Findings of the Household Assessments of Syrian Refugees in Host Communities

Sulaymaniya Governorate

25 July 2013

BACKGROUND

Of the over 1,863,113 Syrian refugees estimated in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt as of the of July 2013, 160,335 have registered with UNHCR in Iraq. In the Kurdistan region a number of factors including: (a) the onset of winter conditions; (b) a continuing influx of new refugee arrivals from Syria causing an increased stress on host community infrastructure and services; and (c) weakened coping mechanisms within refugee communities living in hosted conditions given the prolonged period of displacement; are causing increased pressure on individual refugee families, forcing many to be drawn towards the choice to either relocate towards the main refugee camp in Domiz, Dohuk Governorate, or consider a return to Syria. With the capacity of Domiz camp limited, there is a need for the humanitarian community to focus on support to refugees hosted within communities across Kurdistan. The major challenge for actors on the ground however lies in identifying the refugee families hosted in communities across villages and cities of Iraq, and accessing baseline information that would allow for a quicker and more effective targeting of resources necessary to launch relevant and timely responses.

The data presented in this factsheet represents the findings of household level interviews that were conducted in the host communities of Sulaymaniya Governorate between March – May 2013. During this phase of the project, 1,987 displaced Syrian households, representing 5,014 individuals, were assessed. The household assessments focused on collecting five key sets of information from each households: 1. Household demographic data; 2. Registration card numbers; 3. Displacement profile; 4. Accommodation context; 5. Services and Needs. Additionally, assessment team leaders collected GPS data for each building housing Syrian refugee households in order to allow for the mapping of key data trends discovered through the analysis of collected data.

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. It is important to note that this represents a snap shot of the situation and is based on the self-perception of the interviewees.

1 https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=103
A partnership of:

**KEY FINDINGS**

A total of 1,987 households were identified through the assessment in the Sulaymaniya Governorate, representing approximately 5,014 individuals. The assessment was conducted in 92 neighborhoods (mahala) which were delineated to 102 BSUs. The BSUs, also known as mahala, take the form of the smallest community level delimited area, not always corresponding with geographical boundaries, which are identified and verified directly by the communities.

**HOUSEHOLD PROFILE**

The total population identified demonstrated a slight male majority representing 61% of the total assessed. A total of 1,086 single men were identified, representing 22% of assessed individuals.

40% of individuals identified throughout the assessment were reported to be under the age of 18, of which 15% were reported to younger than 5 years old. Overall, an almost equal gender breakdown can be observed; however, 15% of identified males were aged between 18 and 24, compared to 6% of women; and 19% of males were between the age of 25 to 40, compared to 10% of women.

**DISPLACEMENT PROFILE**

The two main reported areas of origin for assessed households were the neighborhoods of Quamishli and Ain al Arab, 29% and 23% respectively. This considerable proportion of households that reported originating from aforementioned Syrian neighborhoods can be explained by the predominant Kurdish population in these locations. Additionally, a sizeable proportion of households now located in Sulaymaniya Governorate originate from Afrin, 9%, Jebel Saman, 7%, and Darbasiyah, 7%.

Of the households identified through the assessment, the majority, 63%, reported that they had been in Iraq between 2 to 6 months. Almost a quarter of households, 24%, reported they had been displaced from their area of origin recently and had been in Iraq less than a month, while 12% of respondents indicated having been in Iraq between 6 to 12 months. Only a small proportion of households, 1%, reported being in Iraq for a year or more.
REGISTRATION STATUS

The vast majority of households, 76%, reported that they were registered with UNHCR at the time of assessment. In addition to the 18% of households that reported they were not registered with UNHCR, 6% of households reported that they had a registration interview scheduled with UNHCR.

Only 46% of assessed households indicated to possess a residency card; however, 30% of households reported that they had an appointment scheduled. 24% of households indicated they did not possess a residency card nor had an appointment to obtain one at the time of assessment.

The majority of households, 67%, reported they did not require assistance during the registration process. This proportion of individuals is significantly higher than in the other targeted Governorates in this assessment.

SHELTER SITUATION

The majority of households identified in Sulaymaniya Governorate, 54%, were resident in apartments or houses at the time of assessment. Crucially, a significant proportion of households, 28%, indicated that they were living in tents/temporary structures. Many of these households are located in the informal camp in the BSUs Arbat, Ibrahim Ahmed, Shekhan, and Green Land. Further assessments into the living conditions of households residing in tents/temporary structures is advisable, as this type of shelter often lacks basic services, such as latrines, water access and electricity.

In terms of shelter arrangement, the majority of households, 51%, of households indicated “other” as their living arrangement during the assessment, which in most instances referred to accommodation being provided at the place of work. A considerable proportion of households, 34%, reported that they were residing in their own accommodation and not receiving any support. In addition, 11% of households reported to reside in an accommodation shared with other Syrian families/singles. A negligible proportion, 1%, of households indicated they were resident in a facility made available by the KRG Government.
32% of the respondents indicated that they did pay rent, with an average rent cost at 87,000 IQD.

Almost half of all households identified throughout the assessment, 48%, described their accommodation as having moderate damage, whereas 37% of households described their accommodation as good/undamaged. 9% of households reported to reside in an accommodation with minor damage and 6% of households reported their accommodation to be severely damaged. It is important to note that these figures reflect the reported shelter condition of Syrian households and is based on their self-perception.

Furthermore, an overwhelming majority, 93% of respondents described their shelter as able to protect them from the elements.

Most commonly, households reported that the room they live in is shared with less than 5 individuals, 47%, while 29% of households indicated to share a room with 5 to 9 individuals. However, a significant proportion of households, 18%, reported to share a room with 10 to 19 individuals, and 6% reported to share a room with over 20 individuals.

**WATER AND SANITATION**

The majority of households, 91%, considered the water in their home as being potable, whereas 9% reported to consider the water quality good enough only for cooking and washing purposes. Interestingly, only 4 households reported the water to be contaminated.

**EDUCATION**

An alarming 77% of children were reported to not be enrolled in school at the time of assessment. When asked to provide a reason as to why children were not enrolled in school, most commonly reported was the language barrier, indicated by 45% of households who had children who were not attending school. Moreover, the cost of school and lack of documents were other main reported reasons, 33% and 20% respectively.
HEALTH

The REACH assessment teams identified 19 households with physically handicapped family members, as well as 88 households indicating that they had a family member suffering from a chronic disease.

Almost all respondents, 98%, indicated that they have access to health care. As this number varies strongly between the assessed Governorates, more research on the provision of health care is required.

LIVELIHOODS AND EMPLOYMENT

The overwhelming majority of households, 85%, reported that they did not have any family members who were employed at the time of assessment, while 15% of households reported that they had at least one family member in employment. Furthermore, 36% of households reported they had at least one family member looking for employment.

82% of households reported that their primary source of income was provided through daily/unskilled labor, while 15% of households reported that their family had no source of income. 90% of the employed were male.

An overwhelming majority, 92%, of households reported that in the week prior to the assessment, they had enough money to buy food for their family at the market.

ASSISTANCE RECEIVED AND SELF-PERCEIVED NEEDS

35% of all households identified to be resident in Sulaymaniyha Governorate reported that they had received some kind of assistance since arriving in Iraq, whereas 65% responded negatively.

By far, the main reported priority need of households identified throughout the assessment was shelter assistance, namely 92%. In addition, food and clothing were selected by identified households as priority needs, respectively 59% and 41%. Furthermore, employment was reported by 35% of households as their main priority needs. It is important to note that the respondents could choose 3 options in no order of importance.
When asked "How do you find information about services available to you?", 98% indicated that they relied on Syrian families for information. 97% of the respondents indicated that they would speak to the police if faced with violence or threats.

**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.