THEMATIC SERIES

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

Children, women, older people, men, youth, people living with disabilities and people from marginalized groups all experience internal displacement differently. This thematic series investigates the various ways in which people's lives can be affected in relation with their pre-existing characteristics.

BECOMING AN ADULT IN INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

KEY FIGURES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED YOUTH

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BECOMING AN ADULT IN INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Key figures, challenges and opportunities for internally displaced youth

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KEY MESSAGES

There were 9.7 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 living in internal displacement because of conflicts, violence or disasters at the end of 2019. Of those, 3.1 million were under the age of 18.

Age and sex-disaggregated data on IDPs is widely lacking, yet it is indispensable for designing better and more inclusive responses.

Young IDPs are not a homogeneous group. Age, gender, disability status and other factors play a significant role in shaping their lives in displacement and must be considered in response plans.

The ability to access decent livelihoods, pursue quality education and experience safety and wellbeing are essential for young IDPs and are key areas of intervention.

Young IDPs should not only be considered as people with specific needs: they can also take an active part in designing and implementing solutions to displacement.

Young IDPs must receive support and have spaces to voice their needs, wants and ideas for a better future.

INTRODUCTION

Internally displaced young women and men, like all internally displaced people (IDPs), are impacted by displacement in multiple ways. As they are at a crucial time in their lives for their personal, social and professional development, they may have particular ways of facing the experience. They encounter specific risks and sometimes lack the resources to avoid them. They can also, however, find opportunity in the midst of adversity, if the right conditions are in place.

This report presents the first estimates of the number of IDPs between the ages of 15 and 24 at the global, regional and national levels for about 100 countries. Conflicts, violence and disasters resulted in nearly ten million young people living in displacement around the world at the end of 2019. This is the highest figure ever recorded, although it is likely an underestimate.

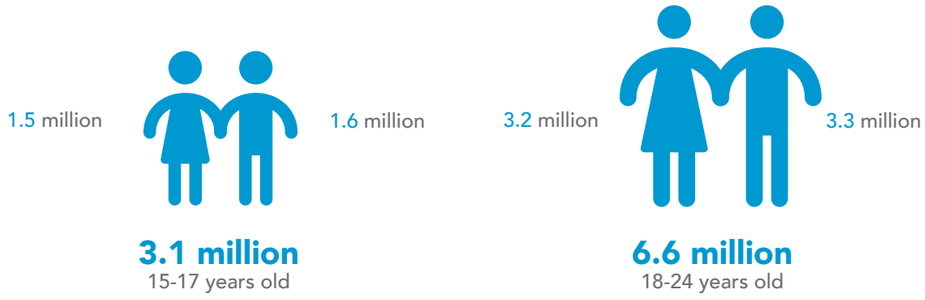
This report also includes an overview of some of the most recurring challenges young people face in internal displacement. Their age, gender, disability status and socioeconomic background, as well as other factors, play a significant role. In order to illustrate this complexity, the report highlights the experiences of internally displaced girls, members of sexual minority groups and street-connected youth, showing the specific risks they can encounter.

The report is intended to raise awareness on the need to include young IDPs in plans to prevent and respond to displacement, to ensure adequate support for all, and to make the most of the resilience and resources young people can display under such circumstances.

In order to achieve those goals, better age- and sex-disaggregated data on IDPs must be collected. Even more importantly, perhaps, young IDPs must be encouraged to voice their needs and wants and take an active part in the design and implementation of solutions to displacement, now and in the future.

KEY FIGURES

FIGURE 1: Global estimate of the number of young people of different age groups and sex living in internal displacement associated with conflict, violence and disasters at the end of 2019



9.7 million young people in internal displacement

Youth is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood. Its precise definition, however, varies from one society to another,[1] and from one individual to another. For the purpose of this paper, IDPs between the ages of 15 to 24 are considered youth in accordance with the UN's definition. Figures are further broken down into girls and boys under 18 and women and men above 18.

The exact number of internally displaced youth is unknown. The total number of people living in displacement associated with conflict and violence is only estimated for 61 countries and territories. For displacement associated with disasters, it is only estimated for 95 countries and territories.[2] In addition to this limitation, only about 15 per cent of these countries and territories publish information on the age of their internally displaced population.[3]

National-level demographic data, however, can be used to estimate the number of youth among the overall internally displaced population, with the caveat that their proportion may be higher in the displaced population than in the national one. For all these reasons, the figures presented below are likely underestimates. Similarly, the number of women and girls among IDPs is often higher than in the overall population, and the figures for them in this paper should also be understood to be underestimates.

More than 9.7 million youth, including 3.1 million minors, were living in internal displacement because of disasters, conflict or violence at the end of 2019 (Figure 1). This includes nearly 4.8 million women and girls and 4.9 million men and boys.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the highest number, with 4.2 million (Table 1). Not only does

TABLE 1: Estimates of the number of young people living in internal displacement associated with conflict, violence and disasters at the end of 2019, by region, sex and age group.

	Total			Women and girls			Men and boys		
Region	15-17	18-24	15-24	15-17	18-24	15-24	15-17	18-24	15-24
Sub-Saharan Africa	1,428,000	2,820,000	4,248,000	709,000	1,400,000	2,109,000	719,000	1,419,000	2,138,000
Middle East and North Africa	739,000	1,656,000	2,395,000	362,000	811,000	1,173,000	376,000	844,000	1,221,000
Americas	330,000	805,000	1,136,000	162,000	396,000	558,000	168,000	409,000	577,000
South Asia	404,000	835,000	1,240,000	195,000	404,000	600,000	208,000	431,000	639,000
Europe and Central Asia	109,000	268,000	377,000	52,000	130,000	182,000	56,000	138,000	194,000
East Asia and Pacific	81,000	186,000	268,000	40,000	91,000	131,000	41,000	95,000	137,000
Global	3,093,000	6,573,000	9,667,000	1,523,000	3,234,000	4,757,000	1,570,000	3,338,000	4,909,000

*Some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures because they have been rounded.

the region have the largest number of people living in internal displacement associated with conflict and violence, it also has the highest proportion of youth worldwide at 19.3 per cent. The Middle East and North Africa is second with more than 2.4 million internally displaced youth, followed by South Asia with 1.2 million. The Americas follow with 1.1 million, then Europe and Central Asia with 377,000 and East Asia and the Pacific with 268,000.

Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Colombia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Somalia and Nigeria are the countries with the highest numbers of internally displaced youth, with more than 500,000 each. Syria and the DRC host more than a million each. Detailed estimates by sex and age group for all countries and territories for which data is available are presented in Tables 2 and 3 in the annex.

Map 1 shows the distribution of young people living in internal displacement at the end of 2019 because of conflict or violence, while Map 2 illustrates disaster displacement. Overall, sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East are the regions where the number of youth displaced by conflicts and violence is the highest, while Asia has the highest number of youth displaced by disasters.

These estimates provide a first step in shedding light on the scale of the phenomenon and the need to dedicate more resources to addressing it. More research is needed to design effective interventions.

Collecting information on the experiences of young people in displacement is essential to understanding their specific needs and resources and creating better support and integration programmes (Box 1).

BOX 1: Youth Mixed Migration in Transit Cities

Through the project on Youth Mixed Migration in Transit Cities, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in partnership with the Danish Refugee Council, collects information on the needs of young people on the move in urban areas. Data on young migrants or displaced people was collected in Nairobi, (Kenya), Tunis (Tunisia), Cairo (Egypt) and Beirut (Lebanon) in 2017 and 2018.

The project includes displaced youth as well as international migrants and highlights a number of similarities between both groups. Young people surveyed cited war, insecurity and a lack of educational and employment opportunities in their area of origin as the main reasons for leaving home.

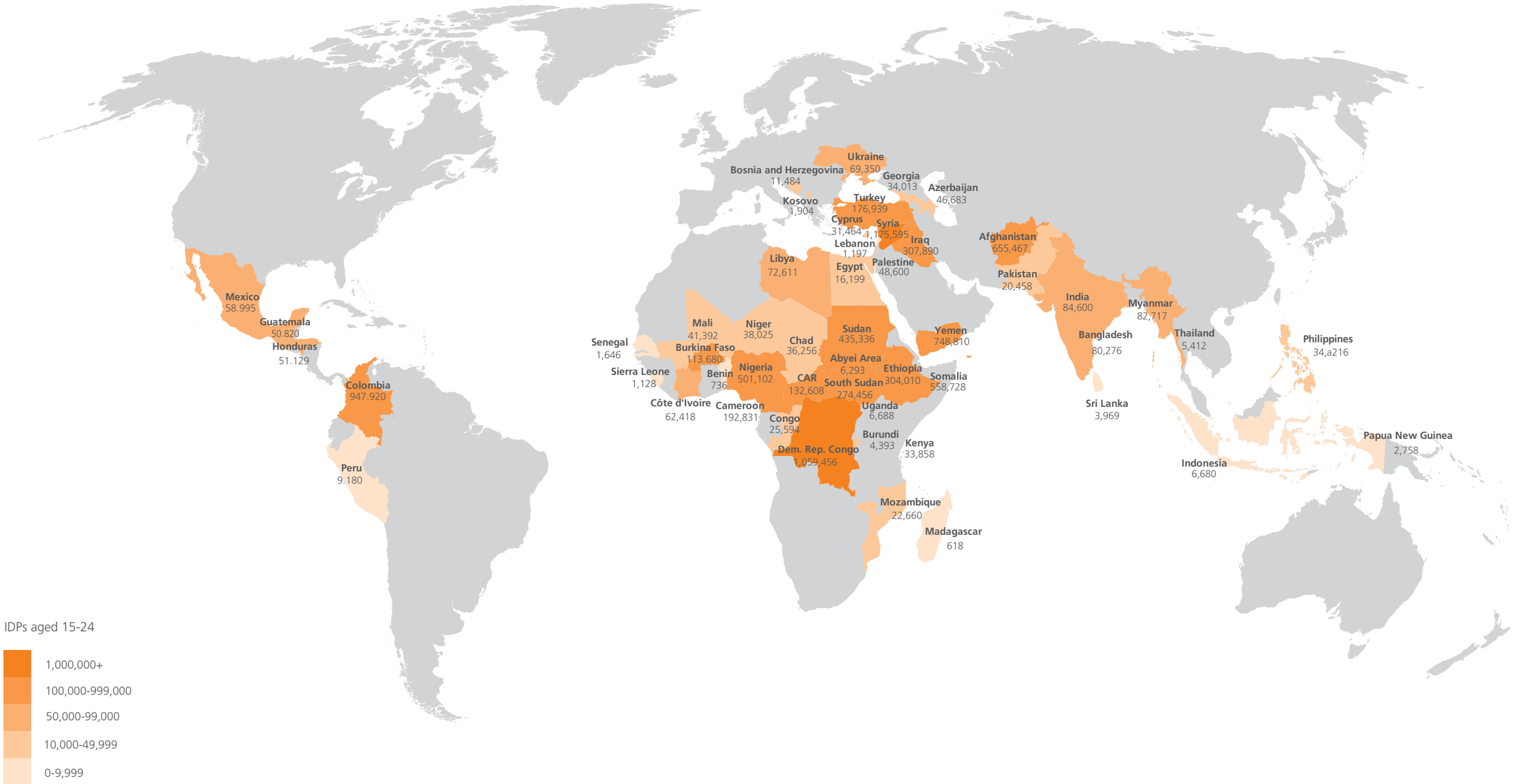
Upon arrival in their host cities, they faced multiple challenges including xenophobia, local languages, other barriers to information, employment and services such as healthcare, particularly for sexual and reproductive health. The fact that many of them did not possess identity documentation is a critical issue. The studies showed a glaring mismatch between youth aspirations and the reality on the ground. While many begin their journey hoping to spend as little time as possible in transit cities, they end up routinely staying for six months and as long as two years or more. Despite these challenges and disillusions, 70 per cent stated that, knowing what they know today, they would still have left their place of origin.

The project also highlighted the diversity in profiles, in needs and in the resources of these young people. Surveyed youth came from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, left their home for different reasons, had distinct needs and benefited from levels of support during their journey and in their host city that varied greatly. Aid providers seeking to support them must take these factors into account in designing better evidence-based interventions.

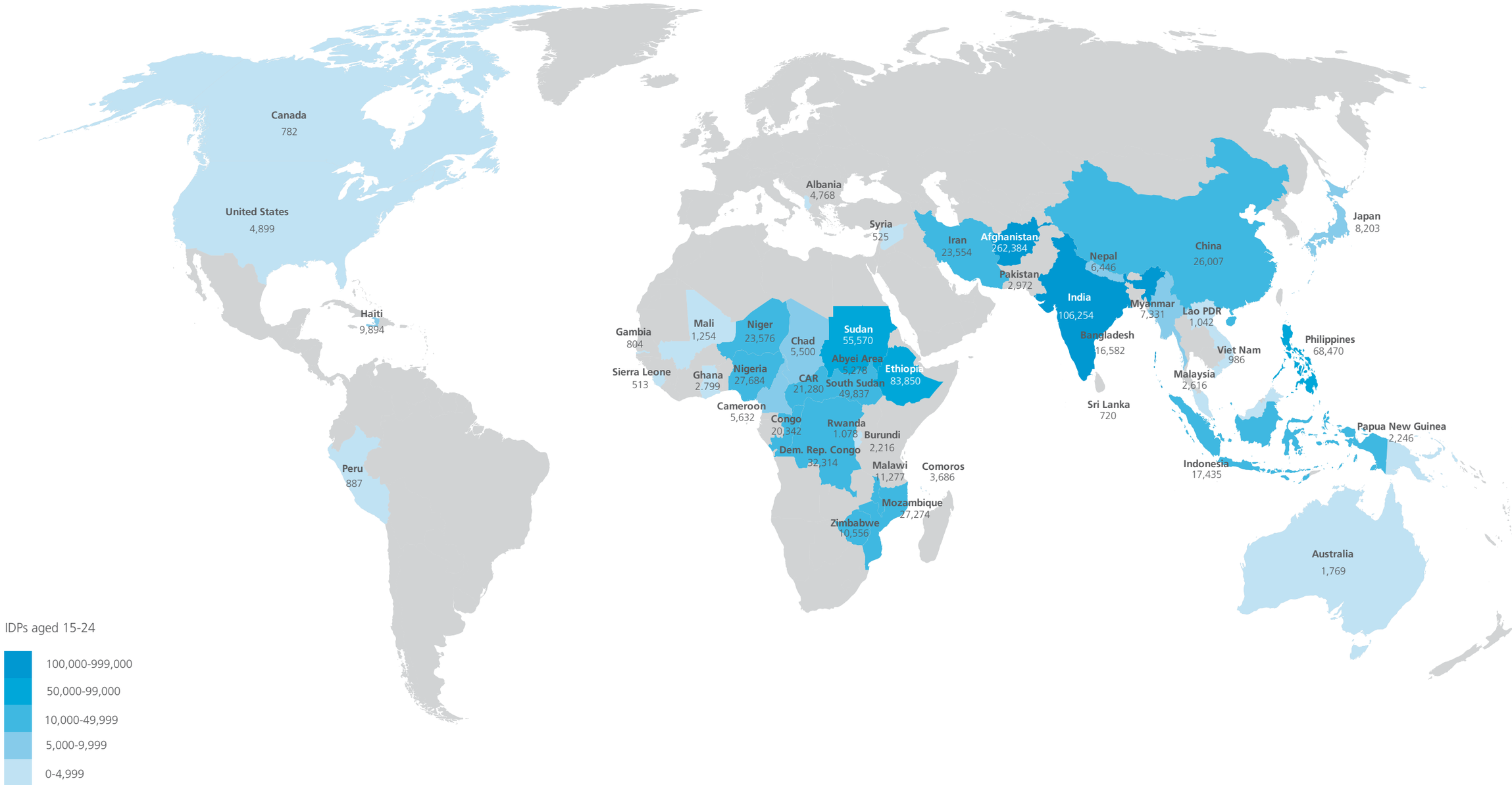
Building on lessons learned from this project, UNFPA aims to implement a set of operational trials of interventions to address the identified needs of young IDPs and migrants in transit cities. The services provided will also be accessible to local populations to enhance the welfare of all simultaneously and minimize the chances that host communitieis will resent the migrants and displaced youth in their communities.

The second phase of this project, currently on hold as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, will conduct similar studies in Bamako (Mali), Niamey (Niger) and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).

MAP 1: Global distribution of people between 15 and 24 living in internal displacement associated with conflict or violence at the end of 2019.



MAP 2: Global distribution of people between 15 and 24 living in internal displacement associated with disasters



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Internal displacement impacts the lives of affected people in many ways: It can influence their health, education, livelihoods, housing conditions, social life, security and environment positively, but most often does so negatively.[4]

Some of these impacts can have further repercussions and create vulnerability loops that are difficult to get out of. For instance, when a family loses its income as a result of displacement, young family members may be forced to drop out of school to support their parents, sacrificing their chance to get a degree and eventually making it harder for them to find decent work.

This section discusses some of the overall challenges facing displaced youth before highlighting three groups that face particular risks and challenges: young women and girls, young people from sexual minority groups and street-connected adolescents.

ACCESSING QUALITY EDUCATION

> "Life here is miserable; there are no jobs and getting money is so hard. I'm out of school because my father has no work. The only help we get now is from the United Nations which is not enough. This has made me look for work to support my family."

Young IDP displaced from Upper Nile Maluk to Juba POC, South Sudan (IDMC, 2019)

Education plays a central role in the lives of displaced youth. Being able to access quality education is a key factor for integration, protection and for ensuring better conditions for their lives. Displacement poses many challenges to accessing quality education. Schools in poorer communities are seldom sufficient for displaced youth or those in host communities, teachers and educational personnel are often unavailable, there may be shortages of teaching materials, and insecurity may limit students' ability to attend classes.[5]

School dropout is often related to insufficient family resources. Leaving school to work and help support the family is the main reason that displaced boys in Afghanistan are out of school.[6] It is also a key educational issue in Iraq.[7]

Dropping out of school can have long-term repercussions on future livelihoods as well as security. The lost potential in earnings of displaced Syrian youth who are unable to go to secondary school because of the conflict is estimated in the tens of millions of dollars.[8]

> "Those of us who have received an education can do basic calculations and work in the shops, but most of the young men with no education have no more skills than a pastoralist. If they had some skills then they would be working in town."

Young IDP in Ethiopia (IDMC, 2019)

Studies suggest that secondary education is a key factor in reducing the risk of conflict.[9] Going to school can also reduce the risk of physical and sexual violence and abuse, as well as recruitment into armed forces and groups.[10]

Recruitment into armed groups is more frequent for internally displaced youth than for their non-displaced peers, either because they are forced to join or because of the lack of other income-generating opportunities.

ENSURING DECENT LIVELIHOODS

Unemployment is a principal concern for youth in many countries, but it is especially so for internally displaced youth. Having been disconnected from their community and social network makes it harder for them to find employment, as does the lack of education and adequate skills.

A study showed that, compared with a youth unemployment rate of 52 per cent for the population of Kosovo, displaced Albanian youth had an unemployment rate of 57 per cent. Displaced Serbian youth had an unemployment rate of 71 per cent, and displaced Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth of 87 per cent.[11]

Challenges accessing decent work were also reported for internally displaced youth in Syria and Somalia (see Box 2).

> "Two or three months ago, some youth from the IDP camp were denied employment because the government was providing them aid. Local employers said that since the youth had food, there was no need to give them work. They opted for local workers instead."

Young IDP displaced from Somali region, Ethiopia (IDMC, 2019)

Youth are affected in different ways by their internal displacement, depending on their age, gender, socio-economic background, abilities and the support they receive, among other factors. Understanding their specific challenges is essential to ensuring effective policies and responses in tackling displacement.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

> "Society's view is that a girl's place is in the home."

Internally displaced girl, 18, Burkina Faso (Plan International, 2020)

Women and girls around the world face challenges that are specific to their gender and age. Internal displacement amplifies pre-existing inequalities and can place internally displaced girls and young women in particularly precarious situations, unable to access services and rights and make their voices heard.

Despite valuing the importance of education, young women and girls still face major obstacles to getting a quality education. Research done with adolescent girls in two contexts of internal displacement show that gender-related barriers, such as norms that devalue girl's education, the risk of gender-based violence in and on the way to schools and early and forced marriage, among others, makes young women's access to education harder.[12]

Internally displaced girls are at a higher risk of dropping out of schools when compared with their male peers. A study conducted in Kosovo showed that across different internally displaced populations, secondary school attendance was lower for girls than boys.[13] Yet quality education could be a real game-changer for internally displaced girls (Box 3).

Young internally displaced women face greater difficulties than young men in finding decent work as a result of having their education interrupted.[14] In Colombia, one study found that displacement decreased men's wages by six to 22 per cent, and women's by 17 to 37 per cent compared with their non-displaced peers.[15]

Extreme poverty resulting from displacement and a lack of employment opportunities render young women and girls vulnerable to sexual exploitation and engagement in survival sex.

This issue was reported in Haiti and numerous other countries.[16] Cases were documented in Nigeria of

BOX 2: Displaced youth's livelihoods in Somalia

Somalia is marked by recurrent climatic shocks, armed conflict and violence that have left millions in need of humanitarian assistance.[58] The multi-layered crisis and the erosion of livelihoods has led to large-scale internal displacement, with displaced groups seeking safety and income opportunities, typically in urban areas.[59]

IMPACT Initiatives (through the REACH Initiative) and the Durable Solutions for IDPs and Returnees in Somalia (DSIRS) Consortium conducted a series of assessments in 2019 on "Youth engagement and livelihoods" in five districts of the country.[6061] Young people aged 18 to 35 were interviewed in displaced and host communities to provide humanitarian and development organisations with an understanding of potential avenues for intervention.[62]

The study shows that unemployment and lack of economic opportunities are among the main issues that youth face in all five assessed locations, regardless of their displacement status. The study also found, however, that displaced youth usually struggle more than their host community peers in accessing economic opportunities and that each group has access to different types of jobs. A higher proportion of host community youth report working at a business, in contract, jobs, being self-employed or engaged in entrepreneurial activities. Displaced young people, by contrast, are often limited to low-level jobs, day labour and casual jobs. Depending on the district, between 40 and 86 per cent of displaced youth reported being involved in day labour or casual work, compared to 32 to 62 per cent of host community youth. Meanwhile, between six and 17 per cent of displaced youth, depending on the district, reported working at a business or being self-employed, compared with 24 to 34 per cent of host community youth. Displaced youth also appear to be less self-reliant than host community youth, as a higher proportion of them say they depend on humanitarian assistance and/or community support as one of their three main livelihood sources. For example, 23 per cent of displaced youth in Cadaado district reported relying on community support and 18 per cent on humanitarian aid, compared with four per cent of host community youth who depended on these livelihood sources.

Qualitative findings suggest that differences in the livelihood sources of displaced and host community youth could be explained by advantages in terms of discrimination and skill sets, as well as social networks and/or access to start-up capital. The study shows that in the assessed districts the relationship between youth from the displaced and host communities is generally good, especially because displaced groups often belong to the same clan as the host community and both groups share the same religion and culture. The study also suggests, however, that nepotistic hiring practices (if displaced youth do not belong to the same clan as the host community or do not have the right social connections) and lower economic status could lead to discrimination against displaced youth, placing them at a disadvantage compared with host community youth when it comes to getting jobs.

The study highlights that one of the main impacts of internal displacement on Somali youth's livelihood opportunities is a failing social network. More than displacement itself, it is the lack of personal connections and sense of belonging in the new location that could be making it harder for displaced youth than for their host community peers to find employment beyond casual and low-skilled jobs.

internally displaced women and girls between the ages of 15 and 21 being kidnapped by armed gangs or exchanged for money and forced to become commercial sex workers.[17]

These phenomena can have repercussions on the health of displaced girls and young women as they increase the risk of sexually transmitted diseases and early or unintended pregnancies.[18] [19] Those risks are often amplified by the lack of health services, particularly sexual and reproductive health services, in both host and IDP communities.[20] In Colombia, displaced girls aged 13 to 19 have higher rates of pregnancy than non-displaced girls.[21]

In addition to repercussions for the girls' sexual health and pregnancy prospects, phenomena such as sexual

Internally displaced girls and young women

exploitation, engagement in survival sex, kidnapping and trafficking may have significant impacts on the survivors' psychosocial well-being, connections in their community and education or livelihoods.

Displacement also increases the risk of gender-based violence against young women and girls significantly. This is linked with various layers of vulnerability in host societies, from high levels of stress in the household to separation from family and community and poor housing conditions, all further exacerbated by displacement. The lack of adequate reporting and justice mechanisms can make this situation worse, particularly in poorer communities.

In displacement, shelters are often not adapted to ensure the safety of internally displaced women, putting them at higher risk of sexual violence. In Haiti, precarious housing in tents has increased young women's exposure to gender-based and sexual violence.[22] In some displacement camps where men and women are separated, women lack the protection of male family and community members and must face the risks of abuse or exploitation by camp officials or hosts alone.[23],[24]

A survey of 14 IDP camps in north-eastern Nigeria found that single girls and women between the ages of 13 and 25 were particularly at risk of sexual exploitation.[25]

Girls who return home after having been displaced can face stigmatisation because their community of origin assumes they have been raped, even if they have not.[26]

BOX 3: The education of internally displaced girls: a potential game-changer

Education offers many pathways for internally displaced girls to better their current situation while securing a brighter future. As Malala Fund's research reveals, there are numerous potential benefits associated with educational attainment for girls generally.[63] There are, for example, strong links between the completion of secondary school and higher earnings and standards of living. A secondary school degree also leads to a decreased probability of child marriage and early childbearing, better health, nutrition and wellbeing, increased personal agency and decision-making ability and growth in social capital and institutional participation.

Though these benefits accrue for all girls, they are outsized and all the more crucial for those who have been internally displaced. Internally displaced girls face increased risks of gender-based violence, unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases as well as greater barriers to employment.

Women who have completed primary school earn 14 to 19 per cent more than those with no education at all. Those with a secondary education make almost twice as much, and those with tertiary education can make almost three times as much. The more educated women are the more likely they are to be working full time.

Receiving a secondary education increases women's knowledge of their sexual and reproductive health. Our research finds that every additional year of secondary education reduces the likelihood of marriage before the age of 18 by six percentage points. With a completed secondary education, women's knowledge of HIV/AIDs may increase by up to 20 per cent, while the risk of intimate partner violence drops significantly.

Finally, there are psychosocial benefits to schooling. For displaced girls who have had to face the trauma of leaving their homes, schools provide a safe space while allowing them to integrate organically into the host community. Malala Fund's research finds that a secondary education can enable women to behave more altruistically, something crucial to building meaningful relationships. A secondary education also changes women's perceptions of their country's institutions, making them less likely to be satisfied with governments that do not deliver. That can spur them to participate politically and lend their much needed voices to the crafting of their futures.

Internally displaced youth from the LGBTIQ community

As a result of the trauma of their life in displacement and their sometimes challenging return, internally displaced girls and young women can fall into vulnerability loops even more often than their male counterparts and require specific attention and support.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED YOUTH FROM LGBTIQ COMMUNITIES

People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ) face specific challenges and suffer from formal or informal discrimination in all regions of the world.[27] Being young and internally displaced makes their situation even more difficult and can lead to life-threatening conditions.

Information on young IDPs from sexual minority groups is scarce. This prevents a comprehensive assessment of their numbers and locations and an understanding of their specific needs and the support they require. These young IDPs may hide their sexual identity from authorities or aid providers for fear of persecution, rendering them invisible in the data.

While humanitarian assistance may be organized to take into account some gender differences, it is usually done so using a model of a household with males and females undertaking traditional roles. This does not always take into account LGBTI persons. Some gay and transgender people in Haiti have talked about needing to dress as women to receive food rations that were only handed out to women while they dressed as men to access emergency housing, health-care and livelihood support.[28] In Ukraine, some IDPs from sexual minorities reported concealing their identity to avoid abuse and harassment by heterosexual and cisgender people sharing the same accomodation.[29]

The risk of violence in displacement increases for sexual minority groups, as it does for women and children. In the Philippines, IDPs from sexual minorities who found refuge in temporary settlements after Typhoon Haiyan reported discriminatory comments and difficulties accessing sanitation facilities. They also reported being denied aid.[30] Displaced members of the LGBTIQ community in Colombia experience higher rates of sexual and physical abuse than non-displaced members.[31] Gender-based violence has even been reported as a cause of internal displacement.[32], [33]

"It is very difficult to get any kind of work because if you are from the trans community, and displaced and you aren't from the area, nobody offers you a job. The only employment opportunities are as hair dressers or prostitutes. I feel like I am increasingly victimized and in multiple ways. I am victimized because I am a member of the LGBTIQ community, especially as a trans, and this has caused me to be displaced five times already." Internally displaced young woman identifying as transsexual in Colombia (IDMC, 2018)

Young IDPs from sexual minorities can face obstacles in getting the support provided to other IDPs. In India, for instance, intergender people displaced by the 2004 tsunami were denied access to shelters and emergency assistance because their appearance did not match the gender on their identity cards.[34]

In addition to extreme impoverishment, violence, lack of shelter and food insecurity, young IDPs from the LGBTIQ community may face health risks when they are unable to access hormone therapy.[35]

The risks and challenges of displacement also result in higher rates of mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.[36]

STREET-CONNECTED INTERNALLY DISPLACED ADOLESCENTS

"Since youth are more tolerant of hardship, the authorities thought they could even live on the street. and the houses were given to their elders." Leader of an IDP camp in Ethiopia, explaining why young IDPs were not granted access to the temporary shelters built for IDPs (IDMC, 2019)

One of the most immediate consequences of displacement is the loss of a home. This leads to housing in poor conditions or even homelessness when no alternative

Street-connected internally displaced adolescents

is available. Displaced young people, particularly if they have been separated from their family or have no family left, are highly vulnerable to living on the streets. [37]

Many young people who live on, work on or have another strong connection to the street have experienced internal displacement. Exactly how many internally displaced adolescents rely on the streets for survival is unknown, not least because of the gap in reliable quantitative data about both populations.[38],[39] There is a lack of consensus on definitions, coupled with methodological difficulties in counting hidden populations who live transient lives. This means that internally displaced youths living on the streets or in informal housing settlements, rather than in official camp settings, can be particularly hard to identify and reach.[40]

There is evidence, however, that many young people who are internally displaced turn to the streets for shelter or livelihood.[41] When displaced in urban areas, they face significant risks and obstacles.

Many adolescents in street situations struggle to exercise their rights and access public services, such as education, healthcare, sanitation and housing. [42],[43],[44] These problems are often a result of a lack of official identity documentation. Identity documents that relate to a particular place of origin may not entitle a person to support in the area to which they have moved. These problems may also be exacerbated by the experience of being displaced and arriving in a new and unfamiliar place. That and the fear of discrimination or violence that many internally displaced and street-connected youth feel may force them to live "under the radar". [45],[46]

Without support, many internally displaced and street-connected youth turn to harmful or dangerous kinds of work in the informal sector to survive, such as street vending, transporting luggage, collecting rubbish for sale, shoe-shining, car-washing and begging. These activities leave them vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation.[47],[48],[49]

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of these opportunities for work on the streets have dried up as cities imposed lockdowns, putting people without access to support at risk of starvation (see Box 4). In South Asia, in particular, youth who had previously been displaced by rural poverty were forced through hunger and desperation to return, often by foot, to their rural homes.[50] For some youth who fled violence, going home is equally wrought with danger.

Food insecurity is not the only driver of displacement that remains a threat for street-connected adolescents once they arrive in a city. Many adolescents on the street have experienced or will experience human trafficking or modern slavery, as factors including poverty, inequality, weak family support, discrimination, exclusion and a lack of documentation put them disproportionately at risk.[51],[52]

Forced recruitment into armed forces or criminal gangs is also pervasive in some contexts.[53],[54] Young people displaced by conflict are particularly vulnerable to forced recruitment, which can happen in both camp and non-camp settings, including the streets.[55]

Displaced adolescents on the streets often find themselves in cramped living conditions with inadequate access to sanitation facilities. Coupled with disproportionately high rates of pre-existing conditions, such as asthma and pneumonia, this can put their health at risk.[56] If they do fall ill, they may struggle without official identity documents to access health services that would help them recover. These concerns are particularly relevant in times of health crisises.

Internally displaced girls and young women, members of the LGBTIQ community and adolescents living on the streets are examples of particularly vulnerable young people, but this is not an exhaustive list. Young IDPs with disabilities, members of indigenous communities and those belonging to ethnolinguistic minorities also face particular challenges.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED YOUTH AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Despite the challenges, young people can find opportunities in displacement and show incredible resilience and adaptation when given the right chances and support. Moving from a rural to an urban area, for instance, may increase the possibility of finding income-generating opportunities as well as better services and infrastructure. Some internally displaced youth even decide to settle in their host city and create a new life there.

BOX 4: The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on displaced children living on the streets

Data from members of the Consortium for Street Children (CSC) has shown that in most of the world the biggest challenge facing displaced adolescents in street situations is not the virus itself but the loss of livelihood that has resulted from lockdowns and curfews.

For those who rely on begging, street trading, waste collecting, transporting luggage and market goods, or receiving donations of food from passers-by, empty streets mean no income and, for many, no access to food.

Where governments support those who are struggling to find food, such as in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the assistance can fail to reach those who are most vulnerable. In India, government officials distributing emergency relief were unable to access the interior of slum areas, and vouchers for use in shops were tied to official identity documents that many displaced street-connected youths do not possess. In Bangladesh, the distribution of food aid was delegated to local politicians who then tied access to it to the ability to vote.

These challenges have been exacerbated by precautionary policies and the limits placed on support services provided by NGOs and civil society organisations. In many countries, work with displaced adolescents on the street has been paused, all group activities have been cancelled, and shelters have been closed or reached capacity as a result of increased demand or distancing measures.

With an enabling environment and the right support from their government and other actors, young people can participate productively in their host community. The government of Sierra Leone in partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and CAUSE Sierra Leone, for example, supported 5,000 young IDPs in starting their own businesses. The initiative included policy and coordination at the national level to improve youth employment, through efforts like mentoring and career advisory services.[57]

Young IDPs should not be seen as people with dire needs requiring support. They are eager and capable of contributing to solutions to their own problems and in the communities in which they live. Examples of their systematic engagement with government policies and responses, however, remain rare.

Consultations were organised in 2020 by Plan International with young IDPs in Damboa and Maiduguri, Nigeria, to gather their views on their situation and their ability to participate in solutions to displacement. Most of them said they felt powerless and were not consulted in the development of solutions. Instead, they needed to go through their elders or leaders to make their voices heard. They also said that age, gender and disability were important factors in whether they were listened to by the government and aid providers. Some reported that young women were usually left out of consultations and were not allowed access to government officials without a man present.

Despite this, the young people who were interviewed showed eagerness to convey their ideas to decision-makers, for instance through focus group discussions.

> **"We feel that we should be represented at decision-making tables and our opinions shared before any decisions concerning us are taken. That would be the best way for the government to consider our ideas. Young males, females and people with disabilities are not considered."**
>
> *– Young IDP, Damboa IDP Camp, Nigeria (Plan International, 2020)*

CONCLUSION

The way young people experience internal displacement is diverse, depending on their age, gender and disability status, as well as other factors. Responses to internal displacement must account for this diversity in addressing their needs and wants in displaced and host communities.

Internally displaced youth should not only be considered as people with specific needs requiring support. They are also potential partners to governments and other aid providers in addressing the negative consequences of internal displacement.

They have a right to be consulted on a more regular basis and included in the delivery of assistance and other longer-term development projects in their area of refuge or origin.

Additional resources must be invested in collecting better information on young people in internal displacement and encouraging them to take an active part in responses that drive lasting change for and with them.

ANNEX

TABLE 2:

Estimates of the number of young people living in internal displacement associated with conflict and violence at the end of 2019, by country, sex and broad age group.

	Total			Women and girls			Men and boys		
Country	15-17	18-24	15-24	15-17	18-24	15-24	15-17	18-24	15-24
Abyei Area	2,000	4,200	6,200	1,000	2,100	3,100	1,000	2,100	3,100
Afghanistan	218,400	436,900	655,400	106,200	212,400	318,600	112,200	224,500	336,700
Azerbaijan	12,900	33,600	46,600	6,100	15,800	22,000	6,800	17,800	24,600
Bangladesh	24,300	55,900	80,200	11,900	27,400	39,300	12,300	28,400	40,800
Benin	200	400	700	100	200	300	100	200	300
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2,800	8,600	11,400	1,400	4,200	5,600	1,400	4,400	5,800
Burkina Faso	38,600	75,000	113,600	18,900	36,800	55,800	19,600	38,100	57,800
Burundi	1,400	2,900	4,300	700	1,400	2,200	700	1,400	2,100
Cameroon	64,900	127,900	192,800	32,300	63,600	95,900	32,600	64,200	96,800
Central African Republic	45,500	87,000	132,600	22,700	43,500	66,300	22,700	43,500	66,300
Chad	12,300	23,900	36,200	6,100	11,900	18,000	6,100	11,900	18,100
Colombia	273,200	674,600	947,900	134,100	331,200	465,400	139,000	343,400	482,500
Congo	8,700	16,800	25,500	4,300	8,400	12,700	4,300	8,400	12,800
Côte d'Ivoire	20,600	41,800	62,400	10,300	20,900	31,200	10,200	20,800	31,100
Cyprus	7,900	23,400	31,400	3,800	11,100	14,900	4,100	12,300	16,400
Dem. Rep. Congo	364,100	695,200	1,059,400	181,500	346,600	528,100	182,600	348,600	531,200
Egypt	5,000	11,100	16,100	2,400	5,400	7,800	2,500	5,700	8,300
Ethiopia	97,500	206,400	304,000	48,300	102,200	150,500	49,200	104,100	153,400
Georgia	9,900	24,000	34,000	4,600	11,300	16,000	5,200	12,600	17,900
Guatemala	15,900	34,800	50,800	7,800	17,100	25,000	8,100	17,600	25,800
Honduras	15,500	35,500	51,100	7,600	17,400	25,000	7,900	18,100	26,000
India	25,800	58,700	84,600	12,100	27,600	39,800	13,600	31,000	44,700
Indonesia	2,000	4,600	6,600	900	2,200	3,200	1,000	2,300	3,400

Iraq	97,900	209,900	307,800	47,800	102,400	150,300	50,100	107,400	157,500
Kenya	11,100	22,600	33,800	5,500	11,300	16,800	5,600	11,300	16,900
Kosovo	500	1,300	1,900	200	600	900	200	600	900
Lebanon	300	800	1,100	100	400	600	100	400	500
Libya	22,500	50,000	72,600	11,000	24,500	35,500	11,500	25,500	37,000
Madagascar	200	400	600	100	200	300	100	200	300
Mali	14,500	26,800	41,300	7,200	13,200	20,400	7,300	13,500	20,900
Mexico	17,900	41,000	58,900	8,800	20,300	29,200	9,000	20,700	29,700
Mozambique	7,700	14,900	22,600	3,800	7,500	11,400	3,800	7,400	11,200
Myanmar	25,500	57,100	82,700	12,800	28,600	41,400	12,700	28,400	41,200
Niger	13,200	24,700	38,000	6,500	12,100	18,600	6,700	12,600	19,300
Nigeria	170,400	330,600	501,100	83,800	162,600	246,400	86,600	168,000	254,600
Pakistan	6,300	14,000	20,400	3,000	6,700	9,800	3,200	7,300	10,600
Palestine	15,000	33,500	48,600	7,400	16,500	23,900	7,600	17,000	24,600
Papua New Guinea	800	1,800	2,700	400	900	1,300	400	900	1,400
Peru	2,600	6,500	9,100	1,300	3,300	4,700	1,200	3,100	4,400
Philippines	10,500	23,600	34,200	5,100	11,400	16,500	5,400	12,100	17,600
Senegal	500	1,100	1,600	200	500	800	200	500	800
Sierra Leone	300	700	1,100	100	300	500	100	300	500
Somalia	188,000	370,700	558,700	93,800	184,900	278,700	94,200	185,700	279,900
South Sudan	89,200	185,200	274,400	44,200	91,800	136,100	44,900	93,300	138,300
Sri Lanka	1,200	2,700	3,900	600	1,300	1,900	600	1,300	1,900
Sudan	142,900	292,300	435,300	70,600	144,500	215,200	72,200	147,800	220,000
Syria	350,700	824,800	1,175,500	171,500	403,400	574,900	179,200	421,400	600,600
Thailand	1,500	3,800	5,400	700	1,900	2,600	700	1,900	2,700
Turkey	52,700	124,100	176,900	25,800	60,800	86,600	26,900	63,300	90,200
Uganda	2,200	4,400	6,600	1,100	2,200	3,300	1,100	2,100	3,300
Ukraine	20,400	48,900	69,300	9,900	23,700	33,700	10,500	25,100	35,600
Yemen	239,900	508,900	748,800	118,100	250,600	368,800	121,700	258,200	379,900

*Some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures because they have been rounded.

TABLE 3:

Estimates of the number of young people living in internal displacement associated with disasters at the end of 2019, by country, sex and broad age group.

	Total			Women and girls			Men and boys		
Country	15-17	18-24	15-24	15-17	18-24	15-24	15-17	18-24	15-24
Abyei Area	1,700	3,500	5,200	800	1,700	2,600	800	1,700	2,600
Afghanistan	87,400	174,900	262,300	42,500	85,000	127,500	44,900	89,800	134,800
Albania	1,200	3,400	4,700	600	1,600	2,200	600	1,800	2,400
Australia	500	1,200	1,700	200	600	800	200	600	900
Bangladesh	5,000	11,500	16,500	2,400	5,600	8,100	2,500	5,800	8,400
Burundi	700	1,400	2,200	300	700	1,100	300	700	1,100
Cameroon	1,800	3,700	5,600	900	1,800	2,800	900	1,800	2,800
Canada	200	500	700	100	200	300	100	200	300
Central African Republic	7,300	13,900	21,200	3,600	6,900	10,600	3,600	6,900	10,600
Chad	1,800	3,600	5,500	900	1,800	2,700	900	1,800	2,700
China	7,400	18,500	26,000	3,400	8,600	12,100	3,900	9,800	13,800
Comoros	1,100	2,400	3,600	500	1,200	1,800	600	1,200	1,800
Congo	6,900	13,400	20,300	3,400	6,600	10,100	3,400	6,700	10,200
Dem. Rep. Congo	11,100	21,200	32,300	5,500	10,500	16,100	5,500	10,600	16,200
Ethiopia	26,900	56,900	83,800	13,300	28,200	41,500	13,500	28,700	42,300
Gambia	200	500	800	100	200	400	100	200	400
Ghana	800	1,800	2,700	400	900	1,300	400	900	1,400
Haiti	3,100	6,700	9,800	1,500	3,300	4,900	1,500	3,300	4,900
India	32,400	73,700	106,200	15,200	34,700	50,000	17,100	39,000	56,200
Indonesia	5,300	12,100	17,400	2,500	5,800	8,400	2,700	6,200	8,900
Iran	7,100	16,300	23,500	3,500	8,000	11,500	3,600	8,300	11,900
Japan	2,300	5,800	8,200	1,100	2,800	3,900	1,200	2,900	4,200
Lao PDR	300	700	1,000	100	300	500	100	300	500
Malawi	3,800	7,400	11,200	1,900	3,700	5,600	1,900	3,700	5,600
Malaysia	700	1,800	2,600	300	900	1,200	300	900	1,300
Mali	400	800	1,200	200	400	600	200	400	600
Mozambique	9,200	18,000	27,200	4,600	9,000	13,700	4,500	8,900	13,500

Myanmar	2,200	5,000	7,300	1,100	2,500	3,600	1,100	2,500	3,600
Nepal	1,900	4,500	6,400	900	2,300	3,200	900	2,200	3,100
Niger	8,200	15,300	23,500	4,000	7,500	11,500	4,100	7,800	11,900
Nigeria	9,400	18,200	27,600	4,600	8,900	13,600	4,700	9,200	14,000
Pakistan	900	2,000	2,900	400	900	1,400	400	1,000	1,500
Papua New Guinea	700	1,500	2,200	300	700	1,000	300	700	1,100
Peru	200	600	800	100	300	400	100	300	400
Philippines	21,100	47,300	68,400	10,200	22,900	33,200	10,800	24,300	35,200
Rwanda	300	700	1,000	100	300	500	100	300	500
Sierra Leone	100	300	500	-	100	200	-	100	200
South Sudan	16,200	33,600	49,800	8,000	16,600	24,700	8,100	16,900	25,100
Sri Lanka	200	400	700	100	200	300	100	200	300
Sudan	18,200	37,300	55,500	9,000	18,400	27,400	9,200	18,800	28,000
Syria	100	300	500	-	100	200	-	100	200
United States	1,400	3,400	4,800	600	1,700	2,400	700	1,700	2,400
Viet Nam	200	600	900	100	300	400	100	300	500
Zimbabwe	3,500	7,000	10,500	1,700	3,500	5,300	1,700	3,400	5,200

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internal displacement monitoring centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement worldwide. Since 1998, our role has been recognised and endorsed by United Nations General Assembly resolutions. IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), an independent, non-governmental humanitarian organisation.

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