



## **Learning Brief**

**Using the Self-Reliance Index in  
Graduation Approach Programing in NW  
Syria**

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**Date:**

June 2022

**Title:**

Using the Self-Reliance Index in Graduation Approach Programing in NW Syria

**Country/Region:**

North West Syria  
Azaz District

**Sector:**

Economic Recovery  
Market Systems (ERMS)

**Intervention Dates:**

From June 2021 to June 2022



**Data collection Platforms**

The SRI is available in CommCare and Kobo data collection platforms.

**Statistics:**

People in need: 14.6 million  
Women: 49%  
Men: 51%  
Persons with disability: 29%  
IDP/returnees: 37%  
Residents: 63%

## Introduction

RESTORE II is a large USAID, Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) supported multi-sectoral humanitarian and early recovery response initiative assisting 902,356 conflict-affected people in Northwest Syria, implemented by GOAL and partners.

Supporting BHA’s *Economic Recovery Market Systems* Sector, GOAL and Shafak (a Syrian NGO), have partnered to plot the Graduation Approach with 400 vulnerable displaced (70%) and resident households (30%), who rely on humanitarian assistance for their survival.

The *Graduation Approach* is an evidence-based approach to increasing self-reliance of the ultra-poor, Internally Displaced People (IDP) & refugees. The Graduation Approach addresses the multiple constraints of the extreme poor in a single approach. It guides participants through a personalized pathway out of extreme poverty.

To inform a *market systems aware* Graduation Approach, a market assessment was undertaken in Afrin and Azaz in 2021. Findings were used to tailor the Graduation Approach methodology to the context.

**As the purpose of the Graduation Approach is to lift vulnerable households out of the need for humanitarian assistance, it is important that we can measure progress towards self-reliance.**

## The Self-Reliance Index (SRI)

The Self-Reliance Index was developed jointly by members of the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative ([www.refugeeselfreliance.org](http://www.refugeeselfreliance.org)), with leadership from Refuge Point and Women’s Refugee Commission to track refugee households progress towards self-reliance.

The SRI was developed through a three-year multi-stakeholder process involving over 25 contributing partners and is primarily intended to support practitioners in designing and providing effective It may also assist in targeting populations for assistance, highlighting service gaps, and informing funding priorities.

**The SRI was created to track refugee household progress towards self-reliance**



## Aggregate Self-Reliance Index Scores

The SRI is designed to provide a rapid, high-level indication of key socio-economic status within a target household and uses twelve domains associated with *socio-economic inclusion*. The *SRI’s score has a range between 1-5 (with 5 indicating higher levels of self-reliance)*, it is used to track changes over time. To date, two data sets have been collected from 396 Graduation Approach participating households in Q 1. Dec. 2021 and in Q2. April 2022. Our thanks to [Refuge Point](#) who provided a quality assurance review of the data sets. The table below illustrates the aggregate responses and changes. All domains show a small but positive change except for relational social capital, which shows a decrease, Q3 will explore potential data collection issues. Additional data sets (each quarter) will provide the trend towards self-reliance for the whole cohort a useful project management tool. However, individual household data trends are much more useful for adaptive management, to identify households that are not making progress and allow Coaches to provide additional and timely support.

Average of SRI Domains	Q1	Q2	Change	
Domain 1a: Housing adequacy	4.21	4.32	+0.11	↑
Domain 1b: Rent	1.83	1.89	+0.06	↑
Domain 2: Food	3.69	4.02	+0.33	↑
Domain 3: Education	1.65	2.19	+0.54	↑
Domain 4: Health care	2.78	3.11	+0.33	↑
Domain 5: Health status	2.41	2.50	+0.09	↑
Domain 6: Safety	3.08	4.16	+1.08	↑
Domain 7: Employment	1.47	1.70	+0.23	↑
Domain 8: Financial Resources	1.30	1.57	+0.27	↑
Domain 9: Assistance	2.45	2.50	+0.05	↑
Domain 10: Debt	2.47	3.01	+0.54	↑
Domain 11: Savings	1.23	1.32	+0.08	↑
Domain 12a: Financial social capital	3.31	3.60	+0.28	↑
Domain 12b: Relational social capital	3.70	2.16	-1.54	↓
<b>Total SRI Score</b>	<b>2.17</b>	<b>2.53</b>	<b>+0.36</b>	<b>↑</b>

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## Key SRI findings

- **Nearly all respondents have some form of debt** (up to 80%), with 74% incurring debt for food, and 30% for healthcare, 22% for housing. When compared with Q1, debt decreased by 12.4%, nevertheless, this remains an area of concern.
- **Most had no savings of sellable assets** (Q1. 90%, Q2. 88%), indicating that most households are unable to rely on their own resources to manage a shock.
- **Low levels of social capital** in a family emergency 35% in Q2 compared to 42% in Q1 do not know of anyone who would be able to lend the family money to cover unexpected and urgent costs, which reflects a small improvement (7%). Host community members are more likely to know someone who can lend them money.
- **A decrease in relational social capital** with little different between IDP and host communities. 57% have not asked other households for advice nor have other household member asked for advice.
- **The overall average SRI scores is low** (average 2.35) and reflects the prolonged conflict affected context and the vulnerability of the people of NW Syria.
- **The SRI score for women (54%) has increased more than for men (24%)** between Q1 and Q2, for both IDP and resident community participants. The improvement for IDP women is the greatest (57.9%), followed by host community women (51.3%), then host community men (35%) with IDP men registering the lowest score (19.3%).
- Host community members are more likely to have **adequate housing**, whereas the IDPs are nearly twice as likely to be living in a makeshift shelter.
- **IDPs feel less save** to pursue opportunities when compared to host communities.
- **Large household size** the average family size is 6.9 (54% children, 5% senior and 41% adults).

## The SRI is currently in use in



## Learning

1. Prior to the third data collection Q3, increase training for data collection for relational social capital question.
2. The aggregate SRI scores are a useful tool for monitor the overall trend by domain for the target group over time, but its real value is in monitoring trends by individual household, a good fit with the Graduation Approach methodology, an individual case management approach.
3. The SRI can be a powerful adaptive management tool to identify the most vulnerable households so that additional support is planned, provided, and monitored more closely for extremely vulnerable households.
4. Coach line managers need to plan a SRI review with each Coach for every participant on a quarterly basis to review the new data set and trends for each domain and make a individualized plan for increased support to specific households, where required.
5. Explore the use of the SRI for measuring Graduation.



## References/ Citations:

**Self-Reliance:** is the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity – developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern and reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian assistance.

*Source: RLSS/DOS/UNHCR*

## Support:

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