

Online meetings on measuring poverty and inequality, 30 November - 2 December 2021**ABSTRACT**

Title	<i>Measuring monetary poverty among refugees and IDPs living in camps</i>
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Continuous conflict, persecution and violence around the world have led to a drastic increase in the number of forcibly displaced persons globally, which the UN Refugee Agency now estimates to stand at 82.4 million – almost double the number ten years ago. Many of these are living in UNECE countries.

For national and international institutions, understanding the poverty levels of these vulnerable groups is of great interest, yet they are often excluded or insufficiently represented in wider poverty measurement work. While recent years have seen the (representative) inclusion of refugees and IDPs in some national poverty surveys, there exists almost no methodological research on the specific challenges that may arise when measuring poverty among refugees and IDPs, especially when they live in camp settings.

In camps where refugees and IDPs survive primarily on the basis of humanitarian assistance, poverty measurement by income may be futile. Here, poverty measured by consumption expenditure is a better instrument. However, even this can be problematic. Camps can be characterized by imperfect or missing markets, highly distorted price patterns, atypical consumption baskets, and large-scale provision of food and non-food items. Making sense of consumption patterns, especially in direct comparison with the rest of the country, is therefore not at all straightforward - and may lead to incomparability of seemingly comparable data points. Matching type and quality of consumption for pricing on free items is one challenge, and even if solved the limited selection of items could lead to non-utility-consistent poverty estimates.

A new methodological paper that is being prepared under the auspices of the World Bank – UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement takes stock of the experiences that exist to date of monetary poverty measurement in refugee and IDP camps, documents the specific challenges that occur and need to be kept in mind when aiming to produce comparable consumption aggregates between sub-populations inside and outside camps, and offers a simple framework to practitioners for assessing the feasibility of poverty measurement in advance of engaging in a particular camp.