

ON THE MOVE, IN THE KNOW

July 2026 • Issue #6

Building better data.
Building brighter futures for **migrant and displaced children**.



Co-funded by
the European Union

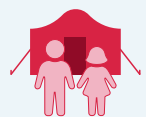


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MAKING CHILDREN VISIBLE: BY THE NUMBERS



45.3 million
children displaced internally
or across borders due to
conflict and violence



18.4 million
refugee and asylum-seeking
children



32.7 million
internally displaced
children

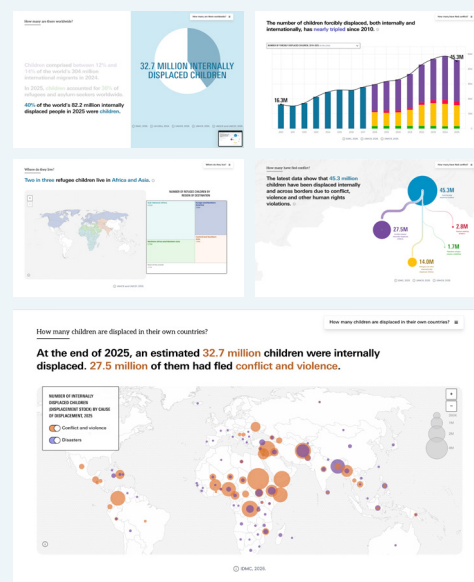


21.5 million
new internal displacements
of children in 2025

New global estimates on displaced children are a sober reminder of the millions of young lives uprooted by conflict, disasters and other crises around the world. But these figures also raise critical questions: Who are these children? Where and why are they on the move? And where does the evidence needed to support them remain incomplete?

IDAC's **new interactive data story**, [Key Facts about Children on the Move](#), brings together the latest available evidence on child migration and displacement to help answer these questions. Through maps, data visualizations and key insights, it explores the scale and characteristics of child mobility today while highlighting the widespread data gaps that remain.

Designed for policymakers, practitioners, researchers and advocates, the platform makes complex data easier to explore and use, supporting evidence-based decision-making to help ensure every child on the move is visible, counted and protected.



➔ [Explore the tool](#)



STAY TUNED!

Launching later this year, the **IDAC Data Gateway** will provide a hub for country, regional and global statistics on migrant and displaced children. Featuring core indicators, an interactive dashboard and downloadable datasets, it will make child migration data more accessible and easier to use – supporting stronger data, better decisions and better outcomes for children on the move.

REGIONAL EFFORTS TAKE ROOT IN NAIROBI



Africa is home to an estimated 4.9 million refugee children and nearly half of all internally displaced children worldwide. Yet for many of these children, reliable data on who they are, where they are and what they need remain limited.

Recognizing that protecting these children’s rights depends on stronger data systems, IDAC and STATAFRIC convened 36 participants from eight countries across Eastern and Southern Africa, together with representatives from UN agencies, regional organizations and youth networks, for a 2.5-day workshop in Nairobi focused on strengthening national data systems for children on the move.

Rooted in experiences on the ground, the May workshop created space for countries to examine the strengths and weaknesses of their own data ecosystems while learning from one another’s experiences. Through highly interactive sessions

and involved discussions, participants explored how global, continental and regional frameworks – including IDAC’s [indicator guidelines](#) – can be translated into action on behalf of migrant and displaced children in their own country contexts.

Country exchanges demonstrated that important progress is already underway across the region:

- **Uganda** systematically integrates data on refugee children into its national Education Management Information System
- **Kenya** recently conducted the National Census of Street Families, capturing data on traditionally hard-to-reach groups of children on the move
- **Somalia** produces an annual migration and displacement report with age-disaggregated data



“Children on the move are a stress test for the whole system. If we get it right for them, we get it right for everyone. In Africa, we have the answers for the continent.”

– **Alison Parker**, UNICEF Deputy Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa



While they celebrated wins, participants also cited structural barriers – such as fragmented data systems, lack of funding and legal barriers to data sharing – as common roadblocks to generating data on vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied and separated children and those in irregular situations.

To address these gaps, the group identified practical solutions for strengthening coordination, improving data sharing, building technical capacity and expanding regional collaboration to ensure children on the move are systematically included in national data systems.

The event marked the second regional workshop in IDAC’s technical capacity-strengthening series, an ongoing initiative designed to help countries translate global guidance into sustainable, systemic structural change. Nairobi participants overwhelmingly endorsed this country-led approach, with all reporting improved knowledge of children on the move and their associated data needs, and every respondent highlighting the value of learning from other countries’ experiences.

“These sessions broadened my understanding of children on the move (definitions and country experiences and challenges) and how to better capture and communicate this data.”

– Nairobi workshop participant

Nairobi workshop results:



36 participants



8 countries



100%
improved
knowledge



90%
improved
technical skills

Participants also identified priorities for continued support from IDAC, including additional practical implementation guidance, country-level technical assistance and forums to strengthen regional communities of practice.

Building on these recommendations, IDAC will continue expanding its targeted, country-specific support to help build the evidence needed to better protect children on the move. Next stops: Regional events in Asia and North Africa.

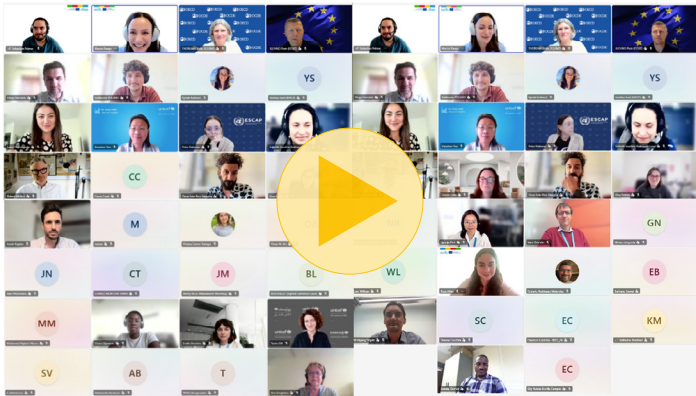
Workshop participant Jimmy Mkandawire, a statistician at Malawi’s National Statistical Office, reflects on efforts to strengthen child-sensitive data systems in his country on pp. 12–13.

[Read the full recap](#)

TAKING STOCK, LOOKING AHEAD: IDAC MEMBERS CONVENE

What has IDAC achieved so far – and how can the partnership maximize its impact for children on the move as it looks to the future?

These questions brought 55 IDAC members together in early July to reflect on the partnership’s progress and help shape its next phase. During the virtual meeting, representatives from governments, UN agencies, NGOs, academia and youth organizations reviewed progress to date, shared lessons learned and identified priorities for strengthening data on children on the move over the coming years.



IDAC at a glance (2024–present):



1,600+ participants **reached** through IDAC webinars and meetings



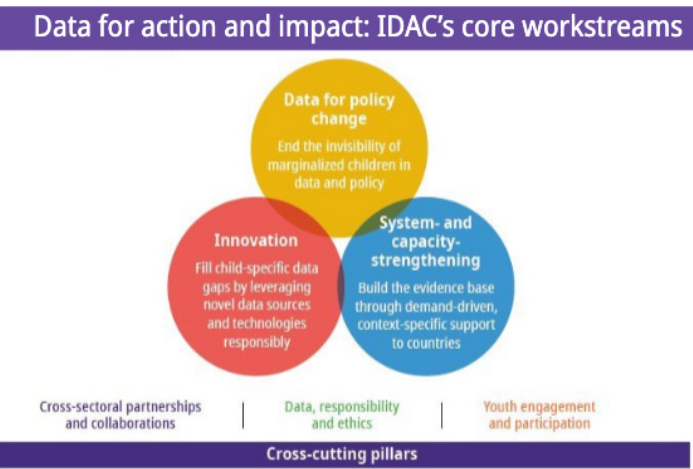
23+ countries and partners with **improved** knowledge, capacity, data and evidence



13 thematic briefs, data insights, technical materials and publications **released**



IDAC 2.0: Safer societies and brighter futures for every child on the move



Building on...	Expanding towards...
Global standards, guidance, knowledge products	Demand-driven technical support
Dedicated high-level events, conferences and webinars	Sustained regional communities of practice
Identifying data gaps	Helping countries close them
Global visibility and data advocacy	National implementation and policy uptake
Bringing together available data	Ensuring data is used for action
Building foundational networks and partnerships	Co-implementing solutions

Following an overview of collective achievements, members highlighted examples of how IDAC’s work is already influencing policy and practice. In Djibouti, the country’s recent Plan for the Development of Human Capital incorporates key indicators on children on the move. Meanwhile, STATAFRIC’s upcoming revision of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA 3) will establish a dedicated Working Group on migration statistics, with IDAC designated as a key partner.

Closing the meeting, Danzhen You, UNICEF Chief of Demographics and founder of IDAC, outlined a vision for the alliance’s next phase. “IDAC has made an impressive mark at the global level,” she noted. “Looking ahead, the IDAC Secretariat would like to move further toward implementation and action, building on the critical guidelines, tools, networks and partnerships we have developed globally.”

➔ [Read the full recap](#)



JOIN US!

An interactive follow-up session will be held in September/October, providing members with an opportunity to build on the discussion and help shape IDAC’s next phase.

“Looking ahead, the IDAC Secretariat would like to move further toward implementation and action.”

– **Danzhen You**, Chief of Demographics at UNICEF



“My biggest fear in Pakistan is being sent back. I want to go to school and live my life freely”

Life in the shadows:
protection and assistance needs of
migrant children and youth in Pakistan

MMC Research Report,
May 2026

Ministry of National Health Services
UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency
IDAC International Development and Community
Ministry of National Health Services

- 77 per cent of children surveyed had been unable to access education or training in Pakistan

- Read the report
- Explore its key findings

Designed as a practical, evidence-based guide for a diverse audience, the publication provides actionable insights that span policy development, humanitarian action, technology integration and research innovation.

[illegible]

↳ **Read the full [recap](#)**



YOUTH IN FOCUS: MYCP AT THE IMRF



MYCP Director of Advocacy & Campaigns, Nour Hassan, highlights MYCP’s Youth Committee on Migration & Displacement Data at the IMRF

Children and young people must help shape the data systems and migration policies that affect their lives. That message was loud and clear at this year’s [International Migration Review Forum \(IMRF\)](#), thanks to the efforts of IDAC partner the Migration Youth and Children’s Platform (MYCP).

Members of the Youth Committee on Migration and Displacement Data (YCMDDD) – a joint IDAC-MYCP initiative – advanced this agenda through plenary interventions, roundtables, side events and bilateral discussions with Member States, UN agencies and civil society partners.

“Too often young migrants are spoken about in places like this as data points, as risks, or as beneficiaries of policy. Today, we speak as partners in shaping the solutions.”

– **Nour Hassan**, MYCP Director of Advocacy & Campaigns.



WHAT’S NEXT?

YCMDDD will use a child- and youth-sensitive lens to examine the experiences of migrant domestic workers across Southwest Asia, North Africa and Asia-Pacific regions in their next research project. Look out for details in the next issue of ‘On the Move, In the Know.’

The committee used the IMRF platform to launch a new [scoping review](#) of the Global Compact for Migration, which identifies critical blind spots in how children’s rights are operationalized in migration governance.

➔ [Read the report](#)

A JOINT PLEDGE FOR BETTER DATA



UN DESA, UNICEF and IDAC joined forces at the IMRF to issue a joint pledge to improve and fortify child-sensitive migration data systems. The pledge calls on partners to close persistent data gaps by strengthening national capacities, including implementation of IDAC’s child-specific indicators.

Throughout IMRF week, IDAC also participated in side events and bilateral meetings to promote child-sensitive and data-informed approaches to migration governance.

➔ [Read the pledge](#)

ETHICAL STORYTELLING AT THE UNSC



“If you don’t tell the story of your data, people will naturally create their own.”

– **Rob McNeil**, University of Oxford, co-author of IDAC’s new technical report on communicating migration statistics

At the [57th Session of the UN Statistical Commission \(UNSC\)](#), IDAC convened a cross-sectoral panel of experts to address a critical component of better data for children on the move: effective and ethical communication.

Building on a new technical report – [Communicating about Migration Statistics](#) – a joint effort between IDAC, the UN Statistics Division and the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford – the discussion reinforced NSOs’ growing responsibility as both data producers and data storytellers.

The session emphasized the need to contextualize data and engage end users – including youth and

migrant communities themselves – throughout the data lifecycle and spotlighted good practices taking place around the world, including:

- Gender- and age-sensitive [Migration Profiles](#) in Serbia
- Indonesia’s new unified migration data system, One International Migration Data Portal
- A child-friendly [Statistics for Children and Adolescents Portal](#) in Georgia

➔ [Read the full recap](#)
➔ [Read the report](#)



INDONESIA: A STEP FORWARD FOR CHILD-SENSITIVE DATA



A March workshop in Jakarta advanced the visibility of children on the move in Indonesia, an IDAC priority country for system-strengthening work. Hosted by BPS-Statistics Indonesia and Secretariat member UNHCR, the workshop brought together 48 representatives from 19 government ministries, UN agencies, and partners to launch the [IDEAS](#) assessment process.

Through interactive sessions and collaborative discussions, participants examined Indonesia’s

existing data landscape, identifying common challenges including including fragmentation across institutions, limited sharing of data and inconsistencies in definitions and coverage.

The workshop marked the beginning of a broader process to map Indonesia’s migration data ecosystem and identify practical strategies and opportunities to strengthen the availability, interoperability and use of data on children on the move.

CHAMPIONING CHILDREN ON THE MOVE IN GLOBAL FORUMS

From government networks to academic institutions, IDAC continues to actively promote and advocate for child-sensitive approaches to migration data on the global stage.

IDAC at the IGC

This April, IDAC joined the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC) Network on Children and Youth in Dublin for a three-day meeting focused on future-ready immigration systems for children and youth.

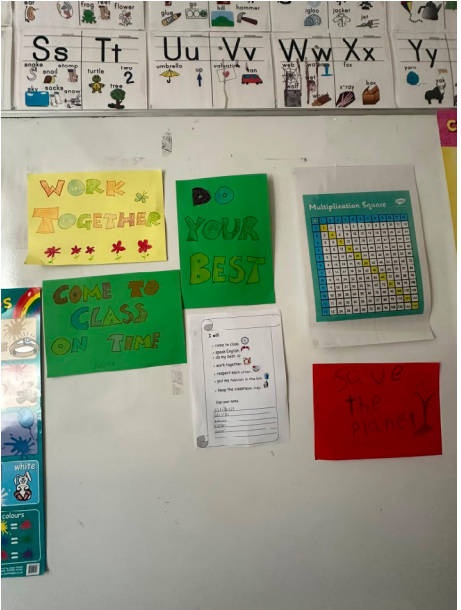
Convening government representatives from nine IGC countries and representatives from

international organizations and civil society, the meeting explored how IGC states are preparing immigration systems to better respond to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of children and youth on the move in light of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum and related policy developments.

Site visits to reception, care and education facilities for migrant children – including unaccompanied and separated children in Ireland – provided concrete insights into good practices and challenges in providing care for these vulnerable groups, and the centrality of interagency coordination on data and case management to improve system readiness and ensure child-sensitive approaches.



IGC in Dublin



IDAC at the EUI Migration Summer School

In June, IDAC joined the Migration Summer School hosted by the European University Institute’s Migration Policy Centre in Florence. Engaging a group of 25 practitioners and researchers representing 21 nationalities, participants delved into key concepts and definitions, global trends, data sources, gaps and challenges, before applying IDAC’s indicator guidelines for children on the move.



MPC Summer School



GET INVOLVED

- **Call for proposals – IMISCOE 2027**
The [24th IMISCOE Annual Conference](#), organized by the [Brussels Institute for Social and Population Studies](#) (BRISPO), will take place in Brussels from 6–9 July 2027 under the theme ‘United for Human Rights and Global Equity’. The deadline for abstracts, papers, panels and workshop proposals is 28 September 2026. We welcome ideas from IDAC members for joint submissions.
- **Save the date: IDAC Annual Conference**
Planning is underway for IDAC’s next in-person Annual Conference, expected in late 2026 or early 2027.

The conference will bring together national statistical offices, government ministries, UN agencies, youth representatives, academia and civil society to review progress, identify emerging priorities and strengthen collaboration on data for children on the move.

More details will follow soon – stay tuned!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: MALAWI



At IDAC’s recent regional workshop in Nairobi, States came together to exchange experiences and identify practical solutions for strengthening data on children on the move. One of those participants was Jimmy Mkandawire, a statistician at Malawi’s National Statistical Office. In this Member Spotlight, he reflects on the realities facing children on the move in Malawi, the data gaps that make their experiences harder to understand and how partnering with IDAC is supporting efforts to strengthen data systems in his country.

Who are the children on the move in Malawi today?

In Malawi, climate-related displacement, poverty, labour migration and refugee movements are shaping the landscape of child mobility. Children on the move include refugee and asylum-seeking children; children internally

displaced by droughts, cyclones and floods; and children who migrate with their families from rural to urban areas in pursuit of better living conditions, jobs or education.

Dzaleka Refugee Camp, Malawi’s largest refugee settlement, is central to understanding this landscape. Children make up roughly 48 per cent of the camp’s 57,000 refugees and asylum-seekers – a facility originally designed to accommodate just 12,000. These numbers place significant pressure on health; education; water, sanitation and hygiene; and child protection systems.

Climate-related disasters are also reshaping patterns of child mobility: Cyclone Freddy alone displaced approximately 659,000 people in Malawi in 2023, including an estimated 287,437 children.

What are some of the biggest challenges Malawi faces in understanding the experiences and needs of these children? Which particular data gaps make this work more difficult?

Because many children on the move are highly mobile, they are often missed during data collection and difficult to track over time. Many reside in border villages, temporary settlements, informal urban areas or with host families – places that may not be covered by administrative data collection, censuses or routine surveys. Children traveling alone or migrating irregularly may avoid authorities due to safety concerns, leaving them underrepresented in official statistics.

Fragmented data systems present another major challenge. Different ministries, departments, humanitarian groups and NGOs collect data using different methodologies, data collection tools and reporting standards. These challenges are compounded by weak coordination mechanisms, limited legal and regulatory frameworks and insufficient technical and financial capacity.

How has IDAC’s partnership contributed to Malawi’s efforts to improve data and evidence on children on the move and how can IDAC continue to support these efforts?

Our partnership with IDAC has strengthened awareness of the importance of data on children on the move and helped identify national data gaps and priorities.

Recognizing that relevant data are often spread across migration, education, health, social welfare and child protection systems, the partnership has also supported efforts to improve cross-sector data integration. By

promoting shared definitions, standards and data-sharing methods, IDAC has helped lay the groundwork for more coordinated systems.

Moving forward, IDAC can further support Malawi by strengthening the country’s capacity to collect, analyse and use data on children on the move through more targeted assistance. Priorities include integrating migration and displacement indicators into national surveys and administrative systems, improving data disaggregation, strengthening interoperability across data systems, and supporting innovative approaches such as digital data collection and geospatial analysis.

IDAC PLEDGES TO...



STRENGTHEN

data systems and capacities



PROMOTE

and establish collaboration and innovation



IMPROVE

data visibility, availability, accessibility and usability

ON THE MOVE, IN THE KNOW provides regular updates on efforts to improve data and statistics on children on the move. It highlights the important work of the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) and its cross-sectoral membership to strengthen data systems to protect child migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced children.

About IDAC

The [International Data Alliance for Children on the Move \(IDAC\)](#) is a cross-sectoral global coalition that aims to improve data and statistics and support evidence-based policymaking for migrant and displaced children. With the European Union as its main donor and jointly led by Eurostat, IOM, OECD, UNHCR and UNICEF, IDAC brings together governments (including experts from national statistical offices and migration- and displacement-related ministries), international and regional organizations, NGOs, think tanks, academics, civil society and youth.

Write us at IDAC@unicef.org to support our work!

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#)

