SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED AND STATELESS POPULATIONS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

A comparative analysis based on the data from UNHCR Results Monitoring Surveys **2022 - 2024**



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CONTENT

Scope and Background 1
Methodology 4
Limitations 5
Executive Summary 6

Thematic Area 1: Legal Status 8
1.1 Civil registration 8
1.2 Housing, land and property rights 11

Thematic Area 2: Social Environment 14
2.1 Safety and security 14
2.2 Gender based violence 16

Thematic Area 3: Basic Needs 18
3.1 WASH and energy 18
3.2 Housing 22
3.3 Health 24
3.4 Education 28
3.5 Social protection 30
3.6 Community-based child protection 32

Thematic Area 4: Livelihoods 34
4.1 Financial inclusion 34
4.2 Employment and income 37

Anonymized microdata 42

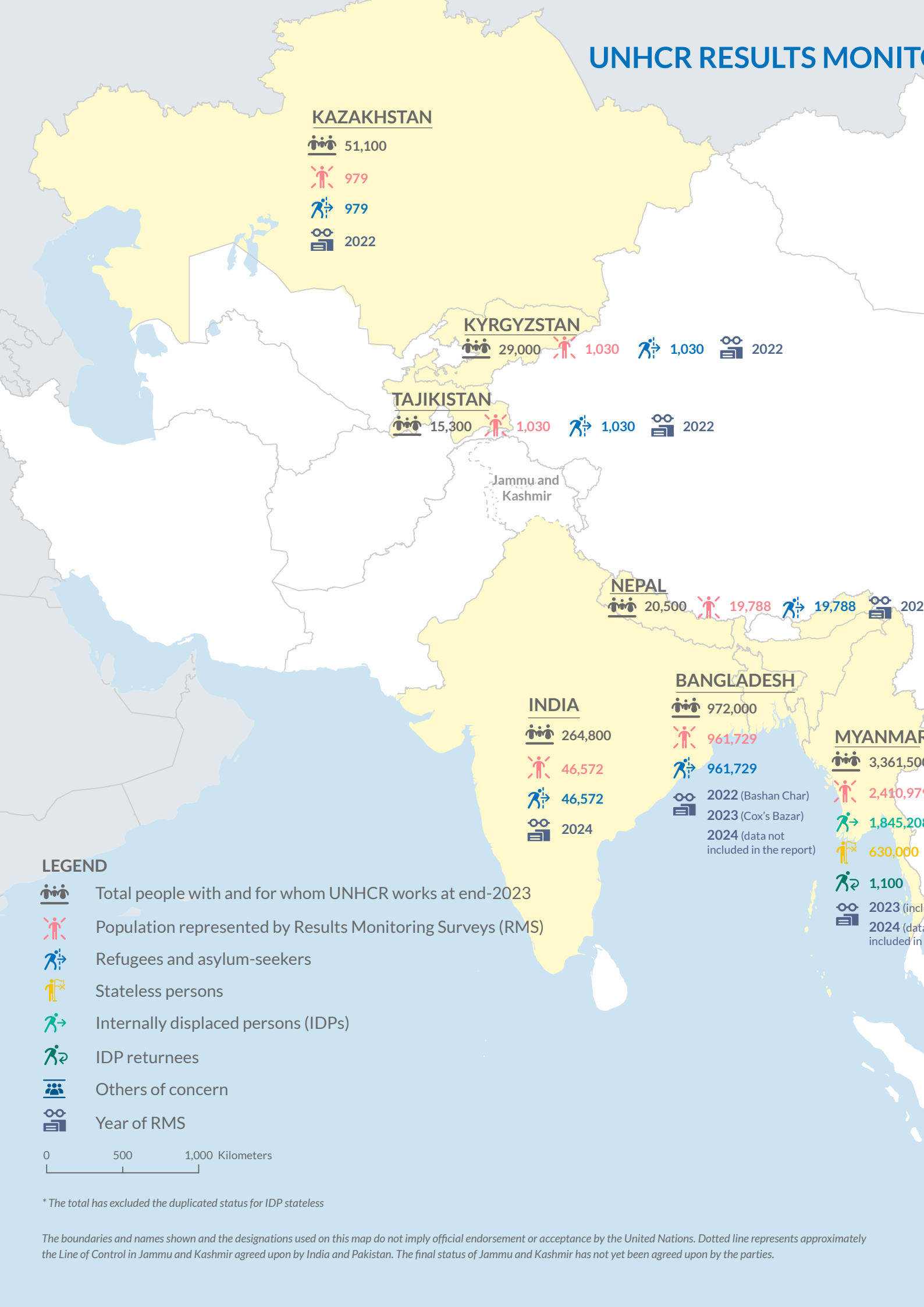
SCOPE AND BACKGROUND

The report presents an explanatory analysis of survey-based data, reflecting the socio-economic situations of forcibly displaced and stateless people across 11 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The data is sourced from UNHCR's Results Monitoring Surveys (RMS),[1] a household-level survey tool that incorporates standardized questionnaire modules aligned with international standards where applicable, while also being adapted in certain instances to meet UNHCR's specific contexts. The report offers evidence for enhanced advocacy and programming by exploring relationships between indicators within four thematic areas, covering legal status, social environment, basic needs and livelihoods. It further leverages the sustainable development goal (SDG) indicators to conduct comparative analysis between forcibly displaced and stateless people and nationals in the countries.

In 2021, UNHCR introduced the Global Results Framework to aggregate, analyze and report results, including core indicators for four impact and 16 outcome areas at impact, outcome and output levels. Out of those core indicators, UNHCR uses the RMS, a global standard tool to consistently measure the impact and outcome of its contributions to the expected changes across 23 core indicators that cover legal rights, well-being and living standards amongst others.

Between September 2022 and August 2024,[2] UNHCR conducted 13 RMS exercises in 11 countries in Asia and the Pacific, including: Bangladesh, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea. The RMS provided representative results for 3.8 million forcibly displaced and stateless people, including 1.9 million refugees and asylum-seekers, 1.9 million internally displaced people (IDPs) and IDP returnees, 1.7 million stateless people and people at risk of statelessness. The targeted populations constitute nearly a quarter of total populations UNHCR protects and/or assists in the region, the rest are not covered so far due to operational and situational constraints.

In Bangladesh, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Malaysia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea, refugees and asylum-seekers were surveyed. In India, only refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR were interviewed. In Papua New Guinea, data collection was limited to displaced West Papuan (Indonesian) refugees only, and focused on two locations: the capital, Port Moresby, and the government-endorsed settlement site at Iowara in Western Province.[3] In Myanmar, the survey included IDPs[4] (most of whom were not from the Rohingya population), IDP returnees, non-displaced stateless Rohingya and host communities. In the Philippines, the survey was extended to the Sama Bajau population, a group at risk of statelessness and reported in UNHCR's official population statistics as "others of concern".



** The total has excluded the duplicated status for IDP stateless*

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

ORING SURVEYS (RMS) IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC 2022-2024



METHODOLOGY

The RMS collected data from representative country-level samples via household interviews. In most countries, households were selected using simple random sampling based on registration data, with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. However, where data is unavailable or inaccessible, other sampling methodologies were used. For example, in the Republic of Korea and Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, snowball sampling was used to collect data on refugees and asylum seekers, while quota sampling was employed in inaccessible locations in Myanmar for IDPs and stateless people. As a result, findings from these areas are considered indicative.

Although probabilistic sampling was not fully implemented across the region, the demographic structure of the target populations and RMS samples are similar. For instance, 52% of the target populations are female, compared to 50% in the samples. Children account for 39% of the target population but 27% of the sample, mainly due to household-level sampling rather than proportional sampling by age and sex. Despite this, the demographic structure suggests that the samples are reasonably representative.

The household-level data were integrated into UNHCR's core indicators to facilitate a comparative study across countries. Some of these indicators align with SDG indicators, enabling a direct comparison between forcibly displaced and stateless populations and national residents.



Moti Maya Rai, makes snacks for the client at her shop in Beldangi refugee settlement, Jhapa, Nepal. Rai runs a small eatery shop at her home. She uses fruits from tree saplings which UNHCR and partners provided to run her business.

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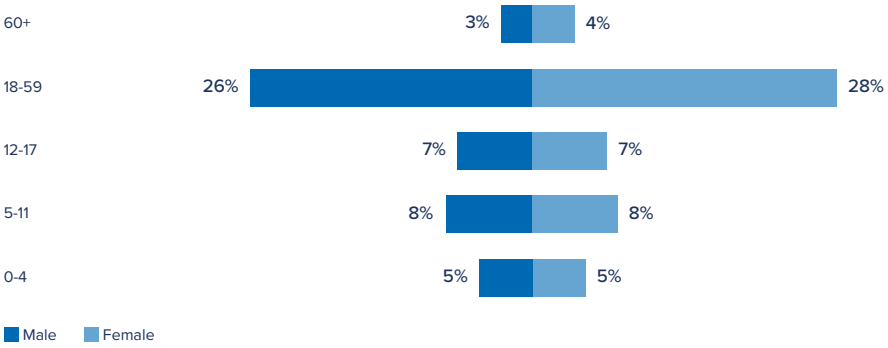
DEMOGRAPHICS OF RMS TARGETED POPULATIONS IN ASIA-PACIFIC



Note: figures do not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Source: UNHCR Refugee Data Finder
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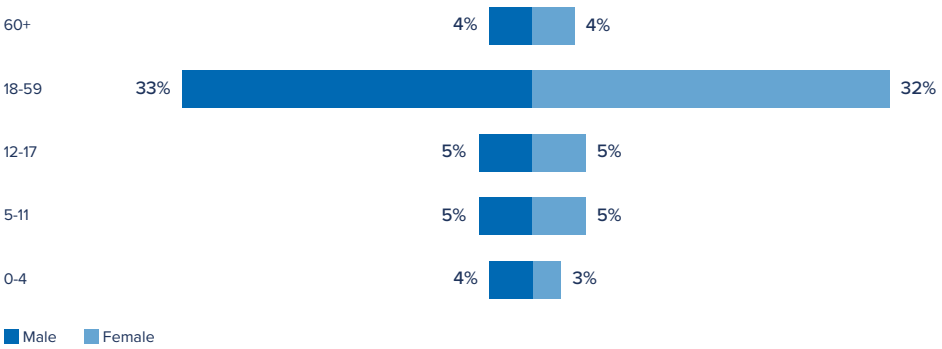
DEMOGRAPHICS OF RMS SAMPLES IN ASIA-PACIFIC



Note: figures do not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Source: Results Monitoring Surveys Asia-Pacific
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LIMITATIONS

The diverse contexts across countries and different population groups create inherent challenges when comparing data across regions. Differences in social, economic, and policy environments may introduce biases, making direct comparisons less straightforward. Some indicators were derived from datasets with overlapping questions, potentially introducing collinearity issues. While these overlaps were acknowledged, they were retained to ensure the analysis remained comprehensive. Another limitation is that the most recent SDG indicator values for nationals are based on older data, which may hinder comparability with the more recent RMS data collected for forcibly displaced and stateless people. Due to the limited availability of data points, correlation analysis was chosen as the most practical approach. These limitations highlight the need to interpret the findings with caution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The key findings of this report are:



CIVIL REGISTRATION

Access to civil registration varies across the Asia-Pacific region. In Nepal, nearly all forcibly displaced people possess documents recognized by national authorities as proof of identity, yet only 36% of births within this population are registered. In the Philippines, over 90% of forcibly displaced people have access to civil registration, but only four out of ten of the people at risk of statelessness possess documents recognized by national authorities as proof of identity. Papua New Guinea has the lowest access to civil registration among the 11 countries covered by the survey, with only one in five forcibly displaced people holding legally recognized identity documents and birth registration being nearly nonexistent.



PROPERTY RIGHTS

Apart from Tajikistan, where two-thirds report secure tenure rights to housing, property rights for forcibly displaced people in most countries remains below a third.



SENSE OF SAFETY

Most forcibly displaced and stateless people in surveyed countries feel safe walking alone at night, with the proportion exceeding 85% in the Philippines, Republic of Korea and Tajikistan. According to the Fragile States Index, the Philippines and Tajikistan both have fragility rankings of “warning”, suggesting the perception of safety amongst forcibly displaced and stateless people could differ from those of nationals.



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Most surveyed countries show high rejection of violence against women, with rates exceeding 80%. However, awareness of multi-sectoral support services for survivors of violence is generally lower.

ENERGY AND SANITATION

Approximately one in four IDPs in Myanmar and populations at risk of statelessness in the Philippines report to lack access to clean drinking water. In the Philippines, only 5% of populations at risk of statelessness report having access to adequate sanitation facilities. Less than 5% of IDPs in Myanmar and populations at risk of statelessness in the Philippines have access to clean cooking fuels.

HOUSING

Housing and settlement conditions for forcibly displaced and stateless persons are inadequate in most countries covered by the survey. Less than 5% of forcibly displaced people in Papua New Guinea and IDPs in Myanmar report both habitable/affordable housing and secure settlements with basic facilities.

HEALTH CARE

While forcibly displaced and stateless people in most surveyed countries report over 90% overall access to health care, they often do not have access to specific universally essential health services, such as vaccination. It is worth noting that the quality and scope of health facilities are very limited for forcibly displaced and stateless people.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT RATES

In most countries, primary school enrollment is generally above 50% for forcibly displaced and stateless people, except for Malaysia (42%), Tajikistan (25%) and people at risk of statelessness in the Philippines (20%). Generally, the gross enrollment rate for primary school is higher than secondary school among the populations. In Kazakhstan and Nepal, secondary school enrollment reaches 100%, which may be attributed to adults seizing education opportunities to return to school.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

A positive correlation is observed between forcibly displaced and stateless people obtaining identity documentation and their access to social protection systems, such as pensions or childcare support.

THEMATIC AREA

1 LEGAL STATUS

1.1 Civil registration

Civil registration trends were analysed using two indicators: 1.2. *proportion of children under 5 years old whose births were registered* and 1.3. *proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials*. For Indicator 1.3, the RMS compiles information on documentation types, such as passports, birth certificates, government IDs, marriage certificates and social security cards to provide a comprehensive overview of the documentation available to forcibly displaced and stateless people.[5]

Figure 1 shows variation in civil registration coverage across the eight countries that included related datapoints within the RMS. Forcibly displaced communities in Papua New Guinea have a particularly low proportion of people with documents recognized by national authorities as proof of identity with about one in five possessing such legal documents. On the other hand, India shows a higher proportion for both children and adults.

In Myanmar, 64% of child births among IDPs, most of whom were not from the Rohingya minority during the survey, are registered and nearly half (46%) of all individuals possess documents recognized by national authorities as proof of identity. These figures appear comparable to those in neighbouring countries.

In the Philippines, the experience of obtaining documents varies considerably across different populations. A significant majority of forcibly displaced people possess documentation recognized by national authorities as proof of identity (93%) and most children have their births registered (97%). However, the Sama Bajau, who are at risk of statelessness and reported as “others of concern to UNHCR or OoC”, show much lower levels of inclusion in the civil registration system: only 40% of adults and 37% of children are registered. This disparity highlights broader inequities in civil registration outcomes between those at risk of statelessness and forcibly displaced people in the Philippines.

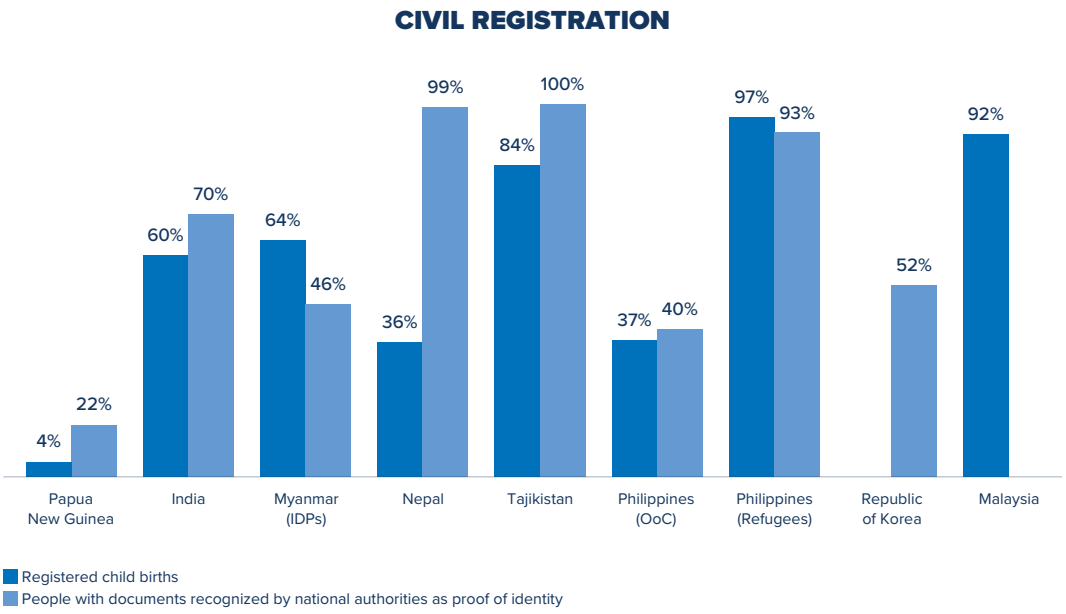
Tajikistan demonstrates strong performance in civil registration, with 100% of refugees holding documents recognized by national authorities as proof of identity and 84% of births among refugees being registered.

Trends in the two indicators on identity documentation and registration (Figure 1) are largely consistent across countries, with differences of less than 20 percentage points. However, Nepal stands out as an exception. Nearly all (99%) forcibly displaced people possess documentation recognized by national authorities as proof of identity[6] yet only one in three (36%) of births among the displaced population are registered – one of the lowest rates recorded.

In higher income countries, access to civil registration varies. For example, Malaysia has a high birth registration rate among displaced people (92%), whereas in the Republic of Korea, only about half (52%) possess legal identification.

FIGURE 1:

Core outcome 1.2 - Proportion of children under 5 whose births have been registered and Core outcome 1.3 – Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials



Note: IDPs refers to internally displaced people, and OoC refers to others of concern to UNHCR.
Source: Results Monitoring Surveys Asia-Pacific
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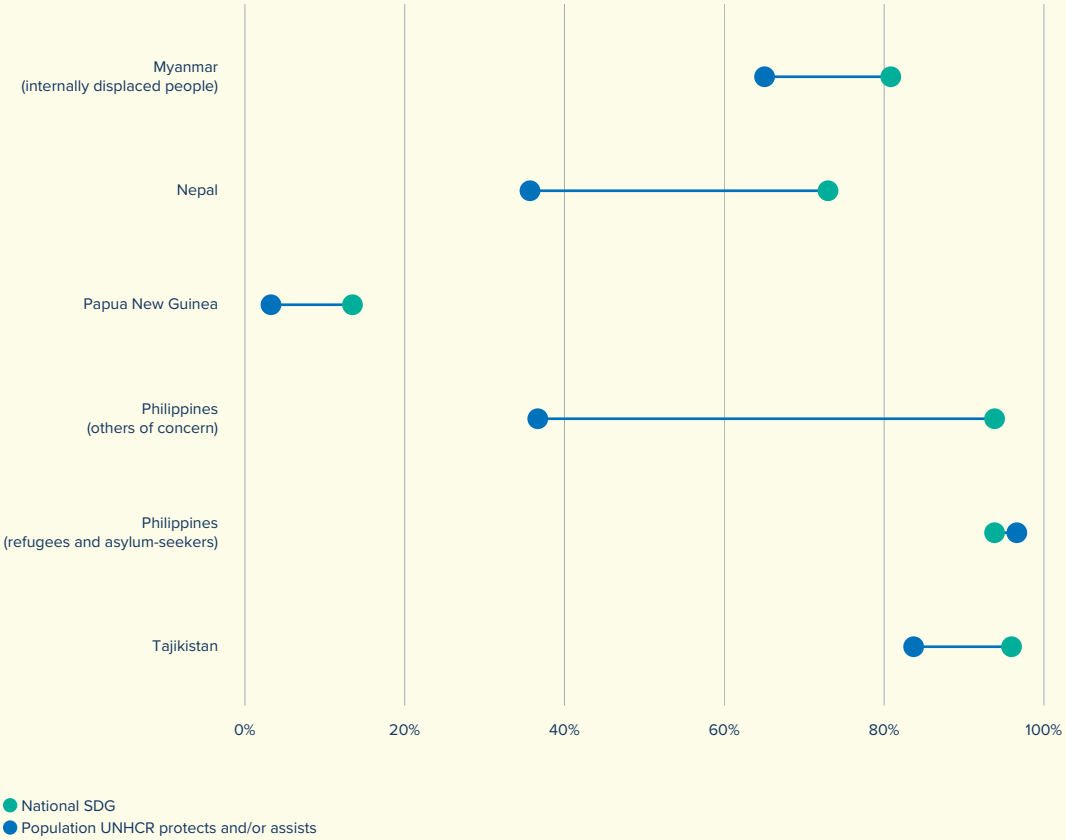
SDG 16.9.1

Core outcome 1.2: Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority



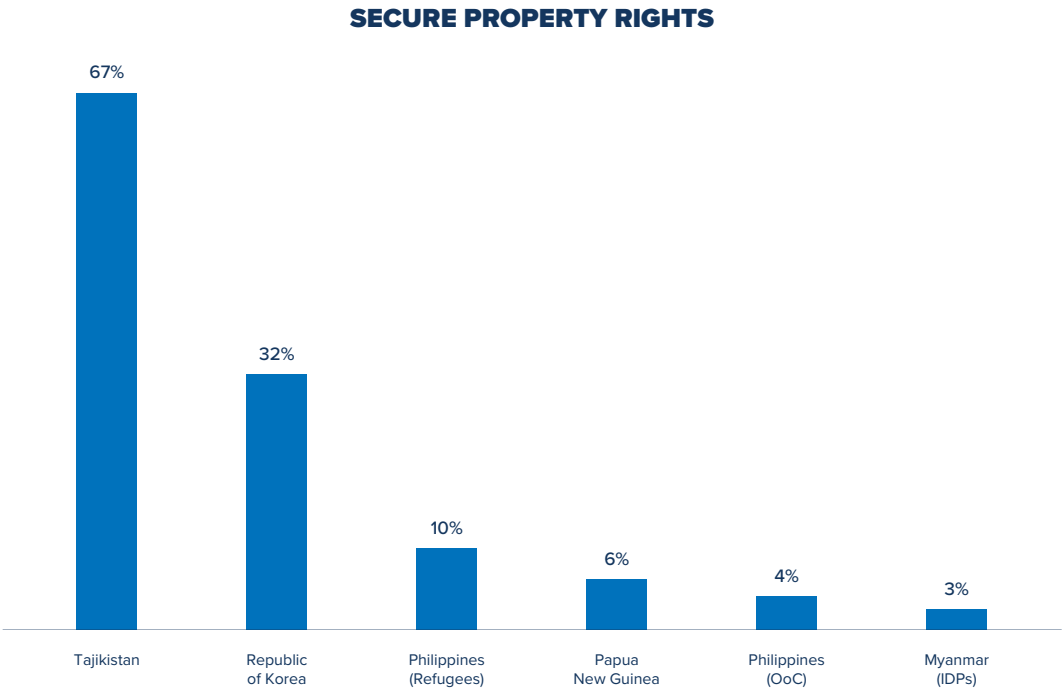
A comparison of the civil registration indicators with national values was possible for six countries in the region covered by the RMS where data on SDG 16.9.1 on birth registration is also available. Generally, the populations covered by the RMS show lower birth registration rates of children under five years old compared to nationals. The sole exception is forcibly displaced people in the Philippines, where 97% of children have had their births registered. This trend is slightly higher than the national birth registration rate of 94%. However, the high national registration rate contrasts with the low birth registration rates observed among people at risk of statelessness. In Papua New Guinea, birth registration among forcibly displaced populations is effectively 0%, which aligns with the country's low national birth registration rate of only 13%.

1.2 Housing, land and property rights

The housing, land and property rights were analysed using the indicator 16.1 *proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land* in six countries where the RMS compiled related datapoints.

Most of the surveyed populations in the region have limited property rights in their host countries (see Figure 2). This is the case for both population groups in the Philippines and refugees in Papua New Guinea.[7] However, Tajikistan is an outlier, with nearly two-thirds of surveyed people reporting secure property rights and land tenure.

FIGURE 2:
Core outcome 16.1 - Proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land



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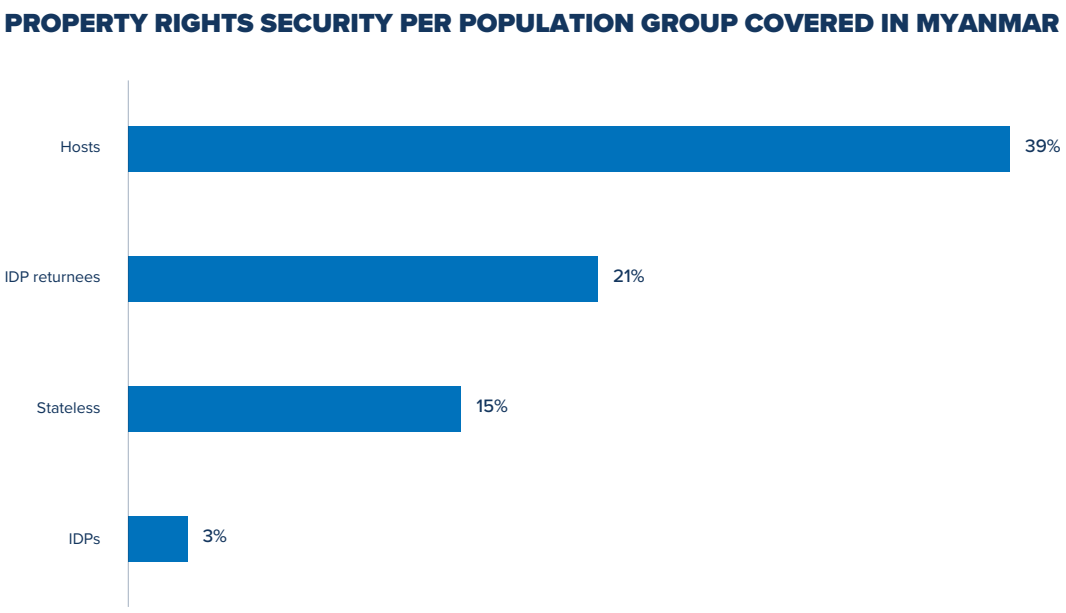
The RMS enables the disaggregation of property rights security among different populations in Myanmar (Figure 3). Overall, there is very low access to land tenure security in the country. Host communities fare relatively better, with 39% reporting secure property rights.

Conflict-induced internal displacement has a significant impact on property rights, with only 3% of IDPs having secure rights. Even after returning, access to secure property rights is limited – roughly half as common as among host communities. Stateless populations in Myanmar (Rohingya) also experience low property security, with only 15% reporting secure tenure.

FIGURE 3:
Core outcome 16.1 proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land accross populations in Myanmar



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THEMATIC AREA

2 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Safety and security

The social environment was analysed using the indicator 3.3. *proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighborhood after dark* in ten countries where the RMS included the relevant datapoints.

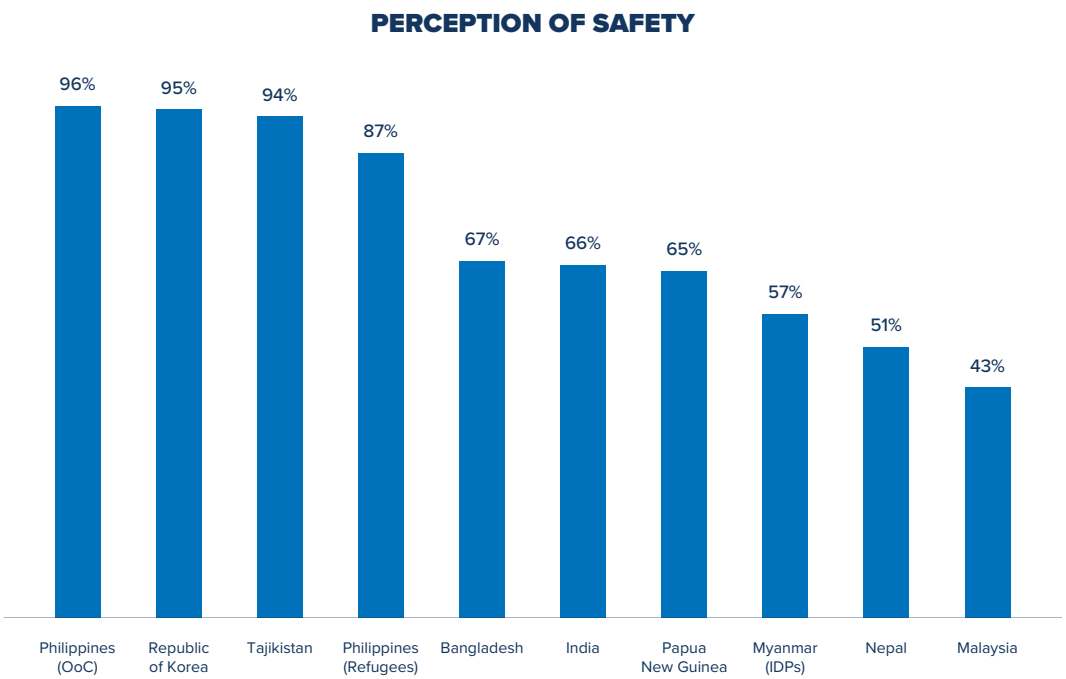
Figure 4 highlights high levels of perceived safety in three countries. In Tajikistan, most of the forcibly displaced population (predominantly from Afghanistan) report feeling safe. Similarly, in the Philippines, both forcibly displaced people and those at risk of statelessness report feeling safe – a perception that is on par with that of the Republic of Korea, a country ranked "stable" in fragility indices and generally score highly on safety metrics.[8] In contrast, the Philippines and Tajikistan both have fragility rankings of "warning", suggesting the perception of safety amongst forcibly displaced and stateless people could differ from those of nationals. These differences could stem from the specific and precarious circumstances forcibly displaced people may face particularly when they lack legal status. In such cases, risks of arrest and detention, deportation or refoulement may arise as well as heightened vulnerabilities to abuse and human rights violations. Fear of approaching authorities to report such incidents due to their undocumented status further exacerbates their insecurity.

Bangladesh, India and Papua New Guinea show moderate levels of safety, with two-thirds of refugees reporting they feel safe.[9] All three countries also have a fragility ranking of "warning". In Myanmar, more than half of IDPs reported feeling safe; however, this data was collected in May 2023 and predates the escalation of conflict later that year. Results for 2024 are likely to differ, as Myanmar's fragility index is currently categorized as "alert".

Nepal reports lower safety perceptions, with 51% of forcibly displaced people feeling safe despite the country's historical reputation as a stable host country for refugees. Malaysia reports even lower levels, with only 43% of forcibly displaced people feeling safe despite a "stable" fragility index.

These findings highlight the disconnect between the broader safety conditions of a country and the lived experiences of forcibly displaced and stateless persons whose perceptions are shaped by unique vulnerabilities and circumstances.

FIGURE 4:
Core Impact Indicator 3.3 - Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighborhood after dark



Source: Results Monitoring Surveys Asia-Pacific
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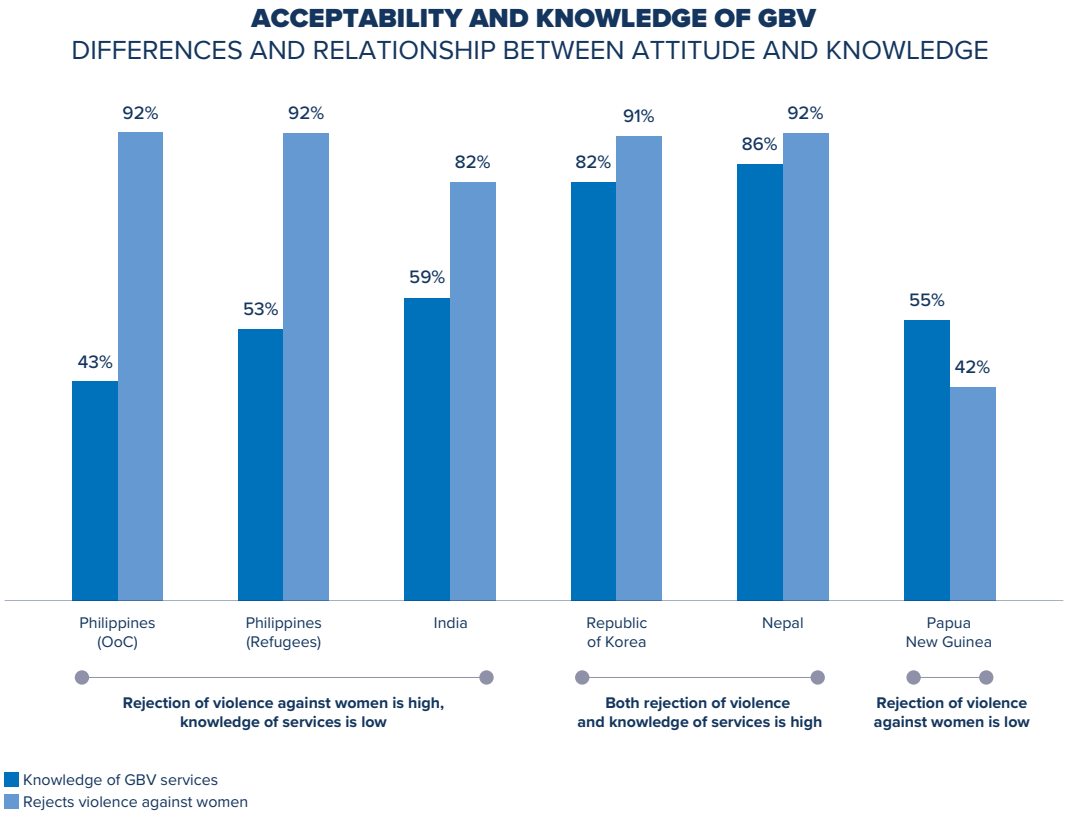
2.2 Gender-based violence (GBV)

Forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls are at heightened risk of GBV. Women and girls at risk or who have been subjected to violence are supported through GBV prevention and response services. The gender-based violence thematic area was analysed using the core outcome indicator 4.1 *proportion of people who know where to access available gender-based violence services* and core outcome indicator 4.2 *proportion of people who do not accept violence against women.*

FIGURE 5:
Core outcome Indicator 4.1 - Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services and Core outcome Indicator 4.2 - Proportion of people who do not accept violence against women



Source: Results Monitoring Surveys Asia-Pacific
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Rohingya women being trained in electrical work repairs and other livelihood skills to support their self-reliance.

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For countries where cultural rejection of gender-based violence and awareness of support services for survivors of violence can be tracked, three broad categories emerge (see Figure 5). The first category consists of countries that show low levels of rejection of gender-based violence. Papua New Guinea falls in this category, where a relatively low proportion of the forcibly displaced population express rejection of gender-based violence (42%). Interestingly, two-thirds of them (55%) are aware of the available support services for survivors of violence, placing the country in the middle range compared to others where similar data has been collected. Papua New Guinea is the only country where knowledge of support services for survivors of violence is higher than the rejection of violence against women.

The second category comprises of populations in India and the Philippines (both forcibly displaced people and the population at risk of statelessness), where there are high rates of rejection of gender-based violence (82% to 92%). However, awareness of services is generally low, ranging from 43% to 59%.

Meanwhile, data points on Nepal and the Republic of Korea show positive outcomes on gender-based violence, with high rates of gender-based violence rejection and widespread awareness of available support services.

THEMATIC AREA

3 BASIC NEEDS

3.1 Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and energy

The WASH and energy thematic areas were analysed using the core outcome indicator 12.1 *proportion of people using at least basic drinking water services* and core outcome indicator 12.2 people with access to a safe household toilet; indicator 9.2 - *proportion of people that have energy to ensure lighting* and core outcome indicator 8.2 *people primarily using clean cooking fuels and technology*.

Figure 6 illustrates the disparities in access to drinking water, sanitation and energy across the countries analysed. Except for IDPs in Myanmar and the population at risk of statelessness in the Philippines, most populations surveyed enjoy high levels of access to clean drinking water. This includes forcibly displaced populations in Bangladesh (95%), Malaysia (95%), Nepal (99%), the Philippines (90%) and the Republic of Korea (99%). However, access is notably lower among IDPs in Myanmar and populations at risk of statelessness in the Philippines, where approximately one in four lack access to clean drinking water.

Access to safe household toilets generally reflects the patterns seen with access to clean drinking water. While sanitation facilities are adequate in most high-water-access countries, notable exceptions exist. In Papua New Guinea, nearly a third of forcibly displaced people report that they lack access to adequate sanitation facilities and the situation is much more dire for populations at risk of statelessness in the Philippines, where only 5% have access to sanitation facilities.

Access to energy for lighting and clean cooking fuels also varies widely. In Malaysia and India, where most refugees live in urban settings, the Philippines (refugees) and the Republic of Korea, over 80% of the surveyed population reported access to both. However, elsewhere, the situation is different. In Bangladesh, 90% of Rohingya refugees use clean cooking fuels and technology, but only 58% have energy for lighting. Meanwhile, in the case of IDPs in Myanmar, over 90% have energy for lighting, but fewer than 5% have access to clean cooking fuels. Populations at risk of statelessness in the Philippines face the greatest challenges: only 29% have energy for lighting, and access to clean cooking fuels and technology is nearly nonexistent.

The contrast in energy and WASH indicators among refugees and populations at risk of statelessness in the Philippines is striking. Refugees benefit from both high access to WASH services and energy while nomadic groups at risk of statelessness remain largely excluded from these basic provisions.



A woman holds a solar lamp provided by UNHCR inside her home in Namtu Township, northern Shan State. Many camps in northeastern Myanmar are not connected to the electrical grid. Solar lamps give residents a few additional hours in the evening to carry out family tasks, including household chores, studying at home, charging phones and accessing washrooms safely at night.

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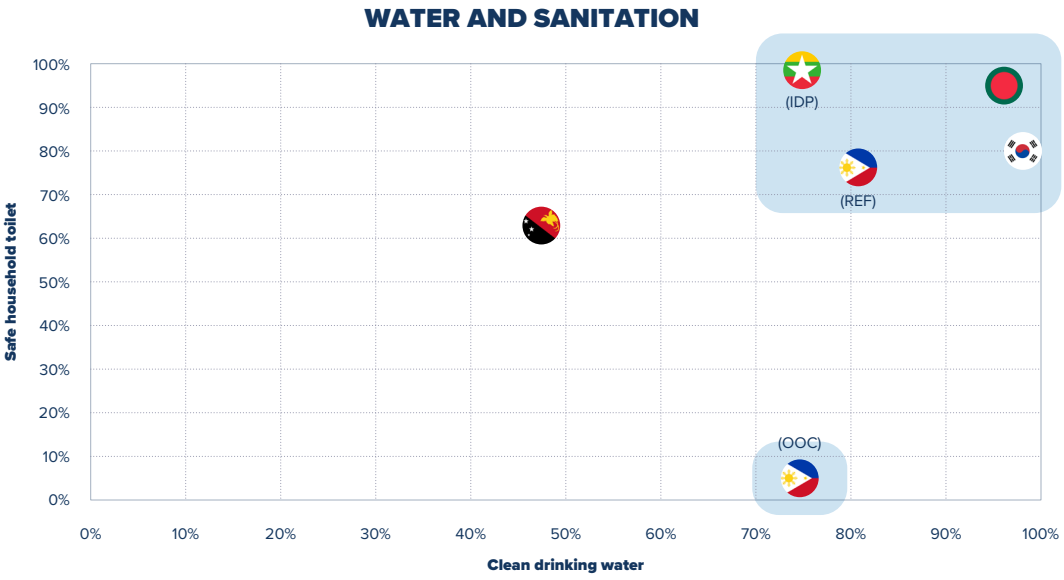
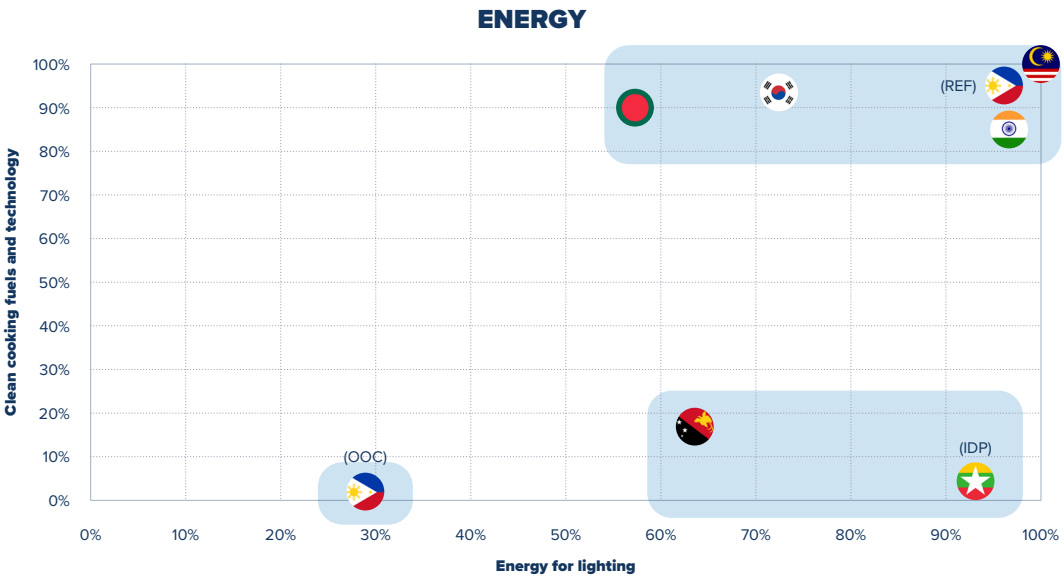
FIGURE 6:
Left panel includes core outcome indicator 12.1 proportion of people using at least basic drinking water services and core outcome indicator 12.2 people with access to a safe household toilet. Right panel includes core outcome indicator 9.2 proportion of people that have energy to ensure lighting and core outcome indicator 8.2 people primarily using clean cooking fuels and technology.





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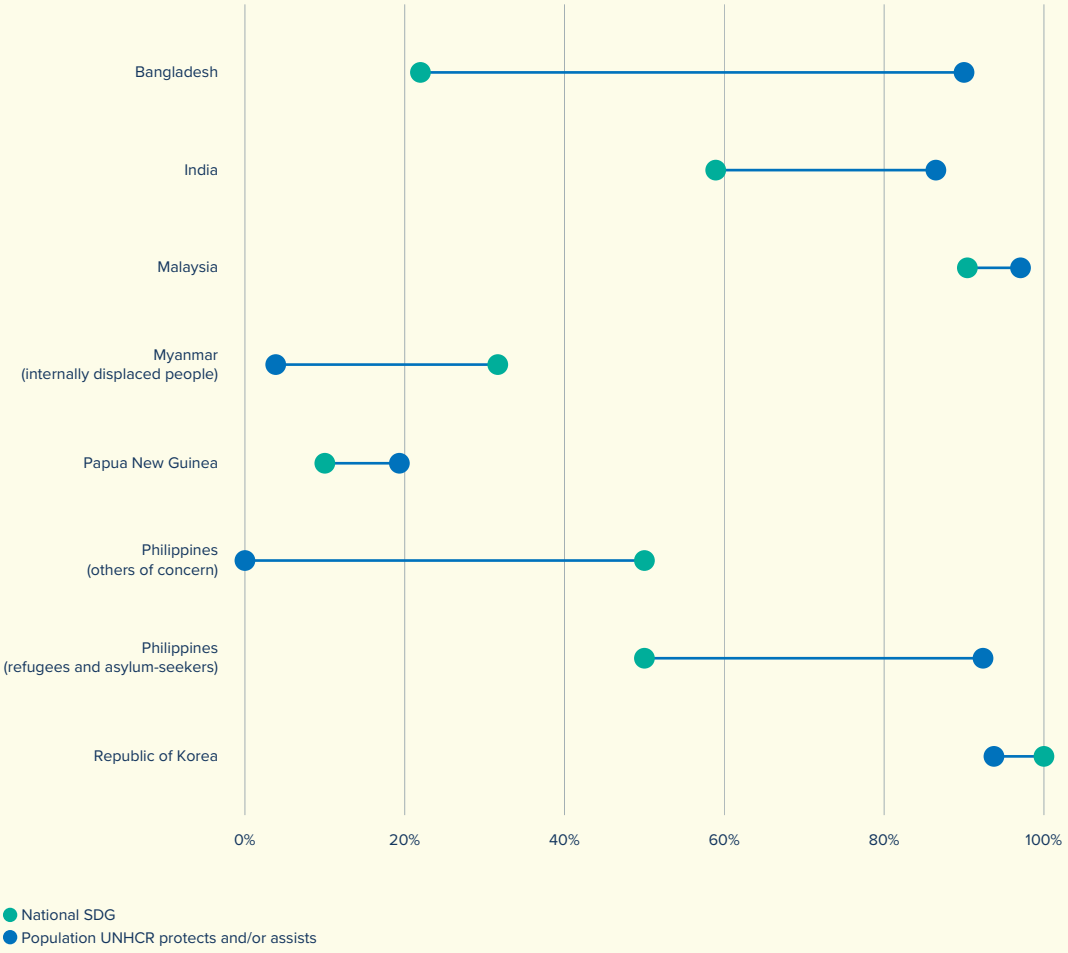
SDG 7.1.2

Core Outcome 8.2: Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology



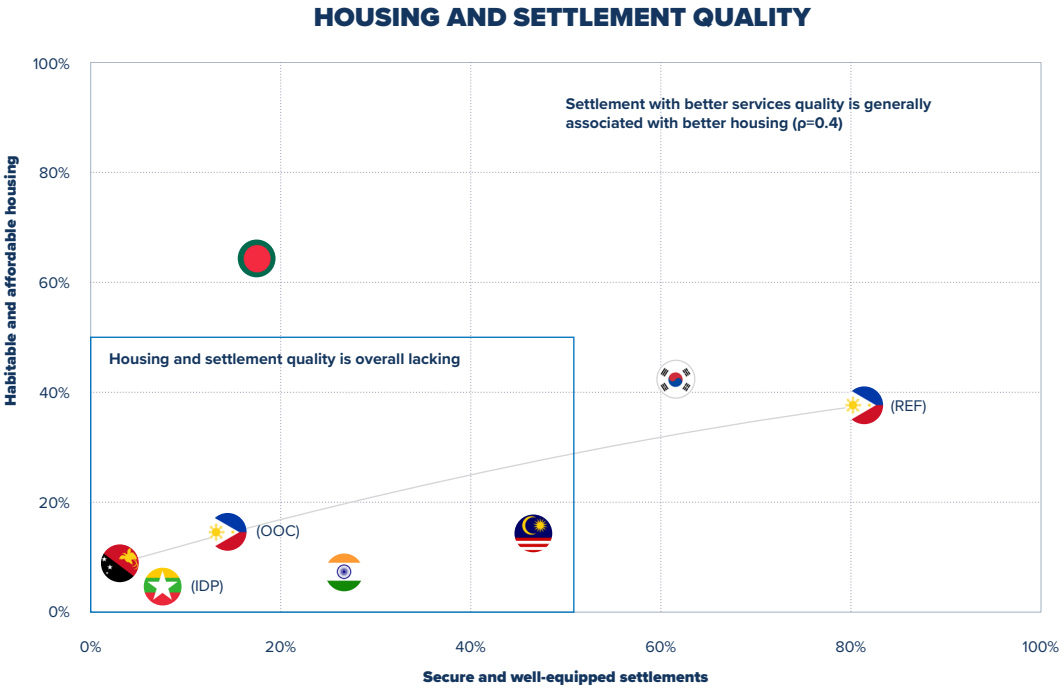
A comparison of primary reliance on clean cooking fuels and technology reveals that some population covered by the RMS generally have higher access to clean cooking options than nationals in the SDG indicators. This difference is evident in Bangladesh, India, Malaysia,[10] Papua New Guinea and the Philippines (refugees). In India the difference could be attributed to the fact that refugees live mostly in urban settings while the measuring of the national SDG includes the large rural population in the country. The gap is particularly pronounced in Bangladesh, where 90% of Rohingya refugees have access to clean cooking fuels and technology, compared to only 22% at the national level. Similarly, in the Philippines, 93% of refugees report access, far exceeding the national SDG figure of 50%. In contrast, national SDG values were higher than the RMS populations covered in Myanmar (IDPs) due to conflict, the Philippines (people at risk of statelessness) and the Republic of Korea. Among the most extreme disparities is the population at risk of statelessness in the Philippines, where no respondents reported access to clean cooking fuels and technology, compared to 50% at the national level.

3.2 Housing

The housing thematic area was analysed using core impact indicator 2.2 *proportion of people residing in safe, secure settlements with basic facilities* and core outcome indicator 9.1 *proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing*.

The housing and settlement conditions for forcibly displaced and stateless persons are often inadequate. Both affordability and quality of housing remain significant challenges for most populations surveyed. As illustrated in Figure 7, access to habitable and affordable housing correlates with the safety and security in settlements in which forcibly displaced and stateless persons reside. Socioeconomic factors such as the host country's economic status and access to formal employment further influence housing and settlement conditions.

FIGURE 7:
Core Outcome Indicator 9.1 - Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing (vertical axis) against Core Impact Indicator 2.2 - Proportion of people residing in safe, secure settlements with basic facilities (horizontal axis)



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UNHCR in partnership with NGO Barqaror Hayot implement a 6-month pilot project in Termez that seeks to improve the skills of Afghan citizens in Uzbekistan and the host community – helping to fill national shortfall in human capital – enable individuals to achieve higher qualifications in new areas, and support groups to recover and rebuild. As part of the project trainings on cooking, sewing, hairdressing are organised as well as and language classes for children.

© UNHCR/Natalia Lazarro

Notably, in Papua New Guinea, only 1% of displaced people live in settlements deemed safe and secure, while just 5% reside in habitable and affordable housing. IDPs in Myanmar face similar difficulties, with only 4% living in habitable housing and 3% in safe and secure settlements.

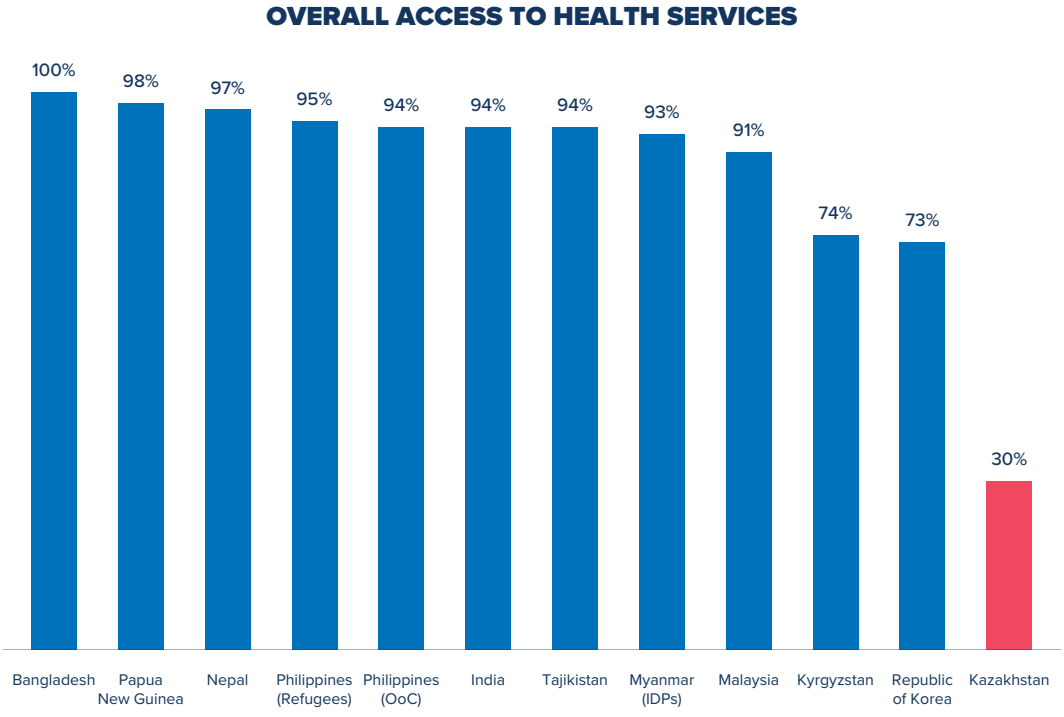
In the Philippines, 80% of settlements are considered secure and well-equipped, yet only 40% of displaced people live in housing that is both habitable and affordable. In Malaysia and the Republic of Korea, less than half of forcibly displaced people live in affordable and habitable housing whereas in India this is only 7%. While 26%, 46% and 61%, respectively in India, Malaysia and Republic of Korea, live in safe and secure settlements, quality housing remains limited despite its broader availability in these countries. The affordability of safe and secure housing directly correlates to displaced peoples' income levels. This underscores the need for greater access to labour markets, including wage and self-employment opportunities, in the target countries to improve housing outcomes.

3.3 Health

The health thematic area was analysed using the core impact indicator 2.3 *proportion of people with access to health services,* core outcome indicator 10.1 *proportion of children aged between nine months to 5 years old vaccinated for measles* and core outcome indicator 10.2 *proportion of births attended by skilled personnel.*

Perceived access to overall health care is reported as generally high among forcibly displaced populations.[11] With the exception of Kazakhstan, which has the lowest reported health care access amongst the countries covered (37%), most populations report moderate to high levels of access. In Kyrgyzstan (74%) and the Republic of Korea (73%), access is moderate. In other countries, perceived access rates exceed 90%, as illustrated in Figure 8.

FIGURE 8:
Core Impact Indicator 2.3 - Proportion of people with access to health services



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However, as shown in Figure 9, this experience may not align with access to specific health services. The RMS compiles data on access to maternal health care and (measles) vaccinations. However, this needs to be interpreted cautiously due to well-recognized systematic health access gaps among forcibly displaced people, even in key primary health areas in most major refugee-hosting countries in the region. These findings reveal a contradiction in half of the countries where reported access to health care is high but access to specific services such as vaccinations and maternal health remains significantly low. For instance, while forcibly displaced people in Bangladesh and India report respectively 100% and 94% access to health care, only 60% of women in Bangladesh and 62% in India have access to quality maternal care, meaning four out of every 10 childbirths occur without skilled personnel present. These gaps in access to specific primary and secondary health care services in the Asia-Pacific region are consistent with the findings from other UNHCR sector-specific assessments such as the Global Annual Public Health Survey and Health Inclusion Survey 2023.

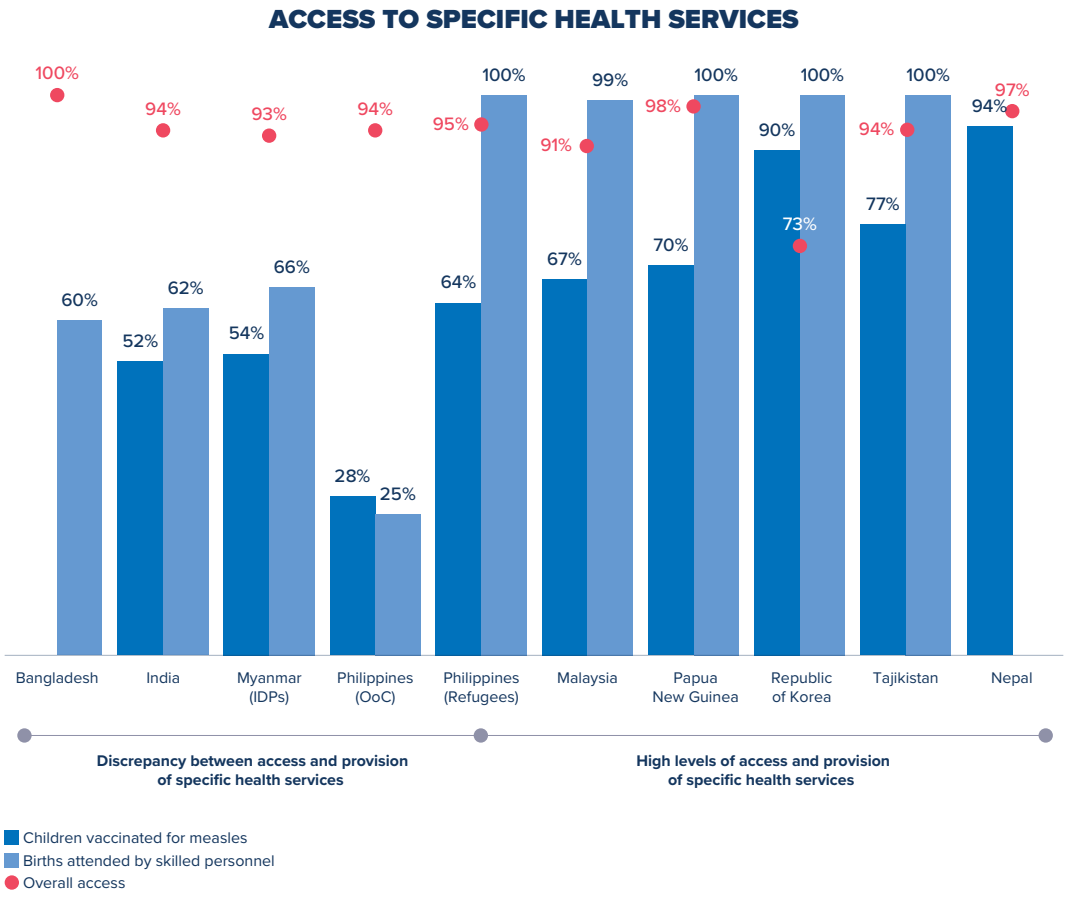
The population at risk of statelessness in the Philippines is of particular concern: only one in four people have vaccinations or quality maternal care available, despite 94% reporting overall access to health care. This represents the lowest rates of maternal health care access among the countries covered. Conversely, among the refugee population, where a similar 95% report access to health care, a much higher 63% are vaccinated and 100% receive maternal health care. Specifically in Malaysia, despite achieving 99% childbirths attended by skilled personnel, the high rate is attributable to the mandatory law enacted by the government where failure to do so may result in violation of the national laws. Affordability issues remain a huge challenge where refugees ended up with huge debts owed to the government hospitals as a result of childbirths.

Coverage for measles vaccination among refugee children in Malaysia was 67% mainly due to low awareness level coupled with affordability and accessibility issues.

Nepal, Papua New Guinea[12] and Tajikistan also demonstrate positive outcomes, with forcibly displaced populations reporting high rates of health care access, high measles vaccination coverage exceeding 70% and universal access to skilled maternal care.

In the Republic of Korea, forcibly displaced people reported an 88% measles vaccination rate and 100% of births attended by skilled personnel, despite only 71% indicating they were able to access needed health care. This may potentially reflect legal access without financial support.

FIGURE 9:
Core Outcome Indicator 10.1 - Proportion of children 9 months to 5 years vaccinated for measles and Core Outcome Indicator 10.2 - Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel against proportion of people with access to health.



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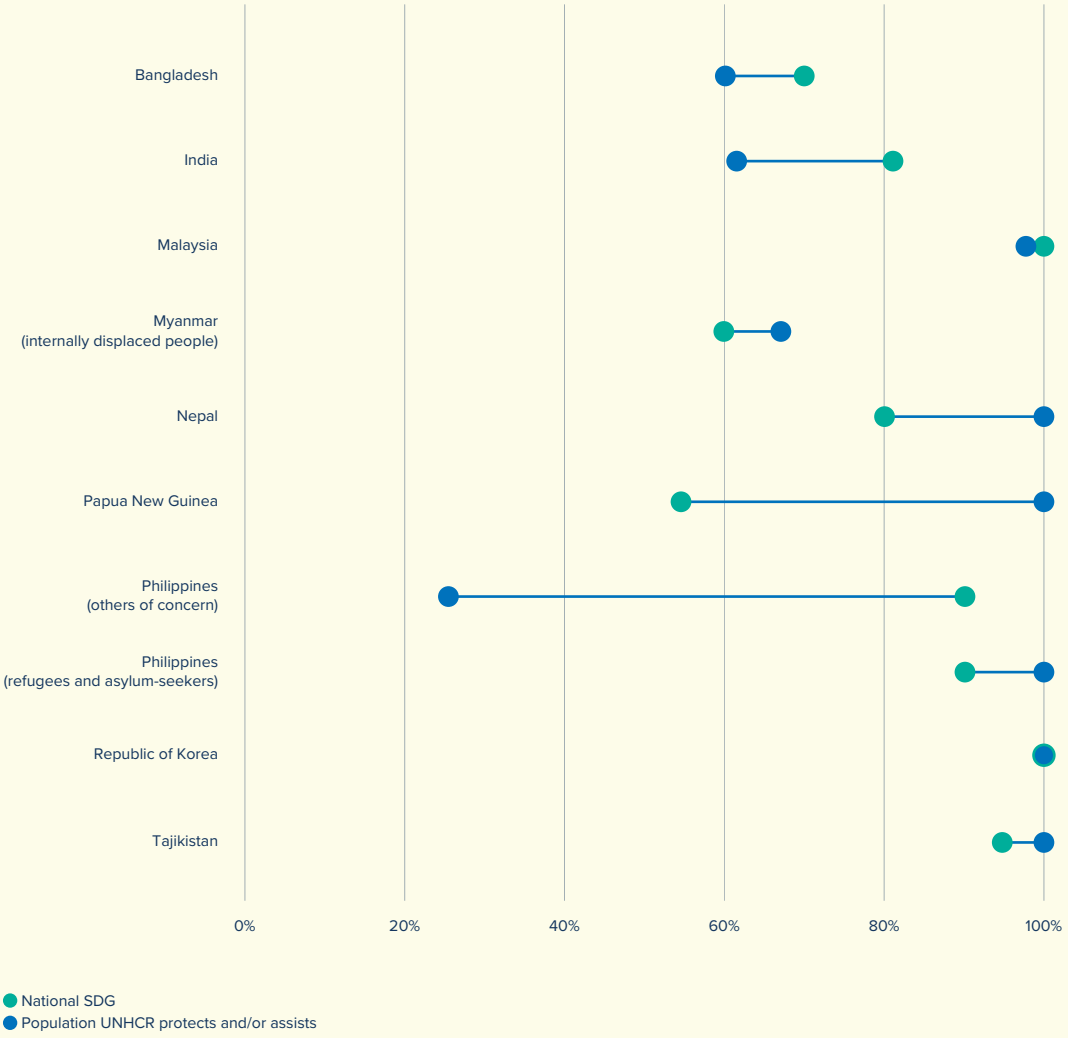
SDG 3.1.2

Core Outcome 10.2: Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel



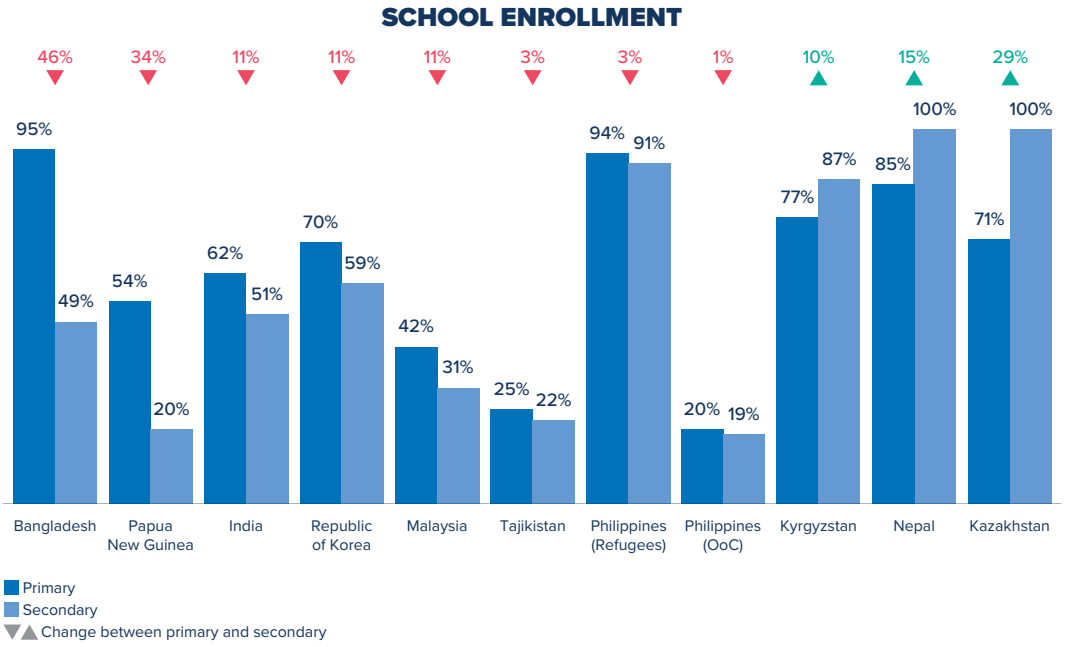
The share of births attended by skilled personnel is an indicator under the SDG 3 Good Health and Well-Being. Populations covered by the RMS in Nepal, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines (refugees) and the Republic of Korea all reported 100% coverage for this indicator, surpassing or matching national rates. In the Philippines, there is a notable disparity between the population at risk of statelessness, where only a quarter of births are attended by skilled health personnel, and the national SDG rate, which stands at 90%. Similarly, in Bangladesh and India, displaced populations reported maternal care coverage rates of around 60%, which is lower than the national SDG rates of 70% and 81%, respectively.

3.4 Education

The education thematic area was analysed using the core impact indicator 3.2a and 3.2b *proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary and secondary school*, respectively.

In most countries, gross enrollment rates (GER) drop significantly from primary school to secondary school (see Figure 10). This trend is evident in Bangladesh, India, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea and to a lesser extent, Tajikistan. Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea show particularly sharp declines, with 46 and 34-percentage-point falls respectively. In both countries, for every two forcibly displaced children enrolled in primary school, only one continues to secondary school.

FIGURE 10:
Core impact indicators 3.2a and 3.2b - Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary and secondary education



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Despite the low dropout rates between primary and secondary schooling, Tajikistan's overall GER stands at only 25% at the primary school level and 22% at the secondary school level. The low GER in Tajikistan is in stark contrast to other Central Asian countries surveyed.

Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have higher enrollment rates for forcibly displaced children, with 77% and 71% enrolled in primary education, respectively. Both countries also show an increase in secondary enrollment diverging from the broader trend of declining enrollment rates. In Kazakhstan and Nepal, the secondary school enrollment rate for displaced children reaches 100%.[13]

Children at risk of statelessness in the Philippines report lower enrollment rates than other surveyed populations, and there is a marked disparity in GER between refugee children and those at risk of statelessness. While refugee children in the country enjoy near-universal enrollment at both primary (94%) and secondary (91%) levels, only one in five children who are at risk of statelessness are enrolled in school at either level.

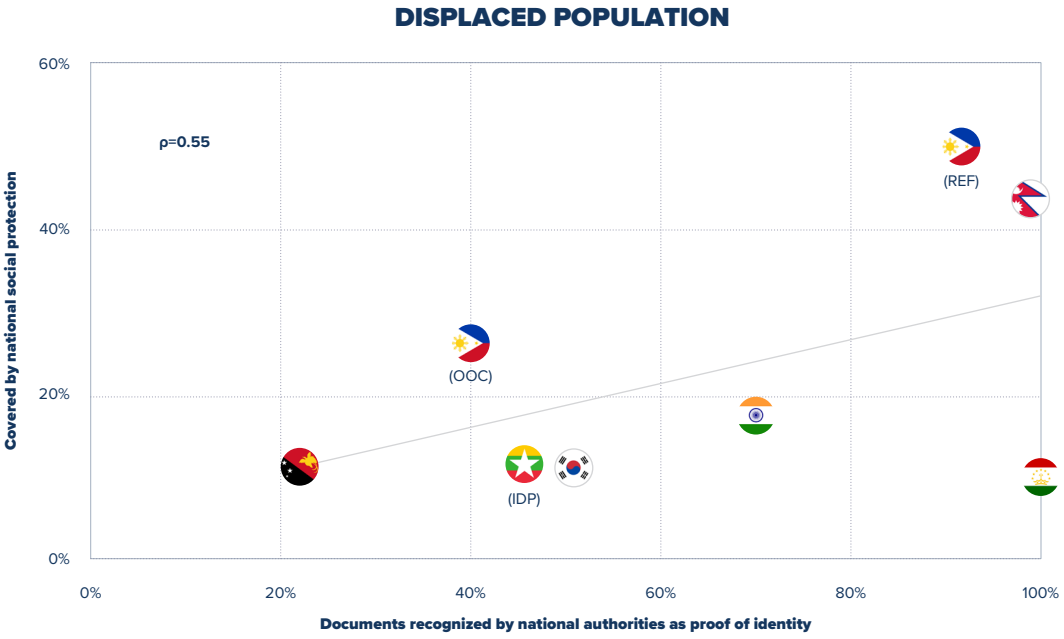
In the Republic of Korea[14] and Malaysia,[15] despite high national GER, the rates for forcibly displaced people stands at only 70% enrolled in primary education and 59% in secondary education for Republic of Korea and 42% enrolled in primary education and 31% in secondary education for Malaysia.

3.5 Social protection

The social protection system thematic area was analysed using the core outcome indicator 16.2 *proportion of people covered by national social protection systems* and core outcome indicator 1.3 *proportion of people with legally recognised identity credentials*.

Access to social protection schemes is imperative for forcibly displaced people, particularly as the initial support for the humanitarian response diminishes and displacement becomes protracted. This aligns with the overall objective of socioeconomic inclusion, ensuring forcibly displaced and stateless persons have access to labour markets and contribute to social protection systems.

FIGURE 11:
Correlation between core outcome indicator 1.3 – Proportion of people with legally recognized identity credentials and core outcome indicator 16.2 proportion of people covered by national social protection systems



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Access to social protection schemes is imperative for forcibly displaced people, particularly as the initial support for the humanitarian response diminishes and displacement becomes protracted. This aligns with the overall objective of socioeconomic inclusion, ensuring forcibly displaced and stateless persons have access to labour markets and contribute to social protection systems.

Amongst the countries covered, fewer than half of the forcibly displaced and stateless persons are covered by protection schemes. The Philippines reported the highest coverage with 49% accessing such systems compared to 26% among those at risk of statelessness. Nepal also shows moderate coverage (43%). In India, 18% of forcibly displaced people are covered by social protection systems, while only one in 10 of IDPs in Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea and Tajikistan are included. However, these rates should be considered within the broader context, as even citizens in most of these countries likely do not have universal access to social protection systems.

Figure 11 illustrates the association between having some form of identity documentation and being included in social protection programmes. The data reveals a positive correlation between identification and the likelihood of coverage by social protection programmes (correlation = 0.55). This highlights the critical role that access to documentation plays in accessing social protection schemes provided by the state. It also underscores the need for host authorities to ensure proper registration of internally displaced populations, starting with birth registration and maintaining legal identity records throughout the duration of displacement.

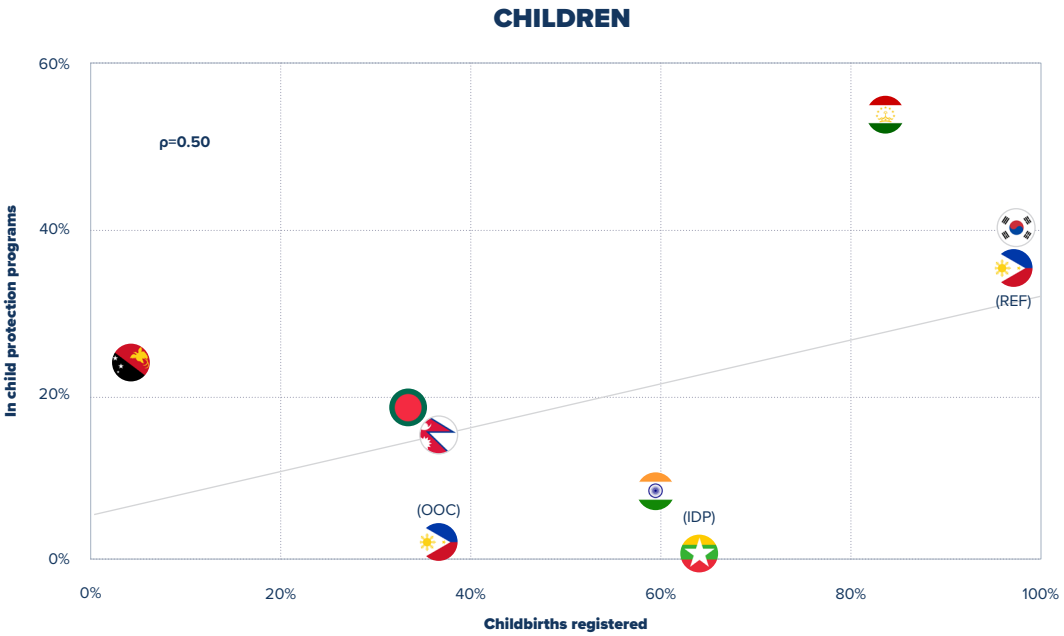
Social protection is also linked to access to formal employment, enabling forcibly displaced and stateless persons to secure gainful employment or become entrepreneurs in order to contribute to social insurance systems through taxes and fees. Supporting the existing system and integrating forcibly displaced populations is more sustainable than creating parallel solutions. This process starts with civil registration and documentation, which bolster access to the formal labour market, in accordance with the legal framework. As a result, forcibly displaced populations can then contribute to and benefit from the social protection system, including social assistance, unemployment support and pensions, on par with the citizens of the host country provided they meet the eligibility criteria.

3.6 Community-based child protection

The child protection thematic area was analysed using the core impact indicator 5.2 *proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes* and core outcome indicator 1.2 *proportion of children whose births have been registered with a national authority.*

A community-based protection activity ensures children's physical safety and engages them in structured activity. While participating, children are likely to be supervised by the community through a trusted adult. The ability of children to participate in such activities is a survey-based indicator reflecting the child protection environment.

FIGURE 12:
Correlation between birth registration and likelihood of coverage under child community programmes



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Most countries surveyed report low rates of children participating in child protection activities. Amongst IDP children in Myanmar (0%) and children at risk of statelessness in the Philippines (1%), almost none report having participated in these activities. For the Sama Bajau population in the Philippines, children may instead engage in informal group games or peer activities, reflecting their nomadic lifestyle.

In more protracted situations, where families are not currently on the move, participation rates are slightly higher. Approximately one in 10 children in India (9%), one in six in Nepal (16%), one in five in Bangladesh (19%) and one in four in Papua New Guinea (25%), report having participated in such activities. The Philippines (36%), the Republic of Korea (40%), and Tajikistan (52%) show the highest rates of participation in activities.

Similarly to social protection schemes, birth registration rates coincide with higher participation rates in community-based child protection activities. Unlike social protection programmes, community-based child protection activities can occur sporadically and may be organized by community organizations or local leaders. Birth registration is not a practical barrier to participating in these programmes. While the analysis does not distinguish between co-variation and causality, both birth registration and community-based child activities are likely to be more widely available in less restrictive protection and asylum contexts.



Alyssa, a 14-year-old girl from Myanmar now living in Klang, Selangor, attends El Shaddai Learning Centre and dreams of becoming a doctor to heal people like her mother, who has a leg injury that limits her mobility. Since arriving in Malaysia in 2018, she has balanced her studies, volunteering, and supporting her family. Alyssa loves to write and documents moments of her life in her journal, capturing her dreams and daily experiences.

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THEMATIC AREA

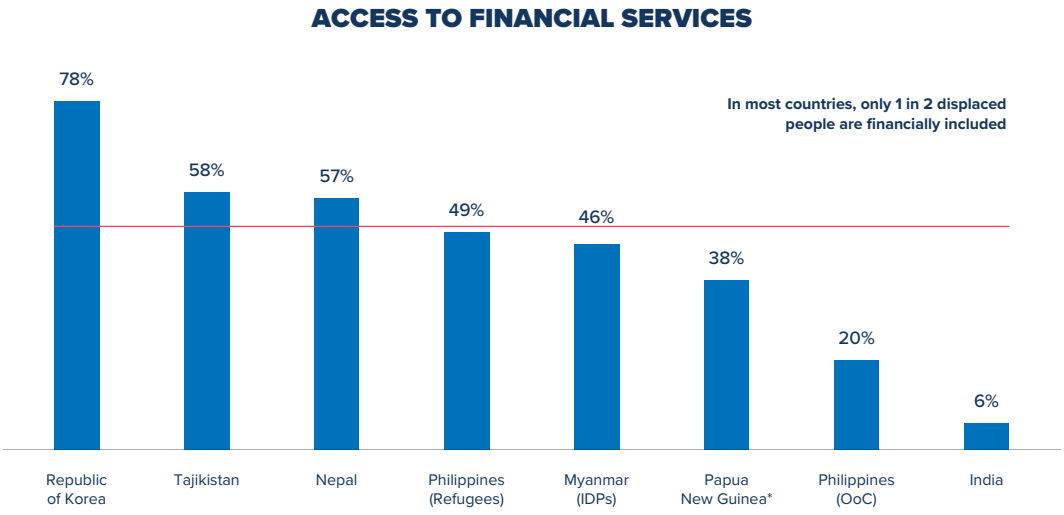
4 LIVELIHOODS

4.1 Financial inclusion

Financial inclusion was assessed using core outcome indicator 13.1. *proportion of people with a bank account or mobile money account*. This analysis includes data from seven countries where the RMS collected the relevant datapoint.

As shown in Figure 13, about half the forcibly displaced people in Nepal (57%), Philippines (49%), Tajikistan (58%), and IDPs in Myanmar (46%) have access to some form of banking. This survey-based indicator measures de-facto access, which may differ from legal access. For all countries with about a 50% financial inclusion rate, legal access exists, however de facto access is not straight forward and still requires support. The lack of access to formal financial services increases reliance on informal financial systems.

FIGURE 13:
Core outcome indicator 13.1 - Proportion of people with a bank or mobile-money account



*A programme established bank accounts for most households in Iowara, but access is limited due to no deposits or withdrawals since their creation.

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The Republic of Korea stands out with a financial inclusion rate of 78%. Conversely, populations at risk of statelessness in the Philippines and refugees in India report significantly lower levels of financial inclusion, with only 20% and 6% of these groups, respectively, having access to financial services. In the Philippines, while people at risk of statelessness are legally eligible for banking services as nationals, practical barriers such as the lack of identity documentation and nomadic lifestyle hinder access.

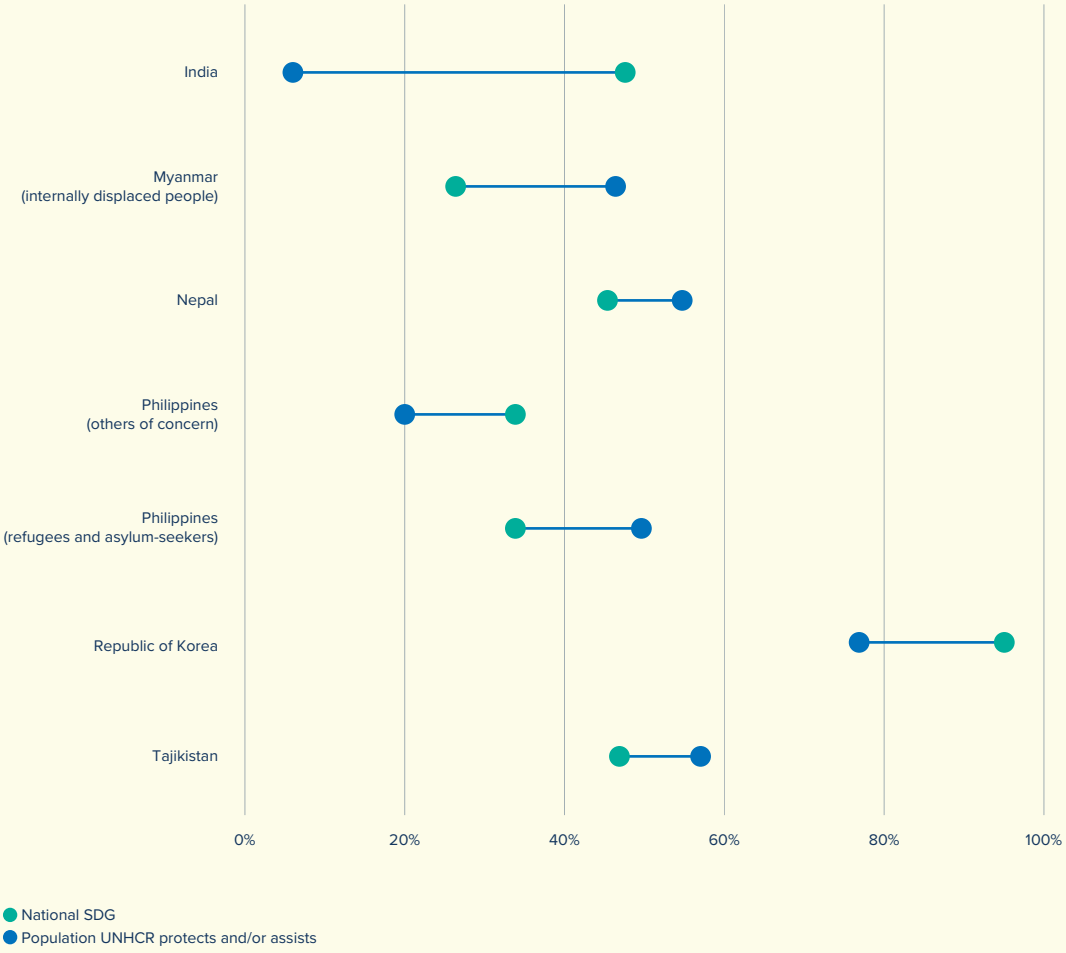
Financial inclusion is closely linked to a conducive legal environment for income generation, as it is often a prerequisite for forcibly displaced and stateless persons to participate in the labour market. However, there are some exceptions like Nepal. Conversely, in India, the lack of a national legal framework impedes access to government recognized documentation required to open bank accounts and the digital transition in India presents additional barriers for refugees to access financial services which contributes to low levels of financial inclusion.

Financial inclusion is a key enabler of potential economic participation by forcibly displaced populations in host countries. Individual financial inclusion facilitates daily transactions, while entrepreneurship requires access to financial services to support business operations Entrepreneurship, fostered by governments to drive job creation, innovation, export and Gross Domestic Product growth, can also be pursued by forcibly displaced populations, provided they have access to the necessary opportunities. Financial inclusion is, therefore, a critical prerequisite for fostering self-employment and harnessing the economic potential of these populations.



SDG 8.10.2

Core Outcome 13.1: Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service



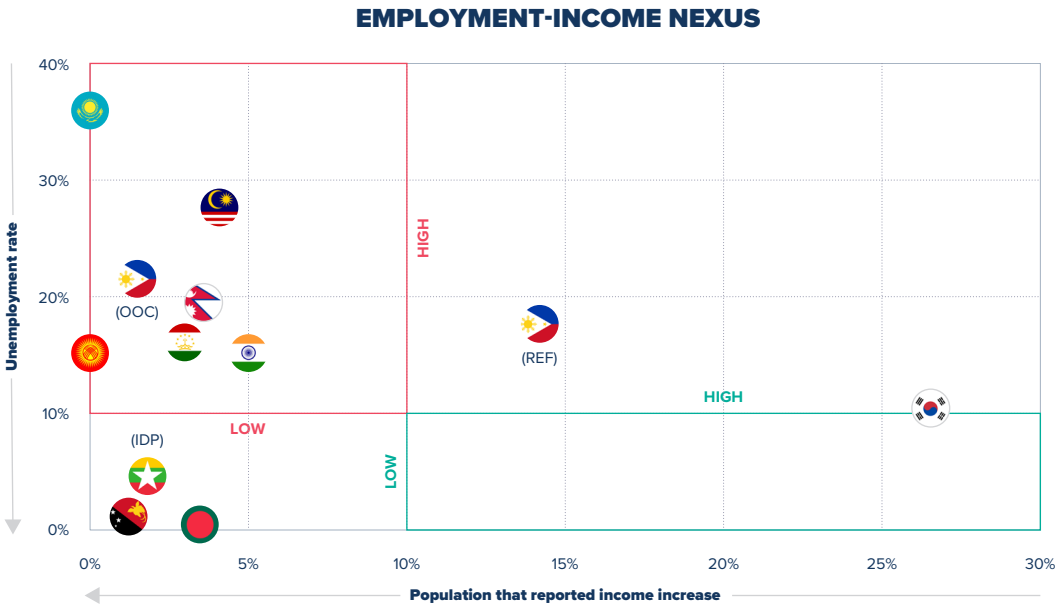
Having a bank account or access to mobile money is an indicator under SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth. In Myanmar (IDPs), Nepal, the Philippines (refugees) and Tajikistan, the population covered by the RMS show higher rates of financial inclusion compared to national SDG values for this indicator. Conversely, RMS populations in India, the Philippines (people at risk of statelessness) and the Republic of Korea report lower access rates than their respective national averages. This gap is particularly pronounced in India, where only 6% of the forcibly displaced population reported having a bank account compared to 47% at the national SDG level.

4.2 Employment and income

The employment and income thematic area was analysed using core outcome indicator 13.3. *proportion of people (working age) who are unemployed* and core outcome indication 13.2 *proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous years.*

The interaction between employment and income among forcibly displaced and stateless persons in our sample can be classified into four distinct quadrants, reflecting the nexus between unemployment rates and income changes from the previous year (Figure 14).

FIGURE 14:
Core outcome indicator 13.3 proportion of working age people who are unemployed (vertical axis) against core outcome indicator 13.2 proportion of people reporting income increase over the past year (horizontal axis)



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Instances where forcibly displaced populations experience both low unemployment and income growth are rare. The Republic of Korea is the only country in the sample close to this ideal. With an unemployment rate of about 10% and 27% of people reporting an increase in income over the past year, forcibly displaced people in the country enjoy the most positive economic prospects among those covered in the survey.

Refugees in the Philippines, however, face a tradeoff between these two indicators of economic well-being. While 14% report an increase in income, the unemployment rate stands at a high 18%. This likely suggests that while some segments of the refugee population in the country benefit from economic growth, the gains are unevenly distributed, leaving a large share of refugees unable to secure employment and improve their financial circumstances.

Populations covered by the RMS more commonly experience low unemployment rates (below 10%) yet few (less than 10%) report income growth. This includes forcibly displaced people in Papua New Guinea,[16] Myanmar (IDPs), and those at risk of statelessness in the Philippines.

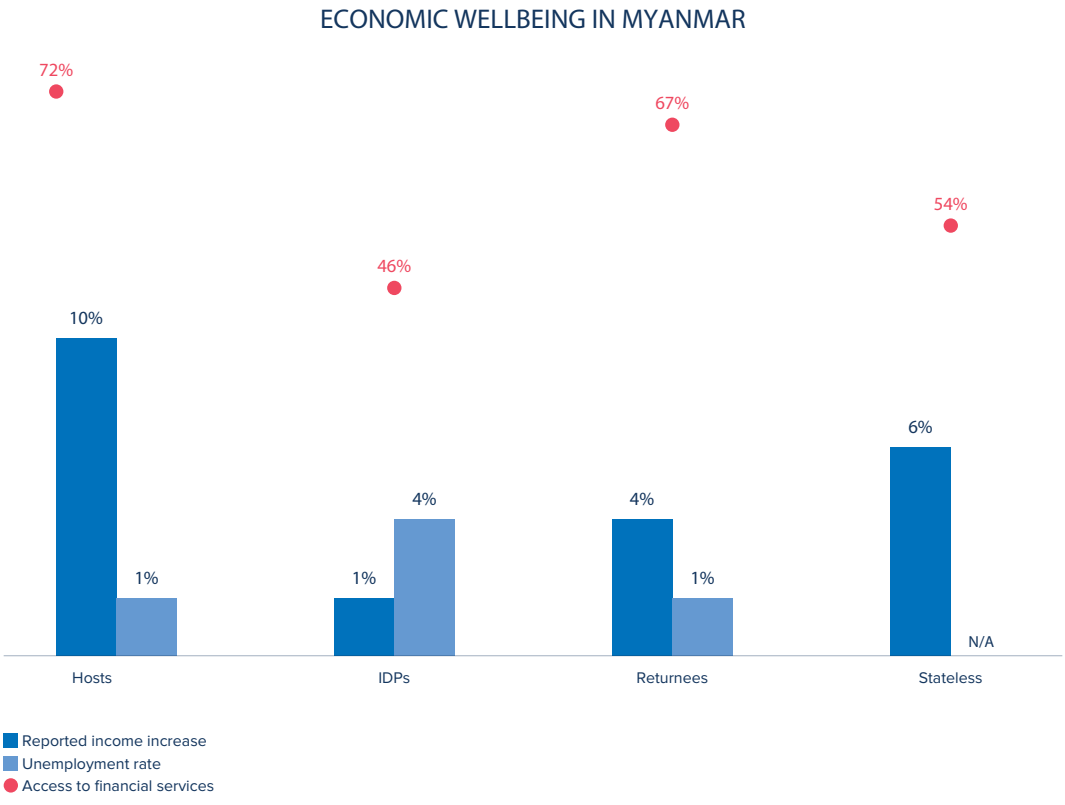
These groups exhibit limited economic mobility. Despite low levels of unemployment, income growth remains stagnant. This is typical in countries where displaced people do not have the right to work and are confined to informal employment, often accepting diminished conditions and pay. For instance, in Malaysia, where refugees are not legally permitted to work, thereby restricting them to the informal sector with limited opportunities for income growth.

Forcibly displaced populations in India, Nepal and Tajikistan fall into the least favourable quadrant. All three countries report high unemployment rates of 15-19%, with income growth experienced by only 3-5%. In India the majority of the forcibly displaced population participates in the informal economy due to a lack of legal status in the country. While forcibly displaced people in Nepal and Tajikistan are more likely to have access to legal identity documents, this does not appear to translate into positive economic outcomes. In addition to restrictions on the right to work, factors such as labour market dynamics and private sector competitiveness appear to adversely impact income generation opportunities for forcibly displaced populations.

A few countries in our sample, including Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and Kyrgyzstan, report high unemployment rates (36%, 28%, and 16%, respectively) but lack data on income growth. Similarly, while unemployment data is unavailable for refugees in Bangladesh, only 3%, report income growth, highlighting the limited economic prospects when legal frameworks do not permit refugees to work. Refugees also often face restricted mobility, further constraining their income generation options outside settlements.

Figure 15 illustrates the stagnant economic conditions faced by different populations surveyed in Myanmar.[17] Among these, host communities have the most favourable outcomes, with the lowest unemployment rate and the highest rate of income growth. In contrast, IDPs face the poorest outcomes, with only slight improvement upon return. While unemployment rates for returnees align with those of host communities (1%), income growth is experienced by fewer (4% compared to 10%). A similar pattern is observed in financial inclusion, where IDPs have limited access (46%), and although this improves post-return (67%), it still falls short of the levels seen amongst host communities (72%).

FIGURE 15:
Metrics of economic wellbeing across displaced subgroups in Myanmar



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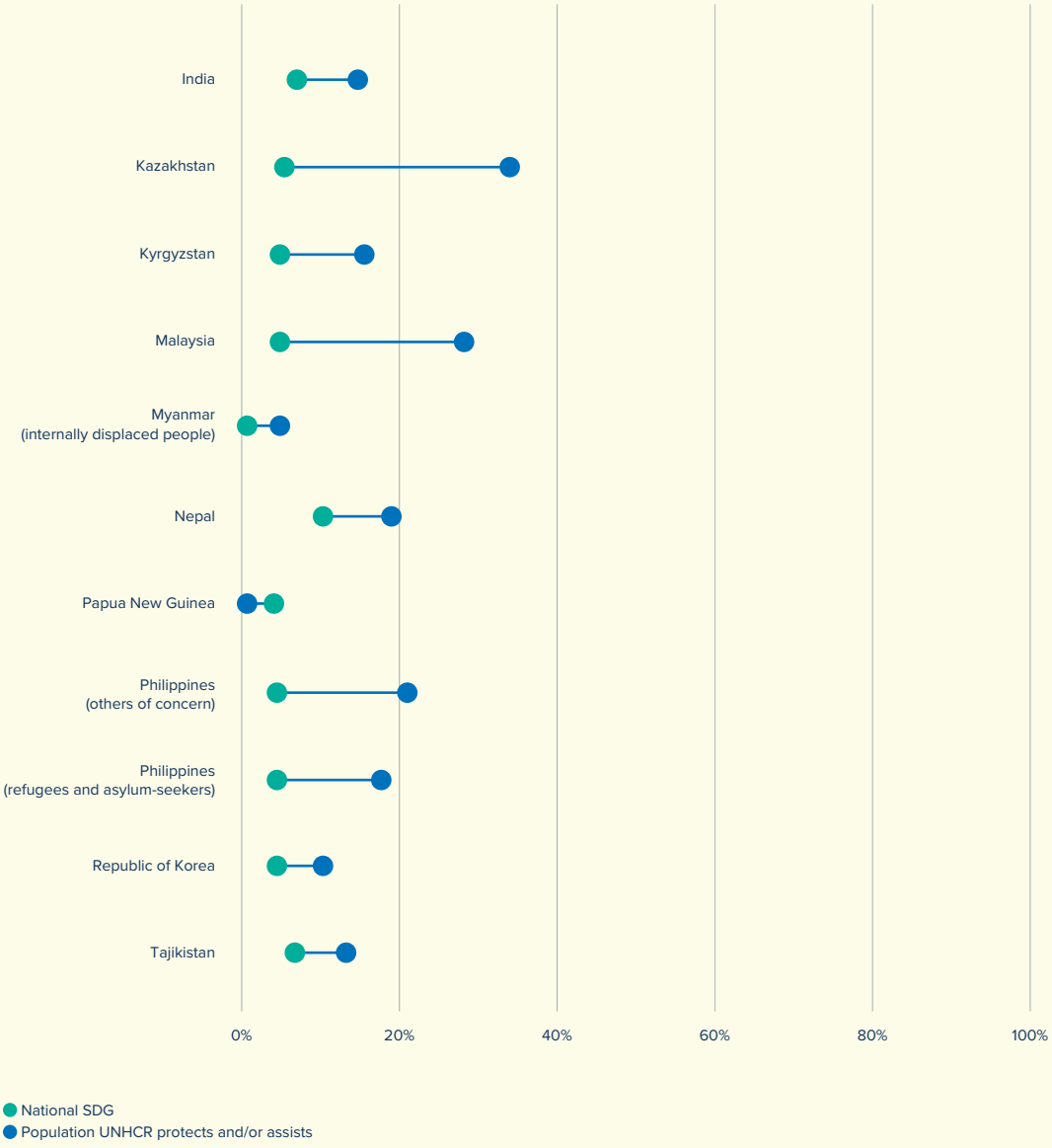
SDG 8.5.2

Core Outcome 13.3: Unemployment rate



Most populations covered by the RMS report higher unemployment rates compared to national SDG averages in their respective countries. The sole exception is the displaced population in Papua New Guinea, where unemployment is slightly lower than the national SDG rate – 1% compared to 3%. The largest disparity is observed in Kazakhstan, where the national SDG unemployment rate is 5%, while the displaced population reports a significantly higher rate of 36%.



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ANONYMIZED MICRODATA

Microdata are data on the characteristics of a unit such as individuals, households, businesses and infrastructures. In the context of UNHCR, microdata include registration data, individual- or household-level survey data from assessments and evaluations and surveys of key infrastructure such as a health facility, school or water point. Survey data are managed by UNHCR field teams and technical units, and include variables pertinent to planning and carrying out operations such as demographic data, health and nutrition data, socioeconomic data, protection concerns and vulnerability indicators.

RMS data can be found at UNHCR's Microdata Library (MDL), a secure online data repository providing access to anonymized microdata on forcibly displaced and stateless. The Microdata Library contains microdata collected directly by UNHCR or indirectly through its partners, but supported in some way by UNHCR. UNHCR made a commitment to "ensure that quality and coherent data related to refugees and other persons of concern is systematically, responsibly and efficiently managed by UNHCR and its partners, and shared openly and responsibly both internally and externally (UNHCR, Data Transformation Strategy 2020-2025). At the external level, the Microdata Library contributes to the data value chain by promoting, through an ease of access, further analysis by academics and research centers, private sector, development actors and other humanitarian organizations. This analysis can be used to inform programming, policy, and advocacy efforts generating a positive impact on the lives of people affected by forced displacement.

The anonymized microdata sets used in this report can be found at the following MDL links

COUNTRY	RMS INDICATOR DATA SOURCE: UNHCR MICRODATA LIBRARY
Bangladesh	Results Monitoring Survey (Bhasan Char Needs Assessment) 2023
India	Results Monitoring Survey 2024
Kazakhstan	Results Monitoring Survey 2022
Kyrgyzstan	Results Monitoring Survey 2022
Malaysia	Results Monitoring Survey 2023
Myanmar	Results Monitoring Survey 2023
Nepal	Results Monitoring Survey and Socio-Economic Assessment - 2023
Papua New Guinea	Results Monitoring Survey 2023
Philippines	Results Monitoring Survey 2023
Republic of Korea	Results Monitoring Survey 2022
Tajikistan	Results Monitoring Survey 2023

ANNEX 1

COUNTRY	TYPES OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION INCLUDED IN QUESTIONNAIRE
India	Passport Birth certificate Government issued ID card Stay/Longterm Visa (LTV) Household card of address / family book/ marriage certificate Driving license
Republic of Korea	Passport Birth certificate (issued by a hospital or government) Alien registration card (ID) issued by the Republic of Koreagovernment Notification of the postponement of the termination of departure Statelessness documentation (Stateless people only) Family relation document (Family registration, marriage certificate etc.) National ID card (Resident registration card)
Myanmar	Citizenship Scrutiny Card/National Registration Card Associate Citizenship Scrutiny Card Naturalised citizenship scrutiny card Birth certificate A passport (travel document) National Verification Card Household list
Nepal	Passport Birth certificate The Government of Nepal Issued ID Refugee Card (for Bhutanese 16+) Census slip (for Bhutanese) Marriage Certificates Health Insurance cards

COUNTRY	TYPES OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION INCLUDED IN QUESTIONNAIRE
Papua New Guinea	Passport Birth certificate Civil/government-issued ID card Residency permit (both temporary and permanent) Statelessness documentation Household card of address / family book/ marriage certificate Social security card
Philippines	Passport Birth certificate ACR I Card Paper-based ACR Certificate of Pending Application for Asylum seeker Machine Readable Convention Travel Document Temporary/ Permanent Residency Visa 47B Visa Household card of address / family book/ marriage certificate Barangay Certificate Certificate of indigency Philhealth Social Security System (SSS) Refugee ID from DOJ
Tajikistan	Passport Birth certificate Civil/government-issued ID card Residency permit (both temporary and permanent)

ANNEX 2

SDG INDICATOR	COUNTRY	SDG INDICATOR DATA SOURCE
SDG 16.9.1	Bangladesh	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) 2019
	Tajikistan	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2017
	Nepal	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2022
	Myanmar	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2015-16
	Papua New Guinea	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2016-18
	Philippines	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2022
SDG 3.1.2	Republic of Korea	The 2021 National Survey on Fertility; Family Health & Welfare in Korea
	Tajikistan	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2017
	Philippines	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2022
	Nepal	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2022
	Myanmar	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2015-16
	Bangladesh	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2022
	Papua New Guinea	Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2016-18
	India	National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) 2015-16
	Malaysia	Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Indicators Malaysia 2022
SDG 8.5.2	Tajikistan	Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2016
	Nepal	Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2017
	Myanmar	Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2020
	Bangladesh	Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2022
	Philippines	Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2022
	Republic of Korea	Economically Active Population Survey (LFS) 2023
	Kazakhstan	Sample Survey of Employment (LFS) 2022
	Kyrgyzstan	Employment and Unemployment Survey (LFS) 2021
	Malaysia	Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2022
	Papua New Guinea	Population Census 2011
	India	Periodic Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2019

SDG INDICATOR	COUNTRY	SDG INDICATOR DATA SOURCE
SDG 8.10.2	Tajikistan	The World Bank (2021), Global Findex Database 2017
	Republic of Korea	The World Bank (2021), Global Findex Database 2017
	Myanmar	The World Bank (2021), Global Findex Database 2017
	Philippines	The World Bank (2021), Global Findex Database 2017
	Nepal	The World Bank (2021), Global Findex Database 2017
	India	The World Bank (2021), Global Findex Database 2017
SDG 7.1.2	Myanmar	Global Health Observatory (GHO), World Health Organisation (WHO) 2018
	Bangladesh	Global Health Observatory (GHO), World Health Organisation (WHO) 2018
	Philippines	Global Health Observatory (GHO), World Health Organisation (WHO) 2018
	Republic of Korea	Global Health Observatory (GHO), World Health Organisation (WHO) 2018
	Papua New Guinea	Global Health Observatory (GHO), World Health Organisation (WHO) 2018
	India	Global Health Observatory (GHO), World Health Organisation (WHO) 2018
	Malaysia	Global Health Observatory (GHO), World Health Organisation (WHO) 2018

SDG indicator values were extracted from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs SDG Indicators Database

ENDNOTES

1 For some countries, this information may also be collected through other channels, including partners or national systems. This report looks at data from comparable and representative surveys only.

2 Data in Bangladesh, Nepal, Republic of Korea, and Kyrgyzstan were collected in late 2022. Bangladesh and Nepal conducted another RMS in 2023. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Myanmar collected data in 2023. Data collection in Myanmar took place in May 2023 before the escalation in conflict later that year. In India, the data was collected in mid-2024.

3 Data from Papua New Guinea should be understood as reflecting only the situation of West Papuan refugees in two locations. The survey results do not speak to the circumstances of other refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people present in the country, nor do they reflect the whole picture for displaced West Papuans. A further RMS exercise for West Papuans in the remote border regions was undertaken in October 2024 but is outside the scope of this report.

4 At the time of data collection (May 2023), IDPs were largely not from the Rohingya minority.

5 Document types were contextualized by country. Please refer to Annex 1 for the full list of documentation.

6 ID types included in the Nepal RMS were passports, birth certificates, Government-issued refugee ID cards (for Bhutanese aged 16 and over), census slips (for Bhutanese), marriage certificates, and health insurance cards.

7 The lack of land or property rights is a core challenge for refugees in PNG, even the 6% is significantly influenced by the settlements in Iowara, where the government has allocated some land for refugees.

8 The Fragile States Index assess pressures on states and their capacity to manage them based on a variety of data points, including information on safety such as community violence or presence of weapons.

9 Most of refugees reporting they feel safe are West Papuan refugees, as the situation for this groups of people is quite distinct from that from other countries of origins in PNG.

10 The target population for the survey in Malaysia are mainly living in urban settings with access to energy sources.

11 It is important to note that overall access to health services depends heavily on how respondents interpret the survey questions. For example, while 98% of respondents in PNG reported having access to health services, in the Iowara area, this access is limited to the presence of an aid post with very low capacity, which significantly affects the quality and scope of the services available.

12 Vaccination questions were only asked in Port Moresby with snowball sampling; thus the vaccination rate should be interpreted with caution.

13 This figure excludes respondents beyond the typical secondary school age who are enrolled in secondary education. Including them would result in values exceeding 100%, highlighting their ability to take advantage of accessible education opportunities.

14 99% primary enrollment and 98% secondary. OECD (2022) Education at a Glance.

15 98.84% primary enrollment and 85.51% secondary enrollment. UNESCO (2025) https://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=3812

16 Nearly all the refugees in PNG reported employment refer to tending small personal gardens where surplus produce can be sold at a local market. The waged employment by a third party is very rare within West Papuan refugee community.

17 The data for stateless people in Myanmar is very limited due to the inaccessibility and non-probability sampling.

Cover: Moti Maya Rai, picks lemons for her small eatery shop in Beldangi refugee settlement, Jhapa, Nepal. She has received saplings of lemon, mango, and lychee from UNHCR to support her livelihood.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED AND STATELESS POPULATIONS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

A comparative analysis based on the data from UNHCR Results Monitoring Surveys **2022-2024**

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