



Returnees from the Tule indigenous group in Colombia's Chocó region stand in front of the community office in the Arquía reservation. Colombia has one the largest populations of internally displaced persons in the world.



Demographic Characteristics and Types of Location

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS across various categories for persons of concern have experienced dynamic changes that are worthy of analysis. Unfortunately, demographic data has been partially and unevenly available across the countries and various categories of the populations of concern to UNHCR.

The importance of disaggregated demographic data cannot be overemphasized. For instance, demographic data can provide guidance and inferences to determine growth rates of numbers of persons of concern within a specific location over a given period of time. Growth rates in totals of persons of concern can help effective planning in the areas of schools and shelters. The number of shelters and expansion of school facilities in the locations of persons of concerns, for example, are impacted by the growth rate, among other factors. Similarly, health care interventions and self-sufficient projects are normally based on the growth rates of the persons of concern.

Demographic information, particularly on children, is crucial in providing the required levels of protection and assistance. Disaggregated data can potentially provide a basis for identifying unaccompanied minors and vulnerable persons with specific

needs in order to better provide appropriate interventions.

This chapter analyzes demographic trends for various categories of persons of concern. An analysis of demographic trends is not complete without including data on the sex, age and location of the persons of concern. Therefore, the chapter first provides an overview of the current availability of demographic data. Second, it reviews detailed demographic characteristics with respect to disaggregated data by sex and age groups. Third, it analyzes data based on the various types of locations, in order to identify gaps in the delivery of protection, assistance and monitoring in UNHCR operations. Finally, the pattern of demographic change of refugee children over time is analyzed.

Disaggregated data on persons of concern are mostly available in areas where UNHCR has an operational role. As a result, sex and age breakdowns of the various population of concern are not available in some countries that supply such demographic data. In particular, it is lacking in several industrialized countries where information on persons of concern is mainly collected by governments. Similarly, demographic information on the types of locations where UNHCR beneficiaries reside is unevenly available. The lack of re-

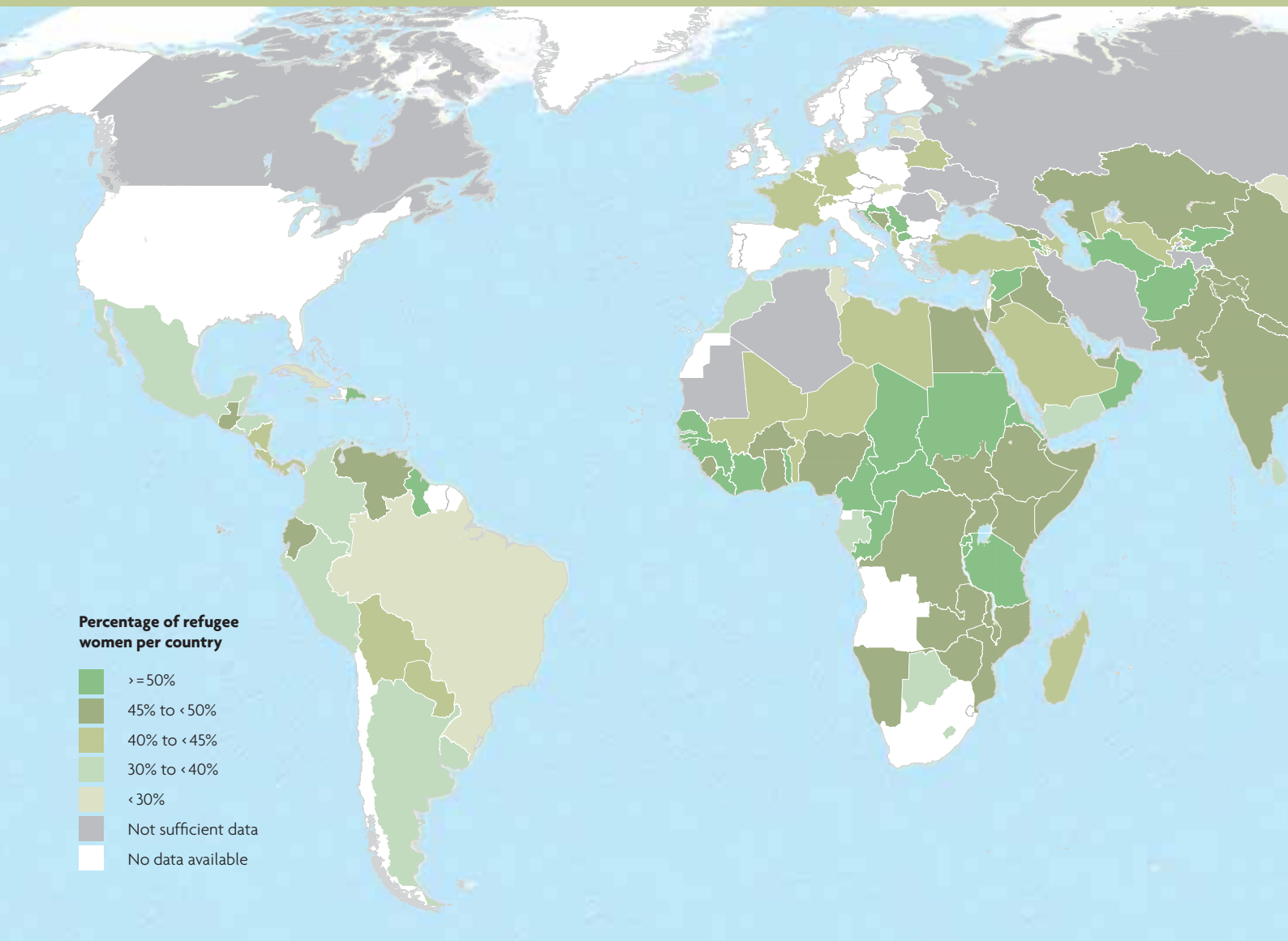
quired data makes an effective and meaningful analysis more difficult.

UNHCR continues to encourage governments to improve their data collection with a focus on providing disaggregated data. It is important to note that over the past two years there has been significant progress in this regard. For instance, 155 countries provided disaggregated data in 2011 as compared to 140 in 2010. It is hoped that this will continue and cover all the categories of persons where disaggregated demographic data are partial and uneven.

SEX AND AGE

The total population of concern to UNHCR recorded at the end of 2011 was 35.4 million. Demographic data broken down by sex was made available for 24.4 million persons in 155 countries or territories. The availability of data on sex and age varied across the various types of population categories. It was high for refugees, IDPs, returned refugees, and others of concern, but low for asylum-seekers, IDP returnees, and stateless persons.

Significant regional variation in the availability of demographic data was also noted. With the exception of southern Africa and the central Africa and Great Lakes regions, information on the sex breakdown was available for more than 50 per cent of all persons of



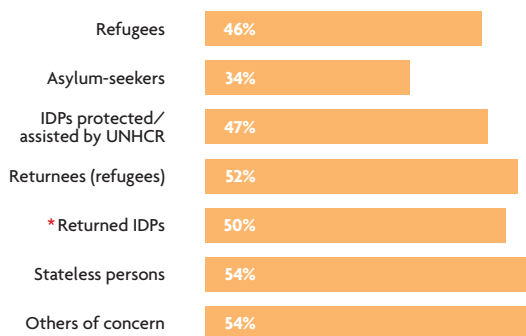
concern. Southern africa recorded the lowest percentage (20%) in terms of availability of demographic data by sex. In the western africa region, de-

mographic data broken down by sex was available for all persons of concern (100%). Similarly, data availability was high in the americas and the east

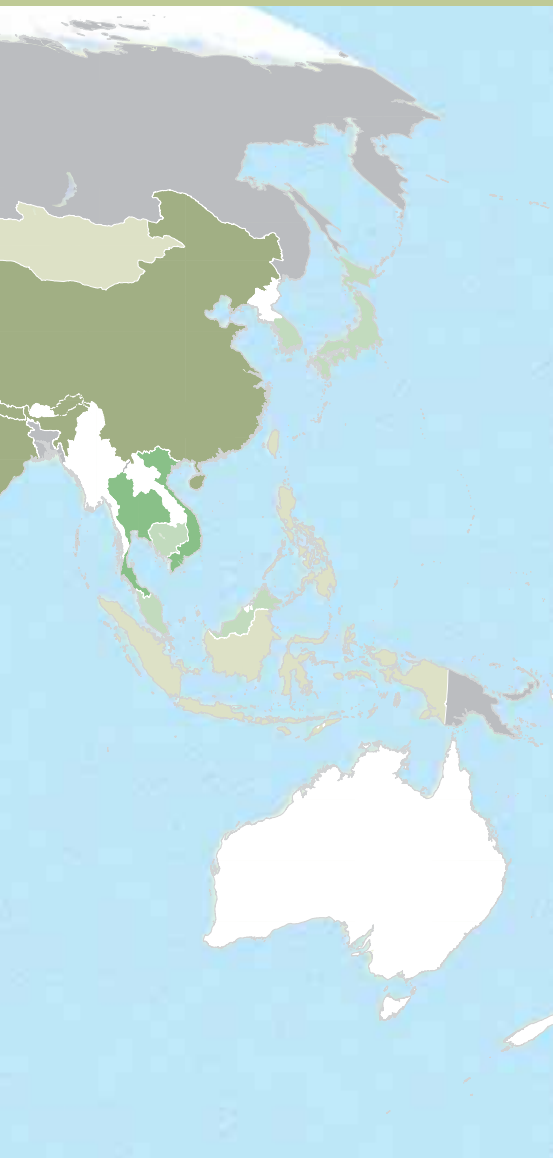
and horn of africa with 90 and 83 per cent, respectively, while the middle east and north africa and asia and pacific regions showed 73 and 65 per cent coverage respectively. By the end of 2011, availability of demographic data in europe broken down by sex for all persons of concern stood at 53 per cent.

According to available data (covering 24.4 million people), on average, women and girls constituted 49 per cent of persons of concern to UNHCR. They accounted for 48 per cent of refugees, and half of all IDPs and returnees (former refugees) at the end of 2011. In general, there were no significant differences between males and females within each age cohort of the refugee population. The average percentage of females in all age cohorts of the refugee population remains unchanged at 49 per cent compared to 2010.

Fig. V.1 Percentage of children by population category | end-2011



* Indicative only due to low data coverage (around 25%).



Information on age breakdown was available for 15.8 million (45%) of the 35.4 million persons of concern to UNHCR. The data coverage was relatively high for refugees (67%) and others of concern (81%). Children below the age of 18 years represented 47 per cent, including 13 per cent below the age of five. Forty-eight per cent were between 18 and 59 years old and 5 per cent were 60 years and above.

The percentage of children recorded at the end of 2011 varied among the various population categories. For instance, 46 per cent of refugees and 34 per cent of asylum-seekers were children below 18 years of age. There has been a marginal increase in the percentage of refu-

gee children from 44 per cent in 2010 to 46 per cent in 2011. Similarly, the percentage of asylum-seeking children has increased modestly from 31 per cent in 2010 to 34 per cent in 2011. Overall, the available data indicated that roughly half of all persons of concern to UNHCR (49%) were girls below the age of 18. Figure V.1 depicts the percentage of children by population category.

The availability of information by age breakdown was particularly limited with respect to developed countries in Europe, North America and Oceania. The figures are therefore not fully representative of the entire population under UNHCR's responsibility.

TABLE V.1 Accommodation of refugees | end-2011

Type of accommodation	No. of refugees	Distribution	% women	% children
Camp	2,596,000	34%	50%	56%
Centre	333,800	4%	48%	45%
Individual accommodation	4,295,200	56%	48%	43%
Settlement	494,300	6%	50%	56%
Sub-total	7,719,300	100%	48%	46%
Unknown	2,685,500			
Grand Total	10,404,800			

Types of location

UNHCR provides statistical breakdowns on the various types of locations for its persons of concern. This type of information is mostly available for refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs. Stateless persons are the least represented category for which data is available in view of the difficulty of identifying this population. In 2011, unhr offices reported the following types of locations: camps, collective centres, individual accommodation (private), settlements, or undefined (the denomination used if the type was unclear). Offices reported on the type of location for 900 individual locations covering some 13 million persons of concern.⁶⁶ The available evidence shows that refugee camps and settlements

are mostly located in rural areas while refugees residing in individual accommodation are found mainly in urban areas. Sub-saharan africa is host to the overwhelming majority of refugees residing in camps. IDPs (including returned IDPs), however, most often reside in rural areas.

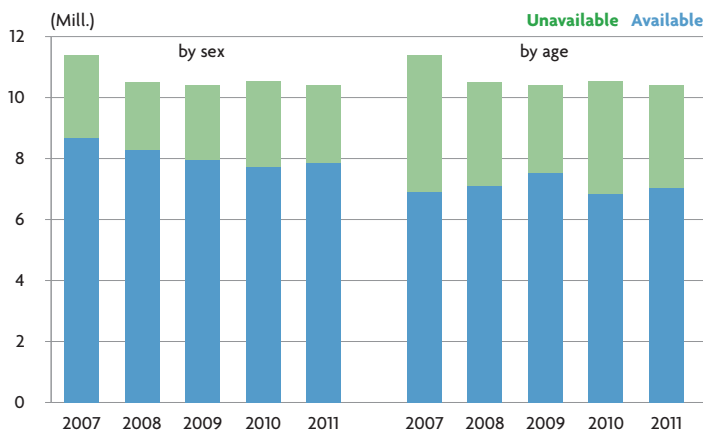
Of the 10.4 million refugees recorded at the end of 2011, the type of accommodation was known for 7.7 million, representing 74 per cent. This implies that the type of accommodation is unknown for approximately one-quarter of the world's refugees. Where data is available, evidence shows that 56 per cent of refugees are residing in individual accommodations and 34 per cent in camps.

Only small percentages are known to reside in collective centres (4%) or settlements (6%).

In terms of gender distribution across the types of accommodation, there is no significant difference between refugee men and women. Similarly, refugee children are fairly equally distributed among the different types of accommodations. The percentage of children in camps and in settlements is both 56 per cent, slightly higher than that of children in centres and individual accommodation (see table V.1).

⁶⁶ Although UNHCR offices reported information on locations of a total of 30.2 million persons of concern, this information was either unclear or a mixture of types in the case of 17.2 million persons (mostly IDPs).

Fig. V.2 Availability of demographic data of refugees | 2007-2011



In focus: demographic trends of refugee children

As outlined above, the availability of demographic data on refugees is limited and does not permit an analysis of demographic trends at the global level. Moreover, the data tends to be positively skewed towards developing countries, for two reasons. First, roughly 80 per cent of the global refugee population resides in the developing world. Second, most of the demographic information available to UNHCR is limited to developing countries. Therefore, the analysis of demographic trends discussed in this section does not fully represent the global number of refugee children. Full coverage of sex-aggregated data is short by an average of 24 per cent in the last five years, while the corresponding value for age-disaggregated data is 33 per cent. Figure V.2 illustrates the availability of refugee data disaggregated by sex and age. The total number of refugee children for whom demographic data exist has fluctuated between 3.0 and 3.2 million per year during the period under consideration.

In absolute terms, both the female and male populations of refugee children have experienced fluctuations in their numbers between 2007 and 2011. In relative terms, however, their number has remained fairly stable (see Figure V.3). The available data indicate

that the percentage of male refugee children has consistently surpassed that of female refugee children. While the former stood at an annual average of 51-52 per cent, the latter remained at an average of 48-49 per cent. The corresponding values for the total male and female refugee population show a slightly wider gap. The percentage of refugee women ranged between 47 and 48 per cent while that for refugee men between 52 and 53 per cent.

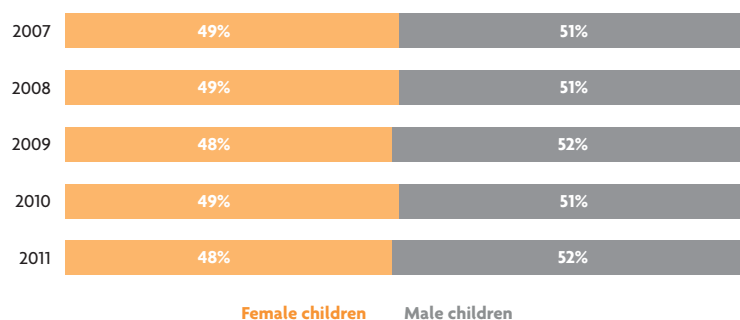
The distribution of refugee children by age cohorts reveals an interesting development over the past five years. Between 2007 and 2009, the percentage of refugee children below the age of five steadily dropped (see Figure V.4). One possible reason for this trend could be the relatively



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high number of refugee children who returned voluntarily to their countries of origin during the period under consideration. In the past two years, however, their percentage has increased significantly which can be explained partly by the high number of new arrivals of refugee infants and children in West, East and the Horn

Fig. V.3 Distribution of relative proportions of refugee children by sex | 2007-2011





Refugee children playing in Basateen, a neighbourhood with a significant Somali refugee population located near Aden, in southern Yemen.

of Africa. Similarly, the total number of school-age male children has remained slightly higher than that of female children.

The demographic changes of refugee children living in both camps and urban areas during the period 2007-2011 demonstrate a shift in refugee population trends. The limited information on both location and demographics indicates that the number of refugee children living in urban areas consistently surpassed those living in camps between 2007 and 2010. However, in 2011 this trend was reversed with the total number of refugee children residing in camps being slightly higher. This can also be explained by the high number of new refugee arrivals in West, East and the Horn of Africa, most of who were accommodated in camps.

The number of male refugee children living in camps was consistently

higher than that of female refugee children between 2007 and 2011. The same trend has been observed in urban areas. The number of refugee children below the age of five living in camps has remained consistently higher than of those living in urban areas. Between 2007 and 2010, the number of refugee girls (5-17 years

old) living in urban areas was significantly higher than the number for those living in camps. This trend was reversed in 2011 with a higher number of refugee girls being reported as residing in camps rather than in urban areas. ■

Fig. V.4 Distribution of refugee children by age cohorts | 2007-2011

