

# IMPROVING DATA, UPHOLDING RIGHTS:

## A PARTNERSHIP TO PROTECT MIGRANT AND DISPLACED CHILDREN

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Annual report of the International Data Alliance for **Children on the Move**  
January 2023



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# Foreword from the IDAC Secretariat

**Today, there are millions of children on the move across nearly every continent on the planet.** Many have been forced from home by circumstances no child should have to endure. Many of them suffer rights violations as a daily part of life – deprived of the right to go to school, to nourish and care for their growing bodies, to feel safe and secure.

We know the world's migrant and displaced children are among the most vulnerable and marginalized young populations in the world. Yet, because the data on them remain so poor, there is so much we do not know – and, as a result, they will continue to be overlooked by policymakers and practitioners.

As long as these data gaps persist, these children will not only be deprived of their right to survive and thrive, but also to reach their greatest potential and realize their dreams. And the global community will fail to realize its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees.

Five years ago, we took a stand in the name of these children and [called for action](#) to address the poor evidence and data on migrant and displaced children. Recognizing that the surest way to drive data improvements was by uniting the many players invested in upholding children's rights in the migration and displacement context, we launched the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) in 2020. IDAC brings together key stakeholders

– from policymakers to practitioners, academics to youth representatives – to reflect on the state of migration and displacement data for children and take action towards effective solutions.

As this report details, IDAC has made significant progress towards achieving its mission, despite operating with limited resources and amid an unprecedented global health crisis. This is thanks to the important contributions of our members and partners. But without greater investments from governments and other crucial stakeholders, our vision of better lives for children on the move will not come to be. Today, these investments are needed more than ever to respond to emerging and compounding global crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict and climate change.


The IDAC Secretariat appeals to all Member States to urgently prioritize the data needs of children on the move, and commit the necessary political, technical and financial investments. The time to strengthen data systems and improve data availability, accessibility and usability is now.

Let us set a course of action together to deliver better outcomes for children on the move. It is our collective responsibility as a global community to meet the urgent material and protection needs of highly vulnerable children on the move. They can wait no longer.




  
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## 1

## A question of protecting children

**At the end of 2021, a record 36.5 million children were forced from home because of conflict and violence.**<sup>1</sup> Since these figures were compiled, the world has unfortunately not become safer for children. Economic instability, turbulent political situations and disasters continue to render environments unsafe and unsuitable for children around the world. In 2022, two thirds of Ukrainian children, or an estimated 5.2 million children, were displaced.<sup>2</sup> And over the next 25 years, climate change is estimated to place 1.2 billion people at risk of internal and cross-border displacement.<sup>3</sup> Children are likely to comprise a sizeable portion of this potentially massive movement.

### Who are children on the move?

**Children on the move** is a compound concept that has gained traction on the operational level in the international community. It describes children who have been directly or indirectly affected by migration or displacement, either internationally across borders or within the same country. When referring to 'children on the move', IDAC includes child migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, internally displaced children, children indirectly affected by migration, such as children left behind due to migration of parent(s), stateless children, and child victims of cross-border trafficking.

Millions of children are on the move around the world. Many are facing severe violations of their rights. **Yet, as innovations in technology and data reshape life on this planet, data that capture the circumstances of migrant and displaced children are glaringly missing from many statistical systems.** In many places, even the most basic details on these children are missing. Data on children on the move are weakened by many challenges: political to technical, substantive to systemic and structural (see p. 11).

**In short, the data challenge is a child protection challenge: Without high-quality, reliable data to reflect the lives of children on the move, their situation will not be fully understood by governments and policy responses will fail to fully uphold their rights.** Without better statistics and evidence, we cannot follow through on promises made in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global Compact for

Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). And in the day-to-day lives of millions of children, this means continued days missed from school, food insecurity, inadequate health care and many other harmful deprivations and rights violations.

### Seen and secured

**Every child, no matter where they are, is protected by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

The rights of **children on the move** are further secured by:

- the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes several targets related to migrants
- the Global Compact for Migration
- the Global Compact on Refugees
- the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement

These frameworks note that disaggregated data are needed to uphold the rights of all migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons – including children.

## YOUNG LIVES AT RISK

Crises and emergencies are disrupting children's lives at disproportionate levels. Many will leave home and enter an often dangerous and prolonged time of uncertainty.

**2 of 3**

Ukrainian children displaced since February of 2022

**1 in 3**

of the world's stateless people are children

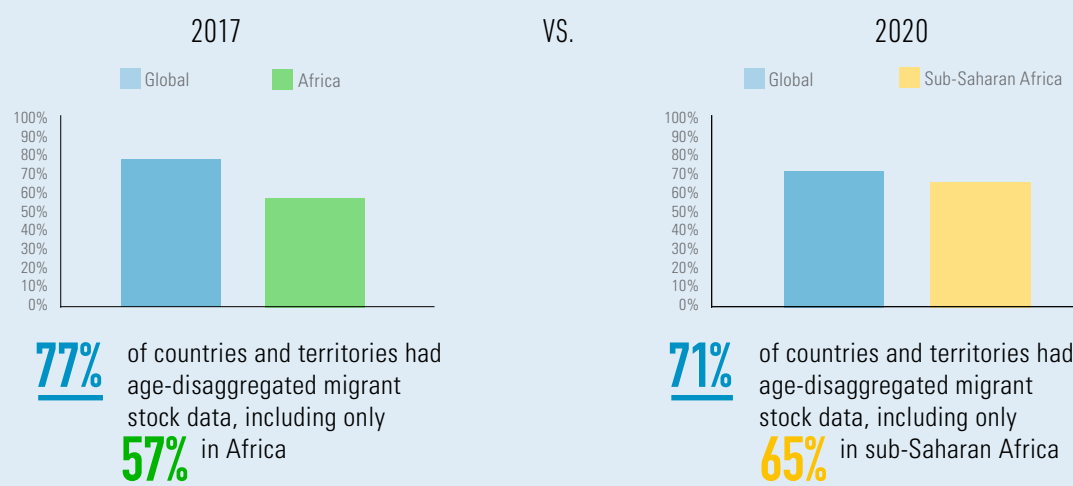
**1 in 2**

of the world's children live in 33 countries classified as high risk of climate change impacts

Source: UNICEF, '[One Hundred Days of War in Ukraine Have Left 5.2 Million Children in Need of Humanitarian Assistance](#)'; UNHCR, '[Statelessness Around the World](#)'; UNICEF, '[The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis](#)'.



## AVAILABILITY OF MIGRATION DATA BY AGE REMAINS LOW



### Cooperating to improve the data

This is why the work of the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) is so critical. As a cross-sectoral global coalition of close to 50 members, IDAC has brought long-overdue visibility to issues impacting children on the move, consistently flagging the glaring data gaps that remain overlooked.

#### The United Nations Secretary-General

highlighted the importance of IDAC's work in his report on GCM implementation (Feb. 2022) and his report to the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (Sept. 2022)

Better data for children on the move are more critical than ever before. Greater investments in data and research on these children are crucial not only to eliminate the hurdles to their well-being today, but also

so that systems are prepared to deal with future emergencies – whether we know they are coming or not. Without better data for children on the move, we cannot protect their rights, safety and agency.

### About this report

Publication of this report coincides with IDAC's inaugural [annual conference](#), which is taking place on 27 January 2023 in Santiago, Chile. Since its inception in 2019, IDAC and its nearly 50 members have made important progress for children on the move. This report highlights key achievements and maps the way forward, reiterating the continued challenges in generating, analysing, sharing and using data for and about children on the move.

By convening a range of stakeholders – including policymakers, practitioners, academics and youth

representatives – IDAC's conference provides a strategic opportunity to reflect on the state of migration and displacement data for children today, and elicit input for actions to protect their well-being tomorrow.

At the broadest level, we ask: *Reflecting on IDAC's past achievements and looking ahead, how can IDAC best position itself to facilitate concrete, lasting improvements in the collection, analysis, sharing and use of data to protect and empower migrant and displaced children?*

**For more information on the urgent need to collect better data on children on the move, see IDAC's website, <<https://data.unicef.org/resources/international-data-alliance-for-children-on-the-move>>.**



# 2

## The International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC): Profile and key activities

### QUICK FACTS

**Mission:** To improve data and statistics on migrant and displaced children in support of evidence-based policymaking and programming that can protect and empower them

#### How IDAC works: A global alliance

##### ✓ **Membership: 47**

- 22 Member States
- 13 United Nations agencies and other international organizations
- 12 NGOs, think tanks and academic experts
- Cross-sectoral, multidimensional, represents national, regional and global perspectives

##### ✓ **Partners with Member States** so they can deliver better outcomes for children in general, and for vulnerable migrant and displaced children in particular

##### ✓ **Organized into four working groups**, each with distinct leadership and thematic technical focus related to improving data for children in migration and displacement contexts

##### ✓ **Guided by the principle** that we can achieve more if resources and expertise are pooled and shared **to drive both agenda and action**

#### Why join IDAC?

- ✓ Broad-based platform serves as an **amplifier**, facilitating wider outreach and broader impact for individual member initiatives
- ✓ Offers a space to **build on existing initiatives** (e.g., [EGRIS](#), [EGMS](#)) and create added value in generating data for children in migration and displacement contexts
- ✓ Provides an opportunity to share **best practices** and **lessons learned** in an inclusive, peer-learning environment, fostering greater efficiency and use of resources for members



- ✓ Enables opportunities for members to **co-create public goods** and resources that advance better data for children
- ✓ Facilitates progress toward meeting **international commitments**, including the 2030 Agenda, the GCM and the GCR

#### IDAC Action Plan (2021–2023)



**Objective 1.** Strengthen national data systems and capacities to protect migrant and forcibly displaced children, through the provision of sustainable capacity-building support



**Objective 2.** Promote and establish collaborative, innovative methods for child-specific data work (e.g., [the annual conference](#), collaborative events, thematic reports, working groups)



**Objective 3.** Improve data visibility, availability, accessibility and usability by developing a global database and dashboard on children on the move, as well as a dedicated online IDAC hub

# IDAC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

## MEMBERS:

### Member States

- **Europe (9):** Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
- **Latin America and the Caribbean (4):** Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru
- **Middle East and North Africa (3):** Egypt, Jordan, Morocco
- **Southeast Asia (2):** Nepal, Thailand
- **Sub-Saharan Africa (4):** Cameroon, South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda

### UN and other international organizations

- African Union Commission
- Eurostat
- IOM
- OECD
- UNDP
- UNESCAP
- UNESCO
- UNFPA
- UNHCR
- UNICEF
- UNPD
- UNSD
- WHO

### NGOs, think tanks, academia

- AidData
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)
- International Security and Development Centre (ISDC)
- IMPACT – REACH initiative
- Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS)
- Joint Research Centre – Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography
- Mixed Migration Centre (MMC)
- Migration Policy Institute (MPI)
- Save the Children
- WorldPop
- Australian National University
- Georgetown University

## LEADERSHIP AND GUIDANCE:

### Secretariat

- Eurostat
- IOM
- OECD
- UNHCR
- UNICEF (Chair)

### Advisory Board

- African Union Commission
- Department of Statistics in Jordan
- Statistics Netherlands
- Statistics Norway
- Statistics South Africa
- UNESCAP (Petra Nahmias, Chair)
- UN Population Division
- UN Statistics Division





## FROM MOROCCO TO CHILE: HIGHLIGHTS

**As the timeline on the following pages shows, IDAC and its nearly 50 members have made notable progress in enhancing data systems to capture migration and displacement data since the alliance was formally launched just under three years ago.**

IDAC's origins date to early 2018, when UNICEF, Eurostat, IOM, OECD and UNHCR issued a global [call to action](#) to address the data and evidence gaps that render many migrant and displaced children invisible to policy- and decision makers. To fulfil the 2030 Agenda promise of leaving no one behind, they urged Member States to prioritize actions and include child-specific considerations in the then forthcoming Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). The need to improve and invest in the collection, analysis and dissemination of accurate, reliable and comparable data for migrant and displaced people was recognized in both compacts.

A 2019 workshop in Rabat, Morocco, attended by experts from UN agencies, academics and practitioners, furthered the discussion on the data gaps concerning children. The best solution,

participants decided, was to create a broad-based platform to enable further collaboration towards generating better data on children on the move. The International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) was formally launched one year later, under the joint leadership of UNICEF (Secretariat Chair), Eurostat, IOM, OECD and UNHCR.

Since the Rabat meeting, the scale of child migration and displacement has only increased, driven by crises including the COVID-19 pandemic, war, several conflicts in Africa and a growing number of climate change-related threats. These emergencies have heightened vulnerabilities and uncertainties for millions of children on the move and contributed to increases in migration and displacement numbers. Notably, the Secretary-General launched the Action Agenda on Internal Displacement in 2022: It calls for better data and evidence to effectively respond to the growing incidence of internal displacement due to multiple crises.

In its work today and plans for tomorrow (see p. 19), IDAC will continue to spotlight the urgent needs of children on the move – and why addressing the data concerns related to these children must be top priority.

- February 2018** ● UNICEF, Eurostat, IOM, OECD and UNHCR release a global call to action, [Protecting children on the move starts with better data](#)
- March 2019** ● An [international expert workshop](#), jointly organized by UNICEF, IOM and the governments of Denmark and Morocco, recommends the formation of a cooperative platform to improve the data on children on the move
- March 2020** ● IDAC is formally launched in New York at an event jointly organized by the governments of the Netherlands and Sweden, together with UNICEF, IOM, OECD and UNHCR, on the margins of the 51st session of the UN Statistical Commission
- April to December 2020** ● The IDAC Secretariat sets up the operational framework, including finalization of the Terms of Reference (TOR), outreach to new members, formation of the Advisory Board and working groups, and fundraising efforts
- April 2021** ● Publication of first [issue brief](#) about the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant and displaced children, using gender as an investigative lens
- IDAC [presents](#) at the 3rd Africa Migration Data Network Webinar Series, organized by the African Union Commission, IOM-GMDAC and Statistics Sweden
- May 2021** ● A [webinar](#) is held to underscore the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children on the move and highlight the need for better data on these children
- IDAC holds a consultation meeting with Member States to exchange ideas and elicit feedback on its vision, strategy and workplan
- October 2021** ● An IDAC [blog post](#) published ahead of the United Nations World Data Forum highlights the urgent need to address data gaps pertaining to migrant and displaced children
- At a webinar organized by the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism focusing on [GCM Objective 1](#), IDAC calls for a child-sensitive approach to data collection and use
- November 2021** ● IDAC publishes its inaugural [Data InSIGHT](#) publication to spur the international community to take specific actions to enhance data systems on migrant and displaced children, in conjunction with a [High-Level Dialogue](#) on closing the data gaps on children on the move
- IDAC co-hosts a webinar with UN Women and IOM-GMDAC to highlight the need for and guide the production of gender-sensitive migration data
- December 2021** ● IDAC's [Year in Review](#) reports on key activities and achievements in its first full year of operation



A [blog](#) on how data can transform education for internally displaced children is published to mark the fourth International Day of Education



**January 2022**

A [side event](#) is held at the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN Statistical Commission, emphasizing the need for better data to improve outcomes for children on the move

**February 2022**

IDAC holds a [webinar](#) to examine the critical role of data to meet the needs of Ukrainian migrant and refugee children

**April 2022**

IDAC presents at the African Union Commission's [Expert Group Meeting on Development of Methodologies on Migration and Mobility Statistics](#) in Marrakech, Morocco

At the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), IDAC highlights the lack of progress in improving child-specific migration statistics and renews the call for stronger data to protect migrant children via a report, [Stronger Data, Brighter Futures: Protecting migrant children with data and evidence: A continued call to action](#)



**May 2022**

IDAC presents at the [Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series](#) and at the [ASEAN workshops](#) on migrant women and children

'On the Move, In the Know', IDAC's newsletter, is launched to provide regular updates on efforts to improve data on children on the move

**July 2022**

A pair of blog posts urges countries to remember children on the move in their global commitments: one focusing on the [IMRF and efforts to improve data](#), and a second that addresses [inequitable access to education](#) among children on the move



**September 2022**



IDAC and IDMC host a [hybrid event](#) to address persistent obstacles to education for internally displaced children

**November 2022**

At the [2022 Meeting of the Expert Group on Refugee, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics \(EGRIS\)](#), IDAC presents the guidelines on child-specific indicators produced by IDAC Working Group 2 and based on EGRIS recommendations



**December 2022**

IDAC's first [annual conference](#) takes place in Santiago, Chile, to reflect on progress made in improving migration and displacement data and consider IDAC's future workplan, alongside publication of its first annual report. Together with the Migration Youth and Children Platform, IDAC calls on Member States to further partner with the alliance and commit to a global pledge

**January 2023**

The conference immediately follows the [International Forum on Migration Statistics \(IFMS\)](#), in Santiago, where IDAC hosts a [parallel session](#), 'How to effectively bridge the data gaps on children on the move? Multi-stakeholder perspectives and solutions'







## 3

## The Challenging Data Landscape: A summary

**The international community has agreed to leave no one behind, and to promote the inclusion of especially vulnerable groups in sustainable development efforts.** The GCM aims to make migration work for all, while the GCR pledges to protect affected populations and provide durable solutions to forced displacement. These international commitments, as well as the Secretary-General's [Action Agenda on Internal Displacement](#), highlight the importance of better data and evidence to inform policymaking and programming.

Yet improving statistics and evidence for migrant and displaced children entails many challenges. The breadth and scope of these issues demonstrate that strategies and solutions must stem from collaboration across the international community, including partnerships with youth themselves. We must galvanize efforts to transform the data landscape and achieve better outcomes for children on the move.

### Political challenges

- x **Many efforts to strengthen migration data lack a child lens – thus neglecting the specific needs of children on the move.** As IDAC highlighted in [a 2022 report](#),<sup>4</sup> “children on the move, and the specifics of their data needs, have been notably missing” from data-related conversations in the framework of the GCM, for instance.
- x **Many countries do not prioritize data on specific subgroups, like migrant and displaced children.** This may be due to competing priorities, limited data infrastructure and funding constraints (in low-income countries) or lack of political will to join a voluntary process like IDAC. Migration and displacement issues can also be contentious, which may further deter States from investing time and resources in collaborative work to improve these data.
- x **Data on children on the move can be expensive to produce.** Low-income countries may not have the time or resources to produce these data – particularly in places impacted by conflict, violence or emerging crises.

### Technical and substantive challenges

- \* Governments, international organizations and other stakeholders often use **different definitions and methodologies** to compile data on migrant and displaced populations. An absence of standardization – which is also seen within national statistical systems themselves – can be problematic when comparing data within and between countries and compiling global estimates on migrant and displaced children.
- \* **Many countries do not collect data that can be disaggregated by age and other factors** (see infographic, p. 4). Age-disaggregated data on migrant and displaced populations are crucial for creating child-sensitive policies and programmes. Disaggregation of data by sex, migratory status, disability status and other key characteristics is also crucial for uncovering a more complete picture of the experiences and needs of children on the move.
- \* ‘Children on the move’ is an umbrella term that encompasses children impacted by a diverse set of migration-related circumstances. **Data commonly neglect many subgroups of children on the move** – many of which are in highly vulnerable situations – such as unaccompanied minors, separated children, stateless children, children ‘left behind’ and irregular migrant children.<sup>5</sup>



- \* **There are currently major gaps in the consistent and regular production of data on the well-being of children on the move,** such as data on access to essential services – e.g., health care, education and housing – including in humanitarian settings. Lack of coordination between various entities, such as national statistical authorities and line ministries, contributes to this challenge.

## Systemic and structural

- **The players involved in national data ecosystems – e.g., data producers and users – often have different mandates and competing interests and priorities.** Coordinating the range of stakeholders at the nexus of human mobility, child protection, development and data – including policymakers – presents a serious challenge to producing the data needed to manage migration and displacement through a child-sensitive lens.

- **National statistical authorities and line ministries working on data, migration, displacement and children's issues often operate in silos.** This obscures the situation of children on the move by weakening the quality, availability and accessibility of data. Even when data on children on the move are available, they may not be shared between government agencies or properly analysed to inform policy and programme design.
- **A notable lack of cross-border or cross-country collaboration, data sharing and data use hampers our knowledge of children on the move.** A synergistic approach is often missing – whether within a country, a region or globally – that fosters partnerships with international organizations, civil society, NGOs and the private sector to promote strategic, robust data collection that can be leveraged for the benefit of all children on the move.





## 4

## Strategic Cooperation, Sustainable Solutions

**Since it was founded in 2020, IDAC has become a leader of global efforts to protect the well-being of children on the move through better data.** By convening high-level events and organizing timely webinars, IDAC has brought hundreds of key stakeholders to the table, including government and non-state data producers and data users. At the same time, a series of publications have shared regular updates on the numbers and situations of migrant and displaced children globally and regionally, while also identifying the data gaps that limit a comprehensive understanding of children on the move and the strategies needed to improve the data. The IDAC platform is also playing an important role in coordinating the many data collection initiatives that exist – helping to create a more coherent and clearer picture of the situation of children on the move.

**IDAC's wide array of initiatives responds to today's unique challenges – those introduced by record numbers of children on the move, the poor availability of data reflecting their situations, and, most importantly, the inaction to support these children's rights. The alliance's work to increase visibility of these issues is advancing advocacy efforts for children on the move and helping to fulfil global commitments to migrant and displaced children.**

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIONS, 2020–2022

**1) As the political landscape of migration and development evolves, more actors are becoming involved in achieving the same objectives (e.g., the 2030 Agenda, GCM and GCR). But efforts are often duplicated, while financial and human resources become increasingly constrained. Partnerships, leveraging expertise and co-creating solutions is the surest way forward.**

IDAC's core strength is its ability to bring all concerned stakeholders together to strengthen data efforts for children on the move. This approach is strategic and cost- and resource-effective.

For instance, the IDAC Secretariat unites the key agencies at the nexus of child protection, development, data, migration and displacement issues: UNICEF (Chair), Eurostat, IOM, OECD and UNHCR. Backed by both the political mandate and technical expertise, these agencies are aware of the pervasive data gaps that harm millions of migrant and displaced children and of the need to integrate child-specific data needs in their work.

IDAC members, which now number close to 50 (see p. 6), are part of an important and ongoing conversation around how to enhance data and deliver on international commitments to migrant and displaced children. Members gather with global experts on a periodic basis to discuss ongoing IDAC initiatives, share projects and events relevant to children on the move, discuss best practices and pitfalls, and identify opportunities for collaboration.

While this cross-sectoral membership has successfully brought the issue of child-specific data gaps and needs to the global agenda and linked it to major global processes related to migration and displacement, these efforts must be sustained. IDAC is only as strong as its members – who must remain committed to work that is only just beginning. The more Member States that take part – by contributing their experiences and adopting agreed standards, for instance – the more effective its work will be.

**2) Production and sharing of quality data are key to upholding children's rights and tracking how well migrant and displaced children are doing. These statistics and evidence must be standardized, regularly collected, analysed and made broadly available as a public good. For too long, data on children on the move have remained irregular, inconsistent and unavailable.**

By bringing together often disparate sources of data specific to children on the move and unpacking who the children are behind these numbers, IDAC has brought visibility to data gaps related to migrant and displaced children to policy- and decision-makers at country, regional and global levels. This includes analyses of key thematic issues impacting migrant and displaced children.

- ✓ The [Data InSIGHT](#) series was launched in November 2021. The inaugural report offered the most comprehensive data about the number and situation of children on the move, while stressing the concerning data gaps that remain. [IDAC's web page](#) highlights the report's findings, continually updating the numbers as new data are released.
- ✓ Two forthcoming briefs will act as foundational background documents to the standardization of terminology when collecting data on children on the move and understanding the data mechanisms at work for these populations:
  - *Getting to Know Children on the move: Key terms, definitions and concepts* unpacks the term 'children on the move,' the subgroups it constitutes, and if/how these groups are counted. The brief presents statistics on different groups of children on the move and clarifies those that are being counted and those that are not.
  - *Data Sources on Children on the Move* explores existing and emerging data sources on migrant and displaced children, highlighting strategic opportunities to enhance data on migrant and displaced children through both official and non-traditional data sources.
- ✓ IDAC issue briefs and blog posts have brought attention to important thematic issues that shape the lives of children on the move. An April 2021 [issue brief](#) highlighted the gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities that children on the move were facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, stressing the urgent need for more improved quality data on these issues. A series of blog posts released to coincide with high-level events on education – one on [internally displaced children](#), and another highlighting that children on the move are often [overlooked](#) in policies and programmes – called for better education-related data for these children and discussed promising practices to close the data gaps.

IDAC is advocating for implementation of the IDEAS toolkit, which assesses national data collection systems to enable a stronger response to the needs of migrant and displaced children. The IDEAS initiative comprehensively maps existing data, identifies gaps and good practices in national data capacities, and generates recommendations on how to sustainably enhance the collection, analysis and use of high-quality, timely and disaggregated data on children on the move at country level.

### What is IDEAS?

The [Integrated Data Ecosystem Assessment and Strengthening \(IDEAS\)](#)<sup>6</sup> project was developed jointly by UNICEF, IOM, UNHCR, UNSD and UNESCAP in 2019. It aims to strengthen national data capacities and support countries in fulfilling their commitment to realize the promise of the 2030 Agenda, as well as to operationalize the GCM and the GCR.

### 3) Data and evidence that capture the needs of children on the move are largely overlooked in global forums. Member States and other key actors, including youth themselves, must be active participants in formulating the necessary sustainable solutions and smart investments in data collection systems.

Engagement at high levels is needed to ensure that children on the move have a voice at the table. In May 2022, IDAC held a [side event](#) at the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), which reflected on progress made toward implementation of the GCM. IDAC's event – the only one to focus specifically on children – and [accompanying report](#) highlighted the foundational role of data in upholding the rights of children on the move and called for Member States and other key actors to make political, financial and technical investments in producing better data for these children. IDAC is also contributing to efforts to realize paragraph 70 of the [IMRF Progress Declaration](#), which calls on States to develop comprehensive strategies for improving disaggregated migration data – a process to be led by IOM and UNDESA.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, IDAC has both organized and participated in several high-level events to ensure the needs of children on the move are represented in relevant dialogues and decision-making processes. In these regional and global dialogues, IDAC has continually called upon key stakeholders to take action to improve data. These events include:

- ✓ An IDAC [presentation](#) at the 3rd Africa Migration Data Network Webinar Series, organized by the African Union Commission, IOM-GMDAC and Statistics Sweden (April 2021)
- ✓ An IDAC-organized [high-level dialogue](#) on closing data gaps on children on the move (November 2021)
- ✓ An IDAC presentation in a webinar organized by the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT), focusing on GCM Objective 1 (October 2021)



- ✓ An IDAC-organized [side event](#) at the 53rd session for the United Nations Statistical Commission (February 2022)
- ✓ An IDAC presentation at the [African Union Commission workshop](#) on definitions, methodologies and standards for production and compilation of migration statistics (April 2022)
- ✓ An IDAC co-organized session at the [Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series](#) on data gaps on children on the move (May 2022)
- ✓ An IDAC intervention at the [ASEAN Workshop](#) on Women and Children in the context of migration (May 2022)
- ✓ An IDMC-IDAC co-launch [event](#) on better access to education for internally displaced children (November 2022)
- ✓ IDAC's participation in the [2022 Meeting of the Expert Group on Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics \(EGRIS\)](#) (December 2022)

**4) Crises and emergencies – such as the COVID-19 pandemic, war and conflict, and the impacts of climate change – continue to displace children internally and across borders and heighten their vulnerability. Robust data systems play a critical role during these times, ensuring**

**relevant agencies and governments can respond quickly and effectively to children's needs.**

Emergencies often carry grave consequences for children's lives and, in many cases, lead to migration or displacement. IDAC recognizes the urgent need to act on behalf of children during these situations, as seen in the [issue brief](#) it produced to discuss the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant and displaced girls and boys, followed the next month by a [webinar](#) to underscore the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children on the move and highlight the need for better data on key topics.

In response to the large-scale displacement of Ukrainian children, IDAC initiated the [first global discussion](#) on the number and situation of children affected by the war, calling attention to the critical information required to meet the protection and development needs of children displaced by the conflict. It brought together the main countries affected by the war, namely Ukraine, Moldova and Poland; the key humanitarian agencies working on the ground, including UNICEF, IOM, UNHCR and Save the Children; and the European Union.

IDAC's second Data InSIGHT publication, to be released in 2023, will focus on climate change and children on the move, highlighting their current and emerging needs, and why quality data are vital to the response to this evolving crisis.



## PARTNERSHIP IN FOCUS: IDAC'S WORKING GROUPS

To achieve IDAC's mission of better data for better lives for children on the move, four working groups have been set up since 2021, each with distinct leadership and thematic focus. They are translating IDAC objectives into concrete outputs to improve the lives of children on the move.

In the last two years, these working groups have developed their respective terms of reference and workplans, held periodic meetings and taken concrete steps to advance their goals. Aligning activities with key migration and displacement statistics expert groups, such as the Expert Group on Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Statelessness Statistics ([EGRISS](#)) and the Expert Group on Migration Statistics (EGMS), IDAC's working groups are identifying challenges related to child-specific migration and displacement data and

generating practical solutions in the form of public goods (e.g., publications, guidance materials, and services such as capacity-building trainings and strategic partnerships).

These working groups leverage IDAC members' broad range of expertise and know-how to promote peer learning and co-create solutions, while also increasing visibility of the data gaps and needs of migrant and displaced children in major regional and global spaces. As they unpack the data challenges, working groups' individual and collective experiences are providing the building blocks to lasting solutions. Although challenges remain, IDAC's four working groups are laying the groundwork for partnerships in action that will lead to tangible improvements in the data collected and utilized for children on the move.

### WORKING GROUP 1

Chair: Hellenic Statistical Authority

Members: Cameroon, Greece, Norway, Australian National University, EU-KCMD, Georgetown University, IOM, OECD, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF

**Goal: To strengthen the capacities of national statistical institutions to collect, analyse, store and make available high-quality, disaggregated and reliable data on children on the move**

Working Group 1 has **produced a manual on child-specific data capacity-building** on children on the move. The manual:

- ✓ Helps countries' national statistical systems develop the skills and structures to produce data on children on the move
- ✓ Provides guidance on child-specific principles and protections necessary to produce and process data on migrant and displaced children
- ✓ Outlines actions that States can take to improve the coordination of data on children on the move, building on EGRISS recommendations
- ✓ Highlights concrete tools, initiatives and best practices that serve as models for how States can enhance data ecosystems and capture more quality, timely and reliable data on migrant and displaced children

### WORKING GROUP 2

Chair: Statistics South Africa

Members: Cameroon, Italy, Mexico, Morocco, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, African Union Commission, Eurostat, EU-KCMD, IOM, OECD, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNPD, UNSD

**Goal: To develop child-specific indicators and metadata most relevant to children on the move to help achieve the SDGs and commitments made under the GCM and GCR**

Working Group 2 has **produced a set of guidelines that recommends key child-specific indicators** for countries to collect on children on the move. The guidelines:

- ✓ Identify and recommend priority indicators to help countries monitor and realize the rights and well-being of migrant and displaced children, building on EGRISS recommendations ([IRIS](#) and [IRRS](#))
- ✓ Recommend disaggregating indicators by a range of dimensions, including: age and sex, migratory status, geographic location, income status, disability status and unaccompanied minors
- ✓ Inform national data collection efforts and create globally comparable data sets on the situation (e.g., numbers on health, education, poverty and child protection) of migrant and displaced children



### WORKING GROUP 3

Chair: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)

Members: Colombia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Uganda, IDMC, IOM, ISDC, MMC, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF

**Goal: To improve the availability of data on internally displaced children, including estimates of their numbers by age, sex, disability status and other relevant intersectionalities**

Working Group 3 has focused efforts on **generating awareness about the data gaps** on internally displaced children. This includes:

- ✓ Producing a [blog post](#) on the fourth International Day of Education to highlight the intense deprivations that internally displaced children face in accessing education, and to stress the urgent need for better data to track their learning needs and to uphold their right to learn. It also noted key initiatives aimed at improving education data for these children, such as the [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre's \(IDMC\)](#) work collecting standardized, disaggregated data on internally displaced children's access to education and UNESCO's [Global Data Portal](#) on education in emergencies
- ✓ In October 2022, the Working Group Chair co-launched a [report](#) on estimating and costing access to education for internally displaced children with IDAC and Education in Emergencies (EiE)

### WORKING GROUP 4

Chair: Save the Children

Members: Slovenia, Uganda, Eurostat, Georgetown University, IMPACT, IOM, MMC, MPI, OECD, Save the Children, UNHCR, UNICEF, WorldPop

**Goal: To promote collaboration around innovative methods and solutions for child-specific data among technical experts, data owners and implementing agencies**

Working Group 4 is **mapping out the variety of data efforts** being undertaken by its members to identify innovative approaches to data collection, analysis, sharing and use. The Working Group:

- ✓ Produced a proposal for a pilot on disaggregation and secured partial funding for a pilot project on data disaggregation on migrant and refugee children
- ✓ Will present cutting-edge data approaches at the 3rd International Forum on Migration Statistics (IFMS) in Santiago, Chile, in January 2023
- ✓ Develops IDAC synergies with relevant processes that focus on innovative approaches to data efforts, including the Big Data for Migration Alliance (BD4M) and the World Data Forum







# 5

## The Way Forward: Investing in every child on the move

**There has never been a more important time to commit to concrete steps to improve the data and evidence on migrant and displaced children.**

The actual count and situation of migrant and displaced children remain obscured by aggregate estimates. We do not know for certain how many children are among reported migrant and displaced populations. We know even less about the numbers of children on the move at any given time, where they are, what their ages are, and whether they travel unaccompanied or have become separated from their caregivers.

As global uncertainties and threats caused by climate change, disasters, conflicts, economic slowdown and other concerns continue, these numbers are likely to increase in the coming years. Unless we improve data collection efforts to ensure that migrant and displaced children are counted, many of them will remain unseen and unaccounted for by the policymakers and practitioners tasked with the responsibility to protect them.

Today, the key actions described in the 2018 Call to Action that led to IDAC's creation are more urgent than ever. Realizing them will demand robust action from Member States and other concerned stakeholders.

### Better Data for Children on the Move: 5 Strategic Action Points

- 1 Disaggregate data by age, sex and migratory status
- 2 Collect data on key issues related to children on the move
- 3 Make better use of existing data, and share it
- 4 Coordinate data collection efforts within countries and across borders
- 5 Make special efforts to collect and analyse data on children

**A cooperative approach that starts from the ground up is needed to set standards that are based on lived experiences and lessons learned, and to strengthen local and country data systems and capacities.** The magnitude of data gaps is immense – and there is a long way to go to lifting the level of data in every country to a place where every child on the move is recognized, seen and counted.

But there are important building blocks available for improving the data and evidence on children on the move. The two expert groups working in migration and displacement contexts – EGRIS and EGMS – have developed new statistical frameworks for counting and monitoring the well-being of migrant and displaced persons:

- The EGRIS recommendations – [IRRS](#), [IRIS](#) and the upcoming [IROS](#) – put forth standardized methodologies and statistical definitions for improving the data collection of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons
- The [EGMS recommendations](#) on migration statistics put forth recommendations for standardized definitions of international migrants
- The EGMS has published recommended [questions](#) to capture migrant populations in national censuses and surveys

IDAC is using its platform to strategically build on EGRIS and EGMS work. For instance, a series of briefs and guidelines aim to develop national statistical systems' capacities to collect and produce data for and about children on the move (e.g., two forthcoming briefs, described on p. 14; the manual produced by Working Group 1, see p. 16; and guidelines produced by Working Group 2, see p. 16). These efforts are doing the important job of connecting the dots across multiple and relevant data sources for migrant and displaced children.

Solving the data gaps is not a question of developing one-size-fits-all solutions. But we can work together towards the shared objective of establishing and

agreeing to common minimum standards. This important step would allow for comparability of data and statistics, which could then inform policy and programme interventions that work just as effectively locally as they do globally.

**Partnership is key – this includes sharing resources and coordinating efforts.** As an alliance with stakeholders based around the globe, coordinating regular meetings and collaborating on multiple initiatives with full participation can be challenging. But the more we work together, the more quickly we will achieve the data improvements that are so urgently needed to protect migrant and displaced children.

IDAC relies on voluntary member participation in various activities, including the provision of thematic inputs, sharing of know-how and experiences, production of publications and organization of events. More dedicated human and financial resources are needed to support IDAC's daily operations and cover a broader range of tasks that further promotes IDAC's work, including communications and social media and proper documentation of IDAC events – such as notetaking and preparation of minutes and summary reports. To date, IDAC has been primarily funded by UNICEF and Eurostat, with support from IOM and UNHCR. IDAC currently operates with only 1.5 full-time staff capacity.

Meeting IDAC's mission and sustaining its activities requires more robust commitment and contributions – political, technical and financial – from Member States and key partners. To borrow a lesson learned by the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement, which has led global efforts since 2017 to improve the data landscape on forced displacement, "Transformational change is a long game."<sup>8</sup>

**Important prospects are ahead that will shape IDAC's work in 2023 and beyond.** The international community is finally paying attention to the value of timely, accurate and disaggregated data for evidence-based policymaking and programming. Achieving the 2030 Agenda and the objectives of the GCM, the GCR and the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement will require robust evidence backed by collaborative approaches. Regional and global processes related to sustainable development, migration and displacement issues offer synergistic vehicles to advance IDAC's work.

We must seize strategic opportunities to close the data gaps and expand our understanding of certain thematic areas where so little is known about migrant and displaced children.

### **IDAC will raise the visibility of the needs of children on the move by:**

- Ensuring children are represented in actions to realize the Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum
  - The 2022 IMRF Progress Declaration (paragraph 70) calls on Member States to develop a comprehensive strategy to improve disaggregation of migration data at a local, national, regional and global level. It also urges States to develop a minimum set of indicators to monitor progress of GCM implementation.
- Emphasizing child-relevant aspects when promoting and implementing new statistical frameworks for migrant and displaced persons produced by EGRIS and EGMS
- Advocating for the inclusion of children on the move in important regional and global processes, including:
  - UN Statistical Commission annual sessions
  - Annual High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda)
  - The Regional Migration Review Forum and International Migration Review Forum to monitor GCM implementation
  - The Global Refugee Forum to monitor GCR implementation
  - The Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement
  - The International Forum on Migration Statistics
  - The United Nations World Data Forum
  - At regional level: the African Union Agenda 2063 and Migration Policy Framework, the European Child Guarantee, ASEAN, ESCAP, UN Economic Commission for Europe, and others

### **Paving the road ahead together**

IDAC has made significant efforts towards achieving its three objectives (see p. 5). But our work has just begun. The partnership in action that we are building must be nurtured and bolstered. We must further expand on the good practices that we have established, while also accommodating the lessons learned. Better data for a brighter future for children on the move rely on continued commitment from IDAC's wide network of humanitarian and development partners. By working together, we can ensure IDAC's next steps are strategic, resource-efficient and effective. These will be discussed in detail at IDAC's events in Santiago, Chile, in late January (see below for more information).



## IDAC IN 2023 AND BEYOND: MEASURES FOR CONSIDERATION

1. **Secure more political support from Member States** for our voluntary process, particularly from countries that are already championing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the GCM, the GCR, the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement and other relevant migration and displacement processes at regional and global levels
2. **Obtain more robust contributions from current IDAC members and partners** including through membership in working groups (see p. 16), presentation of relevant policies and good practices at IDAC events, and financial contributions
3. Leverage and **build synergies with existing processes that are invested in improving data and evidence** in migration and displacement contexts (e.g., EGMS and EGRIS) to sharpen the focus on child-specific data work
4. Lead global efforts to **improve coordination of activities and sharing of knowledge and good practices** in child-specific data collection, analysis, sharing and use at the national, regional and global level, using a bottom-up approach (i.e., by amplifying insights, good practices and lessons learned from countries themselves)
5. **Identify and focus IDAC's work on critical thematic issues** that are likely to impact children on the move in the coming months and years (e.g., climate change, conflict, pandemics, integration, unaccompanied minors, youth engagement)
6. **Explore innovative methods and approaches** to data collection, analysis, sharing and use, while abiding by the principles of responsible data for children ([RD4C](#)) and good data governance
7. **Agree on modalities of engagement** that sustain participation in our varied activities (e.g., webinars, blog posts, high-level events, issue briefs, side events, social media)
8. In all these efforts, **ensure that the voices of children and young people on the move are heard and represented** in crucial activities and



decision-making processes aimed at protecting and empowering them

**To discuss these actions and provide inputs, please join us at two IDAC-led hybrid events at the 3rd IFMS in Santiago, Chile:**

- [IDAC parallel session](#), 25 January, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. CST, 'How to effectively bridge the data gaps on children on the move'
- [IDAC Annual Conference](#), 27 January, 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. CST, 'Data Gaps and Solutions: How to protect children on the move from current and emerging global challenges'

## A PLEDGE TO PROTECT EVERY CHILD

- IDAC is a partnership in action. Achieving its objective to drive and coordinate global efforts for better evidence on children on the move hinges on our collective ability to translate political commitments into reality. To this end, IDAC, with the support of its partner, the [Migration Youth and Children Platform \(MYCP\)](#) of the United Nations Major Group on Children and Youth, is launching the **Global Pledge for Better Data on**

**Migrant and Displaced Children.** It sets forth specific activities and solutions for policy and programme intervention for Member States to commit to.

Improving the collection, analysis and use of data to uphold children's rights has far-reaching benefits. When we invest in every child in every community, we are also investing in our economies, the betterment of society at large and a brighter future. When every child's right to thrive is protected, we are taking action to uphold basic human rights for all. This shared responsibility depends on our ability to work together to institute sustainable change that improves the lives of children, including those who are on the move.

### Upholding the right of youth engagement

The Migration Youth and Children Platform (MYCP), the migration constituency of the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY), is IDAC's newest partner. MYCP engages with key UN processes affecting the lives of migrant and displaced children, including the GCM, the GFMD and the GCR. MYCP was formally established at the 2018 Global Forum on Migration and Development Summit in Morocco to ensure that the right of children and young people on the move to meaningful participation is realized.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Production of this publication was led by UNICEF as Chair of the IDAC Secretariat, in coordination with other IDAC Secretariat members, namely: Eurostat, IOM, OECD and UNHCR.

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Thanks to Jan Beise, Sebastian Palmas, Yukun Pei, Aina Saetre, Irene Schöfberger and Cécile Thoreau for providing inputs.

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## IDAC PLEDGES TO...



**STRENGTHEN**  
data systems  
and capacities



**PROMOTE**  
and establish  
collaboration  
and innovation



**IMPROVE** data  
visibility, availability,  
accessibility  
and usability

# FOR BETTER LIVES FOR CHILDREN **ON THE MOVE**

SECRETARIAT: