%	2.1%	36.6%	9.5%	12.7%
higher than secondary	64.4%	20.5%	5.5%	17.3%	0.1%	2.6%	0.7%	3.5%
Educational level male 20-60								
no education	0.4%	4.8%	24.8%	15.9%	66.8%	32.2%	54.6%	48.9%
some primary	1.8%	25.6%	37.2%	21.3%	15.3%	23.8%	15.2%	20.5%
some secondary	46.8%	46.8%	33.3%	45.6%	17.2%	34.7%	26.5%	23.2%
higher than secondary	51.0%	22.8%	4.7%	17.3%	0.7%	9.3%	3.7%	7.3%
Employment rate (18 and older)								
female	76.8%	60.3%	6.8%	13.8%	7.1%	20.3%	34.7%	55.2%
male	92.9%	80.5%	63.0%	68.7%	41.6%	71.8%	55.4%	79.5%

