INCLUSION OF REFUGEES FROM BASSIKOUNOU IN MAURITANIA’S NATIONAL SOCIAL REGISTRY

Key Results from the Socio-economic Survey

*For a background note on this initiative, please see this link

December 2021
Context and justification

- **Mauritania has been hosting Malian refugees since 2012**, following the security crisis, with a massive influx leading to a continuous increase in the number of refugees over time.

- **Joint UNHCR-WFP targeting was carried out in 2019 to prioritize humanitarian assistance** for the most vulnerable in order to cope with the drop in funding and support.

- The **Mauritanian government** requested the support of the **World Bank** and the **UNHCR-WFP targeting hub** to update and revise the targeting for the inclusion of refugees in the national social protection program, Tekavoul.

- **Mauritania’s Social Registry**, with the support of UNHCR and WFP, included refugees in the national census through a socio-economic survey to revise the targeting and identify the most vulnerable households.
Introduction

OBJECTIVES

• Collect socio-economic information on all refugees in Bassikounou to understand needs at household level

• Categorize refugee households based on their degree of vulnerability to inform programmatic decisions and joint targeting approaches

• Include all refugees in the national Social Registry

• Identify and include the most vulnerable refugees in the national social protection scheme, Tekavoul

DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

Data type: Census, completed from April 27 to June 16, 2021

Data collection method: Computer assisted interview

Vulnerability assessment: through combining data on household demographics, employment, asset ownership and shelter, food consumption, livelihood coping, expenditure, community participation

Leading institution: SOCIAL REGISTRY
With support from UNHCR & WFP
Geographical coverage:
Mbera refugee camp (98.5%), Bassikounou (0.4%), El Megve (1.1%)

14,012 refugee households surveyed total

- Out-of-camp, never registered in the camp: 288
- Out-of-camp, registered in the camp: 422
- In the camp: 13302

Region surveyed
Household demographics

55% of the population are female

56% of household heads are female, with a high share of unmarried household heads

12% of households have a member with a disability or chronic illness

59% of the population are children, ages 0-17

Average household size is less than 5 persons

69% of household heads have no education
80% of households live in m’bar shelters constructed by plastic material provided by UNHCR with roofs made of cloth.

Barracks made of wood and zinc are found in the urban periphery.

**Type of home**

- M’bar: 80.4%
- Hut: 11.1%
- Barracks: 6.0%
- Tent: 1.7%

**Roof material of the shelters**

- Fabric: 80.4%
- Wood: 11.9%
- Straw: 3.3%
- Zinc: 2.1%
- Other: 1.4%
Water & energy

98% of households have access to drinking water.

Most households use charcoal (50%) or firewood for cooking.

89% of households use a public, shared toilet.

91% of households use a torch for lighting.

Energy source for cooking:
- Charcoal: 49.5%
- Wood: 48.0%
- Gas: 1.4%
- Other: 1.0%
- Electricity: 0.1%

Energy source for lighting:
- Torch: 91.3%
- Solar energy: 3.9%
- Candles: 2.5%
- Other: 1.9%

88.7% of households have public, shared toilet.

2.4% of households have private toilet.

8.9% of households have no toilet.
Asset ownership

Households owning various assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic (TV, mobile phone, bed/mattress)</th>
<th>38.7%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Productive (washing machine, wheelbarrow, cart)</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury (modern stove, satellite dish, refrigerator, air conditioner, computer)</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility (car/motorbike)</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Households owning livestock

- Sheep & goats: 18.0%
- Donkeys & horses: 7.5%
- Poultry: 4.8%
- Cattle & camels: 2.7%

33% of households have a cellphone

But digital connectivity remains limited with only 0.8% of households having internet access

0.1% of households have access to land for agriculture
Food security

81% of households reported inadequate or borderline levels of food consumption.

Out-of-camp situation slightly better than in the camp.
An average of **36%** of children aged 7-12 years attend primary school.

An average of **8%** of children aged 13-18 years attend secondary school.

With a slightly higher rate for boys (37%) than girls (35%) with nearly 4% more boys than girls.

UNHCR 2018
12.2% of refugees ages 18-59 employed in the past 7 days, with the main sectors of employment being livestock (32%), artisanal or commercial selling (19%) or service (19%).
Perceptions of refugee households

47% of households self-report having very low capacity to meet their needs.

92% of households report feeling integrated in the Mauritanian community.

28% of households believe their point of view is transmitted by their leaders.

- Always: 27.5%
- Often: 17.1%
- Rarely: 10.0%
- Never: 18.9%
- Don't know: 26.5%

Categories:
- High capacity (can meet at least half of needs)
- Low capacity (can meet small part of needs)
- Very low capacity (cannot meet any needs)
Defining vulnerability

Refugee vulnerability is identified as a combination of several socio-economic dimensions, captured in the RS database for each household and validated with community consultations with refugees.

Each household has its own level of vulnerability based on 5 dimensions:

1. **Education**
   - Level of education
   - Schooling for children

2. **Dependency**
   - Number of children, elderly, sick and disabled, vs. Number of economically active adults

3. **Health and specific needs**
   - Presence of disabled or chronically ill

4. **Capacity to work**
   - Labour force participation
   - Differences between sexes

5. **Food security**
   - Food consumption and nutrition
## Categories of vulnerability and assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vulnerability categories (after reclamations)</th>
<th># Households</th>
<th>Type of assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Extremely vulnerable                         | 7409 53%     | • WFP food assistance  
• Cash + in-kind – 500 MRU provided by Tekavoul  
• Complete coverage of basic food needs |
| Moderately vulnerable                        | 6039 43%     | • Only cash  
• Partial coverage of basic food needs |
| Less vulnerable                              | 564 4%       | • No WFP food assistance  
• Cash for livelihoods and other development programmes |
| Total                                       | 14,012       |                    |

Note: Other types of complementary assistance will be provided at the beginning of the implementation of the targeting categories (e.g. livelihoods assistance) or will remain unchanged (e.g. UNHCR assistance to people with specific needs, WFP assistance for the prevention of malnutrition, etc.).
Conclusions

• **From emergency to poverty targeting:** UNHCR-WFP completed the transition from emergency to poverty-based assistance; the percentage of households receiving full assistance has decreased from 79% (2019) to 53% (2021), although the percentage of households assisted (i.e. highly and moderately vulnerable) still represents 96% of the population.

• **Refugee inclusion in national programmes:** Based on the results of the socio-economic survey in Bassikounou, more than 7,400 refugee households will be included in Mauritania’s national social protection program, Tekavoul, which will help the most vulnerable meet their basic needs.

• **Several uses of the data:** The results of this survey will be used for programming, advocacy, and will constitute a reference situation for monitoring & evaluation.
Next steps

- **Ongoing development and monitoring of targeting methodology**: develop targeting approach to determine update of vulnerability data, procedures for newcomers, partnerships, roles and responsibilities, monitoring, etc.

- **Comparative studies**: Design and implementation of comparative studies between refugees and host populations in terms of living conditions

- **Monitoring & evaluation feeding into programme, policy & advocacy**: the survey will be repeated at a frequency to be determined, which will track changes over time in the lives and well-being of refugees and allow comparison with host populations

- **Expansion to urban areas**: the survey is being conducted in urban areas including with refugee households, with discussions of how to integrate new arrivals