

**81st meeting of the Standing Committee  
5-7 July 2021**

**Agenda item 4 (b)**

**Elements of the oral update on UNHCR's coordination efforts to measure the  
impact arising from hosting, protecting and assisting refugees**

**Background**

Since 2018, UNHCR has been coordinating an initiative to measure the impact of protecting, hosting and assisting refugees with the aim of using the data as a basis for measures to secure more equitable and sustainable burden- and responsibility-sharing. In December 2018, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development made a valuable contribution towards the initiative, by releasing a [report](#) on official development assistance to support refugee and host populations in host countries. During the course of 2019, UNHCR convened a series of technical workshops with participants from refugee-hosting and donor countries, as well as international organizations. The objective was to identify and agree upon methodologies to capture the contributions of refugee-hosting States, quantify the support of donor countries and organizations, and devise a metric to measure progress towards more equitable burden- and responsibility sharing. Health and education were identified as focus areas for the initial phase of the initiative, with work on the latter to be taken forward by technical experts at the World Bank.

**Achievements in 2020-2021**

In 2020, the imperative to prioritize responses to the COVID-19 pandemic slowed down the progress of State-led follow-up processes. This resulted in the delay of regional workshops planned for the year. However, advancements were made in efforts to cost refugee education.

In September 2020, UNHCR invited United Nations member States, non-member State observers and other observers for a virtual discussion on the progress of the initiative and the proposed way forward. UNHCR, the World Bank and the World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center (JDC) on Forced Displacement committed to follow up on the organization of regional and sub-regional workshops, in collaboration with the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships and interested member States. In addition to national and regional workshops, States were encouraged to consider hosting a pilot initiative to develop a costing methodology for the health sector.

In February 2021, the World Bank and UNHCR released a report entitled "[The global cost of inclusive refugee education](#)", which followed work over the previous two years to provide an analytical framework for measuring inclusion in this sector. The paper highlighted that the average annual cost of educating refugees is less than 5 per cent of public education expenditure in developing nations hosting 85 per cent of the world's refugees. It found that the inclusion of refugees in national education systems has an estimated annual cost of \$4.85 billion globally (a pre-COVID-19 estimated cost).

To reflect on the findings of the report, as well as the opportunities to engage key States and development actors on its operationalization, a [roundtable event](#) was held on the margins of the World Bank spring meetings in April 2021. The event was co-hosted by the World Bank, Global Affairs Canada and UNHCR. Issues such as non-cost barriers faced by refugees in accessing education and gaps in the current global approaches to education were discussed. The event was well-attended and drew additional commitments from Global Affairs Canada in using advocacy to further support the inclusion of refugees in education.

The report's findings have informed global discussions on streamlining education financing. As a result, the \$4.85 billion estimated annual cost figure mentioned above has been included in the "[Education finance playbook](#)" launched by Theirworld. It was also used in the Department for International Development's Trust Fund work with the World Bank on inclusive education for refugees, as well as by the International Institute for Education Planning in Kenya, which is looking at the complex issue of standards in refugee-hosting schools compared with national schools.

## **Way forward**

UNHCR, the World Bank and the JDC have begun exploring the possibility of using the ongoing high-frequency phone surveys, which collect data on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19, in the context of measuring the cost of education. These surveys already include an education module that can be employed with some adjustments. In this regard, the World Bank and UNHCR plan on adding information that would support the work on measuring the impact of protecting, hosting and assisting refugees, including in surveys to collect data on displaced Venezuelans in Ecuador and possibly Syrian refugees in Jordan.

The World Bank Poverty and Equity Global Practice hopes to generate data and evidence on the monetary and non-monetary costs of education for refugee children who have been included in the public education system of their host country. The data collection and analysis will identify challenges to Venezuelan refugee children in accessing public schools and additional out-of-pocket expenses incurred by refugee households in accessing education.

UNHCR, the World Bank and the JDC are exploring with member States the possibility of holding regional meetings in Latin America and the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes regions. The purpose of the meetings would be to discuss more broadly the findings of the report on the cost of inclusion of refugees in education and to gauge interest in pursuing a similar exercise with regard to health inclusion costs.

*UNHCR, 1 July 2021*