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A Data-Centric Framework for Monitoring Progress and Outcomes in Refugee Resettlement Programs

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Abstract

This paper explores the significance of a data-centric framework for monitoring progress and outcomes in refugee resettlement programs. Refugee integration into host societies is a complex process that requires systematic evaluation through robust data collection and analysis. The research emphasizes the need for a comprehensive framework that encompasses both quantitative and qualitative indicators, including employment, housing stability, healthcare access, education, and long-term outcomes such as self-sufficiency, community engagement, and well-being. The paper identifies key challenges in data collection, such as inconsistencies in methodologies, data accessibility barriers, and the transient nature of refugee populations. It also highlights the critical role of multisectoral collaboration and technological solutions in overcoming these challenges and improving data accuracy. Drawing from these insights, the paper proposes policy recommendations for strengthening data-centric monitoring, including standardization of data collection protocols, investment in technological tools, capacity building for data collectors, and the establishment of robust feedback mechanisms. The adoption of these strategies can enhance the effectiveness of refugee resettlement programs, ensuring better integration outcomes and improved support for refugees.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background on refugee resettlement programs

Refugee resettlement programs play a critical role in addressing the global refugee crisis by providing displaced individuals with the opportunity to rebuild their lives in new countries. These programs aim to offer refugees essential services, such as housing, employment, healthcare, and education, while ensuring their successful integration into their host communities (Abisoye *et al.*). Resettlement programs typically involve government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international bodies, all working together to provide the necessary support. In many cases, refugees face significant barriers, including language differences, cultural gaps, and economic instability, making the process of adaptation particularly challenging (E. Jessa, 2017).

Consequently, resettlement programs often require long-term commitment and resources to ensure that refugees can achieve self-sufficiency and become active, engaged members of society. Moreover, the effectiveness of these programs is often difficult to measure, given the complexity of the challenges refugees face and the long-term nature of the integration process (S. O. Afolabi & Akinsoto, 2021).

Without proper monitoring and evaluation, it becomes nearly impossible to assess whether the support provided is adequate or if the objectives of the resettlement program are being met. This section introduces the need for a data-driven approach to monitoring the progress and outcomes of these resettlement efforts, aiming to ensure that resources are used efficiently and that refugees are fully supported (A. I. Afolabi, Chukwurah, & Abieba).

1.2 The importance of data in refugee resettlement

Data plays a pivotal role in improving the outcomes of refugee resettlement programs. With a data-centric approach, policymakers, program administrators, and stakeholders can assess the effectiveness of their efforts in real-time, make informed decisions, and identify areas that need improvement. Collecting comprehensive, accurate data allows for the identification of patterns in refugee integration and provides a way to track individual progress across key areas such as employment, education, healthcare access, and community participation (Elumilade, Ogundeji, Achumie, Omokhoa, & Omowole, 2021). Data enables the establishment of benchmarks and key performance indicators (KPIs), which are crucial for assessing whether resettlement programs are meeting their objectives. Additionally, it helps policymakers identify and address systemic barriers to integration, such as lack of access to affordable housing or job opportunities, that could hinder a refugee's ability to integrate successfully (EZEANOCHIE, AFOLABI, & AKINSOOTO, 2021).

Data also facilitates accountability by ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and that stakeholders are held responsible for the outcomes of their interventions. Furthermore, it allows for the longitudinal tracking of refugees, providing insight into their long-term well-being and socioeconomic integration, which is often overlooked in short-term assessments. Ultimately, a strong data framework can optimize the resettlement process and ensure that refugees are provided with the best possible opportunities for successful integration (Ahmadu *et al.*).

1.3 Research objectives and scope

The primary objective of this paper is to develop a data-centric framework for monitoring the progress and outcomes of refugee resettlement programs, focusing on the integration of refugees into host societies. This framework will outline key metrics and methodologies for the effective collection, analysis, and reporting of data, ensuring that refugee resettlement programs can be rigorously evaluated. The research aims to explore how data-driven insights can improve decision-making processes and help stakeholders understand the impact of their interventions on refugees' long-term integration and self-sufficiency. Another key objective is to assess the barriers and challenges in implementing effective data collection systems, such as issues of privacy, data access, and resource limitations. Furthermore, this research seeks to evaluate the role of data technologies and analytics tools in enhancing monitoring practices, making it easier for organizations to assess the success of resettlement efforts. The scope of this paper includes a thorough review of existing refugee resettlement frameworks, an analysis of case studies, and recommendations for improving monitoring through quantitative and qualitative data.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations

2.1 Defining data-centric monitoring in refugee resettlement

Data-centric monitoring in refugee resettlement refers to the use of comprehensive, accurate, and systematic data collection and analysis to track and evaluate the progress of refugees through resettlement programs. This approach ensures that decisions made during the integration process are based on evidence rather than assumptions, providing a clear picture of both individual and collective progress. Data-centric monitoring encompasses a range of activities, including data collection, data storage, analysis, and reporting, with the goal of continuously assessing the effectiveness of the services provided to refugees (Babatunde, Okeleke, & Ijomah). Central to this concept is the integration of quantitative and qualitative data, offering a well-rounded view of a refugee's journey from arrival to integration. This includes monitoring factors such as employment rates, housing stability, healthcare access, education attainment, and social engagement. By systematically measuring these areas, organizations can identify gaps in services and adjust strategies as needed (Hassan, Collins, Babatunde, Alabi, & Mustapha, 2021). Moreover, data-centric monitoring also incorporates feedback mechanisms, allowing refugees themselves to contribute information about their needs and challenges, ensuring that the program remains responsive to their evolving situation. This approach is rooted in the belief that the more accurately and efficiently data can be tracked and analyzed, the more successfully the integration process can be managed and optimized, resulting in better long-term outcomes for refugees (Paul, Abbey, Onukwulu, Agho, & Louis, 2021).

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

Several theoretical frameworks underpin the principles of data-centric monitoring in refugee resettlement. One of the key frameworks is Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), a systematic process for assessing the effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of programs. M&E provides the structure for defining program goals, determining what data needs to be collected, and assessing whether desired outcomes are being achieved. It is crucial for establishing clear benchmarks for refugee progress and outcomes, ensuring that programs remain accountable and responsive to the needs of refugees (Babatunde *et al.*; Ejike & Abbulimen).

Another important theoretical framework is Systems Theory, which emphasizes the interrelatedness of various components within a system. In the context of refugee resettlement, Systems Theory suggests that refugee integration is not a linear process but rather one involving various interconnected factors, such as employment, housing, healthcare, and social support systems. Data-centric monitoring based on Systems Theory allows for a more holistic understanding of the refugee experience, recognizing that interventions in one area (such as employment) can have cascading effects on other areas (such as housing stability or mental health). This perspective encourages a multi-dimensional approach to data collection and monitoring, acknowledging that outcomes cannot be assessed in isolation (Udeh *et al.*, 2021).

The Outcomes Measurement framework further complements these theories by focusing specifically on the long-term effects of resettlement programs. Outcomes

measurement involves defining clear, measurable goals for refugee integration and tracking progress over time. This approach uses both quantitative and qualitative data to assess whether refugees have achieved the desired socio-economic outcomes, such as achieving self-sufficiency, social integration, and economic independence. Together, these theoretical frameworks provide a robust foundation for a data-driven approach to refugee resettlement, enabling more effective monitoring, assessment, and adjustment of programs (Basiru, Ejiofor, Onukwulu, & Attah, 2022).

2.3 Key components of a data-centric framework

A robust data-centric framework for refugee resettlement relies on three core components: data collection, data analysis, and data reporting. Each of these elements plays a crucial role in ensuring that resettlement programs can be continuously assessed and improved.

Data collection forms the foundation of the framework. For monitoring progress in refugee resettlement, it is essential to gather accurate, comprehensive data from diverse sources, including governmental agencies, NGOs, and refugees themselves. This data should cover a broad range of indicators, such as employment status, income levels, educational attainment, healthcare utilization, and housing stability. In addition to these quantitative measures, qualitative data such as refugee feedback on their integration experience, challenges faced, and perceptions of the support received should also be collected. This combination of quantitative and qualitative data provides a full picture of the refugee's experience (Ige, Chukwurah, Idemudia, & Adebayo).

Once data is collected, data analysis allows stakeholders to draw meaningful insights and identify patterns that may not be immediately apparent. Using advanced data analytics techniques such as regression analysis, trend analysis, and predictive modeling, it becomes possible to track the effectiveness of different interventions and identify which factors most strongly influence refugee outcomes. Data analysis also enables the detection of disparities in access to services or outcomes across different demographic groups, helping to inform adjustments to program delivery (Elumilade, Ogundeji, Achumie, Omokhoa, & Omowole, 2022; Ezeanochie, Afolabi, & Akinsooto).

Finally, data reporting ensures that the findings from data collection and analysis are communicated effectively to stakeholders, including policymakers, program administrators, and refugees. Transparent and accessible reporting mechanisms are essential for maintaining accountability and ensuring that all parties involved in refugee resettlement are aware of the progress being made. Reporting should include both aggregate data and case studies, highlighting both successful outcomes and areas where improvements are needed. Reports should be made available at regular intervals and should be used not only to assess current performance but also to inform future policy decisions and programmatic changes (Elumilade *et al.*, 2022).

3. Designing a data-centric monitoring framework

3.1 Multisectoral collaboration for data sharing

Effective data-centric monitoring in refugee resettlement requires robust multisectoral collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international

organizations, and local communities. Each of these entities holds valuable information that, when shared and integrated, can provide a comprehensive understanding of the resettlement process. For instance, governments often collect administrative data on employment, healthcare access, and housing, while NGOs may track social integration, mental health, and community engagement. Collaborative data sharing between these sectors ensures that no aspect of refugee integration is overlooked, creating a more holistic approach to monitoring and evaluation (Mustapha & Ibitoye, 2022; Oladosu *et al.*, 2022).

Such collaboration is not without its challenges, including differences in data standards, privacy concerns, and sometimes the lack of infrastructure for effective data exchange. However, establishing data-sharing agreements, standardizing data formats, and investing in secure, interoperable platforms can overcome these obstacles. Collaboration also fosters the development of common data standards and governance practices that ensure data quality and consistency across sectors. Moreover, through collective data efforts, refugees benefit from a more seamless experience, as programs across sectors can better coordinate their efforts and avoid duplicating services. This kind of multisectoral collaboration enables timely interventions, informed decision-making, and a more efficient allocation of resources to ensure that refugees are supported throughout their resettlement journey (Onukwulu, Fiemotongha, Igwe, & Ewim, 2022).

3.2 Technological tools for data collection and analysis

The integration of technological tools plays a pivotal role in enhancing the efficiency and accuracy of data collection and analysis in refugee resettlement programs. Modern technologies such as mobile applications, online surveys, and sensor-based tracking systems can collect real-time data on refugees' progress, needs, and challenges. These tools offer a streamlined approach to gather large amounts of data across diverse populations while minimizing human error and bias. For instance, mobile platforms can be used to gather feedback directly from refugees on various aspects of their integration, such as satisfaction with housing, access to services, or employment opportunities (Abbey, Olaleye, Mokogwu, & Queen, 2023a; Otokiti, Igwe, Ewim, Ibeh, & Sikhakhane-Nwokediegwu, 2022).

In addition to data collection, technology is also crucial in data analysis. Advanced data analytics tools such as machine learning algorithms, predictive modeling, and big data analysis can process and analyze complex datasets, uncovering trends and patterns that would be difficult to identify through manual methods. These tools allow for more precise assessments of program effectiveness and the identification of barriers to refugee integration (Oladosu, Ike, Adeyemo, & Adepoju). For example, predictive analytics can help forecast refugees' employment outcomes based on historical data, enabling resettlement agencies to tailor support services more effectively. Furthermore, the use of cloud-based platforms for data storage and collaboration ensures that all stakeholders have access to up-to-date information, improving communication and decision-making. Technological tools, therefore, significantly enhance the overall capability of a data-centric framework by improving both the breadth and depth of data collected and analyzed (Abbey, Olaleye, Mokogwu, & Queen, 2023b).

3.3 Developing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for monitoring outcomes

Developing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is essential for assessing the success of refugee resettlement programs. KPIs serve as measurable metrics that provide a clear benchmark for evaluating whether the objectives of the resettlement process are being met. These indicators can be quantitative, such as the percentage of refugees who have secured employment within six months of arrival, or qualitative, such as refugees' perceived sense of belonging in their new communities. KPIs should be aligned with the broader goals of resettlement programs, including economic self-sufficiency, social integration, and long-term well-being (Abbey *et al.*, 2023b).

To develop effective KPIs, resettlement agencies must first define what success looks like for each stage of the refugee journey. For example, early-stage integration may focus on immediate needs such as housing stability and access to healthcare, while long-term integration may focus on employment, community engagement, and the ability to navigate the local cultural and social systems (Adefila, Ajayi, Toromade, & Sam-Bulya, 2023). KPIs must be both specific and measurable, ensuring that progress can be tracked over time. These indicators must also be flexible to accommodate the diverse needs of refugees, as different groups may face unique challenges in their integration process. Additionally, KPIs should be regularly reviewed and adjusted to reflect evolving goals, emerging challenges, and the changing context of the resettlement program. The development and application of KPIs enable refugee resettlement programs to systematically monitor their outcomes, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively and that interventions are adjusted as needed to maximize success (Adekuajo *et al.*, 2023; Adewale, Olorunyomi, & Odonkor, 2023).

3.4 Integrating qualitative and quantitative data

An effective data-centric framework for refugee resettlement requires the integration of both qualitative and quantitative data to capture the complexity of the refugee experience fully. Quantitative data, such as employment rates, income levels, and educational attainment, offers measurable insights into the success of the resettlement process. However, qualitative data, such as personal testimonies, interviews, and surveys, adds a human dimension to these figures, providing deeper insights into the challenges and successes refugees encounter in their journey (Otokiti *et al.*, 2022).

Integrating both types of data ensures that the monitoring process reflects not only objective progress but also the lived experiences of refugees. For example, while quantitative data may show that a high percentage of refugees have obtained employment, qualitative data can provide context, explaining the types of jobs refugees have secured, their job satisfaction, and barriers they faced in entering the workforce. This combination of data types offers a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of refugee integration (Abbey *et al.*, 2023a).

Additionally, integrating qualitative data allows program administrators to capture nuances such as psychosocial well-being, cultural adaptation, and community relationships, which are often overlooked in traditional quantitative assessments. The ability to blend both data types ensures that monitoring and evaluation efforts are thorough, context-sensitive, and responsive to the complex needs of refugees. As such, integrating qualitative and quantitative data is

essential for building a complete and accurate picture of the success and challenges of refugee resettlement programs (Adekuajo *et al.*, 2023).

4. Measuring progress and outcomes in refugee resettlement

4.1 Assessing socioeconomic integration: employment, housing, healthcare, and education

The measurement of socioeconomic integration is a central aspect of evaluating the success of refugee resettlement programs. Key indicators such as employment, housing stability, healthcare access, and education attainment provide critical insights into how well refugees are integrating into their new environments and achieving self-sufficiency. Employment is one of the most direct measures of socioeconomic integration, reflecting not only the refugees' economic independence but also their engagement with the host country's labor market. Monitoring refugee employment involves tracking job placement rates, income levels, and job quality, as well as measuring long-term career growth and stability (Adewale *et al.*, 2023; Anyanwu, Dawodu, Omotosho, Akindote, & Ewuga, 2023).

Housing is another crucial area, as secure, stable housing is often a prerequisite for successful integration. Data on the quality of housing, whether refugees have access to affordable housing, and their satisfaction with living conditions are important indicators of resettlement success. Healthcare access is also essential for refugees' well-being. The availability of healthcare services, including mental health support, and refugees' ability to navigate the healthcare system, often determines their overall health outcomes (O Awoyemi, Attah, Basiru, & Leghemo, 2023). Similarly, education outcomes, including school enrollment rates, academic performance, and language proficiency, are key indicators of integration. Refugees who gain access to education have a higher likelihood of finding stable employment and contributing to the local community. By systematically monitoring these areas, refugee resettlement programs can assess the effectiveness of their interventions and identify areas where further support is needed to ensure successful integration into the host society (Olanrewaju Awoyemi, Attah, Basiru, Leghemo, & Onwuzulike, 2023).

4.2 Long-Term Outcomes: Self-sufficiency, community engagement, and well-being

While short-term indicators like employment and housing stability are important, the ultimate success of refugee resettlement programs is determined by long-term outcomes. Self-sufficiency is a key long-term goal, reflecting the extent to which refugees can support themselves financially and meet their needs without reliance on government assistance. Indicators of self-sufficiency include stable income, financial independence, and the ability to meet basic living costs. Achieving self-sufficiency is a significant milestone in the resettlement process, as it signifies that refugees have successfully adapted to their new environment and are contributing to the local economy (J. O. Basiru, C. L. Ejiogor, E. C. Onukwulu, & R. Attah, 2023a).

Another critical long-term outcome is community engagement. This measure reflects refugees' participation in their local communities, including their involvement in social, cultural, and civic activities. Successful integration into the social fabric of the host country contributes to refugees' sense of belonging and well-being. Community

engagement can be assessed through metrics such as participation in volunteer work, involvement in local organizations, and social connections with both fellow refugees and host-country nationals (J. O. Basiru, C. L. Ejiofor, E. C. Onukwulu, & R. U. Attah, 2023d).

Finally, well-being is an essential long-term outcome that encompasses physical, mental, and emotional health. Well-being is often influenced by refugees' ability to establish social networks, gain employment, access healthcare, and secure stable housing. Measuring well-being involves both quantitative indicators, such as health outcomes and income levels, and qualitative data, such as refugees' perceived happiness, stress levels, and overall life satisfaction. Collectively, these long-term outcomes provide a more comprehensive understanding of refugee success, extending beyond mere survival to full integration and thriving in a new environment (J. O. Basiru, C. L. Ejiofor, E. C. Onukwulu, & R. U. Attah, 2023b).

4.3 Challenges in data collection and outcome measurement

Measuring progress and outcomes in refugee resettlement programs presents several challenges, especially in terms of data collection and outcome measurement. One of the main challenges is data accessibility. Refugees may face significant barriers to providing reliable information due to language difficulties, limited literacy, or fear of disclosing personal information. These challenges are compounded by the transient nature of refugee populations, where frequent moves, displacement, and resettlement in different regions can make it difficult to track individuals consistently over time. Furthermore, some refugees may be reluctant to engage with authorities due to mistrust or concerns about privacy and security, hindering the collection of accurate and timely data (J. O. Basiru, C. L. Ejiofor, E. C. Onukwulu, & R. U. Attah, 2023c; Basiru *et al.*, 2023d).

Another challenge is data consistency. Different organizations involved in refugee resettlement may use varied methods for collecting and reporting data, leading to discrepancies and challenges in consolidating information across different sources. The lack of standardized data collection methods and measurement tools can undermine the comparability of data and reduce the overall reliability of outcome assessments (J. O. Basiru, L. Ejiofor, C. Onukwulu, & R. U. Attah, 2023e; Daramola, Apeh, Basiru, Onukwulu, & Paul, 2023).

Additionally, quantitative measures such as employment rates or income levels may fail to capture the full scope of refugee experiences. For instance, refugees may be employed but still struggle with unstable or underpaid work, or they may experience social isolation despite meeting basic housing or education criteria. Thus, measuring long-term success requires a nuanced understanding of both quantitative and qualitative outcomes. Finally, resource constraints in data collection and monitoring can also hinder effective outcome measurement. Many resettlement programs operate with limited funding and may lack the infrastructure to implement comprehensive data tracking systems. Without proper resources for data collection and analysis, the ability to measure progress accurately and make informed adjustments to resettlement programs becomes significantly compromised (Fiemotongha, Igwe, Ewim, & Onukwulu, 2023b).

4.4 Strategies for enhancing data accuracy and reliability

To enhance the accuracy and reliability of data collected during refugee resettlement programs, several strategies can be employed. First, improving data collection methods is crucial. This involves the adoption of standardized tools and protocols for gathering data to ensure consistency across different agencies and organizations. For example, common data formats and metrics should be agreed upon by all stakeholders to facilitate data comparison and integration. Additionally, incorporating digital platforms for data collection, such as mobile apps or online surveys, can streamline the process and increase the accuracy of data by reducing human error (Hassan, Collins, Babatunde, Alabi, & Mustapha, 2023; E. K. Jessa, 2023).

Training and capacity building for data collectors is another important strategy. Ensuring that individuals responsible for collecting and analyzing data are adequately trained in best practices and ethical data collection procedures helps to minimize errors and biases. Providing cultural sensitivity training can also improve data collection practices, ensuring that refugee populations feel more comfortable sharing information (Fiemotongha, Igwe, Ewim, & Onukwulu, 2023a).

Furthermore, establishing feedback loops and regular data audits can improve data quality. Encouraging refugees to provide feedback on their experiences and progress allows for ongoing adjustments to the data collection process, making it more responsive to their needs. Regular audits can help identify discrepancies in the data and provide an opportunity for correcting errors in a timely manner (Myllynen, Kamau, Mustapha, Babatunde, & Adeye, 2023).

Lastly, leveraging technological solutions, such as automated data validation tools and advanced analytics, can significantly improve the reliability of data. By implementing software systems that can cross-check data in real-time, errors and inconsistencies can be identified and addressed quickly. Such technological tools also make it easier to integrate data from various sources, ensuring a more holistic view of the resettlement process. By combining these strategies, refugee resettlement programs can improve the accuracy and reliability of their data, leading to more effective monitoring, decision-making, and program improvement (Ogundeji, Omowole, Adaga, & Sam-Bulya, 2023; Onukwulu, Fiemotongha, Igwe, & Ewim, 2023).

5. Conclusion and policy recommendations

The research presented in this paper highlights the crucial role of data-centric monitoring in improving refugee resettlement programs. Through the analysis of key components such as employment, housing, healthcare, education, and long-term self-sufficiency, this study emphasizes the need for robust data collection and outcome measurement to ensure the successful integration of refugees into host societies. The paper underscores that while quantitative indicators, such as employment rates and housing stability, are essential in measuring short-term progress, it is equally important to assess long-term outcomes related to community engagement and refugees' overall well-being.

One of the primary challenges identified is the inconsistency in data collection methods, which can hinder accurate outcome measurement. The absence of standardized

protocols for data collection across agencies leads to discrepancies and limits the ability to compare and integrate data effectively. Additionally, the transient nature of refugee populations, combined with language barriers and data privacy concerns, often hampers the accuracy of collected data. Despite these challenges, the paper suggests that the adoption of technological tools, multisectoral collaboration, and regular feedback loops can significantly enhance the accuracy, reliability, and comprehensiveness of data in refugee resettlement programs.

Ultimately, a data-centric framework provides resettlement agencies with actionable insights, enabling them to identify areas of improvement and allocate resources more effectively. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative data, stakeholders can gain a comprehensive understanding of refugee experiences and create more responsive, adaptable programs.

To enhance the effectiveness of data-centric monitoring in refugee resettlement programs, several policy recommendations are proposed. First, standardization of data collection protocols should be prioritized. Establishing common metrics and methodologies across all agencies involved in refugee resettlement ensures that data collected is comparable and can be integrated across different sectors. Governments and organizations should develop and adopt universal data standards that can be used in various resettlement contexts.

Second, investing in technology for data collection and analysis is vital. Refugee resettlement programs should incorporate digital platforms and data analytics tools to streamline the process of gathering, storing, and analyzing data. These technologies can improve the efficiency and accuracy of data collection, as well as enhance collaboration between different stakeholders.

Third, capacity building for data collectors and program administrators is necessary. Regular training in best practices for data collection, data privacy, and ethical standards will ensure that all stakeholders can contribute to a more accurate and reliable data ecosystem.

Moreover, multisectoral collaboration should be further strengthened. Governments, NGOs, international agencies, and local communities must work together to share relevant data and insights, creating a more comprehensive view of refugee integration. This collaboration should be facilitated by policies that encourage information sharing while ensuring privacy and data security.

Finally, feedback mechanisms and regular program evaluations should be implemented to ensure that data is continuously updated and accurately reflects the evolving needs of refugees. By incorporating feedback from refugees, themselves, resettlement agencies can better tailor their programs to address the real-time challenges faced by refugees, making the process more dynamic and responsive.

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