



JIPS Mission to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq August-September 2015

Participants: JIPS Profiling Advisor & Training and Profiling Advisor

Dates: 29th August to 14th September 2015

GENERAL BACKGROUND

JIPS engagement with the KRI operation was initiated by a support request, led by the Erbil Refugee Council (ERC) and UNHCR in June 2015, to support the planning for a collaborative profiling exercise of IDPs, refugees and host communities in urban areas in the Erbil Governorate of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. (**Annex 1: JIPS support request form**) To lead the exercise, a Profiling Steering Committee consisting of ERC, Joint Crisis Coordination Centre, Kurdistan Region Statistics Office, IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR and UNOCHA has been set up. JIPS was invited for a scoping mission to support the Steering Committee members in the process of identifying the relevance of a profiling exercise in Erbil and outlining a methodology approach for the profiling exercise. The mission was jointly hosted by ERC and UNHCR.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of the JIPS mission, in detail identified in the mission TORs (**Annex 2: Mission TORs**), were:

- To provide support to partners in identifying the need and objectives, as well as methodology approach for a profiling exercise of the displacement situation in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq with initial focus on Erbil;
- To provide support to coordination arrangements and partnership consolidation for a potential collaborative profiling project;
- To build the capacity of actors responding to the displacement situation in the KRI through a profiling training event.

MISSION ACTIVITIES

During the mission, JIPS met with key stakeholders in Erbil, including Erbil Governorate authorities, NGO and UN partners. A 3-day profiling training took place in the beginning of the mission. Field visits were arranged in urban and peri-urban areas of Erbil in out-of-camp locations, where displaced populations reside. At the end of the mission, a Profiling Steering Committee meeting was held to consolidate the feedback from various consultations during the mission and to agree on the objectives and methodology outline for the exercise. A full mission schedule can be found as an annex to this report (**Annex 3: Mission Schedule**).

MISSION LIMITATIONS

Although the mission only focused on Erbil, it was not possible to meet with all relevant partners/thematic focal points in the Governorate due to conflicting leave and travel times. Visits to Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk were also not possible during the brief mission time, although initiating the discussions with partners in these Governorates at an early stage will be valuable to include potential considerations of expanding the exercise to the rest of the Region early on in the process.

MISSION ACHIEVEMENTS

The initial expectation of this mission was to explore the relevance and feasibility of a profiling process in Erbil, with the aim of informing comprehensive responses to the displacement situation. During the mission, the process advanced through stakeholder consultations and technical working sessions to produce an outline of the methodology approach. The mission also included the facilitation of a 3-day profiling training, which raised awareness about profiling and paved the way for discussions during the mission. The training was attended by 33 participants from the Government, NGOs and UN agencies. The training focused on raising awareness around profiling, its differences and complementarities with other data collection exercises and systems, and map and strengthen existing capacity and interest to participate in a collaborative profiling exercise. The full training agenda and list of participants can be found in the annexes. **(Annex 4. Profiling training agenda; Annex 5. List of training participants.)** It is important to note that the achievements of this mission are built upon the result of long-standing work and momentum building by partners in KRI, especially ERC and UNHCR.

MISSION OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on mission findings and JIPS experience, the mission made the following key observations and recommendations:

A. General context

1. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq faces a complicated displacement situation with remarkable numbers of refugees from Syria and internally displaced people moving into the region. The majority of these populations are residing among the host community (it is estimated that more than 60% of the refugees and around 80% of the IDPs are out of camps), however available information on these out-of-camp populations is less available in comparison to the populations residing in camps.¹ The displaced populations have the tendency to cluster in the proximity of larger urban areas, such as Erbil city, Diana and Shaqlawa, where they live side-by-side their non-displaced neighbours. **The Government as well as both humanitarian and development actors have recognised the need to develop refined strategies to address the needs of the communities in the urban settings through more comprehensive approaches, which address the urban development challenges of the these areas with particular emphasis on understanding the dynamics caused by the urban displacement phenomenon.**
2. Population figures for displaced populations are by various sources: UNHCR provides the refugee statistics, while the information on IDPs collected by the Ministry of Displacement and Migration and IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix, while information on all population groups moving to and within the KRI region is recorded by the *Assayish* as well as the *mukhtars* that function as neighbourhood-level administrators. The methods of collecting this information as well as the operationalized definitions used for IDPs by these different systems seem to differ slightly, resulting in somewhat different estimates, however the overall trend that the different systems provide is clear: **the influx of the refugees and internally displaced people have resulted in a rapid and drastic increase in the total population in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq over the past few years with significant impacts on all Government as well as**

¹ As of 31 July 2015 for refugees and 30 July 2015 for IDPs. Sources: UNHCR Registration Unit, UNOCHA, CCCM Cluster, IOM/DTM.

humanitarian and development planning. Mandated by the Ministry of Plan and with support from IOM, UNFPA and UNHCR, the Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office conducted in June 2015 a full enumeration of IDP households in the KRI region. This entailed a counting of all IDP households in the KRI, as well as collecting information through a short questionnaire on the household composition and date of displacement. The data is currently being cleaned and is expected to be published shortly, with a second phase of the exercise, entailing a detailed registration, waiting to be launched.

3. The increase in the total population of the KRI due to displacement has clearly had significant implications for the host community, however systematic analysis about this impact and information about the relationships between different population groups, remains largely anecdotal. The Government and the humanitarian/development community have identified the need to move towards more evidence-based long-term planning in relation to the prolonging crisis. **While the humanitarian emergency continues and numerous people are in need of immediate assistance upon their arrival to KRI, large proportions of the IDP and refugee populations are facing a situation that is becoming protracted. At the same time, the profiles of the different displacement-affected groups are diverse.** In addition to recent displacement, groups of IDPs and refugees were displaced prior to the current crises, and due to its rapid economic growth, the Kurdistan region has also attracted substantial numbers of migrants for economic reasons. Additionally, both host populations and displaced groups include households with a range of socio-economic profiles from relatively affluent to very vulnerable households. **While not all of these groups are in need of humanitarian assistance, understanding the coping mechanisms and vulnerabilities that different groups adopt, as well as the interactions and potential sources of friction between the displaced populations and the host communities would provide crucial information for longer term planning for the communities as a whole.**
4. Multiple data systems and exercises such as for example IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix, UNHCR's protection monitoring systems for IDPs and refugees, and Multi-Cluster and Multi-Sector Needs Assessments conducted by REACH are in place to inform programming and responses. However, the majority of the existing data systems and studies have generally been focusing specifically on understanding IDPs, refugees or the host community separately, which has made analysing the situation as a whole challenging. **Bringing the findings of the various data sources into one analysis was thus a need clearly identified by different partners in the operation in order to build a comprehensive picture of the existing information and to identify potential gaps.**

B. In relation to the planned profiling process in Erbil

1. During the mission, the need for a collaborative process to better understand the comprehensive picture of the displacement situation in Erbil Governorate was clearly confirmed by the members of the existing Profiling Steering Committee as well as a wider group of partners. A profiling exercise is therefore planned that will bring together existing data and jointly formulate methodologies for addressing data gaps and completing this analysis. **To ensure added value of the profiling exercise for the Government, NGO and UN partners, a collaborative and consultative approach throughout the exercise will be key.** The Profiling Steering Committee is comprised of several actors representing the KRI Government and Erbil Governorate, as well as the humanitarian/ development community, namely ERC, Joint Crisis Coordination Centre, Kurdistan Region Statistics Office, IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR and UNOCHA. In order to ensure the smooth running of the exercise and to facilitate open communication with the wider group of stakeholders, a technical working group with appointed focal points from different Steering Committee member organisations with the relevant technical and coordination expertise was established. The technical working group will take the lead in working on the implementation of the technical and operational processes of the exercise with the guidance of the KRSO/ESO and support from JIPS as needed. **In addition to the oversight provided by the Steering Committee throughout the exercise, it is also recommended for consultations be expanded beyond the Steering Committee members in the key stages of the process (finalisation of the thematic framework, analysis and interpretation of findings) in order to consolidate technical and thematic inputs from a wider group of partners, including the NGO community.**

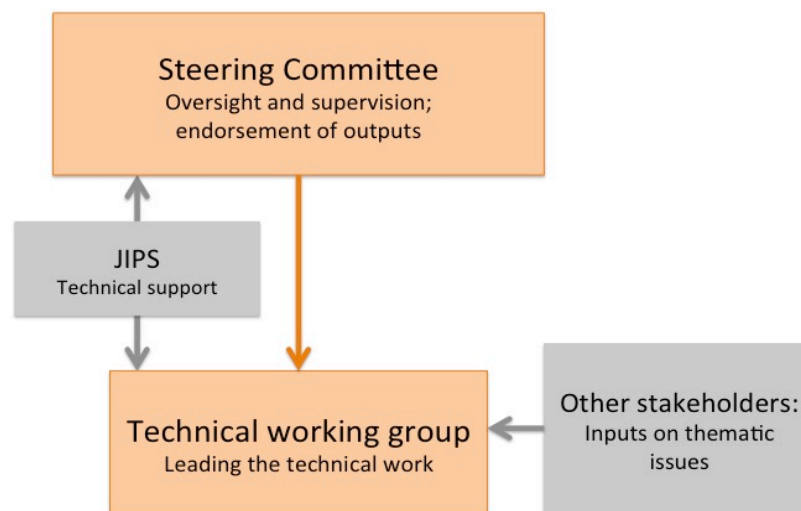


Figure 1. Coordination structure for the profiling exercise.

2. During the mission, discussions also took place with UN-Habitat, exploring possible synergies between their work and expertise and the area-based approach to displacement profiling recommended for Erbil (see section 3 below). **JIPS sees that the work of the Profiling Steering Committee would be further enriched by inputs and expertise of UN-Habitat, particularly in relation to the neighbourhood profile component of the exercise.** At the global level, an initiative is underway to bring together the respective expertise of UN-Habitat, the Feinstein International Center (Tufts University) and JIPS, in order to provide a comprehensive set of profiling tools for understanding urban displacement. Collaboration on the profiling exercise in KRI/Erbil could benefit from this work underway on aligning methodologies for further strengthening the analysis of displacement situations in urban contexts.

3. Based on the scoping mission’s findings, JIPS recommends that the profiling should take an *area-based approach*, whereby the focus of the analysis will be on the vulnerabilities and resilience of the different displaced and displacement-affected communities (IDPs, refugees and the host communities) residing in the same areas, as well as the capacity of these areas to accommodate these populations. Whereas hitherto the focus of the humanitarian response has largely been on populations residing in camps, this analysis will serve to inform a stronger emphasis on an evidence-based out-of-camp response. In order to capture the different nuances of each group, the analysis of the profiling data will be constructed around groupings of different neighbourhoods based on the general standard of living in the areas. During the mission, the overall objectives and methodology approach for the exercise were agreed upon, and more detailed methodology design will take place in September-October 2015. (See Annex 6 for more details on the proposed methodology approach.) Broadly, the methodology will be developed around comparative population profiles of IDPs, refugees and host communities residing in the same areas, combined with an analysis of the absorption capacities of the neighbourhoods where these populations live to identify opportunities and challenges for comprehensive responses to the urban displacement situation. As demonstrated in Figure 1 below, this area-based profiling approach will combine secondary and primary data at neighbourhood, community and household levels, using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

4. Various organizations have collected and are collecting information on IDPs and refugees in Erbil, and the desk review component of the profiling exercise therefore needs to ensure that the planned exercise does not duplicate efforts of existing data collection systems. The profiling exercise is recommended to build upon an analytical framework of thematic issues pertinent for improved responses across the different sectors. These themes should be broken down to clear indicators that will enable measurement of current needs/opportunities and potentially be used for monitoring change in the future. This framework will add value beyond the immediate scope of the profiling plans by consolidating the existing data systems in one frame. As a first step of the profiling exercise, the framework should be populated to the extent possible with existing data – taking into account the potential limitations of their usability for comparative analysis due to the different methodologies used – before embarking on the process of developing tools for primary data collection.

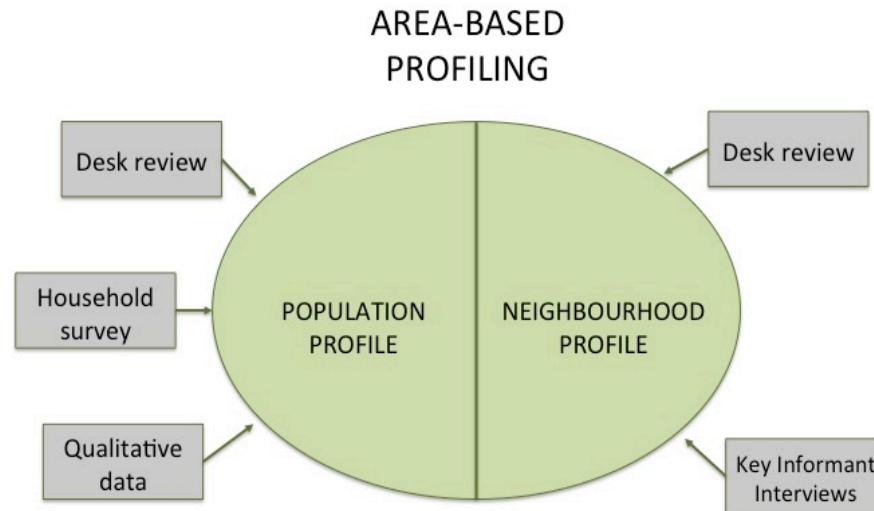


Figure 1. Combining different methods for area-based profiling

5. Relatively comprehensive and up-to-date information on the numbers of displaced populations is available for the Kurdistan Region, although some variation occurs between the figures provided by the different systems led by the authorities and the humanitarian actors particularly on IDP data. Discussions on consolidating the figures was on-going in the operation during the mission, and with support from IOM, UNFPA and UNHCR, the first phase of the Comprehensive Registration of Displaced People (CRDP) was conducted by the Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office (KRSO) in June 2015. **With the opportune release of this official IDP figure from the Statistics Office, it is recommended for the household survey component of the profiling exercise to build upon this recent population figure and identified locations for the creation of a baseline for the IDP population. At the same time, while UNHCR's registration data will likely be used as the baseline for the refugee population.**

6. In addition to collaboratively developed methodology and tools, a collaborative analysis of the findings can provide stakeholders with an opportunity to align responses and advocacy, particularly *vis à vis* the response to date that has been steered separately towards the different displaced populations. **The Government and Steering Committee members should lead this analysis process and jointly formulate recommendations. JIPS recommends that the analysis phase of the profiling also be opened to a wider group of interested partners beyond the Steering Committee members, and that the findings are disseminated strategically, including through a workshop/roundtable for all relevant partners to feed into recommendations for the way forward for the humanitarian and development community as a whole.**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

JIPS mission is grateful to:

- The support and involvement of all partners in Erbil.
- ERC and UNHCR for excellent hosting arrangement and mission support – especially Diyar Omar, Shadman Mahmoud, Vian Rasheed, Jozef Merckx, Peter Joshi, Karam Hindi and Musa Al-Asad.
- Members of the Profiling Steering Committee for committing their time for discussions and guidance during the mission.
- JIPS staff in Geneva for their support from afar.

NEXT STEPS

As agreed upon during the mission, JIPS is available to support the profiling exercises in the following ways:

- Support the process of finalising the profiling methodology;
- Support the technical working group in developing the thematic framework, undertaking the desk review and developing data collection tools and analysis plans;
- Provide further remote and onsite support to the Steering Committee and the technical working group during the profiling process as required.

ANNEXES

- ***Annex 1: JIPS support request for KRI***
- ***Annex 2: JIPS mission TOR***
- ***Annex 3: JIPS mission schedule***
- ***Annex 4: Profiling training agenda***
- ***Annex 5: List of training participants***
- ***Annex 6: Draft profiling methodology outline (as shared during the Steering Committee meeting on 13.9.15, more detailed version under development)***