



WOMEN'S
REFUGEE
COMMISSION

Displaced Women and Girls: A Data Ecosystem Mapping

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

DTM:	Displacement Tracking Matrix
IASC:	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDAC:	International Data Alliance for Children on the Move
IDMC:	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDPs:	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM:	International Organization for Migration
JIPS:	Joint IDP Profiling Service
NGO:	Nongovernmental Organization
OCHA:	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA:	Official Development Assistance
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
SOGIESC:	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics
UN:	United Nations
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
WASH:	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WRC:	Women's Refugee Commission

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Executive Summary

Over 41 million women and girls were displaced within the borders of their own countries in 2025 as a result of conflict, violence, or disasters, and nearly 13 million were displaced abroad as refugees or people in refugee-like situations. Displaced women and girls often face some of the most acute risks to their lives, safety, and well-being. A better understanding of the characteristics, resources, needs, and priorities of women and girls in displacement is essential to ensuring gender sensitive, effective, and equitable humanitarian response. Identifying where support can be most impactful is more necessary than ever, as the total number of displaced women and girls is the highest ever recorded, yet the financial resources available to support them are plummeting at an increasing speed.

This paper provides an overview of existing data on displaced women and girls, identifying knowledge gaps and data quality concerns, as well as potential ways to address them. It also considers the ways that data are currently being used to inform programs or policies, and to guide and monitor financial investments and their results on displaced women and girls. The objectives of this paper are to:

1. inform the development of a new conceptual and indicator framework aimed at providing actionable information and effective monitoring of the conditions of displaced women and girls;
2. identify the potential indicators and sources of data that could feed into this framework; and
3. raise awareness on the data needed to effectively guide and monitor better support for displaced women and girls.

The results presented here are based on a review of existing literature, an analysis of relevant datasets and 25 key informant interviews (KIs) with data collectors, data users, researchers, experts and practitioners working with displaced women and girls and producing, publishing or analyzing displacement data. Some of their direct inputs are featured throughout this paper as anonymized quotations..

What data do we have on displaced women and girls?

Data on internal and cross-border displacement has improved significantly over the past decade, with a visible increase in the availability and in the quality of information on internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees, asylum seekers, and other groups of displaced people. Much of this progress, however, is now jeopardized by the funding cuts affecting the humanitarian and development sectors. Data on women and girls is particularly under threat.

At the global level, only 63 per cent of data on displaced populations is disaggregated by sex, and 56 per cent by sex and age. Sex- and age-disaggregated data is more often available for refugees than for IDPs or asylum-seekers. The availability of such data varies greatly from one country to another, and also depends on the type and main driver of displacement. For instance, internal displacement resulting from disasters tends to be better captured than internal displacement resulting from conflicts and violence. For cross-border displacements, only people forced to move because of conflict or violence are represented in UNHCR's dataset. There is, however, evidence of people being displaced across borders due to recurring disasters, environmental degradation and climate change across the world. In general, large-scale displacement crises tend to be better covered by data collection exercises than smaller-scale, but sometimes recurring events that remain invisible.

With even such elementary information as the number of displaced people available by sex and age lacking in many contexts, additional insights on their sociodemographic characteristics, diverse identities and abilities, social positionings, resources and backgrounds, the number of times they have been displaced and how long for, are even more challenging to come by. Information and insights into displaced

women and girls' needs, capacities and contributions are indispensable to provide tailored support, yet often insufficient. Another major data gap, which is being slowly addressed as it receives more visibility in the past few years, is around longer-term solutions to displacement. Gender is an important aspect of solutions, as men and women have been found to advance differently towards solutions and have different preferences.

Key considerations for data on displaced women and girls

Although resources for data collection, analysis, and dissemination - particularly gender data - have been reduced drastically over the past couple of years, robust information on displaced women and girls can actually help design more impactful interventions and ensure better returns on investments. This is especially relevant at a time of rising displacement levels and plummeting international assistance.

The long-term goal should be to generate high-quality data that can meet the diverse needs of decisionmakers, practitioners, researchers, and advocates. Ideally, such data would capture all displaced women and girls in a given location, be regularly updated, provide individual-level granularity and disaggregation beyond sex and age, and be collected using sufficiently consistent indicators and methodologies to enable comparisons across contexts. Achieving this vision remains a long-term aspiration that is unlikely to be realized in the short or medium term. The challenge, therefore, is not only to define the ideal end state, but also to identify practical steps that can strengthen the availability and use of data on women and girls in displacement.

With this in mind, the following key considerations can be highlighted to ensure that data that is being collected can be as instrumental as possible:

- Displaced women and girls must be represented in all their diversities to provide them with the most appropriate support;
- More efficient methods may be considered to collect information on the diverse needs, wants and contributions of displaced women and girls in various displacement situations;
- Data that can help raise funding and guide investments to better support displaced women and girls should be prioritized;
- Data on displaced women and girls must be accessible and used in order to be impactful;
- Displaced women and girls must be actively engaged in producing, analyzing, and using the data that concern them.

Raising the visibility of displaced women and girls' conditions is urgent, and this means taking action with data that is currently available – and sometimes, without it.

Way forward

Data can be used for multiple purposes by different actors. For displaced women and girls, the focus should be to collect, disseminate and use data that can inform humanitarian and development programming and investments, forward-looking policies and solutions, raise their visibility and advocate for more effective and efficient assistance, and more inclusive and tailored support. Concretely, this means information is most urgently needed to:

1. point to their needs and wants that should be prioritized;
2. identify sustainable ways to end women and girls' displacement;
3. identify where investments can prevent or reduce future displacement;
4. measure the results of past and current investments for displaced women and girls;

5. demonstrate the value of investing in better support for displaced women and girls, not only for their own safety, well-being and human development, but also for the broader development and stability of the communities they are part of.

Some of this data is available and currently used to inform programming decision, funding appeals, resource allocation and risk models. Overall, however, programming, funding, and policy decisions on displacement too rarely consider displaced women and girls and gender dynamics specifically, rather envisaging all displaced people (or at best, all displaced women) as a standard category with similar needs and wants. This is in part due to lack of data, but also to a broader issue of invisibility and lack of awareness (and interest) by decision-makers.

Rooted in strong evidence, advocacy and communication have a major role to play in changing this situation. To date, there is no framework dedicated to monitoring the characteristics, needs, or progress towards solutions of displaced women and girls. Such a framework would help raise awareness of the scale of displacement and unmet needs amongst displaced women and girls, and of the necessity to provide them with tailored support and encourage better accountability of aid providers, donors, governments and civil society organizations that protect and assist them, ultimately contributing to securing more resources to support them. This paper will be followed by a proposed conceptual and indicator framework, to be implemented in 2027 by the Women's Refugee Commission, with the ambition of supporting practitioners, policy makers, donors, and displaced communities to use available evidence to identify leverage points where targeted, carefully calibrated investments can have the greatest impact.

Introduction

Over 41 million women and girls were displaced within the borders of their own countries in 2025 as a result of conflict, violence, or disasters, and nearly 13 million were displaced abroad as refugees or people in refugee-like situations.^{1,2} Displaced women and girls often face some of the most acute risks to their lives, safety, and well-being.^{3,4,5} Research has regularly found that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by displacement compared with men and boys as pre-existing gender inequalities and intersecting forms of vulnerability exacerbate the consequences of displacement.^{6,7} Yet these findings are largely based on qualitative, context-specific evidence, and cannot be extended to all displacement settings globally—nor to all displaced women and girls within a given displacement context. While progress has been made on collecting data on displaced communities, major gaps remain.

A better understanding of the characteristics, resources, needs, and priorities of women and girls in displacement is essential to ensuring gender sensitive, effective, and equitable humanitarian response, as well as supporting durable solutions for displaced women and girls. Identifying where support can be most impactful is more necessary than ever, as the total number of displaced women and girls is the highest ever recorded, yet the financial resources available to support them are plummeting at an increasing speed.⁸ Yet, to date, there is no framework dedicated to monitoring the characteristics, needs, or progress towards solutions of displaced women and girls. Such a framework would help raise awareness of the scale of displacement and unmet needs amongst displaced women and girls, and the necessity of providing displaced women and girls with tailored support. A framework would also encourage better accountability from the aid providers, donors, governments, and civil society organizations that protect and assist them, ultimately contributing to securing more resources to support them. But the scarcity of quality data and information on displaced women and girls makes informing better programs and monitoring results challenging.

This paper provides an overview of existing data on displaced women and girls, identifying knowledge gaps and data quality concerns, as well as potential ways to address them. It also considers the ways that data are currently being used to inform programs or policies, and to guide and monitor financial investments and their results on displaced women and girls. The objectives of this paper are to:

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The results presented here are based on a review of existing literature, on an analysis of relevant datasets and on 25 key informant interviews (KIIs) with data collectors, data users, researchers, experts, and practitioners working with displaced women and girls and producing, publishing, or analyzing displacement data. Some of their direct inputs are featured throughout this paper as anonymized quotes. This paper will be followed by a proposed conceptual and indicator framework, to be implemented in 2027 by the Women's Refugee Commission, with the ambition of supporting practitioners, policy makers, donors, and displaced communities to use available evidence to identify leverage points where targeted, carefully calibrated investments can have the greatest impact.

What Data do we Have on Displaced Women and Girls?

Evolution of Data on Displaced Women and Girls Since 2015

Data on internal and cross-border displacement has improved significantly over the past decade, with a visible increase in the availability and in the quality of information on internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, asylum seekers, and other groups of displaced people.^{9,10} Since the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2015—including Target 17.I calling for high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by gender, age and migratory status—other significant milestones have been achieved to advance better data on displaced people (see Figure 1). These include the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees, the publication of international recommendations on refugee and IDP statistics, the launch of new partnerships and collaborations, such as the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement or the Humanitarian Data Exchange, and the United Nations Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement and subsequent initiatives.

Figure 1: Selected Milestones Advancing Global Data on Displaced People Since 2015



These global calls to action are accompanied by notable improvements in data collection in several countries affected by displacement crises. In Colombia, the already very comprehensive data from the Victims’ Unit, which supports IDPs and other victims of the decades-long conflict, was complemented by a new biannual index measuring progress towards solutions, with results analyzed by sex, age and other characteristics.¹¹ The Philippines established new guidelines for collecting data on disaster displacement, including sex- and age-disaggregated data since 2024.¹² Overall, the amount and quality of data on

displaced people, including sex- and age-disaggregated data, has kept increasing over the past decade as a result of investments by affected governments, donors and international organizations. Much of this progress, however, is now jeopardized by the funding cuts affecting the humanitarian and development sectors (see Box 1).

Box 1: Amidst a Decade of Progress, Recent Funding Cuts Cause Major Setbacks for Data on Displaced Women and Girls

Since early 2025, many organizations providing data on women and girls in displacement have suffered from cuts to humanitarian funding and official development assistance (ODA) by major donors.¹³ Funding cuts have resulted in staff contracts being terminated, the deletion of databases, reduced granularity and coverage, and delays or cancellations of data-collection activities.¹⁴

In certain cases, existing data on displacement have even disappeared, either because staff who were maintaining the databases were let go, subscriptions to host the data were unpaid, or because of intentional deletion.¹⁵ With the termination of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in early 2025, the agency's website and extensive archive of datasets and reports went offline.¹⁶ National Statistical Offices in low- and middle-income countries are also facing a reduction of donors' contributions to official statistics, with Official Development Assistance (ODA) for statistics already reduced in 2024 and 2025, and further cuts likely to occur.¹⁷

Other data sources funded primarily or fully by USAID have also disappeared, with data on women and girls being particularly under threat. In January 2025, US President Donald Trump's Executive Order 14168 ordered the deletion of research, publications, and datasets mentioning topics related to gender from government entities, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Health and Human Services.¹⁸

"I have heard from certain trans groups that they have not only put down some of the amazing studies that they had from their website, they have also taken down data on grantees and revised the language they used."

The consequences of this order were felt far beyond the US, with several humanitarian and development organizations across the world also deleting or archiving gender-related materials, particularly on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC), in an attempt to salvage their relationship with the US administration, maintain any US funding, or protect their program participants from any potential harm. In this concerning environment, it is more important than ever to pool together what information remains available to shed light on the vulnerabilities, needs, and capacities of displaced women and girls, and to identify new sources of evidence to complement traditional data providers.

"The gender erasure is real. There are movements to make archives to protect the data, finding back channels to access data, uploading things elsewhere to make it available. There is a massive amount of gender data and gender analyses that are being removed."

Although the State of Open Humanitarian Data report found that the consequences were not as severe as feared in 2025, the aftershock is expected to be felt much more strongly in 2026.¹⁹ With reported reductions of around 40 percent of data-related teams at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as of early 2026, fewer displacement crises assessed and many primary data-collection exercises reduced in scope, the repercussions for the quality and availability of data on displacement overall could be dire.²⁰

“In 2025, we didn’t see as much [data] disappearing as we thought. The reason is that we are humanitarians at heart, so we were doing more with less, we were forcing ourselves. In my team, we are working like crazy, we haven’t had breaks, it has been constant work and work. But in 2026, we already see that that’s it, people are quitting, getting sick, we cannot make it. We cannot do more than is human.”

Key Sources of Data on Displacement

In many contexts, information on displaced women and girls, whether it is official statistics or operational data, is collected by government entities. Internally displaced populations, having not crossed an international border, are under the responsibility of their own government, which is charged with protecting and assisting them—and collecting the necessary information to do so adequately. People displaced across borders tend to be registered at border crossing points when they enter the host country, provided they do so following official transit routes, and an adequate registration system is operational. When asylum systems are in place in host countries, and displaced persons request asylum from the authorities, this can also be a source of data. Additionally, depending on the country, different aid-providing entities, such as dedicated agencies in charge of humanitarian or social affairs, national or subnational disaster management agencies, may also collect data to guide their work. In an increasing number of countries, official statistics are being collected on displaced populations through national censuses or household surveys by National Statistical Offices.

In many countries, however, there is a lack of resources, capacity, or even political will to collect comprehensive, inclusive and disaggregated data on displaced populations. Other aid providers, including national and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), or multilateral organizations that assist displaced women and girls, also collect information to guide their operations. Because their purpose in collecting these data is to inform their programming decisions or monitor the results of their work, it is usually very specific to a given context and project, and not comparable with other datasets.

The main publishers of global and, to some extent, comparable data on displaced women and girls are UNHCR, IOM and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). These agencies collect, process and publish data on different categories of displacement, using each other’s data and collaborating towards better comparability and interoperability. IDMC, for instance, uses primary data collected by UNHCR and IOM on internal displacement contexts, and aggregates it with other data sources, including from national governments, while UNHCR and IOM then report IDMC’s consolidated end-of-year estimate on the total number of IDPs.

Figure 2: Overview of Data on Displaced Women and Girls Available from Global Sources

	UNHCR	IOM DTM	iDMC
 Displacement situations covered	Conflict-related internal and cross-border displacement	Conflict- and disaster-related internal displacement	Conflict- and disaster-related internal displacement
 Approaches used	Primary and secondary data	Primary data	Secondary data
 Data disaggregated by sex and age	For certain displacement situations	For certain displacement situations	For all displacement situations using national demographic data as proxy
 Number of countries covered in 2025	176	29	147

UNHCR consolidates data for 176 countries from its own registration processes, from governments and other agencies on all categories of displaced persons, including returnees and stateless persons. It provides information on their number, location and country of origin, with sex- and age-disaggregated data when available, but also on repatriation and returns, resettlement, naturalization, type of accommodation, urban or rural location, and more. IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) collects primary data in major internal displacement crises through key informant interviews, group interviews, direct observations, individual or household surveys, and other methods, on the numbers of IDPs and returnees, their movements, key demographics, shelter, and needs, with the methods and indicators used varying from one location to another. IDMC consolidates secondary data from over 100 sources, including UNHCR and IOM DTM, other UN agencies, governments, civil society and media, to estimate the number of internally displaced people and their movements due to conflicts, violence, and disasters in 147 countries. UNHCR and IDMC's figures are updated annually, while IOM DTM's updates can vary in frequency.

UNHCR, IOM and IDMC offer the widest coverage in terms of the number of countries included in their databases (with IOM's Global Migration Data Portal pooling data from IOM DTM as well as IDMC, UNHCR, and others), but other organizations produce information on displaced women and girls for a smaller set of countries or through specific case studies. This is the case for the IMPACT Initiatives' REACH program, which runs multisectoral needs assessments for around 20 countries each year, including data collection on displaced and non-displaced populations disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics when possible.²¹ The Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS), which has now merged with IDMC, also runs sociodemographic surveys of internally displaced populations in collaboration with affected governments and other partners for specific countries.²² The World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center has run several large socioeconomic studies of displaced and host communities. UNHCR, IOM and IDMC have also conducted more in-depth primary data-collection exercises focused on, or including, displaced women and girls. The methodologies used and indicators selected for these assessments tend to vary from country to country, and from year to year, making the results challenging to compare or aggregate with other sources, but nonetheless very useful to provide detailed and context-specific information on displaced women and girls. The Humanitarian Data Exchange platform run by the United Nations Office

for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is a useful resource for identifying the different datasets that provide information on displaced women and girls.

Inequalities in the Availability of Sex- and Age-Disaggregated Data on Displaced Populations

Inequalities in terms of the availability and quality of data on displaced women and girls are striking. For instance, internal displacement resulting from disasters tends to be better captured than internal displacement resulting from conflicts and violence: IDMC reported data in 135 countries for disasters in 2025, compared with 48 countries for conflicts. Within these broad categories, other inequalities exist: displacements linked with sudden-onset disasters, such as storms, floods or earthquakes, are better captured than displacements linked with slow-onset disasters, such as sea-level rise or desertification. Displacements linked with international conflicts are better captured than displacements linked with generalized criminal violence or communal violence.²³ For cross-border displacements, only people forced to move because of conflict or violence are represented in the UNHCR dataset. There is, however, evidence of people being displaced across borders due to recurring disasters, environmental degradation and climate change, for instance in Central America or in the Horn of Africa.²⁴ In general, large-scale displacement crises tend to be better covered by data-collection exercises than smaller-scale, but sometimes recurring events remain invisible.²⁵

Inequalities in data availability and quality also depend on the country in which displaced people find themselves. Data on refugees can be challenging to obtain in countries that are not party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, as is the case in many Asian countries, where they are broadly categorized as foreigners, migrants, or illegal migrants.²⁶ On the other hand, Asia offers several examples of strong national data systems for disaster-related internal displacement, as mentioned earlier in the Philippines, but also in Indonesia and South Korea.

This type of displacement is less well captured in the Americas, particularly when it comes to sex- and age-disaggregated data. The United States Federal Emergency Management Agency, for instance, mostly reports housing destruction data, not broken down by demographics. An additional barrier to data collection is inaccessibility and insecurity in areas affected by ongoing conflict or violence, or a recent disaster that prevents access to displaced communities. Remoteness, as is the case for certain Pacific communities, can also be an obstacle to the representation of displaced women and girls in data-collection exercises.

The availability of sex- and age-disaggregated data on displaced people also varies depending on the methodology used to collect it. UNHCR registration data, for instance, includes such information, but evacuation orders from local authorities may not. Data from IOM DTM operations collected through largescale household surveys would provide more granular sex- and age-disaggregated information than data collected through key informants. For disaster displacement, housing destruction data is often used as a proxy to estimate the number of people forced to leave their homes after a disaster—but this does not allow for any breakdown beyond the number of affected households.

“How many times have we had national assessments where the respondents are overwhelmingly men? If you combine gender data gaps and the consistent absence of participation of women, this is a recipe for a major gender inequalities.”

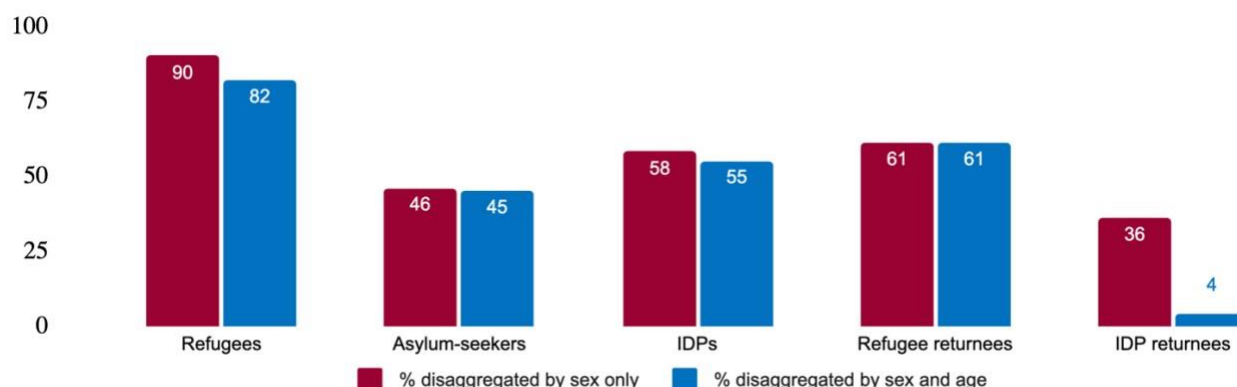
National demographic data can be used as a proxy to estimate the number of women and girls in a displaced community. This is the approach used by IDMC, for instance, to produce annual sex- and agedisaggregated estimates of the number of people internally displaced by conflicts, violence or disasters

in 147 countries.²⁷ Research has shown, however, that the proportion of women and girls is often higher in displaced communities compared with the overall national population, particularly for IDPs.²⁸ The IDMC figures on the number of internally displaced women and girls should therefore be considered as likely underestimates.

“We think sex- and age-disaggregated data is foundational but not sufficient. It can tell us who is included, who was reached and who was left out, but we still need gender analyses to understand why gaps exist, power relations that shape different outcomes, what programming or advocacy we need to do differently.”

Figure 3 illustrates the fact that, globally, sex- and age-disaggregated data is more often available for refugees (82 percent of all data on refugees from the UNHCR dataset was available by sex and age for 2025) than for IDPs (55 percent) or asylum seekers (45 percent).

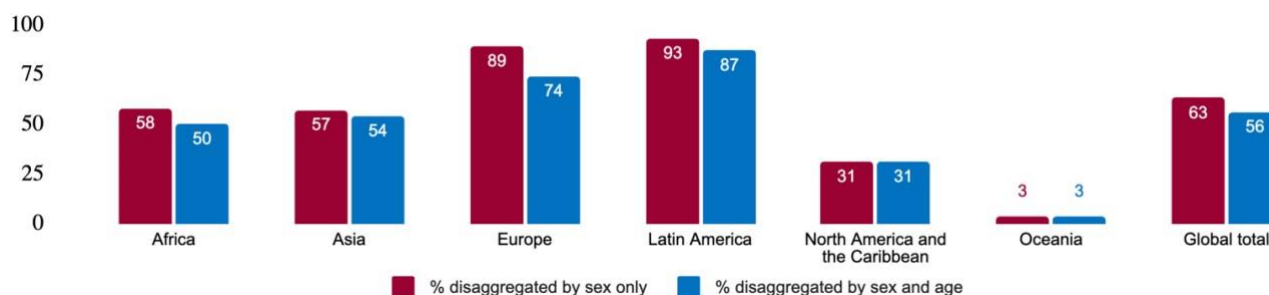
Figure 3: Availability of Data Disaggregated by Sex and Age and by Sex Only by Category of Displaced People in 2025



(Source: UNHCR Global Trends Report 2026 Dataset)

Discrepancies in the availability of demographic data on displaced populations are also clear between regions: Figure 4 shows that 93 percent of all data on refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs and returnees was disaggregated by sex in 2025, and 87 percent by sex and age, compared with only 31 percent for North America and the Caribbean, and 3 percent for Oceania. At the global level, only 63 percent of data on displaced populations is disaggregated by sex, and 56 percent by sex and age.

Figure 4: Availability of Demographic Data by Region as a Percentage of All Displaced Populations



(Source: UNHCR Global Trends Report 2026 Dataset)

Data on Displaced Women and Girls' Needs and Capacities

With even such elementary information as the number of displaced people available by sex and age lacking in many contexts, additional insights on their sociodemographic characteristics, diverse identities and abilities, social positionings, resources and backgrounds, the number of times they have been displaced and how long for, are even more challenging to come by. When available, national statistics from censuses or household surveys can help give a sense of the prevalence of disabilities or ethnicities in an area affected by displacement, and local averages on the types of livelihoods, levels of income, and education most likely to be encountered in the population. This does not necessarily apply equally to the displaced population, however, as already vulnerable and marginalized groups are often at higher risk of displacement in the first place.

Such information and insights into displaced women and girls' needs and capacities are indispensable to provide tailored support. These aspects vary greatly from one woman or girl to another, depending on the displacement context and broader environment they live in, on their pre-existing characteristics and backgrounds, on the assistance they are able to obtain, and many other factors. Such information is therefore not available at the global level, but rather localized, collected, for instance, by aid providers to guide their programming and monitor results, or by researchers for a specific case study.

“It would be helpful (...) to go beyond some of the umbrella categories and the vision of women and girls as a monolith, by representing their diversity. Women and girls don't all experience the same thing in their displacement trajectories and it would be very valuable to help understand the different experiences of people with disabilities, LGBTIQ, older women... highlighting the intersections between these different experiences and vulnerabilities, as well as privileges.”

Conceptual and indicator frameworks, guidelines, and recommendations do exist and serve as a basis for data collectors to try and harmonize these processes, in an attempt to collect information more systematically on key aspects of displaced women and girls' lives, such as access to work or education, gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health. The cluster system coordinated by OCHA is intended to ensure that assistance is provided to people in need, including displaced women and girls, in the essential areas of shelter; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); protection; nutrition; health; food security; education; logistics; and telecommunications.¹ The Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Humanitarian Response Plans that guide the assistance provided to crisis-affected people follow this system, analyze information on each of these domains, often disaggregating data by displacement status, sex, age and disability. They are a key resource on the conditions of displaced women and girls, but are produced only in cases of large-scale humanitarian crises.

More broadly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also provide a checklist of essential aspects to consider for security and stability, economic growth, and human development, which can be used to collect data and analyze the conditions of displaced women and girls. SDG 5 on Gender equality, SDG 10 on Reduced inequalities, and the crosscutting recommendation to leave no one behind, and disaggregate data by sex, age and migratory status, make it particularly relevant for displaced women and girls. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or the Asian Development Bank, for instance, have used the SDGs as an analytical framework to demonstrate that displacement is not only a humanitarian issue, but also a development one, with women and girls often lagging even further behind in reaching these goals.²⁹ CARE International

¹ The Humanitarian Reset which followed the 2025 funding cuts consolidated the cluster system from 15 down to 8 clusters, listed here. This measure, intended to improve efficiency, also resulted in less visibility for gender and child protection. The Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence Areas of Responsibility were consolidated into the New Protection Cluster, for instance.

also aligns its primary data-collection processes and its institutional reporting with the SDGs, including in displacement crises.³⁰

Beyond the identification of these important aspects of displaced women and girls' lives to be measured, indicators and methodologies vary. Attempts to standardize certain indicators have also been made in the past few years, but implementing them remains a challenge. The Multisectoral Needs Assessments conducted by IMPACT/REACH, notably to inform Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Response Plans, are now based on a pre-existing library of indicators, but they are adapted to each country to respond to organizational needs and the local context. The International Recommendations on Refugee and on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics provide useful guidance on harmonizing official statistics, and are being rolled out in an increasing number of countries.³¹ Other guidelines have been published, for instance on displaced children, by the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) and IMPACT Initiatives.³² All call for the sex and age (or date of birth) of each displaced person to be collected as basic variables, with additional information on their displacement background (such as the main reason for fleeing, area of origin, number of times displaced, etc.) also recommended to identify potential vulnerabilities and options for solutions.

In spite of this apparent wealth of very diverse data, major gaps remain. Data and analyses on displaced women and girls' ability to access work and education, move freely and safely, access the internet and open bank accounts, for instance, are insufficient—yet these are some of the key factors enabling them to sustain themselves and their families in displacement, and to eventually find a way towards lasting solutions. Access to aid, property, and finance is a major issue for many displaced women and girls, who sometimes lack the necessary legal documentation or rights to do so without a male representative. Examples of male family members, data collectors, or aid providers abusing their position to control women and girls, exploit them and steal the resources they are entitled to are all too frequent, but rarely documented.

Data on women and girls' participation in decision-making processes, aid distribution, program design and data collection is also lacking, but would go a long way towards highlighting persisting inequalities, and harmful practices and power dynamics. Lastly, analyses on displaced women and girls' *contributions*—in terms of engagement with the displaced and the host community, social ties, paid work, livelihoods, unpaid care work, leadership, knowledge, financial coordination, and more—are another gap in existing data which, if addressed, could transform perspectives and opportunities for displaced women and girls as agents of progress.

Box 2: The Potential of New Resources to Bridge Knowledge Gaps on Displaced Women and Girls

As traditional data producers face drastic reductions in their resources, and see their ability to collect data on displaced women and girls severely affected, displacement crises, on the other hand, continue to expand. Needs for timely, reliable, and disaggregated data are also rising, as such information is indispensable to design cost-effective interventions with long-lasting effects, and to ensure that the most vulnerable—such as displaced women and girls—are included. Two main options are emerging to fill the gaps in this context: the use of artificial intelligence, and of the private sector.

The Complex Risk Analytics Fund (CRAF'd) is a multi-partner initiative that supports data and analytics using artificial intelligence to better anticipate, prevent, and respond to complex crises, including displacement.³³ It is partnering with several organizations on displacement data, including UNHCR, IOM and IDMC, with which it is investing in providing better sex- and age-disaggregated data on IDPs. Generative artificial intelligence services, such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and others, are also enabling data analyses and visualizations at a much lower cost and much faster than previously.³⁴ The rise of AI-generated content also presents significant risks and generates concerns for accuracy, data privacy and the potential use of data for mis- or dis-information or fraudulent activities.³⁵

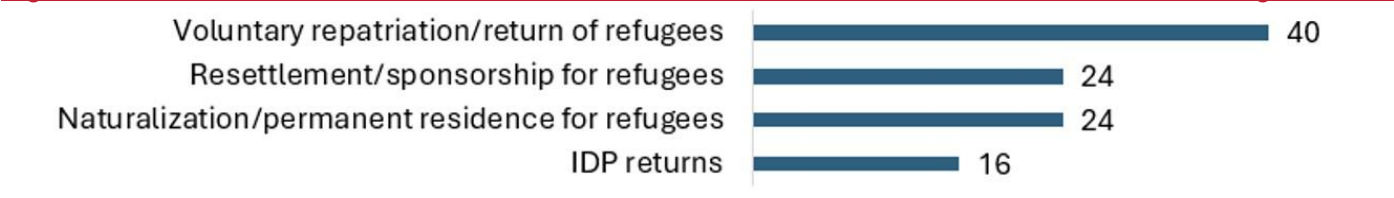
The private sector is also stepping up as a key partner for humanitarian actors, with data from Meta, Google, Microsoft, and FlowMinder (which uses mobile phone data, among other resources) featuring on the OCHA Humanitarian Data Exchange platform.³⁶ Meta's high-resolution population density maps, powered by artificial intelligence and satellite imagery, provide estimates of the number of people living in an area at a 30-meter resolution, disaggregated by sex and age.³⁷ This can, for instance, estimate the number of women of reproductive age or girls under 5 in an area recently affected by a disaster or hostilities that would have prompted displacement—allowing humanitarians to better target their emergency response to their needs.

Both AI and private sector contributions to data are promising, but require caution and adequate safeguarding, safety-by-design, privacy and data protection measures to address the risks and concerns that they can generate, particularly for such sensitive issues as the displacement of women and girls.

Data on Solutions to Displacement for Women and Girls

Another major data gap, which is being slowly addressed as it receives more visibility in the past few years, is around longer-term solutions to displacement. Durable solutions to displacement are generally understood as sustainable return to the area of origin for the displaced person, local integration in the host community, or resettlement in another country or part of the country.³⁸ UNHCR provides information on returns for refugees and IDPs for a number of countries, although this represents a small part of all affected countries: 16 countries show information on IDP returns, for example, when 39 reported IDPs in 2025 (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Number of Countries for which There Are Data on Different Solutions for IDPs and Refugees in 2025



(Source: UNHCR 2026 Global Trends Report Dataset)

Additional conceptualization of what constitutes a “durable” solution highlighted the need to ensure that the negative consequences and prejudice that resulted from displacement were no longer felt by the displaced people, meaning that they were able to regain similar conditions and standards of living, for instance, as before their displacement, or that their conditions were similar to those of the non-displaced people living in the same location. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs identifies eight criteria to consider in order to assess whether a solution has been achieved: long-term safety and security; enjoyment of an adequate standard of living without discrimination; access to

livelihoods and employment; effective and accessible mechanisms to restore housing, land and property; access to personal and other documentation without discrimination; family reunification; participation in public affairs without discrimination; and access to effective remedies and justice.³⁹

“On solutions, there is very little data on displaced women and girls. (...) There is more data on needs, vulnerabilities, demographics etc. than development and solutions because we are all humanitarian organizations.”

Indicator frameworks and measures have been developed on this basis to try to measure progress towards solutions. In 2019, JIPS coordinated the development of an inter-agency Durable Solutions Indicators and Guide, intended as a basis for data collectors to choose from with the objective of measuring progress towards solutions to internal displacement.⁴⁰ The indicators include demographic indicators, a module on IDPs' preferences, and plans and questions aligned with the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs. IDMC also based its severity assessments methodology on the IASC Framework.⁴¹ In 2022, IOM launched a Solutions and Mobility Index that assesses demographic and mobility trends, safety and security, access to services and infrastructure, and social cohesion in targeted locations.⁴²

At the national level, a number of countries affected by large-scale displacement crises have developed their own durable solutions strategies, and collected information to guide their efforts. This is the case, for instance, in Somalia, where the Federal Government of Somalia is leading the implementation of a Durable Solutions Progress Survey, in coordination with Federal Member States and local authorities, and supported by IOM and other partners.⁴³ For internal displacement, a new system-wide report on solutions, adapted from the IOM PROGRESS report, will provide a periodic review of progress for priority countries. Co-authored by UNHCR, UNDP, IOM and IDMC, the report will look at the availability of data, as well as the participation of IDPs, government leadership, the existence of a solutions strategy, and the role of development finance. Where possible, data will be disaggregated by sex, as was the case with previous PROGRESS reports, which compared female-headed and male-headed households when the information was available from IMPACT/REACH's multisectoral needs assessments.⁴⁴

Gender is an important aspect of solutions, as men and women have been found to advance differently towards solutions, and have different preferences. In Somalia, a study found that 38 percent of surveyed female-headed internally displaced households had overcome most of their displacement-related vulnerabilities, compared with 45 percent of male-headed households.⁴⁵ Women were also found to better integrate in their host community and were more likely to prefer local integration over return than men, in certain contexts.

“My opinion is that there is a real gap around participation of women and leadership. What does meaningful participation look like? There is no agreed-upon indicator. How do we define it? There is no data. Women are already excluded from participation and decision-making processes and it is unlikely that their voices are heard more in humanitarian crises.”

Key Considerations for Data on Displaced Women and Girls

As described in the previous chapter, some of the data needed to inform better support and solutions for displaced women and girls is available, at least for certain displacement contexts, but much is still lacking. Although resources for data collection, analysis and dissemination—particularly gender data—have been reduced drastically over the past couple of years, robust information on displaced women and girls can actually help design more impactful interventions, and ensure better returns on investments. This is especially relevant at a time of rising displacement levels and plummeting international assistance.

The long-term goal should be to generate high-quality data that can meet the diverse needs of decision makers, practitioners, researchers, and advocates. Ideally, such data would capture all displaced women and girls in a given location, be regularly updated, provide individual-level granularity and disaggregation beyond sex and age, and be collected using sufficiently consistent indicators and methodologies to enable comparisons across contexts. Despite the commitments and initiatives described in the previous chapter, achieving this vision remains a long-term aspiration that is unlikely to be realized in the short or medium term. The challenge, therefore, is not only to define the ideal end state, but also to identify practical steps that can strengthen the availability and use of data on women and girls in displacement.

“Communicating that things are possible is more powerful to me than having a dashboard which is spotty or not comparable.”

With this in mind, the following key considerations can be highlighted to ensure that the data being collected can be as instrumental as possible:

- **Displaced women and girls must be represented in all their diversities to provide them with the most appropriate support:** A lack of sex- and age-disaggregated data on displaced populations can result in blanket approaches or approximations of the actual experiences, capacities, risks and needs of displaced women and girls. Obtaining these data, or at the very least estimating them through various methods, would help raise the visibility of displaced women and girls, and of their specific needs, wants, and contributions. An important next step is to further disaggregate data by other key characteristics, such as disability status, ethnolinguistic and other identities, or vulnerability categories that are context-specific, in order to design tailored and inclusive support. Information on gender roles, relations and power dynamics is also critical for more impactful interventions.
- **More efficient methods may be considered to collect information on the diverse needs, wants, and contributions of displaced women and girls in various displacement situations:** Context-specific and up-to-date data that present the most accurate picture of displaced women and girls' conditions is essential to provide them with adequate assistance. Traditional primary data-collection exercises are highly resource-intensive, and resources for them have reduced significantly since 2025. Other approaches encompass artificial intelligence or private-sector contributions, participatory research and local data providers, including displaced women and girls themselves.
- **Data that can help raise funding and guide investments to better support displaced women and girls should be prioritized:** Accompanying all displaced women and girls out of their displacement requires higher levels of financial resources, and much more impactful investments. Current financial support for displaced women and girls relies mostly on needs-based and often gender-blind data, rather than impact analyses and estimates of potential returns. Efforts to measure the impact of women-led initiatives, projections, and models pointing at where tailored

support may yield the best returns, and estimates of benefits for other affected communities, and for society as a whole, could help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of current and future investments.

- **Data on displaced women and girls must be accessible and used in order to be impactful:** Many displaced women and girls already experience research fatigue from having contributed to multiple data-collection exercises without seeing the benefits of their contribution. Datasets do exist, but they are collected by different actors for different purposes, using different indicators, time frames and methods that are not comparable nor compatible. Often, due to confidentiality or lack of resources, these data are not shared publicly. Making sure that the data being produced are accessible and usable requires standardized approaches and definitions, the publication of methodologies, metadata, and interoperable datasets, translations and visualizations, as well as data literacy programs to expand the audience and potential users of the data, and ultimately, their impact.
- **Displaced women and girls must be actively engaged in producing, analyzing, and using the data that concern them:** Addressing the displacement of women and girls does not only mean addressing their immediate needs for shelter, food, or protection. It also means addressing the root causes of displacement's gendered impacts, and setting the ground for durable solutions. One essential aspect of the gender dynamics of displacement is power imbalance, between men and women, displaced and non-displaced people, program participants, and aid providers. These power imbalances are very much reflected in the data at all levels: from data collection that asks male heads of households or chiefs to respond on behalf of women, to international experts designing needs assessments and interpreting results, to non-displaced policy makers and leaders collecting data to respond to their own needs for accountability and reporting, rather than to answer the requests of displaced women and girls. Data can do more than paint the picture of women and girls' lives in displacement: produced in a participatory way, designed for them and by them, it can strengthen their capacities and reinforce their rights, elevate their voice and sustain their agency. Women-led organizations in displacement contexts can be instrumental in this regard.

“Many researchers focus on the global picture but it’s really hard to get the nitty gritty if you don’t speak to the displaced people themselves. You don’t just want something beautiful on paper, but something that is actually impactful for displaced women.”

Raising the visibility of displaced women and girls' conditions is urgent, and this means taking action with data that are currently available—and sometimes, without them. Quantitative data on the number of displaced women and girls, on the main drivers of their displacement, and on their area of origin are available for an increasing number of countries. Estimates exist on the risk of future displacement linked with conflicts and with disasters, which could be disaggregated by sex and age using national demographic data when needed.

“It is important to be clear about the limits of quantitative and qualitative data, what each of them can and cannot do. There is a hierarchy out there with people thinking quantitative data is much better and more robust, but qualitative data can be much more informative and powerful.”

However, while quantitative data are often perceived as better, or more robust and objective, this is not always the case. Quantitative data, particularly when collected in complex settings and with limited financial resources and time, come with many biases and limitations that must be thoroughly understood before the results can be accurately interpreted. Qualitative data can complement quantitative data and be a very powerful tool to shed light on some of the most important aspects of displaced women and girls' lives, particularly those that are less well documented. Moreover, for issues that are difficult to measure

with quantitative data—such as participation in the care economy, certain forms of abuse, neglect, and violence, or power dynamics and decision-making—qualitative data may in fact be the best way to raise awareness and inform responsive programs and services.

Way Forward

Data can be used for multiple purposes by different actors. For displaced women and girls, the focus should be to collect, disseminate, and use data that can: inform humanitarian and development programming and investments, forward-looking policies and solutions; raise their visibility; and advocate for more effective and efficient assistance, and more inclusive and tailored support. Concretely, this means information is most urgently needed to:

1. point to their needs and wants that should be prioritized
2. identify sustainable ways to end women and girls' displacement
3. identify where investments can prevent or reduce future displacement
4. measure the results of past and current investments for displaced women and girls
5. demonstrate the value of investing in better support for displaced women and girls, not only for their own safety, well-being and human development, but also for the broader development and stability of the communities they are part of.

Figure 6: Different Data on Displaced Women and Girls for Different Purposes



The previous chapters showed that some of these data are available and currently used, for instance, data from IOM DTM or from the IMPACT/REACH's multisectoral needs assessments informing programming decisions and feeding into Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Humanitarian Response Plans for major displacement crises. Global datasets, such as those produced by UNHCR or IDMC, are also used for modelling purposes and projections to estimate the number of women and girls at risk of displacement and identify potential hotspots for future crises in the objective of pre-allocating resources or preparing better responses.

Overall, however, programming, funding, and policy decisions on displacement too rarely consider displaced women and girls and gender dynamics specifically, rather envisaging all displaced people (or at best, all displaced women) as a standard category with similar needs and wants. This is in part due to lack of data, as discussed prominently in this paper, but also to a broader issue of invisibility and lack of awareness (and interest) by decision makers. Rooted in strong evidence, advocacy has a major role to play in changing this situation. So does better accessibility and communication on displaced women and girls aimed at a broader audience than feminist organizations, displacement specialists, humanitarian and development actors focused on refugees and IDPs.

WRC is developing a new tool to address this issue through an accessible knowledge product, pooling together existing information on displaced women and girls from various trustworthy sources and monitoring frameworks, highlighting the unique challenges faced and solutions needed by women and girls, and calling for more attention, information and resources to support them in different displacement contexts.

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For more information, contact Julianne Deitch, Director of Research, Women's Refugee Commission, at JulianneD@wrcommission.org.

Women's Refugee Commission

The Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) improves the lives and protects the rights of women, children, youth, and other people who are often overlooked, undervalued, and underserved in humanitarian responses to displacement and crises. We work in partnership with displaced communities to research their needs, identify solutions, and advocate for gender-transformative and sustained improvement in humanitarian, development, and displacement policy and practice. Since our founding in 1989, we have been a leading expert on the needs of refugee women, children, and youth and the policies that can protect and empower them.

Women's Refugee Commission, 105 East 34th Street, Suite 180, New York, NY 10016 | womensrefugeecommission.org

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