

Overview of the socioeconomic situation of refugees and asylum seekers in northern Ghana – July 2025



Registration of asylum seekers at the Tarikom Refugee Reception Center in the Upper East Region, Ghana, August 2023© X UNHCR-Ghana

Note to the Reader:

This report supersedes the version issued in October 2025. It places a stronger focus on the situation of burkinabe refugees, providing a more detailed analysis of their profiles and living conditions.

The data used in this analysis come from the ProGres database, which is continuously updated through refugee and asylum seeker registration exercises. As with any data collection process, these datasets may contain reporting errors, missing values, or partial updates.

Consequently, the findings presented here should be interpreted as indicative estimates reflecting broad socio-economic trends, rather than as exhaustive or nationally representative statistics.

1. Introduction

Since 2022, Ghana has been experiencing a growing influx of asylum seekers from Burkina Faso, driven by the deteriorating security situation and recurrent crises affecting the Central Sahel region. This trend has led to a significant increase in the number of individuals seeking international protection in the northern regions of the country.

As of **July, 2025**, the total number of **registered refugees and asylum seekers in Ghana** stands at **19,038**, comprising **50.6% women** and **49.4% men**. The population is mainly composed of nationals from **Burkina Faso (57%)**, **Togo (18%)**, and **Sudan (6%)**. The **burkinabe** represent both the **most recent** and the **largest group** among persons of concern in Ghana, reflecting the ongoing regional displacement dynamics linked to insecurity in the Sahel.

Geographically, burkinabe refugees and asylum seekers are **predominantly concentrated in the Upper East (50%) and Upper West (40%) regions**, with a smaller presence in **Bono East (7%)**.

Given their demographic weight and the recent nature of their displacement, the present analysis focuses **exclusively on the socio-economic characteristics of the burkinabe refugee and asylum seeker population**. The objective is to provide an evidence-based profile that can inform targeted assistance, inclusion strategies, and policy responses in Ghana.

2. Demographics

The working-age population (18–59 years) represents **40%** of the total population, or 4,333 individuals, while the dependent population (those under 18 or over 60) totals 6,480 individuals. This results in a **dependency ratio of about 150%, meaning that each working-age adult supports nearly two dependents**.

This demographic profile - characterized by a high dependency ratio and a strong concentration in rural areas in the north - may place significant pressure on households' economic self-sufficiency and resilience.

3. Education

Access to education remains severely limited. Among children aged 6 to 11 - who represent 22% of the total population - **only 13% have ever attended school, and just 6% were enrolled at the time of registration**. The situation is equally critical for both boys and girls, with identical enrollment rates of 6%. By contrast, the net primary school enrollment rate in the host country was already around 86% in 2019 (World Bank Database, 2025).

Among adults aged 15 and above, 88% have never attended school, compared to 22% of the Ghanaian population according to the 2021 census. Women are disproportionately affected, accounting for 63% of this illiterate refugee and asylum-seeking population. This highlights persistent gender disparities in access to education and underscores the compounded vulnerabilities faced by forcibly displaced women.

4. Employment and economic dependence

Among the working-age population, the overall rate of economic activity stands at **92%**, with **94% of men** (1,412 out of 1,501) and **91% of women** (2,581 out of 2,832) economically active. This very high level of participation illustrates the **remarkable willingness of refugees and asylum seekers to engage in income-generating activities and strive toward self-reliance**; despite the numerous structural barriers they face.

However, **most of these activities are concentrated in low-income sectors**, particularly subsistence agriculture, which remains the dominant livelihood in northern Ghana. While agriculture offers important livelihood opportunities, its limited integration into value chains and markets often restricts its capacity to contribute meaningfully to household needs and income generation. **This concentration in the primary sector reflects both the scarcity of diversified employment opportunities and the prevalence of informal livelihoods that provide little income stability or social protection.** Women are especially overrepresented in these sectors, accounting for nearly two-thirds of the workforce.

While these occupations are characterized by **low productivity and earnings**, they nonetheless **demonstrate the availability, adaptability, and resilience of these populations**, who continue to contribute to the economic fabric of their host communities through their labor, skills, and initiative.

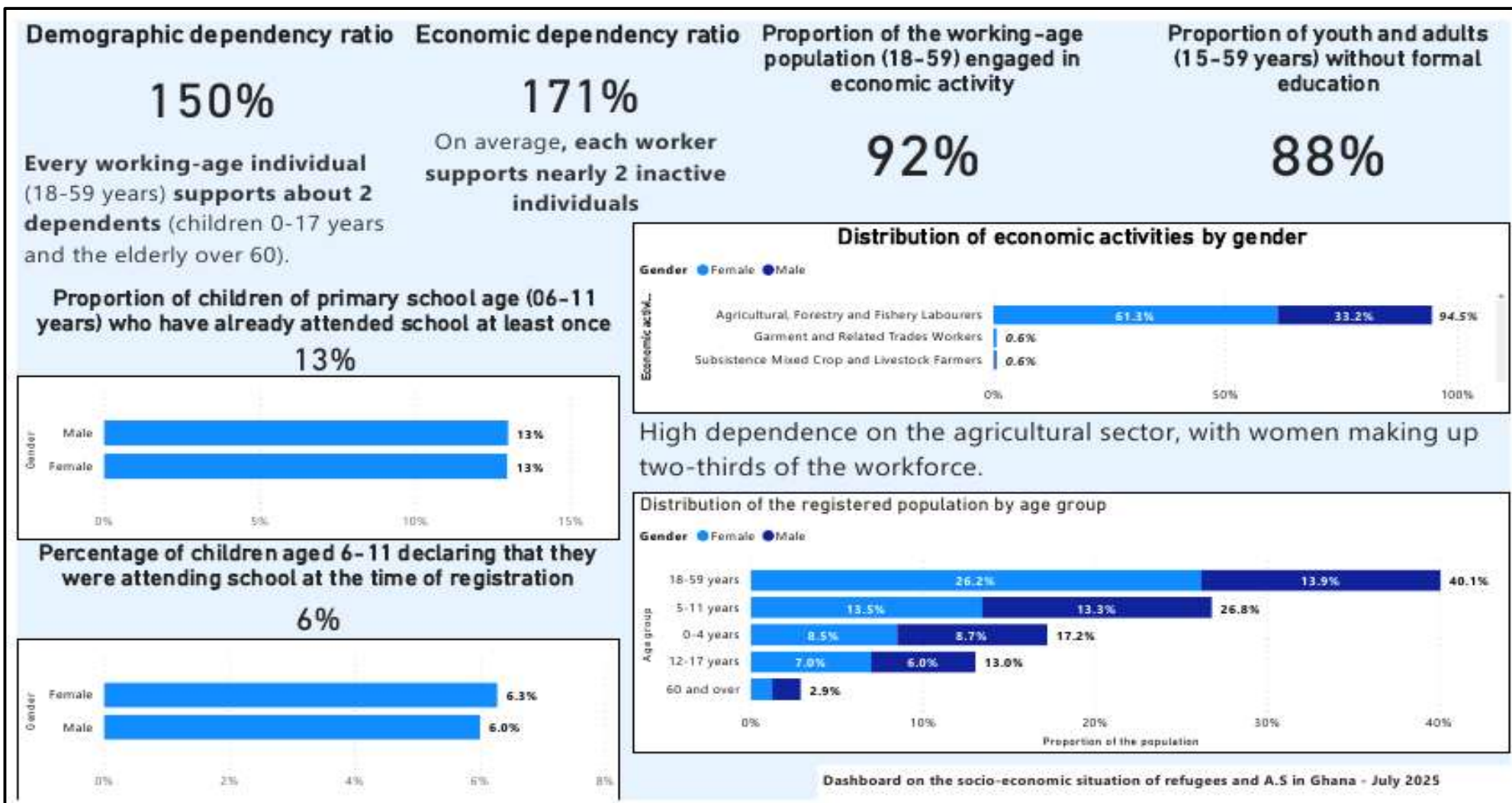
In addition, with around **60% of the total refugee and asylum seeker population** being dependent of those engaged in economic

activities, the **economic dependency ratio remains high**, with each worker supporting about **two other individuals**. This imbalance highlights the **fragile economic equilibrium within households** and underscores the **urgent need for programs that can transform high labor participation into sustainable and productive livelihoods**, capable of generating stable income and reducing dependency over time.

5. Conclusion

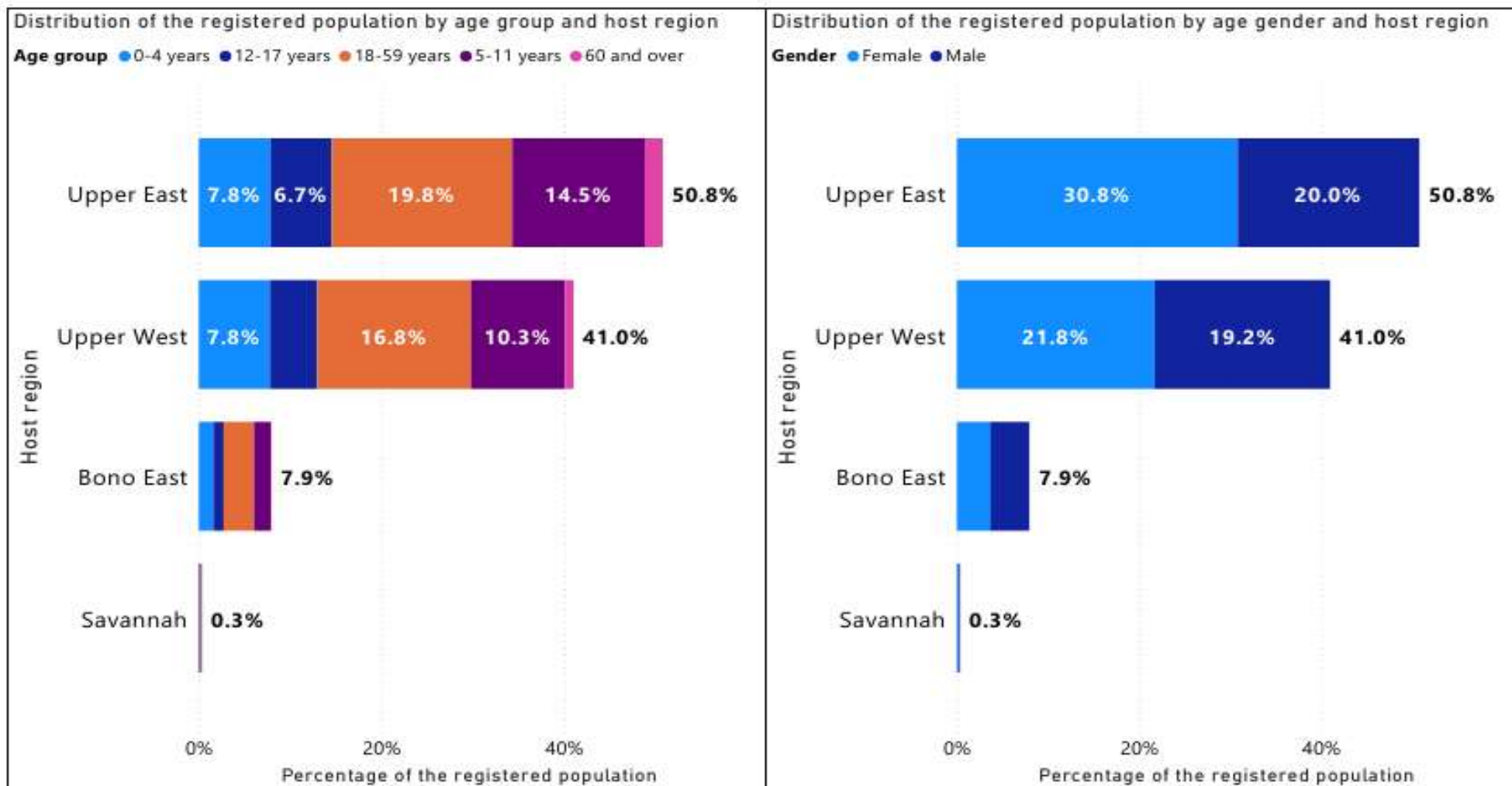
The situation of refugees and asylum seekers in Ghana, particularly those from Burkina Faso, at the end of July 2025 reflects living conditions marked by low levels of education, incomplete schooling for children, and a high concentration in informal employment, particularly in agriculture in rural areas and in small services in urban areas. Despite these challenges, their participation in the local economy demonstrates a real potential for resilience, which could be strengthened by initiatives facilitating better access to financial services, value chains, and actions promoting inclusion with host communities.

Summary dashboard of the situation of refugees and asylum seekers¹ in Ghana in July 2025 (1/2)



¹ Dashboard for the population under analysis: Burkinabe refugees and asylum seekers from January 2022 to August 2025

Summary dashboard of the situation of refugees and asylum seekers² in Ghana in July 2025 (2/2)



² Dashboard for the population under analysis: Burkinabe refugees and asylum seekers from January 2022 to August 2025

This publication has been co-financed by the European Union. The opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the European Union.



Children learning in a settlement in northern Ghana, August 2023 © X UNHCR-Ghana

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