



# Selected Best Practices and Standards for Including Forcibly Displaced Populations in Data Collection Mechanisms<sup>1</sup>

For protracted displacement, refugee inclusion in population censuses has been found to be crucial in establishing a baseline for refugee populations in host countries and a more accurate picture of refugee demographics, in the context of the host country and population. This can also help governments more accurately assess displaced populations' needs in comparison to the host communities, as well as measure the efficacy of humanitarian and development programmes. Over the course of a two-day learning event in July 2021, panellists and government officials from six Great Lakes countries discussed best practices to foster inclusion of refugees in the national census in order to address poverty, vulnerabilities and propose tailored intervention namely through **i) measurement of IDP needs, ii) mapping skills and qualifications for integration and iii) improvement of collection and dissemination of microdata/socio-economic data**. To illustrate these discussions, three case studies from the discussions have been further outlined below. In Uganda, the inclusion of refugees in the national census registration, surveys and poverty assessment exercises helped identify further potential areas of intervention as well as challenges to be addressed in order to benefit both communities in a diligent and comprehensive manner. Additionally, Zambia's use of the UNHCR's ProGres database during the verification process to go beyond capturing purely administrative data has facilitated mapping skills and qualifications amongst forcibly displaced populations. Finally, the World Bank/UNHCR Joint Data Centre provides guidance to support stakeholders in designing strategies for reliable micro-data collection, as well as appropriate tools for data analysis and in-depth assessment and monitoring of intervention.

## Inclusion of Forcibly Displaced Populations in National Surveys to Address Specific Needs

The need to **include displaced people in the national census** remains an important topic within discussions on data on forced displacement, given the persistent lack of disaggregated demographic data on forcibly displaced persons. Governments acknowledged that this **hinders further efforts to strengthen IDP data management**, including quality of data governance and data quality, in coordination with all stakeholders to facilitate access to those communities. Data collected on forcibly displaced populations can be harnessed for local government planning and resource allocation. Furthermore, **additional variables and indicators can be developed while designing the surveys, which may better capture forcibly displaced people's realities**, including monitoring their living conditions, more accurately measuring labour force and arriving at a better understanding of health demographics. Collecting information on both refugees and IDPs as part of population and housing censuses might ensure more viable data that can be used to **i) formulate effective policies to provide methodological frameworks that consider new realities, such as the sedentarization of IDPs and ii) unlock new opportunities, such as the labour force**.

Driven by an increased understanding of the link between poverty and displacement, numerous African countries have begun to incorporate forcibly displaced people and refugees within the national census, as it provides governments with a more comprehensive overview of the population, which can be used to adjust their planning, budgeting, and programming to match needs.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was developed as part of a year-long series of learning events developed jointly by the World Bank, Samuel Hall, and the Rift Valley Institute on development responses to forced displacement with panelists and government officials from the six countries of the Great Lakes region.



## Case Study: Refugees within the scope of the Bureau of Statistics in Uganda

### Key Features



Inclusion of refugees into sectoral and national planning data



Refugee component in sectoral surveys with variables aimed at identifying specific needs and vulnerabilities



Assessment of the living conditions for both host and forcibly displaced communities

In July 2020, refugees were included in the Uganda National Development Plan III and statistics collected by the Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) at the national and district level. Given the demographic structure of refugees in Uganda, the **inclusion of Refugee population into sectoral and national planning data** was essential for adequate planning, service delivery and fair allocation of resources. The large refugee population cannot be neglected and its incorporation into national surveys has opened up opportunities for their inclusion in national health, livelihood, and education planning and programming. Due to the refugees' inclusion within the national data, the Bureau of Statistics will develop variables aimed at identifying specific needs and vulnerabilities based on an assessment of the living conditions for both host and forcibly displaced communities. Once the assessment is completed, the data is shared with relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for consideration. Prevalent ownership from the National Statistical Office (Uganda Bureau of National Statistics) has enabled competent authorities to design multi sectoral planning (joint in some cases) strategies while enhancing coordination of key stakeholders based on empirical findings. Moreover, it has given the opportunity to review flawed mechanisms, re-assess needs and identify areas where improvement is the most needed.

Uganda's National Development Plan III acknowledges the need for:

- **Developing targeted agri-LED interventions for refugees and host communities (Objective 1.11).** The plan emphasises the need to further develop the institutional capacity of local and governmental actors, in order enhance social cohesion amongst both communities through evidence-based interventions beyond agriculture and land reforms. Inclusion of refugees and host communities within data on livelihood and agriculture should facilitate integrated interventions with the objective of increasing self-reliance for both populations. Documenting the outcomes of interventions and measuring its benefits will provide needed evidence for broader systems development.
- **Strengthening the compilation of statistics on cross-cutting issues, including refugees and IDPs (Objective 5.12).** This point aligns with government efforts to increase data capabilities and improve programming on forced displacement. It would also help governmental and civil society counterparts monitor sustainable development goals.

Inclusion of forcibly displaced data into the national system has the ability to provide better information on the needs of both communities. This can subsequently contribute to integrated interventions for development-based responses designed to foster social cohesion, rather than developing short-term, emergency-based responses. Uganda's inclusive approach has revealed encouraging results acknowledged by both governmental and local stakeholders as well as key development actors. The data is collected, consolidated, and disseminated transparently to support an array of implementing partners delivering targeted services. Since its adoption, Uganda's model has been adapted within the Great Lakes region, as Rwanda has announced plans to include refugees in their upcoming 2022 national census.



## Main Impact



Contributes to information on the sectoral needs of refugee and host communities



Identifies development goals for targeted future interventions and monitoring

## Mapping Qualifications for Sectoral Integration and Planning

Mapping the qualifications of displaced populations assists in sectoral integration and planning as it helps countries **consider available labour forces on various sectors key to the country's development**. Thus, identifying skills of people affected by forced displacement i) facilitates their integration and ii) renders them important development actors in their communities, benefiting both refugees and host communities. Targeted data collection information systems within different ministries enable qualification assessment, which unlocks capabilities and existing potential in refugee hosting communities and countries via the deployment of new development actors. **Technical groups on durable solutions regarding the integration of forcibly displaced persons can be recommended to foster recognition of prior learning and facilitate beneficial integration within the framework of a development response**. Zambia's practice includes capturing skills, qualifications and prior education, which may aid governments and development actors to identify opportunities to fill skills-gaps. For instance, medical professionals or educators could be identified to bolster the health and education systems in their host localities.

### Case Study: Zambia – ProGres Database V4

#### Key Features



Online database designed to capture and store information on forcibly displaced people



Captures key demographic information



Collects data on the skills and qualifications of forcibly displaced populations

The Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) in Zambia has run a global database - the Profile Global Registration System (ProGres) since 2017. **The database is exclusively dedicated to asylum seekers, refugees and former refugees**. All documentation received on these three categories is captured in ProGres - however data is limited to those who live within refugee settlements - it does not include urban refugees. ProGres primarily captures demographic information - such as sex, age, residence, marital status, size of family - as well as the qualifications of registered FDPs. In addition, the **qualifications of forcibly displaced persons are captured during the profiling stage, which is central to improving inclusion within host communities**. For example, many forcibly displaced persons in Zambia were found to have skills in the medical and education sectors, two vital sectors for the development of both host and refugee communities. **Capturing this kind of data can facilitate inclusion through training, assessing existing qualifications, and recognising prior study**. ProGres allows the Government of Zambia (GRZ) to capture essential data in order to facilitate sectoral integration of forcibly displaced people. Furthermore,



integrating data on skills present in forcibly displaced communities within national sectoral planning ultimately benefits both refugee and host communities.

Zambia's experience demonstrates that **web-based databases facilitate greater and more straightforward accessibility of relevant data for sectoral planning**, as it can identify skill gaps at the national level that could be covered by refugees and other qualified forcibly displaced persons. Thus, sectoral integration can be facilitated by a thorough and more comprehensive data collection process that goes beyond primary information.

The approach used in the development and implementation of data collection for the ProGres database has led to improved collaboration between the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) and the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) on skills and recognition of prior learning, as well as the Zambia Statistical Office (ZamStats) for potential inclusion of forcibly displaced populations in the census, surveys and other opportunities of administrative data collected by other institutions. Furthermore, TEVETA, in close collaboration with the aforementioned institutions, is considering assessing prior education certifications of refugees across the country in order to deliver training and degree certificates acknowledging prior learnings.

## Main Impact



Empowering displaced populations by supporting their faster transition to economic agents



Sectoral integration for people affected by forced displacement



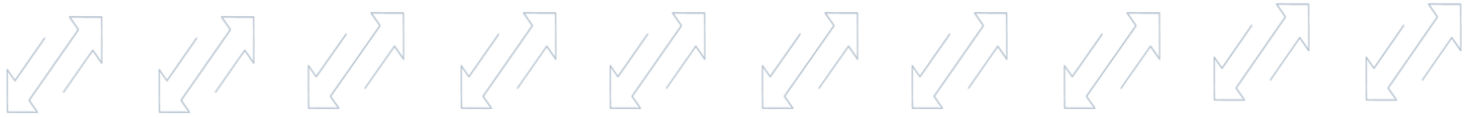
Accessibility of data



Optimization of existing resources including human capital

## Capturing Microdata for Tailored Sectoral Planning

The capture of data resources to reflect demographic characteristics of refugee hosting countries necessitates the inclusion of forcibly displaced people within national statistical tools. Moreover, it is crucial to evaluate both the capacity and levels of technical expertise across ministries on topics concerning forcibly displaced populations, while ensuring a basic understanding of the topic, including challenges and opportunities. Data collection of this nature can reveal the level of effort required across sectors to address the lack of technical expertise and anticipate the levels of scaling up efforts needed. One of the ultimate remaining questions is how to move beyond security narratives and policy trends to explore socio-economic issues that would result in durable solutions to current challenges in displacement. Significant improvement efforts on data sources and methods are required in order to better identify socioeconomic indicators to monitor progress toward durable solutions for the forcibly displaced. This could include profiling data, socioeconomic characteristics and livelihoods.



## Case Study: World Bank/UNHCR Joint Data Centre – Micro-data for Programme Monitoring

### Key features



Socioeconomic data collection and analysis of refugees and host communities



Reliable data access for decision-makers and key stakeholders to conduct sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic assessments



Provide technical capacity strengthening on data management for all stakeholders, including development actors to incorporate best practices

The Joint Data Centre (JDC) aims to **enhance the ability of stakeholders to make timely and evidence-informed decisions** that can improve the lives of affected people and ensure population and socioeconomic data are systematically collected and analysed. The JDC **advocates for the incorporation of micro-data collection in national surveys and census**. It includes education levels, general skills, level of income, and informal vs formal work. **Micro-data collection is deemed central to programme monitoring** as it aids capturing socio-economic data, which can demonstrate levels of well-being amongst these populations, whilst providing important guidance on where and how efforts should be prioritised.

The JDC supports government and statistical institutions in strengthening their data collection standards. The JDC strongly encourages inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in the national census for a comprehensive representation of their situation. Additionally, the **JDC makes existing data available to researchers, practitioners and decision-makers, and has supported the establishment of a microdata library for UNHCR**. It currently reports 280 available data sets, which are updated frequently to ensure data accuracy. Most crises in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence are protracted in nature. Thus, due to the increasingly lengthy nature of displacement, there is a crucial need to collect and analyse data over longer time frames, as well as the **need to develop methodologies that capture the root causes, as well as socioeconomic status and livelihoods of refugees across different contexts**. Such data enables governments and other key stakeholders to confront local realities through practical means. Integrating refugees within the national census requires additional data collection to measure their levels of resilience and/or vulnerabilities accordingly and comprehensively, to go beyond a mere capturing of demographics. Many countries - such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Central African Republic, Niger, Chad, and Uganda - have shown significant interest in strengthening collaboration between the relevant Ministry of National Development Planning and the National Statistical Office with the World Bank in order to leverage the JDC's technical capacity on data management.

### Main Impact



Improve the quality of the comparability of refugees and IDP statistics across countries



Enables governments and other key stakeholders to confront local realities



Insight on health and well-being of affected communities



Supports evaluation of intervention and programme monitoring efforts



## Additional Issues and Questions to Think About

### *Capacity building on emerging technologies*

**Lack of funding remains a common challenge in the region for facilitating timely and consistent data collection on forcibly displaced populations.** Data collection is often de-prioritised by governments and institutions due to lack of funds, which has contributed to less frequent and/or less permanent data collection measures nationally and regionally, as well as smaller capacity by relevant stakeholders and institutions.

- **Training: A more significant investment in national statistical data and data collection capabilities** must be considered to accommodate these integrated surveys. Providing appropriate training to stakeholders within the government to respond to the needs of both host and refugee communities appropriately and consider their needs, vulnerabilities, and specifics while including them in the national census. Important turnovers and constant change with new technologies impel competent authorities to provide capacity building training and engage stakeholders, including within the private sector in capacity development in order to address skills gaps in rural areas.
- **Digitisation - The use of new tools requires an articulated capacity-building approach** to improve the quality of data storage, analysis and use of data to take full advantage of internet and mobile-based technologies, which can provide enormous and rapid advances in the way digital statistics are collected, analysed, desegregated and disseminated. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of developing innovative tools and methods for data collection in line with protection measures, including social distancing and lockdowns. For example, telephone surveys and the growing influence of spatial data analysis through geo-data collection and mapping have helped overcome barriers in access and accessibility, to collect timely data, as well as data capturing urgent needs.
- **Confidentiality, safeguarding and confidence: Ensure harmonized safeguarding protocol** to increase confidence and facilitate interaction between staff in charge of data collection and persons in need.

### *Qualitative approach*

Although qualitative sources are also relevant for capturing forcibly displaced person's data, they are less frequently used to produce official statistics. These other sources may be combined with more traditional quantitative data and result in more extensive data being available. **Data from various sources may be integrated to provide better coverage and more extensive information about forcibly displaced persons and facilitate their voluntary inclusion in the national census.** By involving the beneficiaries in collecting data related to the socio-economic status to inform on sociological/historical/cultural factors of distrust or marginalization.

**Qualitative approaches to data collection can also inform intervention development, as they can be a valuable source for control and verification, as demonstrated by the [International Recommendations on IDP Statistics](#).**

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) emphasised a qualitative approach enabling relevant stakeholders to understand the different motivating factors among local communities selected for interventions. DRC provided the example of communities refusing to participate in biometric registration due to lack of understanding of the processes, invoking religious beliefs and personal convictions. **A participatory approach involving different community profiles would have helped contain the situation by introducing them to the purpose of these registration efforts.** Additionally, many forcibly displaced people lack awareness regarding reintegration programs and policies. Placing them at the centre of programme interventions would facilitate community understanding, and would foster a more collaborative approach, as community representatives and leaders could assist data collectors in understanding cultural norms to better engage with community members. A qualitative-informed approach could include key informant interviews or focus group discussions in order to elucidate the origins of community apprehensions in participating in research. Exploring existing contextual factors and rationales at the community level can help address them and inform a more thoughtful approach to data collection in displacement affected communities.