



# CHAD

## COUNTRY SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE OF SUDANESE REFUGEES

January 2025

## Country Context

**The Government of Chad has maintained an open-door policy for hosting and protecting people fleeing violence and persecution. As of November 2024, over 710,500 new refugees arrived in Chad due to the conflict in Sudan.** These refugees primarily come from Darfur, a region severely affected by violence, exacerbating internal and external displacement across Sudan and neighbouring countries. As a result, with over one million registered refugees, Chad ranks as the world's fifth-largest refugee-hosting country per capita.

**This displacement presents complex humanitarian, development, and peace challenges that require coordinated action and engagement from development partners.** This is especially critical as UNHCR anticipates that the number of forcibly displaced individuals is expected to rise further in 2025, exacerbating uncertainty in one of the world's poorest countries.

**The Chadian government has been swift to respond to the crisis.** Just ten days after the conflict began in Sudan, the President of the Transition signed a decree implementing the 2020 Asylum Law to address the sudden refugee influx. This decree provides refugees with critical opportunities, such as: (i) Access to land and secure tenure, through integrated settlements as an alternative to refugee camps; (ii) Freedom of movement and the right to settle in locations that promote self-sufficiency and local integration; and (iii) Access to an identity card, which serve as residence permits and allow refugees to access public services.

**The new arrivals in Chad have led the government and UNHCR to establish seven new settlements so far with around 50,000 individuals per location, except for one settlement with a 15,000 hosting capacity, and create ten extensions in existing settlements across eastern Chad.** The government supports a model of local integration of refugees and has selected locations in areas where there is economic potential and possibility to scale up health and education services for both refugees and hosts.

## Socioeconomic Characteristics of Displacement

**Chad's recent Asylum Law, which grants refugees rights to land ownership, formal employment, and free movement, lays the ground for refugees' economic integration.** By recognizing refugees as economic actors and investing in their productive capacities, Chad can harness their potential to contribute to the country's development.

**Today, of the 1.2 million refugees in Chad, 86% come from Sudan – including more than 400,000 who arrived in the 20 years before the 2023 crisis – and 11% fled the Central African Republic.** Among the more than 710,500 new refugees, approximately 624,000 are already registered, of which 88% are women and children and 15% have specific needs. Most of the refugees previously earned their livelihoods from agricultural activities in Sudan. In addition to the refugee population, there are also 221,000 internally displaced people and 317,000 returned migrants.<sup>1</sup>

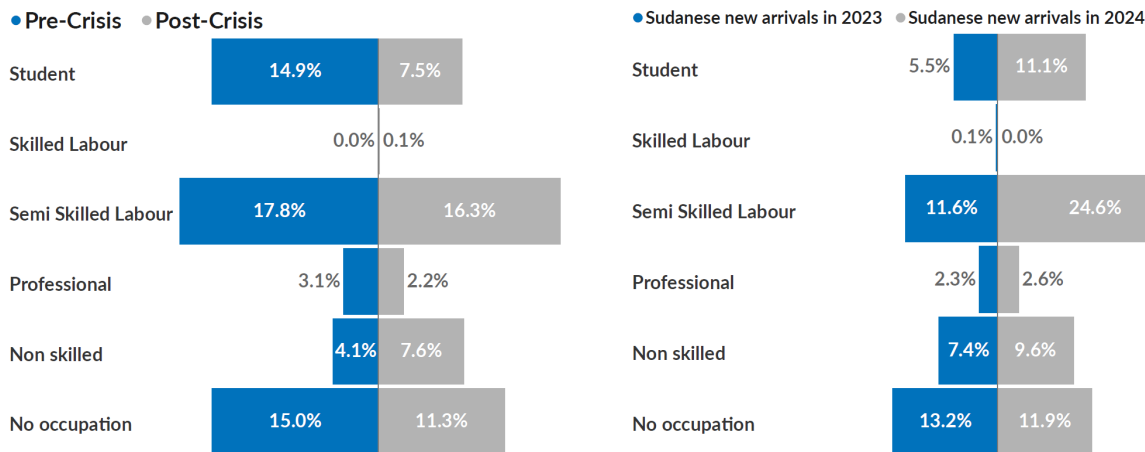
**Among those Sudanese refugees in Chad, registration records show that most were in professional, semi-skilled or non-skilled occupations or students.** Since the onset of the crisis in April 2023, skilled labour registration increased from 0% to 0.1%, from 12 to 236 people and semi-skilled decreased from 17.8% to 16.3%. However, in actual number, the number of semi-skilled people almost

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Operational Data Portal (2024)

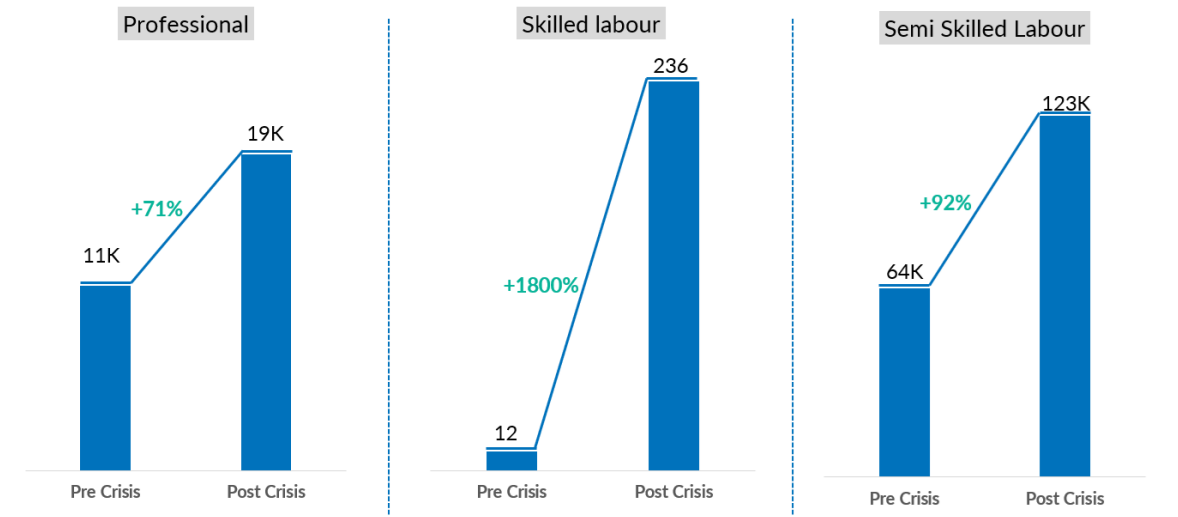
double from some 63,000 to 124,000 people. Subtle shifts were also evident between those arriving in 2023 and 2024, with slightly more professional and semi-skilled labourers and fewer individuals with no occupation listed. The percentage of students also increased from 5.5% to 11.1% between 2023 and 2024.

Figure 1: Occupation



- Pre-Crisis: Sudanese refugees in Chad before 15th April 2023
- Post-Crisis: new Sudanese refugee arrivals since 15th April 2023

Figure 2: Evolution of professional and semi-skilled labour pre and post crisis



- Pre-Crisis: Sudanese Refugees in Chad before 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023
- Post- Crisis: Sudanese Refugees Arrivals in Chad After 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Source: UNHCR registration data

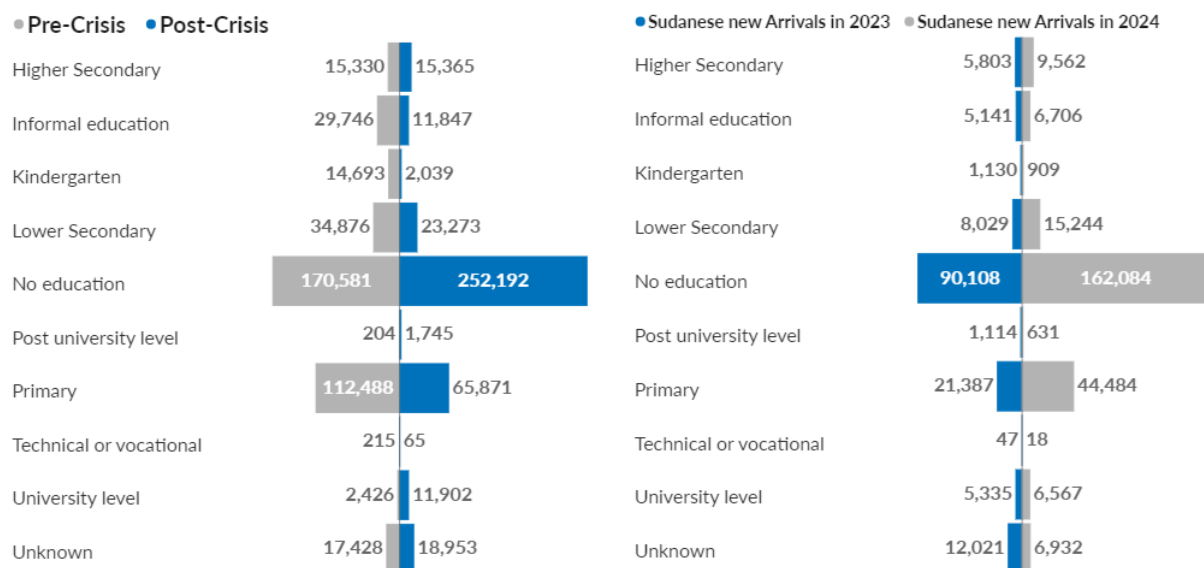
**While the overall percentage of skilled, semi-skilled and professionals of the total population has decreased compared to before 2023, the number of professional, skilled and semi-skilled refugees surged.** The number of professionals increased by 71% from 11,000 before the crisis to over 19,000 post-crisis. The number of skilled refugees increased from 12 pre-crisis to 236 post-crisis. The

number of semi-skilled refugees increased by 92% from 64,000 to some 123,000; The number of people with no occupation also increased from 54,000 to 94,000.

**Among those who were employed in Sudan, UNHCR registration records show that 15% were employed in non-agricultural socio-professional categories.** These included managers (17%), cooks (0.2%), shopkeepers (7%), teaching professionals (6%), construction professionals (4%), health professionals (3%) and other professionals (62%). For this population, which is often better qualified than the host community, the host environment offers very few job opportunities. UNHCR has begun advocacy toward the government and the private sector to improve access to employment for certain categories. This non-agricultural profile is an asset for diversifying the region's economy and support the functioning of basic social services.

**The numbers of refugees with university and post-university levels of education was multiplied by 5 to 8 times, respectively, from 2,426 to 11,902 university level and from 206 to 1,745 for the post-university level. However, most Sudanese refugees who moved to Chad have little or no education.** Compared to those arriving before April 2023, the current Sudanese refugee cohort appears to have lower levels of education, with the share of primary school education dropping from 28 to 16% and no education rising from 43 to 63%. Less than 15% in other group have any secondary schooling. Before the start of the conflict in 2023, the education of many Sudanese school children already suffered disruptions due to repetitive strikes since 2019, which led many students to miss two to three years of classes. The number of refugees who arrived with primary, secondary and university level education increased in 2024 compared to 2023.

Figure 3: Education



- Pre-Crisis: Sudanese refugees in Chad before 15th April 2023
- Post-Crisis: new Sudanese refugee arrivals since 15th April 2023

Source: UNHCR registration data

**UNHCR Chad is preparing a socio-economic survey of Sudanese refugees, jointly with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the UNHCR-WFP Joint Hub, with the aim establishing a more detailed profile of the population to information prioritization for assistance (to better guide individuals toward humanitarian assistance, resilience, or development programs). This activity is in the planning phase and is expected to begin in beginning of 2025. Moreover, if resources allow, UNHCR Chad will**

organize a verification exercise in 2025 to update and expand registration records, building on existing data sets already available (education, skills and occupations).

### Refugees in Chad: Contributions and Opportunities

Despite facing significant challenges, refugees in Chad can significantly contribute to the country's socioeconomic landscape through various opportunities:

- **Agriculture and Livestock:** Given Chad's reliance on agriculture and the profile of refugees, refugees can make positive impacts on farming and livestock rearing. .
- **Small Trade and Entrepreneurship:** Many refugees have skills in small trade and entrepreneurship. [Supporting them with microfinance and business training can help them establish small businesses, boosting the local economy.](#)
- **Casual Labour and Construction:** Refugees can participate in casual labour, especially in construction and infrastructure projects. [This not only provides them with income but also helps in the development of local infrastructure.](#)
- **Education and Vocational Training:** Investing in education and vocational training for refugees can enhance their skills and employability. [This can lead to better job opportunities and integration into the local workforce.](#)
- **Healthcare Services:** Refugees with medical training can support local healthcare services, especially in underserved areas. [This can improve healthcare access for both refugees and host communities.](#)
- **Occupations of refugees:** The registration process is framed to systematically collect data on refugees occupations prior to displacement.
- **Cultural Integration and Social Services:** [Refugees can play a role in cultural exchange and social services, helping to bridge gaps between different communities and fostering social cohesion.](#)

### Socioeconomic Survey (2022)

In the context of the protracted displacement of previous influxes of refugees from Sudan, significant efforts have been made to gather evidence and provide concrete recommendations for transitioning from humanitarian assistance to an integrated refugee response support by development funding. Using detailed household data, the World Bank's [Refugees in Chad: The Way Forward](#) identified agriculture and small businesses as promising pathways for refugee self-reliance and recommended complementary programs to improve productivity and secure access to farming (World Bank 2022).

Chad has continued to include refugees in National Household Surveys, such as the 2021-2022 Enquête sur la Consommation des ménages et le Secteur Informel au Tchad or ECOSIT 5, and the National Statistics Office in Chad plans to include refugees in its upcoming census.

Since 2018, Chad has been among the first countries to include refugees in a national survey. The data formed the basis for the World Bank report, produced in collaboration with UNHCR and the WB-UNHCR Joint Data Center. This work highlighted how a comprehensive and coordinated approach by governments and the donor community is necessary to create an environment that supports refugees as they become self-sufficient and participate in the local community and the local labour market.

The continued inclusion of refugees in the national statistical system and the collection of new data vis-a-vis the current emergencies in bordering countries, will provide up-to-date information to the



Government as well as UNHCR and the World Bank. In turn, this will allow a better identification of needs, provision of services, and targeting of programs: all essential elements for stimulating a successful inclusion of refugees in their host communities and supporting an adequate humanitarian and development response to current and future challenges.

#### **Inclusion and self-reliance of refugees in Chad**

According to the [World Bank Economic Update: Special Chapter on Inclusive Refugee Hosting](#), the economic inclusion of refugees in Chad depends on their recognition as economic actors, restoring their productive capacities, and enabling them to contribute to the local economy (World Bank 2024). Expanding financial inclusion, microfinance, and mobile financial services, increasing the use of flexible identification methods like refugee identification card and adapting collateral requirements to suit refugees offer positive benefits.

The report also underscored the need for refugee settlements to be located in areas of economic potential, while allowing refugees the option to moving, at least seasonally, to areas of greater opportunity, as stipulated in Chad's Asylum Law.

According to its recent [Policy Research Working Paper, "Responsibility Sharing and the Economic Participation of Refugees in Chad"](#) (March 2024), if refugees could become as productive as Chadians, it is estimated that poverty among refugees would fall from 88 percent to 50 percent, while the income earned by poor refugees would increase to 83 percent of the poverty line, thus significantly reducing the need for assistance. Moreover, integrating refugees into the economy would generate an additional \$164 million a year in cost savings, while supporting their basic needs through humanitarian assistance would cost \$573 million.