

**Education Data and Statistics Commission  
Working Group on Administrative Data**

**Task Force on Adjusting Out-of-School Population Estimates  
for Crisis-Affected Contexts**

Terms of Reference

Draft

3 June 2024

## 1. Introduction

Having reliable and timely data for flagship indicators is essential to inform policy and programme decisions about delivering quality education to all in any circumstances. In recent years, there have been important methodological developments to the estimation of one such flagship indicator: the out-of-school rate / population. The improvements have focused on combining multiple administrative and survey data sources to fill gaps and address challenges with imperfect population data. The model is also making use of the cohort structure of data to improve the consistency of long-term trends.

However, one of the weaknesses of the model is that it cannot take into account sudden increases in out-of-school populations in crisis contexts. Therefore, usual assumptions underpinning the model no longer hold. There are multiple challenges in producing reliable and timely data on the situation of schooling in crisis-affected areas. Conflicts and natural disasters often cause disruptions of data and statistical activities where system capacities tended to be fragile to start with. Regular data supply is interrupted because affected areas become inaccessible and/or data collection becomes a lesser priority. While it will take more than just compelling evidence to address the large unmet needs for children's schooling in crisis-affected contexts, having technically robust data on relevant issues would certainly guide and strengthen advocacy and funding prioritization.

But while data generation is severely affected in crisis-affected areas, some data are nevertheless collected. These are not being utilized to assess how the global estimate could be adjusted. For instance, a major responsibility of the Global Education Cluster is to annually carry out data collection and analysis to produce the number of people in need of humanitarian response. In addition, donor-supported programmes and projects usually contain dedicated activities of situation analyses and data collection. Such data are usually not in the right form and shape to immediately calculate out-of-school populations. In addition, the collection and analyses of such data are fragmented and separated from the global reporting mechanisms. Therefore, extra work is needed to use such data for SDG 4 reporting.

A recent [blog](#) tried to assess the implications of incorporating data from the top five crisis-affected countries in 2023 and concluded that the global out-of-school population of 250 million might be underestimated by 5.5 million. However, this approach needs to be institutionalized to establish standards by which available evidence can be utilized.

At the Education Data and Statistics Conference in February 2024, a decision as part of the session on administrative data, called on the Education Data and Statistics Commission to focus efforts on “developing protocols and standards to capture the impact of emergencies and crises on affected populations”. A special [session](#) on the conference's Engagement Day focused on this issue.

As part of the Education Data and Statistics Commission, new working modalities were introduced, which envisage receiving expert inputs for resolving specific problems. These terms of reference describe the setting up of a task force to provide expert advice and guidance on adjusting country- and global-level estimates on out-of-school population in crisis-affected contexts in a timely and reliable way.

## 2. Objectives and key activities

The objective of the task force is to propose a methodology for incorporating evidence to adjust global out-of-school rate and population estimates to take into account the situation in crisis-affected contexts.

In particular, the task force will need to:

- Propose a method for selecting a limited number of crises (for example, up to 10 per year) that should be analysed based on specific criteria, of which the main one should be that their exclusion results in an underestimation of the global out-of-school population.
- Delineate the geographic extent, population size, and time period that are impacted.
- Outline a process on how to collect any related data that have been reported from these crises contexts including templates, tools and guidance on identifying and documenting existing data sources, mechanisms of data collection, processes and procedures of data sharing and dissemination, and develop criteria of their usefulness for producing timely and reliable country-level estimates on out-of-school rates that are aligned with SDG 4 reporting.
- Carry out analyses for the selected crisis contexts according to an agreed protocol, including submitting preliminary and finalized drafts of the case study.
- Draw on insights from these analyses, develop technically sound, context-specific, and operationally practical solutions to leverage such existing data in crisis-affected context.
- Compare such evidence with out-of-school population estimates based on official data that might be ignoring the impact of crisis.
- Develop a protocol for reporting these adjustments as updates to the global estimate.

## 3. Deliverables

The expected outputs of the task force are:

- Agreed work plan with milestones and timelines.
- Protocol of country case studies.
- A set of country case studies.
- A set of tools and guidelines for using existing data in crisis-affected contexts for adjusting the global out-of-school estimates each year.
- Establishment and functioning of appropriate mechanism and process of data compilation and reporting in selected countries.

## 4. Timeline

The task force is to carry out the work in three phases.

Phase 1: Preparation – by end of June 2024

- Task force formulation
- Work plan

Phase 2: Country analysis – June-September 2024

- Agree on protocol
- Agree on case study countries
- Carry out case studies
- Finalize case studies

Phase 3: Development of tools and guidelines – October–December 2024

- Draft tools and guidelines
- Pilot tools and guidelines
- Finalize tools and guidelines

## 5. Composition

The Task force will consist of:

- a. Three representatives of national education statistics departments (preferably representing cases by conflict, natural disaster and refugee crises)
- b. Three representatives of UN humanitarian actors at global/national level with understanding of education data collection (notably from the cluster mechanism)
- c. Two representatives of international organizations active in collecting and analysing data on education in crisis-affected contexts.

The task force will report to the chair of the Administrative Data Working Group and the Education Data and Statistics Commission co-chairs.

## 6. Work modality

The Task Force will employ mainly teleconferencing for discussions. The secretariat will identify opportunities and arrange in-person meetings, as needed.

## 7. Dissolution of the task force

The task force will be dissolved upon completing the deliverables.

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