

Findings of the Key Informant Assessments of Syrian Refugees in Host Communities

Irbid Governorate

20th January 2013

BACKGROUND

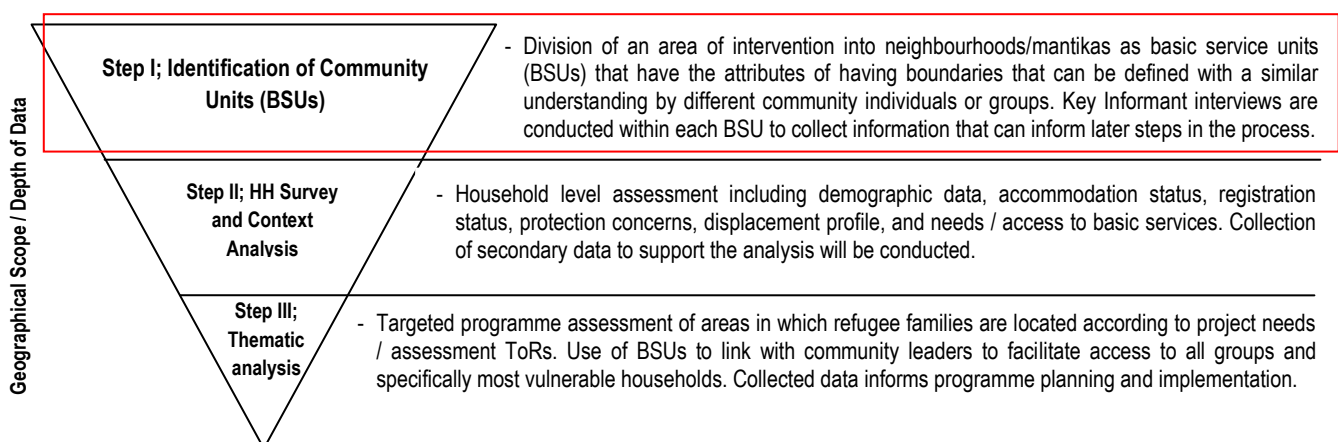
The continued crisis in Syria has caused a large influx of Syrians into Jordan, amounting to more than 164,000 refugees (UNHCR, 07.01.2012). According to UNHCR registration data, more than 90% have settled in Northern Jordan, as well as the urban and peri-urban centres of Amman and Zarqa, with the large majority of refugees settling within host communities.

Information management systems available to humanitarian actors have struggled to keep pace with the rapidly changing refugee context. With this in mind, REACH was deployed to Jordan in October 2012 in order to complement information management efforts undertaken by other humanitarian actors, notably by UN agencies, and to contribute towards addressing information gaps on Syrian refugees located in camps and host communities. By establishing a baseline dataset that includes key information on the geographical distribution, conditions and priority needs of Syrian refugees, REACH aims to ensure better planning, coordination and traceability of humanitarian aid.

The data presented in this factsheet represents the findings of key informant interviews that were conducted in the host communities of the Irbid Governorate between November 12th and December 12th. Key informant interviews were conducted in two stages; first, assessment teams would use the knowledge of key informants to define basic services units (BSUs); secondly, interviews would take place with a set of key informants from each of the defined BSUs to build up a picture of displacement patterns and the refugee profile and context in the target Governorate. During this phase of the project, 199 key informant interviews were conducted, involving over 583 key informants.

Assessment Methodology

REACH's assessment methodology is based on a three step approach to data collection that gradually sharpens the understanding of the context both in terms of geographical focus as well as depth of data, as shown in the figure below. The objective of this process is to provide humanitarian actors with information that allows for more informed decision-making with regards to their targeting of specific geographic locations or beneficiary group based on their programme planning needs; thus enabling better planning, coordination and traceability of aid. As such the REACH methodology (outlined in the figure below) focuses primarily on the geographic identification of refugees living in host communities and collects a core baseline of household specific information that enables the preparation of situational analyses. This Fact Sheet is based on the findings of Step I for Irbid Governorate. Step II is currently on-going and a separate fact sheet will be produced accordingly.



Key Findings

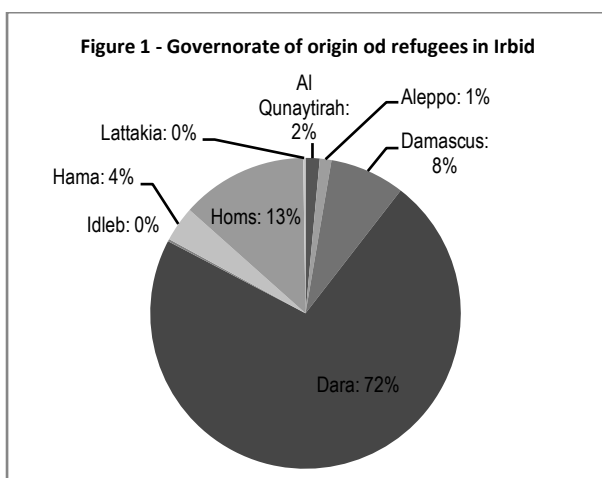
A total of total of 194 BSUs were identified through the assessment, in which key informant interviews were conducted involving more than 577 key informants. 43 of the BSUs identified were located in the urban areas of Irbid (27) and Ramtha (16) Cities, and 151 were located in the rural areas of the Governorate. Annex 1 shows the BSUs identified by assessment teams in which key informant interviews were conducted.

Through this process a total number of 4802 refugee families were identified representing approximately 28139 individuals. 13342 of the identified individuals were settled in urban BSUs within the Governorate and 14797 in rural BSUs. Annex 2 shows the breakdown of households per BSU identified in Irbid Governorate.

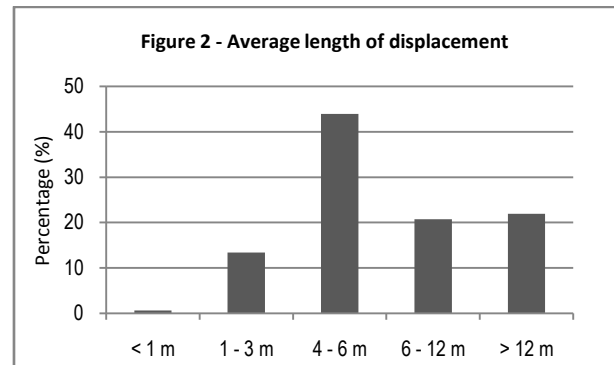
Note that family and individual figures presented in this report should be interpreted as indicative figures as these are reported by key informants within each geographic location / basic service unit. A household survey is currently ongoing and will provide confirmation of these figures. Past experience has shown that demographic figures are subject to increase once the household survey results are compiled.

Displacement Profile

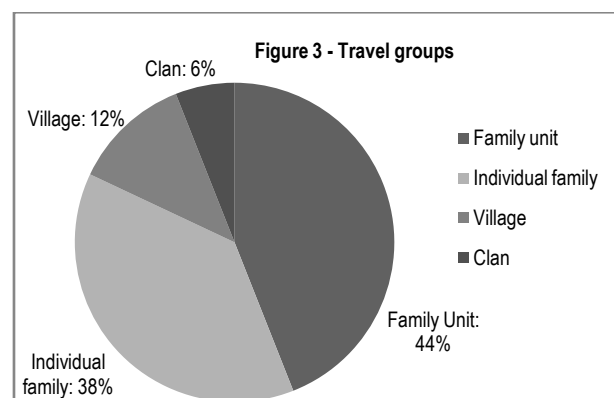
72% of refugees resident in the Irbid Governorate originate from Dara'a Governorate; other Governorates from which a sizeable proportion of refugees were displaced from were reported as: Homs (13%), Damascus (8%), and Hama (4%). Additionally, Key Informants identified a small minority of refugees, representing less than 3% of the total, whose origin in Syria was from the Governorates of Aleppo, Al Quneitra, Idlib, or Latakia. For further details on areas of origin, please refer to Annex 3.



On average 20.7% of refugees had been displaced to Irbid Governorate for a relatively long period, having been displaced in Irbid Governorate for over 12 months. The most commonly reported period of residency in the Governorate was 4 – 6 months (43.9%). Interestingly, key informants reported that only a very small proportion of refugees, 0.6% (ca. 1 family), had arrived less than 1 month prior to the time of assessment.



44% of refugee families travelled to Jordan as part of their extended family unit. A similar proportion, 38%, reported to have travelled as an individual family¹. Only a small proportion of refugee families travelled to Jordan either as a village – i.e. with neighbours from their specific area of origin – or in a clan grouping (in which groups from various villages belonging to the same clan travelled together), with 12% and 6% respectively. Although the majority of refugees travelled in either extended or direct family groups, 34% left one or more family members behind in Syria for a variety of reasons including: health problems, a lack of appropriate transportation, a refusal to leave Syria, employment, or due to family members being currently involved in the armed conflict.

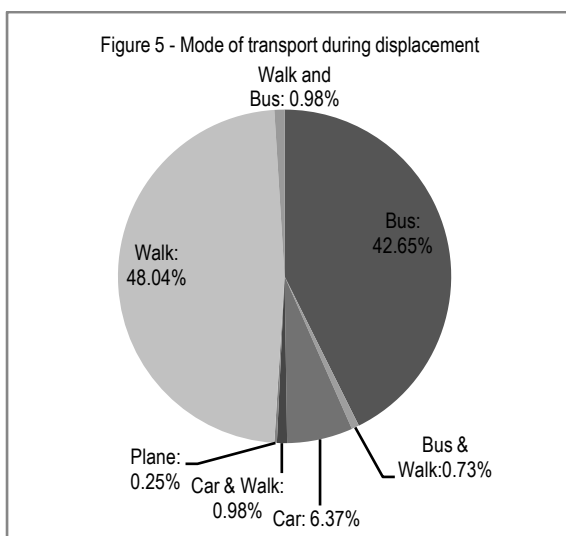


61% of Syria refugees residing in Irbid Governorate reported having entered into Jordan either at or in the proximity of the

¹ For the purpose of this assessment an 'individual family unit' represents direct family members only; parents and children. An 'extended family' refers to blood relatives travelling together as a group consisting of multiple individual families.

Ramtha border crossing. The remainder, **39%**, reported having crossed the border either at or in the vicinity of the Jaber border point located in the neighbouring Mafrqa Governorate².

48% of refugees residing in Irbid Governorate reported having reached Jordan by walking. Of those who walked, the majority, **77%**, chose to travel during the night with only a small proportion, **23%**, opting to travel during the day. **43%** reported having travelled to Jordan by bus; with the majority (**66.2%**) using this method of transport during the day. Key informants reported a small number of refugees that travelled to Jordan by car or plane, representing **6.37%** and **0.25%** of the total respectively.



Context Analysis within Jordan

According to Key Informants the vast majority, approximately **65%**, of refugees residing in Irbid Governorate at the time of the assessment had settled directly in their current location. Additionally, a considerable proportion of refugees, **29%**, had spent some time in either a transit facility (Al Bashabsha, King Abdullah Park, or Cyber City) or a refugee camp (Al Za'atari) prior to settling in Irbid. When Key Informants were asked the reasons as to why refugees were moving away from the aforementioned locations the most common reasons were the following – *note these are not listed in order of priority*:

- The perceived low quality of available services.
- Family member(s) with health problems.
- Security concerns inside the camp.

² Note that due to the potential sensitivity of the question, the assessment did not request the respondents to specify whether refugees within their community crossed at the official border points or otherwise via an unofficial crossing.

A small proportion, approximately **6%**, of refugees settled in other host communities prior to settling in Irbid. When questioned as to why the refugees moved to Irbid from another location the most common reasons given by Key Informants were the following:

- Poor services available in previous location (**60.7%**)
- Cost of living in previous location (**9.2%**)
- Lack of available job opportunities in the previous location (**4.2%**)
- The presence of relatives in Irbid (**4.0%**)

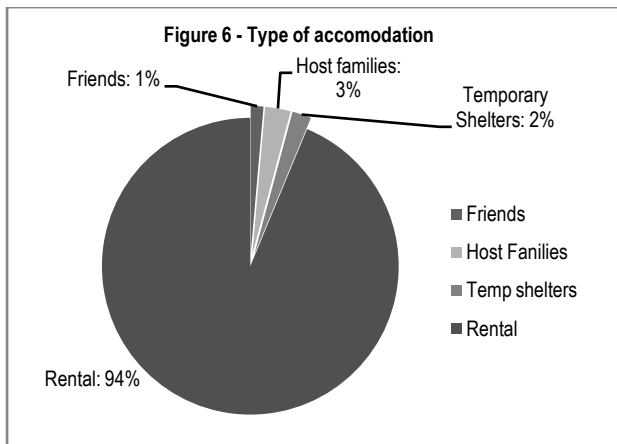
When asked if further displacement was likely, Key Informants indicated that the main issue that could lead to further displacement is the high costs of living in the Irbid Governorate, particularly the cost of rental properties. Additionally, according to Key Informants, a small number of refugees are likely to leave their current location in Irbid Governorate due to the presence of relatives in another location. Interestingly, a **6.7%** of Key Informants indicated that some refugee families were planning on returning to Syria as a direct result of the high cost of living in Jordan in combination with rapidly diminishing resources with which to finance these expenses.

The most commonly reported factor attracting Syrian refugees to settle in Irbid Governorate was the presence of relatives (**45.8%**). The other factors reported by Key Informants are as follows:

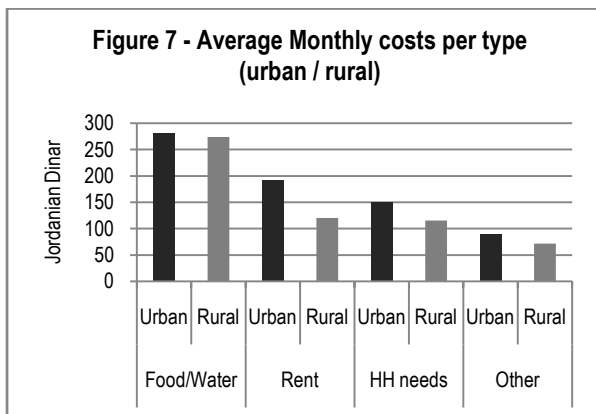
- Feeling of improved personal security (**22.1%**)
- Affordable rental costs / cost of living (**18.3%**)
- Availability of services (**3.05%**)
- Work opportunities (**1.5%**)
- Proximity to the Syrian border (**0.76%**)

When questioned on the source of information used by Syrian refugees to determine where to settle in Jordan, Key Informants stated that the majority, approximately **56%**, received information from other Syrian families. Additionally approximately one third of refugees received information from local Jordanians. Only a small proportion, approximately **6%**, relied solely upon relatives for information on where to settle in Jordan.

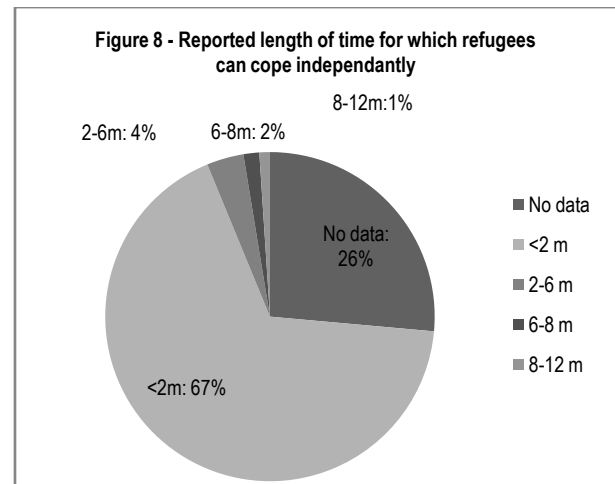
The majority, **93%**, of refugees resident in Irbid Governorate at the time of assessment were living in rental accommodation. Of those living in rental accommodation, the average rental cost was reported as being **143 Jordanian Dinars (JOD)**. Key Informants reported that a small number of refugees, representing 7% of the total, lived in a temporary shelter, with friends / relatives, or with host families. Of this 6%, only **30%** of respondents are reported to be paying rent.



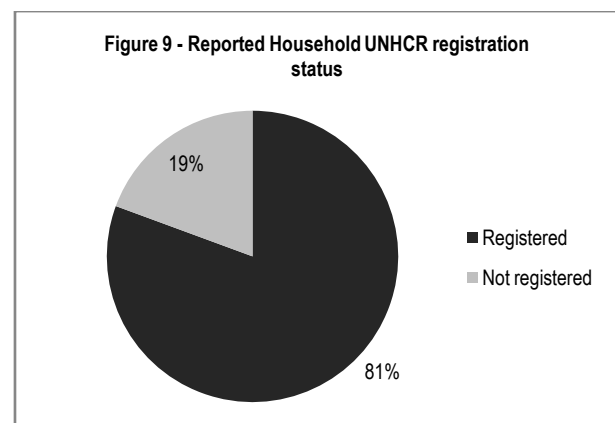
On average the total monthly living cost per refugee household in Irbid Governorate was reported as **596 JOD**. The majority of monthly expenditure was reported to be on food/water (on average **277 JOD**) and rent (**143 JOD**). Total average monthly living costs are much higher for refugees resident in urban than rural BSUs, with **715 JOD** compared to **582 JOD** respectively. The most considerable difference in expenditure between urban and rural BSUs is on rent, with the average monthly cost in urban BSUs being **192 JOD** compared to **120 JOD** in rural areas.



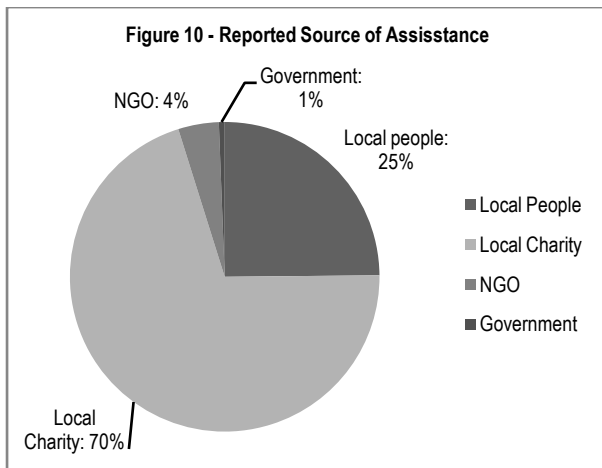
Considering the high cost of living in Irbid (illustrated above), and the reported increase in rental costs in the Governorate, Key Informants were asked to estimate the length of time for which Syrian refugees could cope independently. It was reported in **67%** of Key Informant interviews that Syrian refugees would be unable to cope independently for any longer than 2 months in their current living conditions. Only a small number of refugees were reported to have the means to cope independently for longer than 2 months, representing **6.2%** of the total.



According to Key Informants, **81%** of refugee households in Irbid Governorate were registered with UNHCR at the time of assessment. Of the BSUs which reported that no refugee households were registered with UNHCR, the average time of residency in Irbid Governorate was relatively short, reportedly under three months. In BSUs where households had been longer term residents in Irbid (either 6 – 12 months or over 12 months) **100%** of refugees were reported to be registered with UNHCR.



Of the **194** BSUs hosting Syrian refugees, **69%** reported having received some kind of humanitarian assistance. Overall the assistance received by Syrian refugees was in the majority of cases from local sources, be it local charities, **70%**, or local people, **25%**. Only a very small proportion of key informants reported that the international community or the Jordanian Government were the source of assistance received by Syrian refugees, **4%** and **1%** respectively.



Key informants were asked to rank the sector specific needs of refugees resident in their BSU. As the table below shows, in the vast majority of cases, **88%**, support in the form of cash / vouchers was identified by Key Informants as the most urgent need of Syrian refugees. Winter support and food aid were also identified as urgent needs of Syrian refugees, being selected by the majority of key informants as second (**60%**) and third (**55%**) priorities respectively.

Table 1 – Priority needs as a % of times mentioned

| Sector Need | Priority 1 | Priority 2 | Priority 3 |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Cash / Voucher | 80.85% | 2.22% | 0.81% |
| Food Aid | 1.06% | 24.44% | 54.03% |
| Water | 2.13% | 2.24% | 1.61% |
| Shelter & NFI | 3.19% | 0.74% | 4.84% |
| Sanitation / Hygiene | 0.0% | 0.74% | 2.42% |
| CfW / Job Placement | 1.06% | 1.48% | 2.42% |
| Health Assistance | 1.06% | 5.92% | 3.22% |
| Winter Support | 10.65% | 62.22% | 30.65% |

REACH

REACH was formed in 2010 as a joint initiative of two INGOs (ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives) and a UN program (UNOSAT). The purpose of REACH is to promote and facilitate the development of information products that enhance the humanitarian community's capacity to make decisions and plan in emergency, reconstruction and development contexts.

At country level, REACH teams are deployed to countries experiencing emergencies or at-risk-of-crisis in order to facilitate interagency collection, organisation and dissemination of key humanitarian related information. Country-level deployments are conducted within the framework of partnerships with individual actors as well as aid coordination bodies, including UN agencies, clusters, inter-cluster initiatives, and other interagency initiatives.