COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN
SUMMARY REPORT – MAY 2022

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INTRODUCTION

WFP and UNHCR Jordan Country Offices jointly requested support from the Joint UNHCR/WFP Programme and Targeting Hub (Joint Hub) to revise the targeting strategy for WFP's food assistance to non-Syrian refugees.

As part of this process, a mobile assessment was conducted, a targeting approach agreed, and a set of eligibility criteria identified. With the goal of validating the newly proposed targeting approach and collect additional qualitative information, non-Syrian refugees were invited to participate in community consultations in Amman as well as in the North and South of Jordan.

METHODOLOGY

Twelve community consultations, in the form of focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with over 120 people between March 20th–31st 2022. To ensure gender balance, half of the sessions were held with men and half with women, while ensuring the participation of youth, adults, and persons with specific needs (PSN) in an inclusive and transparent manner.

Participants were consulted on their perception of vulnerability in the refugee community, common characteristics of the

NON-SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN

Jordan is currently hosting close to 88,000 non-Syrian refugees from countries including Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia. 66,660 non-Syrian refugees are from Iraq, 13,158 are from Yemen, 6,014 from Sudan, 696 from Somalia and the remainder from other countries.
All the non-Syrian refugees are living in host communities in urban and rural areas, with the overwhelming majority living in the capital Amman.

most and least vulnerable, proposed vulnerability categories for eligibility, protection risks of prioritization and mitigation strategies, and preferred information and feedback channels, and related barriers.

This exercise was subject to limitations, since only 12 consultations were conducted under a tight timeline with limited geographical representativeness, hence the findings from this analysis should be treated as descriptive. It is not recommended to generalize these findings to other targeting contexts due to its limitations in statistical value and representativeness, but rather to build on these findings to further explore certain aspects.

The feedback collected during joint community consultations was consolidated by the Joint Hub, and the main findings from the community consultations and recommendations on finalizing the eligibility criteria and retargeting approach were presented to the Country Teams. This report summarizes the main findings per key focus area and includes an overview of the conclusions and recommendations.

VULNERABILITY FEEDBACK

Consulted refugees highlighted a variety of case[1]-level characteristics associated with vulnerability (see Figure 1). The most relevant aspects are around specific needs (such as medical conditions and disabilities), case size, presence of children, older, unemployed, or female members in the case. Other important aspects include gender, legal restrictions to work, and pending registration with UNHCR after government suspension of registration for non-Syrian refugees[2].

FIGURE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF MOST VULNERABLE REFUGEES IN THE COMMUNITY
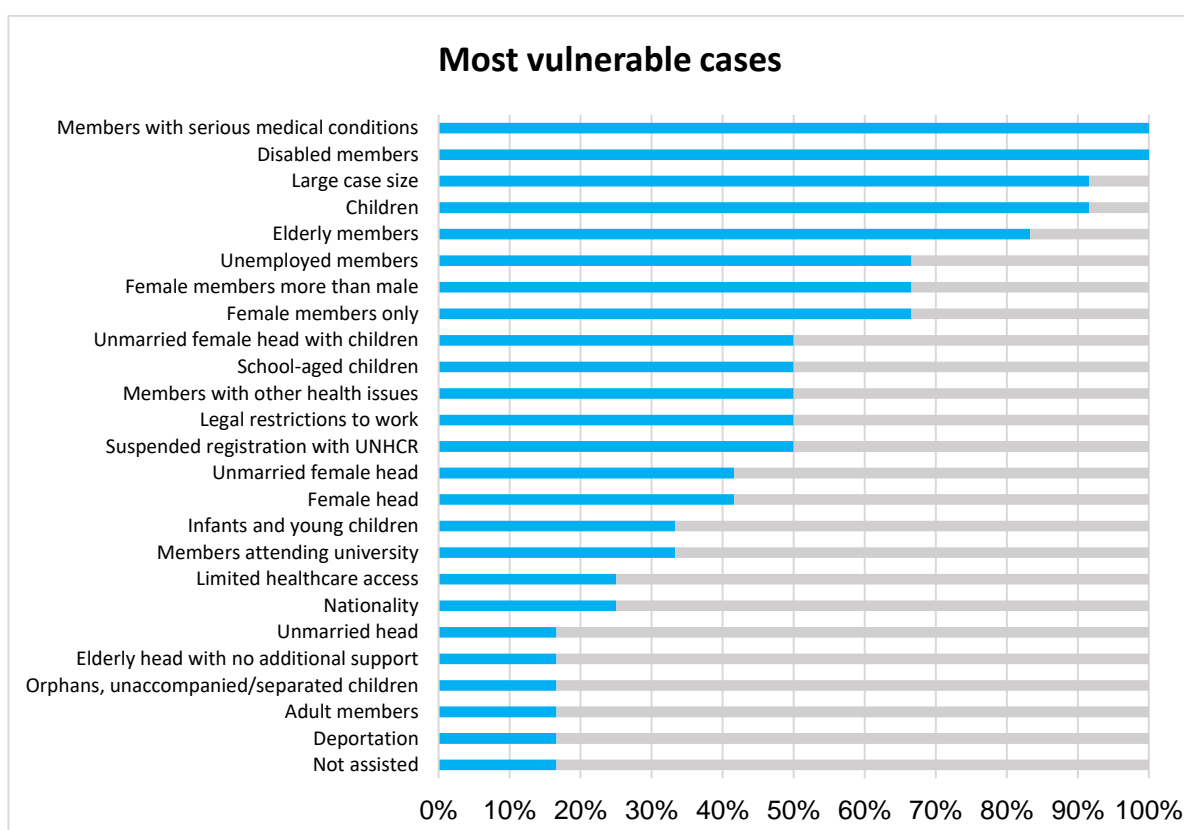
Note: The graph shows the share of reports mentioning a vulnerability characteristic, listed on the left hand-side. The X axis shows the percentage of FGD reports mentioning the characteristic. This percentage should be interpreted as out of a total of 12 consultation sessions. The term 'head' refers to the head of household, as reported by FGD participants, which coincides with the head of the case in most instances.

Characteristics listed by consulted refugees are in line with the proposed eligibility criteria, identified through quantitative analysis of mobile assessment data. In the consultation sessions, the vulnerability categories used to define the proposed eligibility criteria (such as case or household composition, gender of the case head, presence of PSN) were presented to participants. 75% of focus group discussions confirmed that these dimensions capture the most vulnerable refugees in the community.

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[1] A "case" is a grouping of people considered together for a specific purpose, usually in relation to a decision or action, such as in status determinations or resettlement.

[2] In addition, in order to be eligible for a work permit, refugees need to have a closed file with UNHCR.

Additional suggestions to the proposed eligibility criteria, brought up in the remaining 25% of FGDs, are also broadly covered by these criteria. Suggested additions (mainly sociodemographic characteristics) were mentioned with overall low frequency (i.e., in maximum 25% of FGDs) and are also broadly covered by the proposed eligibility criteria.

For example, older people alone/ with health conditions would be included in the proposed criteria (PSN, high dependency ratio), and unmarried heads will also be covered, at least partially, by other criteria high such as dependency ratio, female heads, etc.

Other mentioned characteristics, such as presence of deported members, income and debt level, legal restrictions to work, while useful for understanding vulnerability, are not suitable for targeting as data is not available for all refugees and may pose issues to verification and inclusion or exclusion.

As compared to lower vulnerability, high vulnerability is also associated with debts for basic needs, increasing debt, lack of income sources, and high dependence on assistance.

Potential differences in shelter, water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions as well as asset ownership were also investigated; however, evidence is inconclusive.

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH RE-TARGETING

Re-targeting is expected to increase protection risks and further compromise households' ability to meet their basic needs, culminating most prominently in risk of eviction (Figure 2). Other potential risks and challenges include:

- Reduction in household budgets to cover basic needs
- Difficulties to repay debts
- Tensions with landlords
- Access to nutritious food
- Negative psychological impacts
- High-risk, dangerous, or exploitative income generating activities.

To mitigate these risks, refugees highlighted the need for livelihoods opportunities and documentation to facilitate engagement in income-generating activities and identified the provision of vocational trainings and seed capital as ways to address current gaps.

FIGURE 2. POTENTIAL PROTECTION RISKS OF RETARGETING
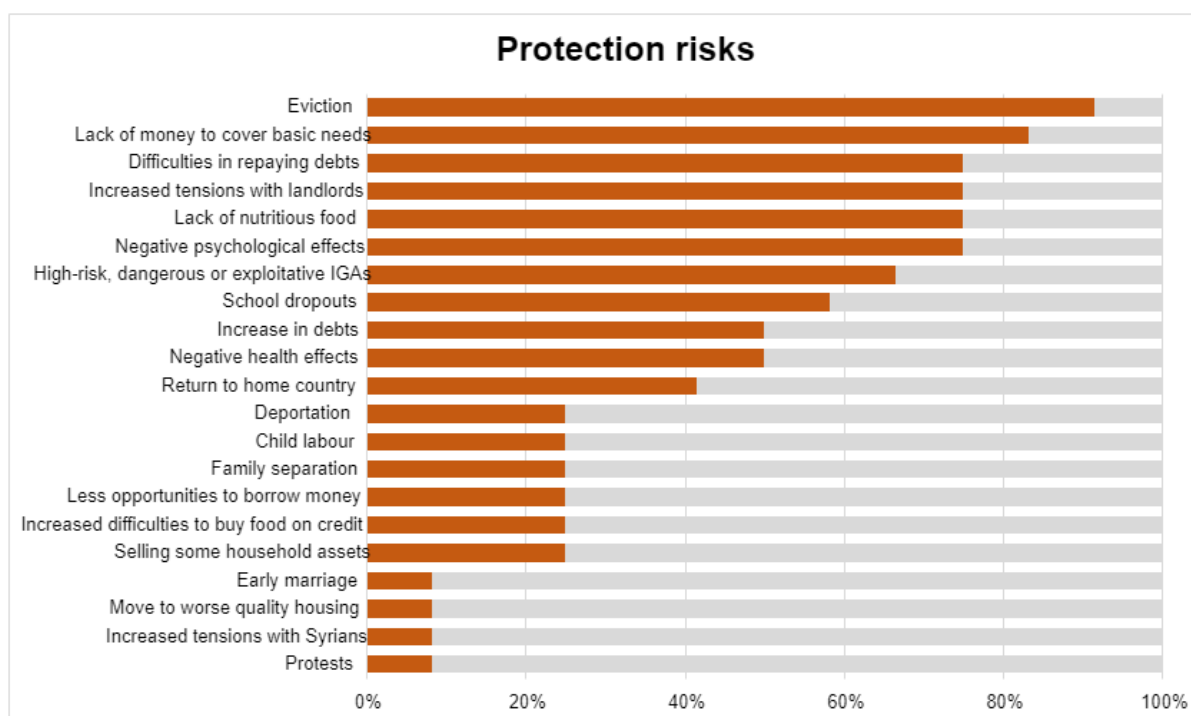
Note: The graph shows the share of reports mentioning a protection risk, listed on the left hand-side. The X axis shows the percentage of FGD reports mentioning the characteristic. This percentage is out of a total of 12 consultation sessions.

CHANNELS AND BARRIERS TO FEEDBACK AND INFORMATION

SMS, phone calls, social media, WhatsApp, and home visits were mentioned as preferred channels to receive information on assistance. Limited literacy and disabilities were considered the biggest barriers to accessing key information (mentioned in half or more of FGDs), suggesting that communication should be simple, effective, and tailored to refugees' needs.

Additionally, helplines are by far the channel refugees prefer the most to share feedback, complaints, and questions, for example regarding issues on assistance. However, refugees are also facing barriers when trying to share questions, feedback or complaints and receiving a response. These barriers include the inability to directly speak to UNHCR helpline agents due to the interactive voice response system that is in place, the limited responsiveness of feedback mechanisms in certain instances, the access challenges that people with disabilities or limited literacy face, as well as access to phone credit.

FGD participants highlighted making existing mechanisms more accessible, user-friendly, inclusive, and responsive, including the interactive voice response system, and ensuring access for all refugees, including those with disabilities, limited literacy and those unable to contact a helpline.

FIGURE 3. BARRIERS FACED BY REFUGEES
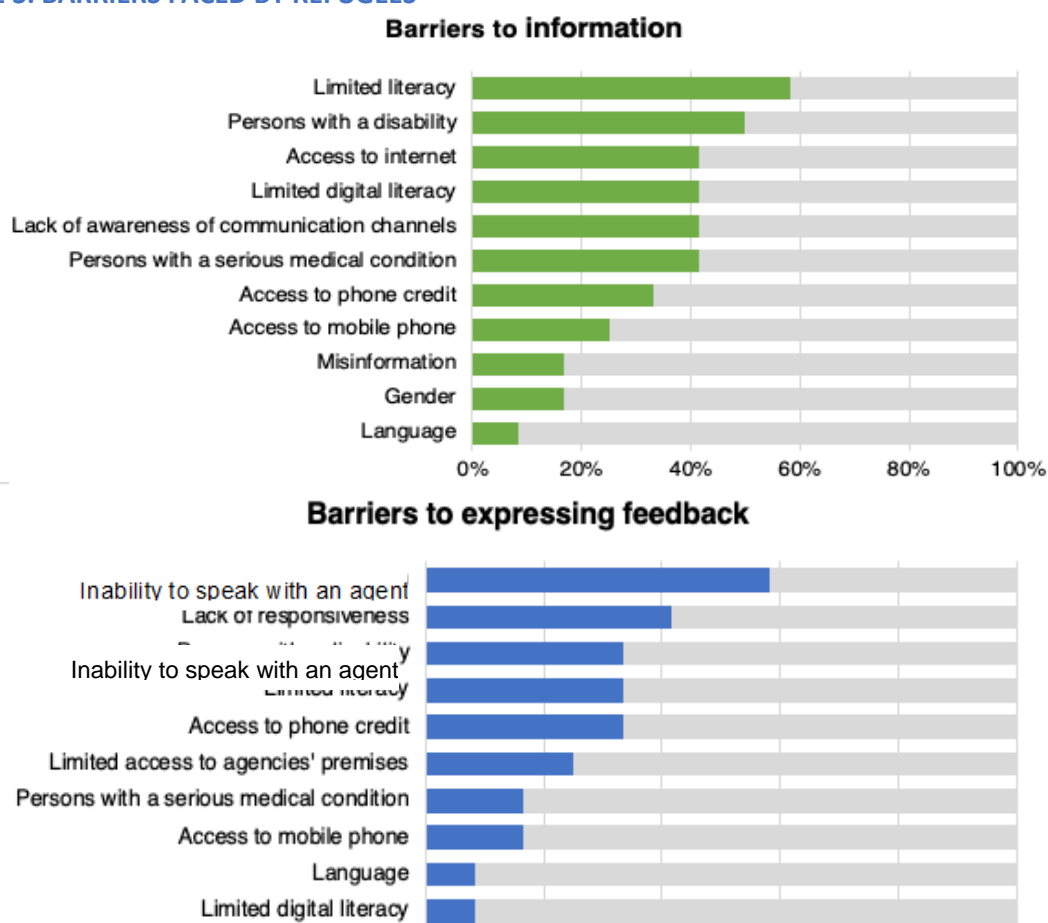
Note: The graphs show the share of reports mentioning a barrier, listed on the left hand-side. The X axis shows the percentage of FGD reports mentioning the characteristic. This percentage is out of a total of 12 consultation sessions.

FEEDBACK ON THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Overall, refugees were appreciative of the opportunity to share their experiences, views and concerns regarding the retargeting exercise. A quarter of FGDs highlighted that this was a positive experience for participants. In a third of sessions, participants also encouraged the field teams to arrange more regular consultations with refugees in the future.

KEY FINDINGS

Given the limited number of consultations conducted under a tight timeline, the findings from this analysis are purely descriptive in nature and should be treated as suggestive evidence in the context of the retargeting strategy for WFP and UNHCR's assistance for non-Syrian refugees, developed by the Joint Hub. Despite these limitations, community consultations represented a successful way to capture refugees' perspectives on several aspects of the retargeting process, including vulnerability and the eligibility criteria, and inform the way forward in terms of assistance eligibility considerations, protections risks and mitigation, and communication and appeals.

TARGETING

Distinguishing the population by different vulnerability levels appears to be an adequate option, confirming the rationale and refugees' understanding of why assistance is targeted and prioritized.

The highly vulnerable categories identified by the community are aligned with the proposed eligibility criteria and findings from quantitative analysis. Based on consultation key findings, the proposed retargeting approach is confirmed and remains unchanged.

The validated targeting approach can be combined with other methods to further refine the pool of highly vulnerable refugees eligible for cash assistance, such the PMT targeting model developed by UNHCR in collaboration with World Bank, to also respond to prioritization needs.

MITIGATION OF PROTECTION RISKS

Supporting access to livelihoods stands out as a priority and the most frequently mentioned mitigation strategy to address potential protection risks associated with the retargeting exercise.

COMMUNICATION AND APPEALS

The use of preferred information sharing, and feedback channels is recommended for the communications strategy for the retargeting exercise and the appeals mechanism.

Specific attention should be given to reducing barriers, for people with limited literacy; sensory, physical, and other disabilities that could prevent access to information and feedback channels; and those with limited internet access and digital literacy.

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