DATA SYSTEM MAPPING OF COX’S BAZAR EDUCATION FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT
This working paper highlights data’s crucial role in shaping education policies in humanitarian settings such as Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh. In Cox’s Bazar, the Education Sector coordinates efforts across the various agencies that serve both Rohingya refugees and the host community, but the lack of adequate data hinders policy makers in their decision-making. Current research and understanding of this context often lacks a thorough evaluation of education data systems in humanitarian settings, which are often characterized by fragmented and inconsistent data across different actors in the Education Sector, and this requires closer examination. We used semi-structured interviews with 17 data managers from NGOs, international NGOs, and UN bodies to map data systems, identifying education data gaps in Cox’s Bazar. Agencies in Cox’s Bazar gather learners, teachers and education materials, provide information, and share aggregated information, yet data gaps exist in teacher and student assessments, learning outcomes, dropout tracking, and social-emotional learning. A lack of data-sharing policies leads to intervention duplication, while government data on education is collected by the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) but not publicly shared. The findings highlight the necessity for standardized data collection and data-sharing policies to improve collaboration and decision-making within Cox’s Bazar’s education sector.

Disclaimer
This material has been funded by UK International Development from the UK government. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed here are entirely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the ERICC Programme, the authors’ respective organisations, or the UK government’s official policies. Copyright lies with the author of a paper; however, as per ERICC contracts, the authors have granted permission for the non-commercial use of the intellectual property to ERICC Research Programme Consortium, and by extension to the funder.

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**ACRONYMS**

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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>BANBEIS</td>
<td>Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics</td>
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<td>CBPS</td>
<td>Cox's Bazar Panel Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>EPDC</td>
<td>Education Policy and Data Center</td>
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<td>ERICC</td>
<td>Education Research in Conflicts and Protracted Crisis</td>
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<td>HDX</td>
<td>Humanitarian Data Exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Persons</td>
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<td>IM</td>
<td>Information Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>JCF</td>
<td>Jagorani Chakra Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>JENA</td>
<td>Joint Education Needs Assessment</td>
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<td>JRP</td>
<td>Joint Response Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>MEAL</td>
<td>Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>SEL</td>
<td>Social-Emotional Learning</td>
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<td>UIS</td>
<td>UNESCO Institute for Statistics</td>
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I. INTRODUCTION

Data is essential for informing policy and practice decisions to improve the quality of education services. In Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, where more than 900,000 Rohingya refugees live in overcrowded camps, data is crucial for addressing the educational needs of the displaced population and the host community (UNWFP & UNHCR, 2019). Data can also be used to monitor progress and challenges, as well as to ensure accountability and transparency. However, collecting and using data in this context is challenging due to various factors, such as a lack of standardized assessment tools, limited coordination among actors, and restricted access (Shohel, 2022).

While data is a powerful tool for improving the quality and effectiveness of education in crisis and conflict situations, data collection and analysis in crisis contexts pose many challenges and risks, such as ethical dilemmas, security threats, political sensitivities, and methodological limitations (UNESCO, 2019). Given this particularly challenging context, education research in conflicts and crises faces two interrelated issues. First, while there is widespread lack of missing data, systematic evaluation of data missingness exists in few conflict contexts. Second, among missing data, there is limited knowledge about what components of education delivery suffers from missing data.

In this study, we address the two related issues by building on the recently developed Education Research in Conflicts and Protracted Crisis (ERICC) framework, which provides a comprehensive mapping of interconnections between different components of education at both policy system level (e.g. governments and international organizations) and local system level (e.g. schools and households). We show that, by developing a systematic overview of data availability using the structure from the ERICC framework, we can address the two issues by identifying critical data gaps that signal challenges in the existing education system. We do so in Cox’s Bazar, a particularly challenging context with one of the world’s largest refugee camps and significant obstacles to education delivery. It is also an appropriate case for this approach. While some initiatives, such as Cox’s Bazar Panel Survey (CBPS), have collected data on various socioeconomic indicators including education outcomes (CBPS, 2021), information on what data is collected and what data is missing in the education system itself remains critically limited.

We mapped data systems in Cox’s Bazar using semi-structured interviews to assess data availability and gaps in both the host community and refugee camps. Interviews were carried out with 17 individuals responsible for data management and information management (IM) in various UN bodies, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and local NGOs operating in the Cox’s Bazar Education Sector, based on their significant influence in the education sector and their substantial coverage of education implementation agencies for refugees in the region.

Using data from the interviews, we find that, in Cox’s Bazar, there have been some efforts directed towards addressing data needs. The CBPS endeavors to provide such data through a comprehensive, large-sample survey that tracks both host and refugee households over time in Cox’s Bazar (CBPS, 2021). However, we also find numerous data gaps in education access, quality, and continuity caused by the lack of a systematic overview of available data and a coordinated data-sharing policy. Implementing partners in the education sector collect periodic data on enrollment of learners, teachers’ demographic data (e.g. date of birth, parents’ names, address, education history, work experience) and supplies (e.g. text book, school bag, pen, pencil, paper and other material for learning) for monitoring. There is a deficiency in assessing teachers’ competencies and wellbeing, as well as students’ academic learning outcomes, social–emotional development and wellbeing outcomes, which potentially affect understanding of students’ learning progress. Interview findings show that limited assessments of learner progress and teacher competency assessment exist, and those that do are not publicly available.
There is no adequate documentation and tracking of the number of student dropouts, and the reasons behind dropouts. Although data on grade transition is gathered, its basis lacks systematic assessment. There is a gap in the collection of data on social-emotional learning (SEL) and mental wellbeing in standardized format; this is mostly obtained from research studies or specific interventions. The education sector lacks a clear policy for data sharing, which leads to overlapping interventions and repeated learner registration among government and humanitarian actors. The findings highlight the importance of comprehensive data strategies to guide educational policy and programming, especially in the complex context of Cox’s Bazar.

Findings provide a foundation for future research endeavors and education policy formulation related to the identification of data needs, and the processes needed to improve the availability and use of data for decision-making in Cox’s Bazar. Based on the findings, we recommend establishing an improved coordination and data-sharing system among agencies to prevent duplication of efforts, particularly in the absence of a centralized data system. We further recommend developing a systematic and standardized data collection system which will assess academic learning outcomes, social-emotional learning, and mental health indicators. Additionally, there is a need for more systematic assessment of grade transition and documentation and tracking of student dropouts and the reasons behind these. The findings also highlight the need for a shift towards a data-driven decision-making system.

A. Education data and evidence in conflict and crisis settings

In the challenging context of emergencies, conflict, and crisis, securing access to relevant, timely, and reliable education data and evidence to inform decision-making is a challenge. This has resulted in a lack of data and evidence in the field of education in emergencies. The ERICC program aims to bridge this gap by conducting rigorous and policy-relevant research on effective and cost-efficient methods of delivering education in conflict and protracted crisis situations. The program operates in seven countries: Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Nigeria, South Sudan, and includes cross-border research in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, and Myanmar (INEE, 2023).

The ERICC Conceptual Framework (Kim et al., 2022) centers on identifying, examining, and providing support for four key factors that influence learning and growth during conflict and prolonged crises. To enhance children’s academic, social, emotional, and physical development, it is vital to ensure their access to education, the quality of that education, and the continuity of education. Furthermore, system coherence toward these goals is essential and crucial for determining how and in what settings programs and policies are effective. This alignment aids in decision-making, policy formulation, resource allocation, and individual choices, all of which contribute to the overarching goals of access, quality, and continuity of education (Kim et al., 2022). Data plays a pivotal role here, as it furnishes policy makers with the information needed to make well-informed decisions, ensuring a coordinated and effective strategy for tackling educational challenges in times of crisis.

In today’s world, where humanitarian emergencies and crises are on the rise, access to quality education is crucial. However, gathering education data in humanitarian settings can be challenging due to the chaotic and unpredictable nature of these situations, and also due to other factors such as the lack of incentives for data sharing among organizations which often compete for funding. Existing data on education in humanitarian settings is limited, but efforts have been made to collect and analyze the available information (UNESCO, 2021). One source is the Education Cluster’s Joint Education Needs Assessments (JENA), which collects information on access, quality, and protection issues in education in emergencies (SCRC, 2023). Besides this, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) provides global and regional statistics on education indicators, such as enrollment, completion, and learning outcomes. The Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR), is another data consolidation platform, which tracks progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education and its targets (UNESCO, 2020). And the Education Policy and
Data Center (EPDC) offers data dashboards, profiles, and projections on education systems and trends in low- and middle-income countries (EPDC, 2023).

Some national education data systems and humanitarian needs assessments have collected data on education for internally displaced persons (IDPs). However, reporting is fragmented, while different methodologies and lack of consensus over how to identify IDPs make it difficult to aggregate and compare data. This lack of consensus contributes to the lack of availability of national and global education data for IDPs (Shephard et al., 2021). Data on learning outcomes, while becoming more available at the project level, is still not widely available at the national level in forms that make it possible to track progress and to disaggregate between girls and boys, and between people who are directly affected by crises and those less affected (INEE, 2021).

Gaps in data on refugee education are a major challenge for providing access to quality and equitable learning opportunities for displaced children and youth. Data on refugee education is often incomplete, inconsistent, or outdated, making it difficult to monitor progress and identify challenges. Some of the reasons for the data gaps include lack of coordination among data producers, fragmented tools and sources, and non-standardized indicators and definitions. The lack of data on refugee education hinders the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of educational interventions and policies (UNESCO, 2019).

Data on refugee education faces many challenges, including lack of disaggregated data by age, gender, disability, location, and other factors; lack of alignment and harmonization of data collection tools and standards across different actors and sectors; lack of capacity and resources for data collection, analysis, and dissemination; lack of feedback mechanisms and participation of refugees themselves in data processes; and lack of political will and commitment to use data for evidence-based policy making (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019).

As we elaborate in the next section, Bangladesh provides a setting with significant education data availability challenges that impact children in conflict contexts. These challenges are also compounded by political economy constraints due to national and local government policies shaping education delivery for displaced communities in camps. By producing findings from such a challenging context, we expect this paper to serve as an example for other countries with conflict-affected settings, showing how much we can learn about data missingness through a systematic data systematic data system mapping under the ERICC framework

**B. Education data on Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh**

The Rohingya, a persecuted ethnic minority, have been displaced from Myanmar to Bangladesh since 1970 due to ongoing conflict, with an unprecedented surge in movement occurring in 2017 following a significant state violence event (BBC, 2020). The Rohingya currently reside in densely populated refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar, facing numerous challenges, notably including restricted access to education (Rahman et al., 2022). Since the mass displacement of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar to Bangladesh, access to formal education has been a significant challenge. Rohingya refugees live segregated from the host community in 34 refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar and education opportunities are provided by INGOs and NGOs, and therefore they are not part of the government education system. Due to segregation, Rohingya refugees face significant challenges in accessing education such as overcrowded camps, limited resources, and restrictions on movement (Shohel, M., 2022). According to a report by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), around 75% of school-aged Rohingya children in the refugee camps are not attending any form of formal education (Education Sector, 2021). The lack of sufficient schools and classrooms within the camps has contributed to this access barrier, leaving many children without the opportunity to receive an education (UNICEF, 2018).
Refugees in the camps are unable to access government schools. Those children who have access to education opportunities attend informal learning centers facilitated by NGOs and INGOs, which follow either the Learning Competency Framework or the Myanmar curriculum. Additionally, host government restrictions on education that aligns with their own system pose further obstacles to ensuring consistent and high-quality education (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Quality and continuity of education in the learning centers of the Rohingya camps present significant concerns. The lack of appropriate teaching materials, including textbooks and educational aids, further hampers the quality of education (Save the Children International et al., 2018). Overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of qualified teachers, and inadequate teaching materials have affected the learning environment. A study by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) found that many teachers in the camps lack formal training (IRC, 2021). This has led to challenges in delivering effective and engaging lessons, ultimately impacting the quality of education provided to Rohingya children. Furthermore, the transient nature of life in the camps has disrupted the continuity of education for many children. Frequent relocations and the lack of stable learning environments have impeded the establishment of a consistent educational trajectory for Rohingya students (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

In this context, data-related challenges exacerbate the difficulties in addressing the education crisis in the Rohingya camps. Accurate and up-to-date information on the number of children, their ages, and their educational needs is crucial for effective planning and resource allocation (ISCG, 2021). Unfortunately, there is not a unified data system for the education sector in Cox’s Bazar, which would be critical for improving education planning and decision-making. Instead, existing data collection efforts are conducted by NGOs and INGOs for the purposes of monitoring and evaluating their own programs, but this data may not be centralized, consistent, or reliable. As a result, important education-related data may not be easily available, trustworthy, or timely for informed decision-making. The lack of a unified data system leads to challenges in measuring progress, finding gaps, and making evidence-based policy changes (Magee, et al., 2020). Without accurate data, it is difficult for humanitarian organizations and governments to design and implement targeted interventions to improve education access, quality, and continuity for Rohingya refugee children (Plan International, 2022).

Efforts to address these data-related challenges were part of the 2022 Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis, a coordinated effort by the Government of Bangladesh and humanitarian partners to address the needs of about 919,000 Rohingya refugees and host communities in Cox’s Bazar. The JRP seeks US$70.5 million to provide life-saving assistance, protection, and solutions for the displaced population (ISCG, 2022). However, the JRP does not provide disaggregated data on the funding gap for different sectors of education, such as early childhood development (ECD), primary education, and specific needs-related components. This makes it difficult to track the allocation and use of resources in emergencies and protracted crises (Olney et al., 2018). Moreover, there are challenges in reporting mechanisms at the national and international levels that hinder the availability and accuracy of data on funding for education. Therefore, there is a need for more transparent and comprehensive data collection and analysis to monitor and evaluate the progress and challenges of education in the context of the Rohingya crisis (INEE, 2021).

C. Research questions

This report presents the findings of a data system mapping exercise conducted in Cox’s Bazar, where education in emergency and protected crisis interventions are being implemented. The purpose of this exercise is to assess the current data management practices of the relevant stakeholders and to identify the gaps and challenges that hinder effective data use for decision-making. The main research questions are below.
1. What types of data are available to the education system for decision-making on access, quality, continuity, and children’s education outcomes in settings of conflict and protracted crisis?
2. What types of data are necessary but unavailable to the education system?
3. What are the sources of available data?
4. How frequently is data collected and for what purpose?
5. What are the protocols for data access and data sharing among ministries, departments, agencies, organizations (e.g. NGOs, funders), and users for implementation and decision-making?

II. METHOD

We conducted a data system mapping using a semi-structured interview to identify the available data and data gaps in the host community and refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar.

A. Participants

We collected data from 17 data managers/IM personnel working in various NGOs and INGOs, as well as other stakeholders that play a significant role providing education services in the education sector of Cox’s Bazar (the Appendix contains the list of organizations, data they maintain, and their target for data collection). The sampled IM personnel are taken from the larger and influential UN bodies, INGOs and NGOs who are working to provide access to education to Rohingya refugees and the host community in Cox’s Bazar. We selected 17 organizations based on their influence in the education sector and their data coverage over a large number of refugees in Cox’s Bazar. The Education Sector IM consolidates and publishes this data in the 5W report, including the number of teachers and students and their associated information, gathered from all implementing partners, as well as information about implementing partners working in different camps. We conducted interviews with 17 IM focal points, one from each of the prioritized organizations, and learned about the data they collect.

B. Instruments

A Data System Review and Documentation Protocol was developed by a cross-regional team of ERICC researchers (Haque et al., 2022) and adapted by the Bangladesh research team for data collection in Bangladesh. The questionnaire uses a mix of quantitative closed questions and qualitative open-ended questions, designed to gather information from different organizations about various aspects of data collection, including the types of education data they collect, frequency of data collection, purposes behind data collection, and funding sources among others.

The protocol includes questions about availability of data related to education variables that are aligned with the ERICC Conceptual Framework, including the drivers of learning – namely, access, quality, and continuity. In terms of access-related data, the protocol seeks information about whether the organization maintains, documents, and monitors students’ enrollment and attendance data. As for quality-related data, the protocol asks questions about whether data systems include information on teachers’ qualifications, teacher-student ratio, etc.

With regards to continuity-related outcomes, the protocol aims to ascertain whether the data systems collect information on students’ dropout, grade progression, and grade repetition. For achievement, the protocol identifies whether the data system has information on academic learning outcomes such as literacy and numeracy, as well as other holistic learning outcomes such as social-emotional learning, mental health, and physical health. Finally, it aims to determine whether the data system collects information at the student, teacher, school, and community level, and the types of demographic information
available that can be used to disaggregate information by characteristics such as gender, disability, displacement status, etc.

C. Process

Data is the most sensitive part of an organization. Before the interview, the research team took approval from the sampled organization’s authority. For data collection, the research team preferred in-person interviews. When a respondent was not able to join in person, we used an online platform. A lead person conducted the interview, and another team member supported the interviewer by taking notes. Interviews were conducted in Bangla and English, depending on the participant’s preference. The raw data was uploaded in KoboToolbox and analyzed through an Excel worksheet using pivot analyzer.

The research team used formal communication for scheduling the interview. A formal mail was sent with a set of documents including information explaining the reasons for the interview, the type of information required, and the planned use of the information. Verbal consent was taken during the interview to take notes and record the conversation, and the interviewer described the interview process, information protection, and use of information. We also ensured the participants that they can leave the interview if they feel uncomfortable and do not wish to continue or to discuss any particular topics, or do not want to provide any information requested at the interview.

D. Analytic approach

After identifying and accessing relevant sources of data on the education programs of 17 lead agencies that operate in Cox’s Bazar, we mapped the data flow and relationships among the data sources and stakeholders. Data was analyzed estimating descriptive statistics based on research questions, and then visualized using graphs and charts as illustrations.

III. DATA AVAILABILITY AND GAPS

The ERICC Conceptual Framework is a tool for researching and enhancing education systems and processes that affect the outcomes of children in conflict and protracted crisis environments. Its goal is to give evidence-based recommendations for education systems, policies, and programs that promote children’s learning and development. The ERICC Conceptual Framework focuses on four learning drivers: accessibility, quality, continuity, and coherence. These are the essential factors of education that determine the outcomes of students. Taking these factors into account, the study’s findings are organized based on data availability and gaps in access, quality, and continuity. In addition, this study exposes data gaps on learning outcomes and demographic data. It also describes the flow of data in Cox’s Bazar emergency education situations. This section discusses the frequency of data collecting, its purpose, and the data-sharing practices of Cox’s Bazar. It presents data availability, gaps, and use of data in the context of the ERICC Conceptual Framework and its application to the Cox’s Bazar emergency education setting. It covers the four learning drivers (access, quality, continuity, and learning) and how they relate to data availability and gaps. It also outlines Cox’s Bazar’s data sources, frequency, purpose, and sharing methods.

There are many data gaps that affect decision-making to improve access, quality, continuity, and coherence of education for refugees and host communities in Bangladesh. Some of these gaps are related to demographic data, such as information on parents’ socio-economic status, education level, and language proficiency, as well as teachers’ subject-based knowledge and language skills. This data is important to understand the needs and challenges of different groups of learners and educators.
A. Access

Access to education means more than merely enrolling children in school (Kim et al., 2022). It is about giving children the opportunity to learn and grow in a variety of situations and disciplines. It addresses not only academic knowledge but also physical, emotional, social, and cognitive growth. It involves building safe and supportive learning settings, particularly during times of crisis, when education can help children cope with trauma and upheaval. Access includes promoting awareness and encouraging children to participate in a variety of educational activities (Kabay, 2021). To increase this access we need data to make the right decisions at policy level and local systems level. Therefore, in this study, we analyze data availability and gaps in education access in Cox’s Bazar.

A.1. Availability of data on access

One of the challenges in providing quality education for displaced and host communities is to collect and analyze data on various aspects of access and learning. Different agencies have different methods and formats for collecting and reporting data on education. For example, some agencies have a facility tracker which includes detailed information about learning facilities, GPS, number of teachers and learners by each learning center. Implementing organizations disseminate the status of education by learning centers to the education sector IM using a format called a 5W report.

The 5W report is a basic tool for information gathering and problem solving that answers the questions of who, what, when, where, and why. The Sector IM Officer gathers this information and shares consolidated data with the government and related stakeholders. Agencies also collect data on the number of shifts they conduct in each learning facility. The data includes the number of teachers conducting classes, program officers responsible for facilities, and enrolled learners in the shift. There is an attendance book in every facility. The facilitators regularly record the attendance of present learners and report this to the program officers. Program officers maintain an attendance dataset for monitoring the attendance of learners. However, this data is not shared between agencies in the Education Sector and only internally within individual agencies. Agencies also collect information on the distance of schools from the homes of female students, especially adolescents who require additional support to reach facilities. Organizations are collecting this information to support their learners, but the data is not made public.

For host community education, the Bangladesh government collects data for the formal system delivering the national curriculum. The Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) is the government agency for collecting and preserving data on education, which collects annual data on enrollment and dropout, and on teachers’ demographics as well as their teaching experience. Each school fills out a form annually providing data on enrollment, teachers and their training, and grade transitions to BANBEIS. But this data is not publicly available. Agencies neither collect data following a similar format nor do they collect data on all access-related indicators. However, agencies report to the education sector IM using the uniform 5W reporting format. Figure 1 shows some of the key indicators reported on education in refugee communities by agencies to the Education Sector IM.
Figure 1. Distribution of agencies collecting data on access-related indicators

A.2. Access-related data gaps

In the camps, while various agencies offer education services, they do not share a common database for student registration, which creates data gaps and leads to duplication in enrollment. These data gaps affect the ability to track student progress, identify needs and gaps, and allocate resources effectively. There are also data gaps in demographics data such as the information on parents' socio-economic status, education level, and language proficiency. This information is important for understanding the needs and barriers of different student groups.

B. Quality

Based on the ERICC conceptual framework, we define quality as the availability of resources and support within classrooms/schools, households, and communities – and of the relationships, norms, practices, and interactions that are necessary to safeguard and improve children’s holistic learning, development, and wellbeing (Tseng & Seidman, 2007). Examples of the former include human resources such as teacher skills as well as economic, the quality of instructional or social-emotional supports, and physical resources/constraints like school fees, classroom structure, remote learning devices; examples of the latter include teacher-student relationships, and caregiver expectations for and involvement in child’s education. There is a lack of data on the quality of education in Cox’s Bazar emergency context, particularly on teaching and learning aspects. Education agencies collect data on teachers’ qualifications, the distribution of materials, and the impact of materials. However, data collection practices vary with organizations, programs, and data collection focuses on attendance and supervision. While many collect data on teacher background and qualifications, critical data gaps include a lack of reliable information on instructional practices, supervision, retention, and professional development. Additionally, data on teaching methods, classroom management practices, and student engagement is lacking. Addressing these gaps is crucial for improving education programs.

B.1. Availability of data on quality

With substantial variation, agencies involved in education gather and store data on aspects of teaching and learning. For example, many (93% of organizations) record educational background and qualifications of the
teachers, as well as their relevant experiences in the field. Some also track the distribution of teaching materials, such as session plans and subject-specific guidelines, to ensure they reach the intended recipients. Furthermore, they provide learning materials, such as books and other accessories, to the students and monitor their use and impact. Each agency maintains its own dataset and uses post-distribution monitoring as a common tool to assess the quality and effectiveness of the materials distributed. One of the IM persons from a leading organization mentioned,

“Quality teaching and learning materials are one of our priorities for ensuring quality education. For this purpose, we distributed teaching materials for teachers and conducted Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) activities which include qualitative and quantitative data collection tools.”

All the agencies use quality benchmarking tools for collecting information on education quality. Regarding this, one of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) managers mentioned,

“Quality assurance is the first priority of our organization. So, we developed quality benchmarks and collected data regularly according to the benchmarks to identify the education quality. We regularly analyze the data and share it with the Program Management to enrich their interventions.”

Most implementing agencies are supporting children 0–4 years for their ECD. For quality assessment, as a standard practice all agencies are deeply focused on teachers’ regular attendance data.

Not all agencies collect data on the same quality indicators. Figure 2 provides a distribution of agencies collecting data on major quality indicators.

**Figure 2. Distribution of agencies collecting data on quality indicators**
Very few organizations collect quality data for ECD programs. Among 14 agencies, 14% collect data about teachers’ ECD qualifications, which includes the highest level of education and biographic information, but not the quality of teaching based on observation. Of these 14 agencies, 93% collect data on teachers’ supervision which is equivalent to teachers’ attendance.

Far more quality data is available for Learning Competency Framework and Approach–based primary education. Some 88% of agencies collect data on teachers’ highest levels of education and 65% of agencies collect data on teacher supervision in classrooms. Among 17 organizations only 12% maintain class size data. And 47% of organizations surveyed keep detailed data on their distribution of learning and reading materials provided by the learning center.

B.2. Quality-related data gap

While organizations collect data on teacher qualification, there is no reliable information on teachers’ training history, instructional practices, supervision, retention, and professional development. This data is essential to measure and track the quality of teaching and learning. The data collected by different agencies on the quality of education is not consistent or comprehensive. There is no common set of quality indicators that can measure and compare the effectiveness of teaching and learning across different agencies. Some agencies use post–distribution monitoring to evaluate the impact of the materials they provide, but they do not track important indicators such as the quality of teachers’ instructional and classroom management practices. As such, while agencies typically collect data on teachers’ attendance, they do not observe how they teach in the classroom. The quality of teaching based on observation, teaching methods, and student engagement is a data gap that needs to be addressed. Another data gap is the lack of data on student engagement, satisfaction, and perceptions of the learning environment. These data gaps prevent a holistic understanding of the quality of education and its effects on student learning.

C. Continuity

Continuity is the sustained exposure to education that allows progression in both learning and grade/school transition. Continuity is critical to overcoming the challenges of disjointed programming, frequent disruption and school closures, attendance challenges, program and grade repetition, and dropouts prevalent in crisis contexts (Kim et al., 2022). The availability of data related to the continuity of learners in educational programs is a significant issue. Many education agencies do not systematically collect information on learners who have been absent for 15 days or more, including their demographic characteristics, reasons for absence, and current status. Instead, they often admit new learners to maintain class sizes, without addressing the root causes of dropout. Only 21% of organizations collect dropout data for ECD programs, and reasons for dropout, particularly relocation or migration, may not always be up to date. While 82% of agencies collect grade transition data, the basis for this data is questionable without student learning assessments. Efforts are being made to improve data collection, but hurdles remain, such as the lack of assessment guidelines and the practice of filling dropout positions without addressing the underlying issues. There is a data gap in understanding dropout trends and reasons for dropout among different demographic groups, as well as a potential gap in accurately assessing student progress during grade transitions.

C.1. Availability of data on continuity

According to the Education Sector, learners who have been absent from their assigned facility for 15 days or more, agencies are supposed to keep data on the number of missing learners, their demographic characteristics, their reasons for absence, and their current status. However, most of them do not maintain it
systematically and do not identify the reason for dropout. Generally, all the agencies fill in their dropout learner places by admitting new learners to meet the standard of at least 30 students per class.

Only 21% of organizations systematically keep dropout data for ECD programs. One respondent mentioned,

“We provide home-based ECD. Our facilitators always follow up with them and provide regular motivation to the parents. So, we have a small chance of dropping out. If there are any missing families found, it is generally because of relocation or migration to Bhasan Char or any other place; we collect this information, but it is not up to date.”

Figure 3 provides a distribution of agencies collecting data on different indicators on continuity.

**Figure 3. Distribution of agencies collecting data on continuity-related indicators**

Collecting data on access (i.e., enrollment) and continuity (i.e., progression) to higher grades is a priority for each agency, as our respondents claimed. Some 82% of agencies collect grade transition data, though the basis of this data has been dubious in the absence of a student’s learning assessment. Transitions are not always linked to learning assessments, and many systems have automatic advancement. After the introduction of the Myanmar curriculum, UNICEF developed a standard education assessment form. The level of difficulty of the test varies by grade. If all agencies started to use this instrument to assess their students and make grade transitions based on the standard assessment criteria, this data could be a useful source of information on learning quality and continuity. Agencies collect and store data on access (attendance) and continuity (grade promotions, grade repetition, and dropout) that improve data on continuity significantly for the Myanmar curriculum.

Explaining the hurdles of data collection on education quality and continuity, one data manager said,

“We collect learner’s progress data but there is no specific guideline from the Education Sector. It is easier for us because we have fewer learners than other big organizations. Agencies that have a large number of learners cannot do it because of the paucity of
specific guidelines of assessment. Education Sector is now working on it after Myanmar curriculum piloting”

C.2. Continuity-related data gap

Although agencies are expected to track learners who are absent from their assigned facility for 15 days or more, there is a data gap in maintaining this information systematically. Most agencies collect data on the number of missing learners but don’t collect data on their demographic characteristics (i.e. income, socio-economic condition), reasons for absence, or current attendance status. This prevents a comprehensive understanding of dropout trends by demographic groups, and the specific reasons leading to learners discontinuing their education. This makes it hard to understand why students are leaving school and hinders decision-making around dropout prevention. Without this information, it’s tough for agencies to figure out how to help students stay in school. The practice of filling up dropout positions with new learners to meet class size standards (at least 30 students per class) suggests a gap in addressing the root causes of dropout. While 82% of agencies collect grade transition data, there is a gap in the basis of this data. Grade transitions are not always linked to learning assessments.

D. Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are generally defined as the competencies that students should possess (i.e. what students should know and be able to demonstrate) on completion of a course or program (Kenny, 2011). The learning outcomes data gap refers to the lack of available data on how students are learning and growing in different subject areas, as well as the lack of data about their social-emotional development, and mental and physical health. In Cox’s Bazar, data on learning outcomes for Rohingya students is rarely collected. Some organizations collect learning outcome data at the classroom level, but there is no regular monitoring or dataset management. Save the Children collected literacy and mathematics outcome data from its learning center, but this practice was discontinued after COVID-19. In the host community, schools have their own examination system to identify learning outcomes, but the reports are not published publicly. The lack of learning outcome data raises questions about the reliability of data on grade transition. The data gap hinders the design and evaluation of educational policies and programs.

D.1. Availability of data on outcomes

Turning to education in the host community, each school has its own examination system to identify its learning outcomes. Schools do not publish these reports but share them with the government. There is a central examination system for completing primary and secondary education. The Education Board publishes the summary report on its website.

Figure 4 provides a distribution of agencies collecting data on learning outcome-related indicators. It appears that most organizations do not collect data on learning outcomes, which questions the reliability of data on grade transition that most agencies claim they collect. In the absence of learning outcome data, the grade transition could be subjective.

**Figure 4. Data on Learning Outcomes**
Four out of 17 organizations, namely, IRC, Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council and Plan International, collected data on social-emotional learning outcomes. Both data related to physical health outcomes and data on mental health and wellbeing are collected by Handicap International, though its main emphasis is on accommodating people with disabilities.

D.2. Data gap on outcomes

One of the main challenges in education is the lack of data on how students are learning and growing in different subject matters, as well as data about their social-emotional development, mental and physical health. Likewise, data on their academic progress is essential for measuring and enhancing their skills and achievements. Unfortunately, such vital data is often missing or limited in existing data systems of agencies in the education sector, leading to a gap in knowledge that hinders the design and evaluation of the effectiveness of educational policies and programs.

E. Demographic data for equity analysis

Demographic data refers to information that is collected about the specific characteristics of a population. This data includes indicators such as age, gender, ethnicity, income, education level, and marital status. Demographic data for equity analysis is essential for implementing programs, but in Cox’s Bazar there is a data gap.

E.1. Availability of demographic data for equity analysis

Implementing agencies collect basic demographic data about learners and teachers during enrollment to their programs. For teachers, this includes name, parents’ names, gender, identification to monitor career and skills progress, teaching certificates, experience, training undertaken, displacement status, geographic location, language, and ethnicity. For learners, this includes name, parents’ names, gender, age, geographic location/present address, identification to monitor learning progress, grade, and disability status.
E.2. Data gap on demographic data for equity analysis

A census conducted by the Bangladesh Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner and UNHCR provides demographic data for the entire population in the camps, but is not used for education program implementation because of data protection issues and UNHCR’s data-sharing protocol. Although this census-level data could help organizations enroll and manage students better, because it contains personal information about individuals, organizations do not have access to it, to prevent misuse. This data gap has consequences such as duplication in enrollment, where the same student may be admitted to multiple agencies or learning centers. This results in ineffective resource allocation and numerical inflations in education access.

F. Needs for Data Availability

Periodic and standard learning assessment has been frequently cited as the most important data gap. An assessment system was developed by UNICEF (first comprehensive assessment completed in 2018) but this was not universally used. Many perceive that assessment is lacking grade-specific focus. An M&E officer of an NGO stated that the absence of a universal learner’s progress assessment leaves a gap around grade advancement.

The absence of parents’ demographic data often prevents education providers from assessing the risk of dropout. The IM focal point of an NGO stated,

“During the data gathering procedure, we do not collect parents’ socioeconomic status. If we have this information, we may establish its applicability to other areas of children’s education and take early steps to eliminate child labor. We need to collect those data, but our program doesn’t have a high need for this data. If higher management asks for that then we will collect data.”

Jagorani Chakra Foundation (JCF)’s IM focal point added that to maintain quality education, management information systems need to incorporate more data, as noted below:

“Students dropout of school for various reasons. However, we do not track dropout students; we simply count the number in the database. Therefore, we should have tracked the dropout children in a database, as well as their reasons and the necessity for continuous follow-up.”

The Education Sector database, developed for all its members to track learning outcomes, does not have learners’ unique IDs or progress IDs. The lack of a unified learner database in the sector has been identified as a concern shared by all actors. As a result, it is difficult to pinpoint the precise learning gap for those children who do not have access to education. One student may be enrolled in two to three distinct learning facilities. Education partners can perform a cross-check with their current database if they have access to the UNHCR database that has all the household details. Ideally, in order to cross-check the information of existing students, agencies should have access to the UNHCR database with identifiable information to avoid duplication, although it is not possible due to data security and data privacy concerns with identifiable information.

IV. DATA SOURCES

All agencies have their own IM systems with a dedicated person for collecting and preserving data according to the guidelines of the education sector and its respective donors. Data is collected primarily using the ODK platform but organizations also preserve hard copies at their offices for audit purposes.
Organizations also share data with the sector IM using the 5W report reporting system, which includes enrollment data on age, sex, facility information with location disaggregation, school attendance by grade, and facilitator (teacher) registration attendance. This 5W report is collected from all education service implementing partners on a monthly basis. The education sector aggregates data and then shares it with the government. The education sector has an IM working group, where all the IM persons from each agency participate and share their information. The Education Sector IM officer analyzes all the data, aggregates the data collected from individual organizations, and stores it as publicly available data in Google Drive and website for use, including higher management from each agency and government stakeholders.

**Figure 5. Cox’s Bazar education program data flow**

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**V. DATA COLLECTION FREQUENCY AND PURPOSE**

**A. Data collection Frequency**

Generally needs assessment data is collected using a Joint Multi-Sector Needs Assessment and Needs and Population Monitoring and this is done once a year where agencies collect data on the number of learners who need access to education, number of facilities needed, number of teachers needed etc. This data is used by the Education Sector for budgeting and planning purposes and each implementing partner is assigned a target. Based on this data all programs make plans for implementation.

During enrollment and recruitment, student- and teacher-level demographic data is collected, including teachers’ highest level of education and training undertaken.

Students’ and teachers’ attendance data are collected on a daily basis but reported to the education sector on a monthly basis. The numbers of books and learning materials are also collected and reported monthly by the different learning facilities.

**B. Data Collection Purpose**

The primary purpose of data collection is monitoring program implementation and reporting to the donors and the sector. Each organization has monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) plans and
a results framework that are project specific. Agencies collect data for this results framework and this is the primary reason for education-related data collection.

A second important objective of data collection is to identify needs and design programs accordingly. The education sector conducts a needs assessment by collecting data from Needs and Population Monitoring and the Joint Multi-Sector Needs Assessment. Agencies collect the data and submit the needs assessment form to the Camp in Charge office. Following that, the need is confirmed by the office with the help of the Sector IM focal point, community mobilization officer, site management, and individual agencies. They finally submit the needs assessment form to the Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner for approval, with the aim of then implementing education programs at camp level.

Although respondents mentioned that they collect data to evaluate their policies or programs, this entails using some form of M&E to improve their programs. The exact protocols for M&E, such as conducting baseline, midline, and endline studies with intervention and control groups, may differ by organization and remain unclear.

8 (47%) of 17 organizations follow this process of assessing individual achievement at primary level and 41% at the ECD level. On achievement, agencies distinguish between weak and strong students. Weak students who need additional care are provided extra tuition. However, this data is not systematically collected and maintained and is not reported to the sector.

Every student goes through an assessment test developed by UNICEF for the Myanmar curriculum among camp communities. This assessment is supposed to be held at six-monthly intervals and is the basis of grade transition. It has been held twice so far since the beginning of the crisis. Students who did not perform well in the assessment were shifted to accelerated learning programs. Due to a lack of technical expertise, only 29% of education programs from primary and 36% of ECD programs could conduct this test.

**Figure 6. Purpose of data collection for the education sector in Cox’s Bazar**
VI. DATA-SHARING PRACTISES AND PROTOCOLS

All the organizations provide data to their donors in regular reporting cycles in a format determined by donors. This data helps the donors to monitor the progress and impact of their funding.

The Education Sector is a coordination body that oversees the educational activities of different organizations in the country. Most of the organizations share their data on early childhood development (ECD) and basic primary education programs with this body, except for IRC and Prantic Unnayan Society which do not share their ECD program data, and UNHCR which shares its data through its partners. The data sharing helps the Education Sector to plan and implement educational interventions in a harmonized way.

The government is the official authority that regulates and supports the educational activities of different organizations in the country. All the organizations need to share completion and assessment reports with the government at the end of their projects. For ECD programs, organizations do not need to share routine reports. But for primary education programs, organizations working for refugee education need to share monthly updates with the government, while organizations working in the host community have a flexible timeline. The data sharing helps the government to ensure the quality and accountability of the educational activities.

The Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) is an online platform that hosts and publishes humanitarian data from different sources. UNHCR and UNICEF publish their data on HDX, which makes it accessible to other humanitarian actors and the public. The data sharing helps to increase the transparency and visibility of the humanitarian response.

VII. LIMITATIONS

This report presents the results of a data system mapping exercise conducted in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, to assess the current state of data collection, management, and sharing among humanitarian actors responding to the Rohingya refugee crisis. The report identifies the main data sources, actors, platforms, and gaps in the data system, as well as the challenges and opportunities for improving data quality, coordination, and interoperability.

The report has some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, data system mapping only covered 17 of 32 organizations that are active in education in the area. As a result, the report does not capture the views of all the stakeholders involved and therefore may not fully represent the diversity and complexity of the data system. Second, the data system mapping was conducted in a dynamic and evolving context, where new data sources, actors, and platforms may emerge or change over time. Therefore, the report provides a snapshot of the data system at a specific point in time, and may not reflect the latest developments or trends. Third, the data system mapping focused on the availability and accessibility of data, but not on the quality or reliability of data. Therefore, the report does not provide an assessment of the accuracy, validity, or representativeness of the data sources or platforms included in the mapping.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Data is vital for delivering education in conflict and crisis settings such as Cox's Bazar, where conflict and crisis pose many challenges. The high density and inadequate learning facilities require well-executed data
collection and data-sharing policy to minimize education challenges for the Rohingya refugees. Around 32 agencies who are providing education for Cox’s Bazar Rohingya refugees and the education sector IM are gathering data for advocacy and coordination purposes. A major challenge is that this data sometimes does not provide any useful insights for decision-making and harmonization, exacerbating challenges for designing new programs and evaluating existing interventions.

This study provides the first ever systematic review of available data on the education sector in Cox's Bazar. Through interviews with 17 key organizations, the study mapped out data availability based on the ERICC framework. Cross-sectoral collaboration between child protection and education generates limited data on mental health support, which is aggregated at the facility level and not publicly available. The national education data is separate from refugee education, and the national database has limited access and updates. For refugee education, the education sector is collecting 5W reports (who, what, when, where, why), which do not have enough information for making decisions about access, quality, quantity, and education outcomes. The lack of connection between these datasets makes it difficult to address educational challenges effectively.

Data on enrollment, attendance, process monitoring, and dropout are collected periodically by agencies at the learner, teacher, and facility level. A well-established and well-defined data-sharing mechanism among agencies, practitioners, and policy makers could be helpful to establish and design new or improved programs. The main challenge is that little data is shared between organizations through a common platform. The next biggest gap is around the students’ and teachers’ assessment data. UNICEF initiated a standard assessment tool for the previous Learning Competency Framework and Approach, but it was not universally adopted. Given the introduction of the Myanmar curriculum, this assessment system needs to be remodeled. We did not find evidence of a plan to centralize and share data on student-level assessment between agencies. To overcome these difficulties, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of the data that is available. This can help to make informed decisions and design interventions that are tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the learners. Going forward, it will be critical to collect data on access to education and skills by older adolescents, learning assessment at the student level, teachers’ assessment and professional development at the teachers’ level, mental health at the student level, dropout at the student level, and availability of learning materials at the facility level.

The interviews with the lead organizations and sector leads identified that they have collected data on student enrollment through various educational programs, but there is a lack of data on students’ outcomes or achievements, which is crucial for evaluating the quality, progress, and impact of education interventions. A few organizations possess student assessment data but are reluctant to share these with external stakeholders, even the government. The Education Sector leads suggest that a full dataset with learners’ detailed information could help reduce duplication of learners between agencies. Even the agencies that share aggregated information about the change of learners’ grade do not clearly state the strategies they are following for changing the grade. There was a placement test in 2018 which determined the grade of present learners, but there have not been any sector-wide assessments since then. When the Myanmar curriculum was introduced, learners started to follow this although students had not been tested to determine their grades/level within the curriculum. Additionally, organizations are reluctant to share their budgetary information and implementation strategies, which makes it difficult to assess the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of their education interventions.

As the Education Sector leadership and IM coordination groups suggested, coordination between agencies is crucial to improve the interventions. The Education Sector’s purpose is to better inform the interventions but key agencies who have larger interventions in multiple camps are not interested because they have different commitments with donors that may be interrupted and organizations may fall into situations without mutual trust. Coordination and negotiation among agencies in the Education Sector is important to
harmonize and standardize data collection and sharing processes. This may help prevent learners’ duplication through enrollment. It may also allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the education system, aiding in decision-making and resource allocation.

REFERENCES


https://inee.org/resources/ericc-inception-report


### APPENDIX

**Table 1. Data system reporting by organization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder/ organization name</th>
<th>Associated dataset(s) organization maintains</th>
<th>Population focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 CARITAS Bangladesh           | ● Attendance Tracker  
                                    ● Teachers Database  
                                    ● Training Tracker  
                                    ● Distribution Master Roll | ● Host Community  
                                    ● Refugee |
| 2 Jagorani Chakra Foundation (Save the Children-funded project) | ● Enrolment Tracker  
                                    ● Attendance Tracker  
                                    ● Teachers Database  
                                    ● Training Tracker  
                                    ● Referral Tracker  
                                    ● MSPSS Tracker  
                                    ● Facility Tracker  
                                    ● Distribution Master Roll | ● Refugee |
| 3 Prantic Unnayan Society      | ● Enrolment Tracker  
                                    ● Attendance Tracker  
                                    ● Teachers Database  
                                    ● Training Tracker | ● Refugee |
| 4 Jagorani Chakra Foundation (UNICEF-funded Project) | ● Facility Tracker  
                                    ● Enrolment Tracker  
                                    ● Attendance Tracker  
                                    ● Teachers Database  
                                    ● Training Tracker  
                                    ● MSPSS Tracker  
                                    ● Distribution Master Roll  
                                    ● Community Support Group Tracker | ● Refugee |
| 5 Handicap International (HI)  | ● Output Tracker  
                                    ● BPRM dataset  
                                    ● Session dataset | ● Refugee |
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ABOUT ERICC

The Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis (ERICC) Research Programme Consortium is a global research and learning partnership that strives to transform education policy and practice in conflict and protracted crisis around the world — ultimately to help improve holistic outcomes for children — through building a global hub for rigorous, context-relevant and actionable evidence base.

ERICC seeks to identify the most effective approaches for improving access, quality, and continuity of education to support sustainable and coherent education systems and holistic learning and development of children in conflict and crisis. ERICC aims to bridge research, practice, and policy with accessible and actionable knowledge — at local, national, regional and global levels — through co-construction of research and collaborative partnerships.

ERICC is led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) with Academic Lead IOE, UCL’s Faculty of Education and Society, and expert partners include Centre for Lebanese Studies, Common Heritage Foundation, Forcier Consulting, ODI, Osman Consulting, Oxford Policy Management and Queen Rania Foundation. During ERICC’s inception period, NYU-TIES provided research leadership, developed the original ERICC Conceptual Framework and contributed to early research agenda development. ERICC is supported by UK Aid.

Countries in focus include Bangladesh (Cox’s Bazar), Jordan, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan and Syria.