Building Inclusive Education Systems for Refugees

Background

In line with the Agenda for Sustainable Development, and especially Sustainable Development Goal 4, access to quality education is essential for all children and youth, and offers refugee children and youth in particular a stable and safe environment within which to learn, grow and thrive. Globally, however, refugee children and youth struggle to reach the classroom – 48% of refugee children were estimated to be out of school in 2020-21, with lower enrolment rates at secondary and tertiary levels (UNHCR 2022a; UNICEF 2022a).[1] Low rates of educational engagement for refugee learners are heavily influenced by a lack of durable solutions and the lack of continuity across different educational pathways, with often limited access past primary school. This is all the more concerning as the number of refugee children worldwide has increased dramatically (UNHCR, 2023) by an estimated 116% in the period between 2010 and 2020 (UNICEF, 2022b).

Educational provision for refugee learners tends to involve a patchwork of access to national systems in their host country, parallel provision (largely in camp-based settings), and varied types of non-formal provision. Approaches to securing education provision for refugee learners over the last decade have shifted since the advent of UNHCR's Education Strategy 2012-2016. Policy and programming has moved from parallel provision to an emphasis on the inclusion of refugees in national education systems (Dryden-Peterson 2016, 2017).

These changes in educational provision have also been influenced by broader trends in displacement, including:

- Alongside the increase in the total numbers of refugees globally, a growing number of refugees are now living in urban areas in close proximity with host communities rather than in relatively isolated camps, which widens opportunities for refugees to be included in national education systems;[2]

- An increasingly protracted average length of displacement means that many refugee children spend their entire school cycle in a host country with ittle to no prospect of returning to their home countries;

- Humanitarian agencies and host countries recognize the high and unsustainable costs associated with having parallel systems in place, especially considering the average length of displacement.

These trends reflect the needs for effective durable solutions, such as local integration with rights fully realized. Providing permanent legal status and permitting the right to work, for example, go hand in hand with realizing the right to education, as participation in national education systems prepares young people to work in and contribute to host country economies and societies. Educational inclusion can also increase the safety of children and youth and promote other opportunities for the integration of refugee children and youth and their families into host communities, ranging from strengthening language skills to forming social networks, building social cohesion, and constructively engaging in civic life. In this regard, the commitments and actions of host governments' including policy and legislative provisions as well as financial allocations to include refugees in national systems (e.g., those government responding to the Syrian and Venezuela situations) should be commended.

However, despite the paramount importance of educational access for refugee learners, a strong evidence base on what works to increase inclusion into national education systems for refugees is lacking. This important gap provides, in turn, the common impetus for the studies commissioned by UNICEF Innocenti, UNHCR, and UNESCO to further investigate these cross-cutting areas of refugee education and integration.

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1 Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, roughly half of refugee children were out of school (UNHCR 2022a).

2 UNESCO (2019) estimates that around 39% of refugees globally lived in camps or collective centres with these settlements being most common in Africa.

Key Definitions Relating to the Inclusion of Refugee Learners in Education

Though there is no internationally agreed definition, inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems commonly refers to their participation in publicly funded education institutions on the same basis as local students at all levels, from pre-primary through to tertiary. Inclusion is often considered to mean 'no better, no worse' in relation to the quality of teachers, school infrastructure, funding levels, and access to learning resources and other material (UNHCR 2022).

Overview of Brief

This brief advances knowledge on the current state of inclusion of refugee learners. It is based on several separate but complementary studies carried out by UNICEF Innocenti, UNHCR, and UNESCO, and was developed to share common inter-agency findings, gaps, and learnings. Taken together, these studies collectively seek to understand what has worked to promote inclusion in national education systems from multiple perspectives (e.g., policy and data), and to identify remaining barriers and challenges to effective inclusion for each.

Overview of Research Studies Underpinning This Brief

UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight (UNICEF Innocenti) commissioned research by the ODI (formerly the Overseas Development Institute) to investigate the evidence base on refugee education inclusion, including factors both underpinning and hindering effective policies and practices related to educational inclusion. This forthcoming report, entitled 'Inclusion of Refugee Learners in National Education Systems', includes a rapid review of literature, undertaken between July and October 2022; interviews with global stakeholders; and in-depth country case studies in Ecuador and Rwanda developed through a review of documents and in-country stakeholder interviews including representatives of UN agencies, civil society, and government representatives. This research builds on a flagship UNICEF (2022a) report entitled 'Education, Children on the Move and Inclusion' that presented lessons learned and scalable solutions to increase education inclusion.

UNESCO has two forthcoming reports. The first, 'Paving Pathways for Inclusion: A Global Overview of Refugee Education Data' carried out a comprehensive review of publicly available data collection exercises on refugee education in the top 35 refugee hosting countries in 2021 based on a Framework for Refugee Inclusion in Education Data Systems. This assesses the extent to which we can measure the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations (FDPs), especially refugees, in education across these contexts. The second report 'Paving Pathways for Inclusion: Towards evidence-based policy making for refugee education conducts a policy analysis based on research conducted in 7 case study countries (Chad, Colombia, Ecuador, Jordan, Pakistan, Peru, Uganda) to explore the enablers and constraints for policy and data inclusion across these contexts.

UNHCR commissioned research conducted by Cambridge Education to better understand education data systems and identify challenges associated with including refugee and displaced learners into learning assessments and EMIS in key case study countries (Cameroon, Chad and Mauritania). The project involved a combination of document review, secondary data review, and primary qualitative data collection through key informant interviews in the case study countries.
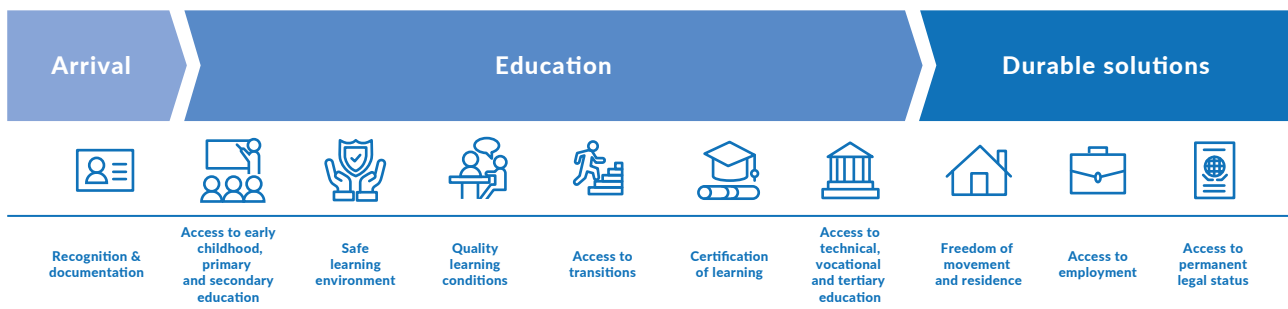
The following sections summarise key findings from each study, and look across this portfolio of research to explore a variety of overarching questions:

1. What evidence exists of effective policies and practices on the inclusion of refugees in national education (including data) systems?

   a. How are these policies and practices enacted in diverse contexts?

   b. What are the facilitating factors to support case study countries to report on refugee learning outcomes? What changes would be required to ensure EMIS can track individual children?

   c. How are the different existing education data systems structured from the school level to the national level?

   d. How does EMIS interact with other education data sources to provide a fuller picture of refugee education?

2. What factors have underpinned these effective policies and practices?

3. What factors have challenged the inclusion of refugees in national education systems (including data and policy)?

   a. What are the challenges associated with including refugees and displaced learners into EMIS?

4. What evidence is there of efforts to address intersecting inequalities to boost the inclusion of particularly marginalised groups of refugee learners?

Effective policies and practices for refugee inclusion in education systems

From a policy perspective, the inclusion of refugees in national education systems requires a holistic approach across key areas, beginning at the time of arrival in the host country. The pathway presented in Figure 1 highlights these areas and indicates the policy elements needed for full inclusion.

Figure 1. **Key policy areas for the inclusion of refugees in education systems**

Arrival	Education						Durable solutions		
Recognition & documentation	Access to early childhood, primary and secondary education	Safe learning environment	Quality learning conditions	Access to transitions	Certification of learning	Access to technical, vocational and tertiary education	Freedom of movement and residence	Access to employment	Access to permanent legal status

To ensure the full inclusion of refugee learners, national policy frameworks must go beyond granting access to schools and learning institutions to guarantee safe learning environments and the conditions in which high levels of learning can occur. This includes providing access to pedagogical, psychosocial, and language support. Furthermore, refugees should be able to progress through all levels of the school cycle, validate their studies (including non-formal education), and gain access to technical, vocational and tertiary education. Given the increasingly protracted nature of displacement, there is a need for policies to address inclusion in the host society beyond education, including access to the labour market and long-term, stable residence. Policies in each of these areas directly impact how refugees participate in education and their ability to use what they learn to build a future.

At the micro level, a variety of positive practices for shifting to more inclusive approaches of refugee educational inclusion have emerged in the last decade in support of the above areas of educational access, as overviewed in Table 1. Key areas of inclusion where positive practice is still needed on a large scale include access to higher education and linkages between education and durable solutions.

Table 1. Positive shifts towards refugee educational inclusion: 2012-2022

Type of setting/ situation	Positive Shift since UNHCR's 2012-2016 Global Education Strategy	Main approaches and illustrative examples
Parallel provision e.g., schools in refugee camps	Shift to using host country curriculum, assessment, and certification systems.	• Training of refugee teachers to teach host country curriculum. • Use of national curricula in non-formal education centres .
Non-formal provision	Absorption of learners into national education system.	• Training of host country teachers to teach speakers of other languages. • Ensuring non-formal provision is aligned with host country curricula.
Formal provision, e.g. mainstream public schools and learning institutes	Including refugee learners who lack fluency in host country language of instruction or who have missed out on key learning.	• Training of host country teachers to support speakers of other languages • Language preparation before entering schools or as additional support. • Remedial programmes to allow students to catch up on lost learning.
	Including refugee learners from different cultures and/or who may have experienced trauma.	• Cultural orientation for teachers. • Training in basic mental health and psychosocial support and/or non-xenophobic practice.

Barriers and Enablers of Refugee Inclusion in Education

Research on the trajectories of refugee inclusion in select low and middle-income countries have identified a range of barriers and enablers for refugee inclusion in national education systems, overviewed below.

1. Policy and legal frameworks
Positive legal and policy frameworks, including outside the education sector (e.g., documentation and recognition of status, right to work, freedom of movement, access to permanent legal status) provide a basis for durable solutions for refugees. These frameworks may also remove administrative barriers to enrolment, such as requirements to provide identity documents or certification of previous studies; reduce financial costs associated with schooling; and enhance employment prospects, countering potential disincentives to school attendance, particularly among older adolescents.

Barriers to the implementation of policy, including administrative barriers to enrolment:

- Our research finds that the implementation of policy is often impeded by a lack of knowledge relating to refugees at the subnational and district levels of government, which can result in incoherence in policies related to access to education;

- For individual students, enrolment constraints are often documentation-based, as alternative documents may not be accepted, or on account of lack of legal status to remain impedes school enrolment;

- There is a lack of systematic evidence to inform the scalability of effective approaches to inclusion. Educational inclusion initiatives tend to be small scale and are rarely evaluated, with few examples of large-scale follow-up to successful educational inclusion pilots. This can make it challenging for the growing evidence to be used as a basis for wide-scale policy change.

Recommendations for strengthening policy and frameworks relating to educational inclusion

To national governments:
- Monitor and raise awareness of the implementation of explicit laws and policies to enable the inclusion of refugees within the education system from national to individual school level;

- When inclusive policies for refugees are not explicit, framing refugees as part of the larger set of marginalised groups may help facilitate their inclusion;

- Take a whole system-wide perspective to policy to ensure that policies outside the education sector are not creating barriers to access and progression;

To national governments, donors, and humanitarian and development partners:
- Invest in using data to ensure inclusion and building evidence on what works to scale educational inclusion initiatives;

- Invest in better and timely evidence to inform effective action. The educational inclusion of Ukrainian refugee children who have received temporary protection in Europe and elsewhere is an important exception to many refugee experiences in host countries, and one which is now fairly well-documented (UNICEF 2022c). Learning from this situation through robust research and tracking of student retention, wellbeing, and educational outcomes can offer valuable evidence of effective approaches.

2. Political Will and Coordination

The existence of political will to integrate refugees and plan for long-term solutions from the onset of crises influences the development of policies and practices that prioritize education as a key component of the refugee response. Ministers' and officials' previous experience with refugee inclusion and/or displacement has been shown to play an important role in driving inclusive policies and practices. Where coordination between Ministries of Education and relevant migration or crisis-management departments is effective, this has helped ensure that education has been given a high priority as part of refugee response programmes. Challenges contributing to lack of political will and negative perception of refugees by policymakers and the public.

Barriers related to public support and political will

- A consistent finding across our countries of research is that xenophobic sentiment and negative attitudes towards refugees can hinder efforts towards policy inclusion and the implementation of inclusive practices. This includes both the political will of elected officials to further refugee inclusion in education and other areas of practice, and the level of public support for displaced people, which collectively influence decision-making processes.

Recommendations for increasing political will and coordination

To national governments, donors, and humanitarian and development partners:
- Implement awareness-raising campaigns to challenge prejudices and highlight refugee contributions to the host society;

- Identify and work with key political champions for refugee education.

- Engage in advocacy efforts with policymakers and stakeholders to emphasize the benefits of including refugees in national education systems;

3. International coordination

Effective coordination at national, regional and international levels is critical to ensure efficient use of funding and coherent outputs for all children. International cooperation, along with technical assistance and financial contributions supporting government-led plans and assistance frameworks, is vital to ensure the utilization of capacities to enable inclusive policies and implementation plans.

Barriers contributing to the lack of coordination between stakeholders

- A key finding that emerged from our research is that the absence of good coordination mechanisms for data collection on refugee education leads to the duplication of efforts across humanitarian partners and often means that existing humanitarian data cannot be used to inform government responses

Recommendations for strengthening international coordination on refugee educational inclusion

To national governments, donors, and humanitarian and development partners:
- Inform new responses by drawing on pre-existing knowledge and skills as well as existing coordination platforms (e.g., Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, Regional Monitoring Framework for People on the Move);

To national donors and humanitarian and development partners:
- Increase international technical assistance, accompaniment, and financial contributions to work with government-led coordination mechanisms (e.g., Rwanda, Ecuador);

- Capitalize on pre-existing coordination platforms with humanitarian partners and governments to reduce fragmentation in data collected and improve data sharing.

4. Building education systems' capacity for refugee inclusion

Existing efforts to strengthen education systems, which enhance overall accessibility, safety, and the quality of education in refugee-hosting countries (e.g., reducing the chance of insufficient school places, facilities, and ICT equipment) can provide a framework into which additional support for refugee learners can be integrated. This can help prevent overstretching existing infrastructure and improve learning for all. Furthermore, considering both the local population as well as refugees in programming can help prevent the growth of resentment and xenophobia and assist in providing support to refugee learners with intersecting vulnerabilities, such as adolescent parents or indigenous learners experiencing additional language barriers. Strengthening education data systems at the same time ensures that refugee learners are visible, that their progress is captured, and that their needs are met.

Barriers including insufficient school places, facilities, and ICT equipment.

- Additional/upgrading classrooms, WASH facilities, learning materials and ICT equipment is often needed in classes;

- A further challenge is that in some countries have automated allocation systems that may place students in far-away schools or learning institutes which necessitates transport. This compounds existing access challenges.

> 'You need to invest in bricks and mortar. You need classrooms. You need teachers and you need equipment in the classrooms. That's going to support the learning and unless we invest in that we won't be able to move the needle. It's that simple. (Key Informant, Donor – UNICEF Innocenti forthcoming)

Recommendations for strengthening education systems' capacity for inclusion

To national governments, donors, and humanitarian and development partners:
- Integrate refugees where systems are capacitated to respond and work further on quality improvements where refugees are present (e.g., Rwanda);

- Raise awareness of refugee inclusion throughout education systems, with a focus on including the education workforce and other stakeholders at district level (e.g., Ecuador), as well as broader awareness campaigns (i.e., back to school);

- Invest in the improvement of school infrastructure to facilitate inclusion;

- Invest in data system capacity to ensure that refugee learners are visible and their needs can be addressed through policy.

5. Financing for refugees and refugee hosting countries

Linked to building system capacity, sustainable long-term financing is critical to ensuring responses to refugee learners look beyond humanitarian responses and take a long-term inclusion perspective. The World Bank and UNHCR estimate that enrolling all refugee children in school would cost 4.85 billion USD a year or 1,051 USD per refugee on average (World Bank & UNHCR 2021). Previous work by Save the Children identified a funding gap of 2.4 billion USD for the education of refugee children (Save the Children, 2018).

Barriers related to insufficient financing at household, domestic, and international levels

- Funding shortfalls are substantial and undermine the expansion of educational provision, while effective practices emerge when more substantial finance is available;

- There is also limited public-private sector partnership in funding for educational inclusion;

- At the household level, there is often a lack of affordability for transport, uniforms, school supplies (access to books, stationery, and digital devices) and to make school contributions.

Recommendations to increase financing to support refugee educational inclusion

To donors and humanitarian and development partners:
- Support governments and other education stakeholders with sustainable financing to support the development of system capacity (including beyond education, e.g., through cash transfers, creation of employment opportunities, etc.) to facilitate refugee inclusion;

To national governments, donors, and humanitarian and development partners:
- Strengthen refugee households' assets base and ability to withstand shocks, such as through increasing social protection coverage for refugees, can positively impact school retention rates. Relatedly, the inclusion of refugee households in social protection programmes can help address cost barriers such as learning materials, uniforms, transport, and food at school.

6. Discrimination

Existing research shows that shared language and socio-cultural similarities or, in their absence, effective language support for refugees and recognition of different cultural backgrounds can help facilitate refugee learners' social integration. In contrast, discrimination, xenophobia, and wider insecurity can undermine refugee learners' safety in or while travelling to school, and is often particularly acute for adolescent girls at risk of gender-based violence.

Barriers including discrimination, xenophobia, and lack of safety

- Bullying and harassment of refugee learners, along with insecurity, undermines many refugee students' sense of safety. The basis of such discrimination often lies in perceptions by nationals that resources and initiatives are unfairly targeted to refugees rather than to nationals. These experiences may be compounded by discrimination relating to other characteristics such as gender or sexual orientation;

Recommendations to combat the discrimination of refugee learners

To national governments, donors, and humanitarian and development partners:
- Support aspects of shared language and culture (e.g., Venezuelans in Ecuador), and look beyond nationality and refugee statistics to identify common and core vulnerabilities that need to be addressed;

- Ensure that refugee learners have mechanisms to report bullying and discrimination and that processes are in place for support and follow-up (e.g., Peru).

For more on refugee inclusion, see UNICEF's 2022 report, 'Education, Children on the Move and Inclusion in Education', UNICEF-Innocenti's forthcoming report ''Inclusion of Refugee Learners in National Education Systems', and the forthcoming UNESCO publication 'Paving Pathways to Refugee Inclusion: Towards evidence-based policymaking for refugee education' which provide more information and further in-depth positive practices and enabling factors (UNICEF 2022a; UNESCO forthcoming).

Policy-data nexus: Pathways for inclusion

Data on refugee learners is critical for informing effective policymaking and for measuring policy implementation. Along the pathway for inclusion presented in Figure 1, key data points may provide a means of measuring the implementation of inclusive policies for refugee education. For example, access to schools may be monitored through data on enrolment or attendance; access to learning may be measured through learning assessments; access to transitions and certification of learning may be monitored through data on primary and secondary leaving examinations; and access to higher education may be monitored through data on tertiary enrolment.

Making this linkage requires that refugees are included in both policy and data systems, and that they can be identified in data collection exercises—for example, through information on protection status or nationality. Case studies have revealed promising practices for successful inclusion in both policy and data systems:

- In Jordan, the Ministry of Education collects data on enrolment by nationality, allowing for the identification of Syrian refugee students in national EMIS data. This data has been used to inform policies such as the 2018-2022 Education Strategic Plan (ESP),[3] which promotes the inclusion of refugee learners in national schools.

- In Colombia, a resolution issued by the Colombian Institute for Education Evaluation (ICFES)[4] granted Venezuelan students the ability to register for the Saber 11 examination, which measures formal learning achievement for those that complete secondary education, using their Special Stay Permit (PEP) number or a unique code provided by the Ministry of Education for students in irregular status. Using this information, the ICFES collects data on the results of Venezuelan students, which may provide an indication of learning outcomes of Venezuelans in comparison with their Colombian peers and on the number of students who qualify to certify their studies (although only students in regular status may receive certification). This data is available to the public via the Colombian Observatory for Venezuelan Migration (OMV).[5]

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3 Ministry of Education, Education Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022.

4 Colombian Institute for Education Evaluation (ICFES), Resolution 624 of 2019.

5 National Planning Department, Colombian Observatory for Venezuelan Migration (OMV).

Addressing intersecting inequalities to include particularly marginalized groups

The needs of refugee learners are diverse, reflecting their experiences of flight and seeking refuge, the specific context in which they now live (levels of safety, provision of infrastructure, and so on) their prior learning and skills, their family situation (particularly financial resources and familial responsibilities), and aspects of their identities (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, and other characteristics). These are complex sets of interactions, and it is important not to over-simplify or label whole groups as vulnerable, without fully understanding the factors that underpin marginalisation, or recognising diversity within a country. Despite this reality, most of the literature on inclusion of refugee learners focuses on the level of education systems, and the kinds of large-scale adjustments that are needed to shift from parallel systems or to train teachers to teach a new curriculum. This illustrates the need for more research and strong policies relating to both education and inclusion that account for the intersecting inequalities of many refugee learners.

Knowledge gaps on refugee inclusion in education systems

There is a critical need for greater understanding of how best to support refugee learners in their education to break potential cycles of marginalisation and lead to better lives and livelihoods of those forced to leave their homes in the most devastating of circumstances. Key knowledge gaps and ways they could be addressed include:

Knowledge gaps	Recommendations
Data gaps in understanding the reality of refugee education, especially beyond access (UNESCO-UIS/UNHCR 2022). While there have been significant efforts by the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons, and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS) to standardise profiling, the implementation of these in national education systems is a work in progress. There is a lack of up-to date, granular data in many refugee-hosting contexts on: enrolment, retention, drop-out and progression of refugee learners through different levels of education systems. Further, learning outcomes on diverse refugee groups and systems are rarely discussed in the literature (for an overview of the existing evidence, see UNHCR et al. 2022).	**Strengthen inclusion of refugees in national education management information systems (EMIS) and harmonize data standards**, keeping in mind any protection concerns related to disaggregation. There is a need to harmonize and utilise all existing data sources (e.g., multi-sector needs assessments, household surveys, learning assessments) to ensure that the unique needs of refugees are captured. The current practice of disaggregating by nationality in EMIS in some countries is helpful, however it is not necessarily scalable to contexts where there have been long-term migrant flows between countries. Further, increased participation of refugee learners in national assessment and certification systems should facilitate a more accurate understanding of refugee students' learning outcomes and any specific barriers they face.
A lack of impact evaluations and in-depth analytical reports, particularly of system-wide/large-scale initiatives to strengthen refugee inclusion. There are very few impact evaluations targeting the effectiveness of policies and initiatives. Further, policy reports and studies tend to be descriptive, with little analysis of the factors that have underpinned decisions and adoption of different approaches, meaning that discussion of political factors is often absent – despite their centrality in programming decisions and educational outcomes.	**Strengthen the evaluation of different approaches and initiatives to boost inclusion and help inform national programming;** this is particularly the case if quantitative EMIS data, data from learning assessments and national exams, and qualitative evidence from students, parents and school staff are included in evaluations.

Gaps	Recommendations
A lack of impact evaluations and in-depth analytical reports, particularly of system-wide/large-scale initiatives to strengthen refugee inclusion. There are very few impact evaluations targeting the effectiveness of policies and initiatives. Further, policy reports and studies tend to be descriptive, with little analysis of the factors that have underpinned decisions and adoption of different approaches, meaning that discussion of political factors is often absent – despite their centrality in programming decisions and educational outcomes.	Strengthen mixed methods analysis of impacts of different approaches and the factors underlying them to help identify transferable and context-specific elements of success. This was the case with AIR-UNICEF-Innocenti's impact evaluation of Min Ila, a cash transfer program for displaced Syrian children, which found that the program increased school attendance and improved children's food consumption and health, among other positive outcomes (UNICEF-AIR 2018). Important exceptions include a theoretical framework placing national education systems within the humanitarian-development divide (Carvalho & Haybano 2023).
A dearth of studies going beyond primary and secondary education and introducing students' and parents' perspectives. Among the thematic gaps identified in literature are effective ways to support refugee inclusion in pre-primary, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), tertiary education and adult education outside of high-income contexts, use of ICT, and accurate data on financial allocations to support inclusion in national education systems. Furthermore, few policy-focused studies draw on primary research, meaning that the voices of refugee students and their parents are overlooked, resulting in analyses of systems and 'top-line' case studies and masking some of the complexity of refugee inclusion.	Increase the number of studies focused on these areas to strengthen the overall evidence base on refugees' educational inclusion and contribute to a better understanding of where host country, humanitarian, and development programming should begin or continue to invest in supporting refugee learners.

Data Availability for Refugee Education

UNESCO's (forthcoming) report systematically mapped and reviewed 1,109 questionnaires from 621 data collection exercises in the top 35 low- and middle-income refugee hosting countries in 2021, covering 21 million (80%) refugees. Overall, the report finds that the availability of data for refugee education is low, but in line with UIS & UNHCR (2022), it found that data on access was far more readily available than data on quality and safety outcomes. However, even with access, data on progression and access to higher education was very limited.

Overall, the work finds that while progress on inclusion of refugees in education data systems has been made, there is still a long way to go. UNESCO recommends the following in order to make refugees visible and more easily identifiable in data sources:

- Disaggregate data whenever possible:

  → Including refugees into existing data collection exercises by working with organisations such as EGRISS and national governments to include and disaggregate refugees and other forcibly displaced populations into national data systems;

  → Including profiling questions to disaggregate refugee status in the above assessments would greatly improve data availability;

- Use all available data sources: By making metadata and questionnaires for all data collection exercises publicly available when possible so that, even if the data is not publicly available, other actors can understand what data has been collected and how to reduce duplication. This also facilitates the use of diverse data sources for understanding refugee education;

- Improve the quality of data by developing shared definitions and indicators: Ensuring that shared indicators, with standardized definitions and methodologies, are used within national data systems across partners. This would improve comparability of data and facilitate uptake into policymaking processes.

Conclusion

This brief provides a current snapshot of effective policy and practices in the inclusion of refugees in education systems. There is a critical need to increase the understanding of both those leading decisions on policies and programming relating to refugee educational inclusion and those interacting with refugee learners directly within schools and learning institutes on how best to support refugee learners in their education. Understanding and building on existing good practices, while also continuing to address key barriers and gaps, is an important means to do this, and in turn, to break potential cycles of marginalisation and to help refugee children lead better lives in and after displacement. The findings presented here can inform host government, humanitarian, and development policy and programming and in so doing contribute to changing the reality of educational exclusion into one of inclusion that better prepares refugees around the world for durable solutions.

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Endnotes

[1] UNESCO (2019) estimates that around 39% of refugees globally lived in camps or collective centres with these settlements being most common in Africa.

[2] Data from 2018 show that 78% of refugees were living in protracted situations, up from 66% the previous year (UNHCR, 2019).

[1] Ministry of Education, Education Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022.

[2] Colombian Institute for Education Evaluation (ICFES), Resolution 624 of 2019.

[3] National Planning Department, Colombian Observatory for Venezuelan Migration (OMV).