Findings of the Key Informant Assessments of Syrians Living in Host Communities

Ajloon Governorate - Jordan

13 February 2013

BACKGROUND

The continued crisis in Syria has caused a large influx of Syrians into Jordan. As of 13 February 2013, UNHCR reports 209,063 registered refugees with just over 45,000 awaiting registration. According to UNHCR registration data, more than 90% have settled in Northern Jordan (including Zaatari camp), 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 facilitate 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 Ajloon Governorate in January 2013. 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, 67 key informant focus group discussions were conducted, involving 271 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 Syrians 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 the Ajloon Governorate. Step II is currently on-going and a separate fact sheet will be produced accordingly.

Geographical Scope / Depth of Data

Step I; Identification of Community Units (BSUs)
- Division of an area of intervention into neighbourhoods/mantikas as basic service units (BSUs) that have the attributes of having boundaries that can be defined with a similar understanding by different community individuals or groups. Key Informant interviews are conducted within each BSU to collect information that can inform later steps in the process.

Step II; HH Survey and Context Analysis
- Household level assessment including demographic data, accommodation status, registration status, protection concerns, displacement profile, and needs / access to basic services. Collection of secondary data to support the analysis will be conducted.

Step III; Thematic analysis
- Targeted programme assessment of areas in which refugee families are located according to project needs / assessment ToRs. Use of BSUs to link with community leaders to facilitate access to all groups and specifically most vulnerable households. Collected data informs programme planning and implementation.
Key Findings

A total of 67 BSUs were identified through the assessment, in which key informant interviews were conducted involving more than 271 key informants. 8 of the BSUs identified were located in the Ajloon urban area, and 59 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 503 refugee families were identified representing approximately 2978 individuals. 268 of the identified individuals were settled in urban BSUs within the Governorate and 2710 in rural BSUs. Annex 2 shows the breakdown of households per BSU identified in Ajloon Governorate.

25 unaccompanied minors were identified through key informant interviews, with 13 located in the Downtown neighbourhood of Ajloon City and 12 in the village of Ain Janna.

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

53.2% of Syrians reported by key informants to be resident in Ajloon Governorate were originally displaced from the Syrian Governorate of Al Suwayda. Other Syrian Governorates from which a considerable proportion of Syrians originate were reported to be Dara, 26.7%, and Homs, 15.6%. Only a small number of Syrian were reported to have been originally displaced from other Syrian Governorates, representing 4.47% of the total.

On average only a small proportion of Syrians resident in Ajloon Governorate, 9%, had been displaced for a relatively long period of time, over 12 months. A considerable proportion, 35%, was reported to have been displaced for 6 – 12 months. None of the refugee households identified by key informants in Ajloon Governorate were reported to be recent arrivals (within 1 month of the assessment).

The most common group in which Syrians travelled to Jordan was as an individual family, 42%. Additionally a considerable proportion, 35%, was reported to have travelled as part of a family unit.  

1 For the purpose of this assessment an ‘individual family’ represents direct family members only; parents and children. A ‘family unit’ refers to blood relatives travelling together as a group consisting of multiple individual families.
Although key informants reported that the majority of refugee households travelled as either an individual family or as a family unit, there were only 2 BSUs in which it was reported that no family members were left behind upon displacement. Males and males with children were reported to be the most commonly left behind family members, representing 29% and 24% respectively. Despite this, a considerable proportion of females and females with children were left behind in Syria upon displacement, 15% and 19% respectively.

When asked what the primary form of transportation was during displacement for Syrian resident in their respective BSUs, key informants reported that the majority, 55%, primarily travelled by foot to reach their current location. In addition, it was reported by key informants that a relatively large proportion, 41%, of households were able to primarily travel by bus during displacement. Only a very small proportion of Syrians were reported to have access to a private car during displacement, representing only 4% of the total.

Context Analysis within Jordan

According to key informants most Syrians residing in Ajlooon Governorate at the time of assessment had settled directly in their current location, 45%. In addition a considerable proportion of Syrians had been displaced either once or twice within Jordan, 24% and 21% respectively. Only a very small proportion, 10% or 39 households, of Syrians had been displaced three or four times within Jordan.

When key informants were asked to provide a reason as to why Syrians were displaced one or more times upon arrival in Jordan, the vast majority (70%) responded that the additional displacement had occurred due to economic reasons, with refugee families moving to areas where rent is cheaper. The remainder of key informants reported that some families had been displaced within Jordan due to a will to be with other Syrian families, 18%, or as a result of safety concerns, 12%.

Further displacement from Ajlooon was identified as being likely by only a minority of key informants, 17%. Of those that stated that future displacement was a possibility, 100% identified rental prices as being the primary factor. When asked where these refugee households would be displaced to the most common response from key informants was to...
another location within Jordan, 72%. Key informants in only 1 of the BSUs that identified further displacement as a possibility reported that refugee households were likely to return to Syria if displaced.

The most commonly reported factor that attracted Syrians to settle in the Ajloon Governorate was more affordable rental prices, 68%. Additionally a number of key informants identified the presence of other Syrian families as a contributing factor, 18%.

In the vast majority of cases (64%) key informants reported that Syrians received information on where to settle from other Syrian families, with the remainder receiving information from local people. The main medium through which Syrians received information on where to settle was predominately via word of mouth, 36%, followed by television and text messages, 27% and 23% respectively.

The majority, 91%, of Syrians residing in Ajloon were reported by key informants as having been able to secure rental accommodation upon arrival. Of those living in rental accommodation at the time of assessment, the average price was reported as being 114 JOD per month. Rental prices were reported as being slightly higher in urban than rural areas, 123 JOD and 106 JOD per month respectively. Of the 23 BSUs identified in which Syrians were reported to have settled, only two reported that the main shelter context saw refugee households living either with host families or in temporary shelters. The household being provided with accommodation by a host family was reported to be paying under average monthly rent at 100 JOD per month, while the household resident in a temporary shelter was reported to be paying no rent.

On average the total monthly cost of living in the Ajloon Governorate was reported as being 571 JOD. The majority of monthly expenditure was attributed to food and water costs, on average 304 JOD per month. Total average monthly living costs were reported as being 20% higher for Syrians in urban areas than in rural areas, 633 JOD compared to 508 JOD. In absolute terms the most considerable difference to cost of living between urban and rural areas is on food and water expenditure, with an average of 20% higher prices in urban compared to rural areas, 338 JOD and 271 JOD respectively.

As a result of the high cost of living for Syrians in host communities (as illustrated above), key informants were asked to estimate the length of time Syrians would be able to cope independently in their respective BSUs. The vast majority, 78%, of key informants estimated that Syrians would be unable to cope for longer than two months. Although a small proportion of key informants reported that Syrians would have the ability to cope independently for either 2 – 5 months or 5 – 8 months independently, 14% and 10% respectively, none of the key informants interviewed estimated that Syrians could cope independently in the longer term (8 – 12 months).
Key informants were asked to estimate what proportion of the Syrian resident in their respective BSUs were registered with UNHCR. The most commonly reported range, by 35% of key informants was 0% - 25%. This low range was in most cases in BSUs where Syrians had arrived in Jordan between 1 and 3 months prior to the time of assessment. Only a minority, 13%, of key informants reported that the majority (75% - 100%) of Syrians resident in their BSUs were registered with UNHCR.

87% of BSUs in which the presence of Syrians were reported had received some kind of humanitarian assistance at the time of assessment. Food aid was the most commonly reported assistance received in the Ajloon Governorate, representing 71% of all received assistance. The majority of key informants reported that the assistance received in their respective BSUs was from local charities, 83%. No assistance was reported from the local community. Only a small proportion of key informants reported that assistance had been provided by the international community, representing 17% of the total.

As with previous governorates targeted for assessment, key informants overwhelmingly responded that cash for rent was the highest priority for refugees living in their respective communities, with 83% of BSUs reporting the need as the top priority. Looking at non-financial needs, winter support and food aid were identified as being high priority needs in a considerable proportion of BSUs.

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.