



**Women's Refugee Commission**  
Research. Rethink. Resolve.



## **Unpacking Gender**

The Humanitarian Response to the  
Syrian Refugee Crisis in Jordan

March 2014



WOMEN'S  
REFUGEE  
COMMISSION

## Research. Rethink. Resolve.

The Women's Refugee Commission identifies needs, researches solutions and advocates for global change to improve the lives of women, children and youth displaced by conflict and crisis. The Women's Refugee Commission is legally part of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, but does not receive direct financial support from the IRC.

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## Acronyms & Abbreviations

ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
ARDD	Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development – Legal Aid
CBO	Community-based organization
CHP	Cooperative Housing Foundation (now: Global Communities Partners for Good)
CP	Child protection
GBV	Gender-based violence
GenCap	Gender Standby Capacity Project
HI	Handicap International
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	Internally displaced person
IMC	International Medical Corps
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRD	International Relief and Development
JOHOUD	Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development
JWU	Jordanian Women’s Union
LGBTQI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, queer and intersex
NFI	Non-food items
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
RRP	Regional Response Plan
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SOP	Standard operating procedures
SRCD	Syrian Refugee Camp Department
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPP	Un Ponte Per
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Program
WRC	Women’s Refugee Commission

## Executive Summary

With no political solution on the horizon to end the conflict in Syria, it is clear that humanitarian agencies must continue to prepare for a protracted conflict.

In late 2013, the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) undertook an extensive literature review and a month-long field assessment in Jordan, including in-depth interviews, focus group meetings and observation. The goal of the project was to identify how the humanitarian community was integrating existing gender guidance across all sectors and whether gender was being dealt with centrally as an institutionalized way of working rather than peripherally. It looked at the ways in which humanitarian agencies, including UN agencies and international and local organizations, assessed these needs and planned their programs. It also asked questions about the opportunities and good practices and models for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

### Key Findings

While sex- and age-disaggregated data about the refugees' needs and concerns was being gathered early on, there was little evidence that this data was being used to inform the design and implementation of programs that address the real needs of women, men, girls and boys.

Nonetheless, at the end of 2013, most UN agencies and international organizations were aware of these gaps. They were trying to integrate gender in the planning and programming processes, including the need for better monitoring and follow-up. The introduction of the GenCap (Gender Standby Capacity Project) advisor in March 2013, the investment by several humanitarian organizations over the past five to eight years in gender policies and programming, and public attention to the specific issues facing women and girls have collectively had a positive impact on the situation. The GenCap advisor brought tools, provided training

and promoted integration of the gender marker in all sectors' plans for the latest Regional Response Plan (RRP6).

While agencies are starting to take serious steps to ensure gendered needs are being addressed in their programs, there continue to be challenges and gaps in services and resources. The WRC study outlines the context by sector, highlighting ongoing challenges and current practices in distribution of resources, access to services and ensuring protection and reduced risk for sexual and gender-based violence. The research found that certain populations receive less attention and less access to programs, including the elderly, women and girls living outside the camps, people with disabilities and sexual minorities. In addition, there was a scarcity of specialist services to support Syrian men, who face their own anxieties as a result of the lack of work and failure to fulfill their breadwinner and protector roles, and who are at constant risk of being drawn into the war. Gender impacts the ability to access information and thus access services. Finally, accountability and follow-up in referral pathways for child protection and gender-based violence concerns continue to be major challenges that impact specifically women, girls and boys.

### Good Practices and Recommendations

Several organizations have created impactful programs that support the empowerment of women and girls and meet the gendered needs of the Syrian refugee population. The following encapsulates good practices that the WRC recommends should be adopted by the humanitarian community:

Empower women and girls through:

- working with local women's rights organizations that have the political vision and know-how;
- building the capacity of refugee women and girls, as well as local activists and staff, to speak on their own behalf and strategize collectively;
- creating safe spaces to address protection issues

and increase access to information and services.

Support host communities, as well as refugees, through:

- longer-term planning for continued change;
- projects that benefit host communities to reduce tensions;
- building local capacity of community organizers and service providers;
- establishing community centers and working with local community-based organizations to address local challenges, create welcoming spaces for collaboration and increase access to information and services.

Engage refugees in identifying problems and adequate solutions through:

- leadership development and capacity building;
- relationship building;
- working with Syrian refugees as volunteers;
- conducting door-to-door assessments and distributions.

Advance gender mainstreaming through:

- gathering and using sex- and age-disaggregated data;
- conducting gender analysis and using it to plan programs;
- going beyond needs to focus on empowerment and potential;
- incorporating GenCap advisors into humanitarian crisis responses from the very beginning;
- creating and training on standard operating procedures and processes for protection;
- adopting an internal gender strategy that fully trans-

forms organizations structurally and programmatically;

- incorporating gender-based violence and child protection mechanisms into all programs.

## Introduction

The Syrian crisis has continued to escalate, causing tremendous devastation to people and land. Even as the Geneva 2 talks came to an end in January 2014, the number of Syrian refugees continued to increase. As of January 2014, there were a total of 2,426,178 refugees, the majority of whom, 2,377,984, were registered with UNHCR. More than 590,700 were in Jordan.<sup>1</sup> Syrian refugees have been fleeing into Jordan since 2012, though the number of new arrivals decreased during the second part of 2013. The majority of the refugees (78.5%) are women and children under 18 years old.<sup>2</sup>

Zaatari<sup>3</sup> camp was set up in 2012 in response to the emergency, and has been difficult to manage.<sup>4</sup> The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is trying to learn from the lessons of Zaatari camp in building a second camp in Azraq.<sup>5</sup> The majority (80%) of refugees reside outside of camps in urban and rural communities (host communities).<sup>6</sup> This has made it more difficult to provide services to the refugee community and to gather adequate information about trends, needs and practices. The aim of this research is to get at a better understanding of how well the humanitarian response has addressed the gendered needs of women, men, girls and boys. This research also looks at opportunities and good practices and models for gender equality promotion and women's empowerment.

The Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) *Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action*<sup>7</sup> sets standards for integrating gender from the beginning of responses to emergencies or disasters. It aims to ensure that humanitarian services neither exacerbate nor inadvertently put people at risk but that they respond to the actual needs. The handbook outlines fundamental principles that

need to be observed and implemented to realize full gender integration. It is a useful tool in terms of thinking about how to mainstream gender in assessments, programs, services and ongoing monitoring during a humanitarian crisis. Gender mainstreaming indicates that the impact of all programs on men and women should be considered and analyzed at all stages of the response to crisis. When followed, it allows institutions to respond better and be more effective. Targeted actions based on gender analysis can follow from a detailed assessment of the needs and impact of the crisis on men, women, girls and boys. Additionally, programs should act to empower women and girls in order to enhance the possibilities of gender equality.

According to IASC, “Two main strategies are needed to reach the goal of gender equality, namely gender mainstreaming and targeted actions in response to a gender analysis, as well as a number of programmes which together make up a gender equality programme.”

Complementing the IASC *Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action* are both UNHCR’s Age, Gender and Diversity Policy,<sup>8</sup> which aims to put refugees at the center of decision-making and take into account the different needs and capacities of refugee women, men, girls and boys, and the IASC *Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings*,<sup>9</sup> which provides detailed guidance on GBV prevention and response programming.

In spite of available guidance, humanitarian response during emergencies continues to be *ad hoc*, uneven and fragmented in both practice and approach. While a lot of data is often collected,<sup>10</sup> it continues to be marked by rapid assessments and a lack of representational strength. Systematic gender analyses are seldom conducted to assess women’s and men’s roles and responsibilities and their access to and control over resources. As a result, programmatic interventions are based on assumptions, urgent and short-term planning and response and, often, Western bias, resulting in missed opportunities for promoting gender equality, women’s empowerment and the reduction of risks by

engaging men and youth in substantive ways. In this particular crisis, critique of the humanitarian response has focused on the approach to assistance, which has not differed from previous crises<sup>11</sup> and has not taken into account that the displaced population is from a middle-income country.<sup>12</sup> Without adequate data it is impossible to design and implement effective, responsive programs that address the real needs of women, men, girls and boys. Furthermore, it is important to find entry points for increasing women’s political and economic empowerment and to mobilize affected communities in order to capitalize on and use their capacities to be part of the solution. For empowerment to take place, a shift from women and girls as victims to women and girls as agents of social change is necessary. “Projects that recognize and engage all aspects of refugees’ lives have much higher chances of success. They are more than mouths to feed and bodies to care for, and recognition of their humanity, creativity, and resilience is required even in the midst of difficult times.”<sup>13</sup>

## Background

The needs of Syrian refugees in Jordan can be differentiated by date of arrival (new arrivals versus those who have been in Jordan for more than a year), place of residence (inside refugee camps or in host communities) and, in some instances, sex and age. New arrivals require more immediate assistance in the form of material items, including shelter, non-food items (NFIs), food items and medical attention, in addition to information on referral pathways for other concerns. However, Syrians who have been in Jordan for some time are in need of more long-term solutions, including cash assistance or work to cover the cost of living. Their coping strategies,<sup>14</sup> both mental and material, as many informants identified, have been slowly drained over the past two years and their earlier assumptions of the temporary nature of their situation are now being replaced with growing fears regarding the uncertainties that lie ahead.

Refugees residing in Zaatari camp have most of their basic needs met, including shelter, food, primary education and primary healthcare. Distribution of NFIs and food items and access to education and healthcare have improved over the past two years. Their current needs center on livelihoods, safety, higher education, specialized medical care and psychosocial support to address their traumas and anxiety about loved ones and relatives still in Syria, as well as their worries about the uncertainties of the future. Those living in urban centers may have better access to services given the multiplicity of institutions such as clinics, hospitals and schools that can cater to their needs.<sup>15</sup> However, they struggle with paying rent and covering everyday costs.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand those scattered in more remote areas and villages have a harder time accessing services due to lack of information about where the services are and the difficulty in finding transportation to get to them.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, public health and educational institutions in these areas are not equipped to handle such a large volume of people. Furthermore, those residing in the southern region of Jordan have even less access, given that most international and local NGOs have concentrated their efforts in the center and north of the country over the past two years.<sup>18</sup>

Almost all UN agencies and local and international NGOs interviewed identified livelihoods as a significant current and ongoing need.<sup>19</sup> As the crisis continues, Syrians have drained whatever savings they may have had.<sup>20</sup> The lack of access to work is an enormous and important need that affects all aspects of life.<sup>21</sup> “When refugees ask for cash assistance they are actually asking for work, they are asking for their dignity,” one informant explained.<sup>22</sup> “I sense from both men and women they want to work, a real desire to be self-sustainable,” another explained.<sup>23</sup> In addition to its material consequences in terms of ability to pay for rent, food, healthcare and education, the lack of access to work also affects the psychosocial status of men, in particular, as well as of those women who were previously working; impacts interfamily dynamics by adding stresses and possibly leading to increased incidents of violence

against women and children; increases the possibility of young men’s recruitment in the war; pushes families to send their children to work instead of to school, thus escalating the problem of child labor<sup>24</sup>; and leaves female-headed households with economic deprivation and resultant compromised choices.<sup>25</sup> Most Syrian refugees living outside of camp settings worry about being able to cover rent or find adequate or livable shelter. Assessments by and interviews with key informants indicate that many Syrians are living in uninhabitable or even condemned structures, including basements with no windows, moldy and drafty rooms and unsafe structures.<sup>26</sup> Data also indicates that many families are sharing apartments. Most habitation is overcrowded, leading to additional stresses and lack of privacy.<sup>27</sup> Rent has increased threefold in the last two years.<sup>28</sup> There are reports of landlord exploitation in different parts of Jordan. Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development – Legal Aid (ARDD) reports getting numerous calls on its hotline with regard to this particular issue.

Given the short-term nature of funding for many of the projects providing services to the Syrian refugees, organizations often run out of items and can no longer respond to needs or provide services. Less experienced organizations and the tremendous increase in the numbers of refugees in need of assistance may overwhelm an organization’s ability to adequately respond. Thus, referral pathway informational materials that are distributed at the registration point get outdated, leaving refugees with decreased access to services. Additionally, registration is often done by the presumed head of household, which in many instances is a male member of the family. This does not guarantee that information shared with this person will reach those who may need it most, women, girls and boys. Unregistered refugees have even more limitations in accessing information.

Winter is a particularly difficult period when organizations field numerous requests for blankets, gas heaters and warm clothes. While UNHCR, working closely with the Jordanian government, provides primary health services in assigned clinics and hospitals to registered refugees, specialized services such as dental and eye



care, medications and specialized treatment for chronic illnesses (mostly affecting the elderly) such as heart disease, blood pressure and cancers continue to be uncovered.<sup>29</sup> Educational needs are tremendous, even though public schools have opened their doors to Syrian refugee children and started running double shifts to address overcrowding. Many refugee children are losing or have already lost one to two years of schooling,<sup>30</sup> which makes reintegration into the educational system harder.

Protection concerns are high priority for both camp residents and those Syrians residing in towns and cities of Jordan.<sup>31</sup> Concerns around protection and safety affect all refugees in different ways. The two Protection sub-working groups,<sup>32</sup> Child Protection and Gender-based Violence, have been working hard over the past year to establish more mechanisms and community spaces that can guarantee safety and ensure proper referral mechanisms when the need arises. Nonetheless, this continues to be a major challenge that is closely tied to other needs identified here.

For boys, bullying and harassment in schools and on the streets is an area of major concern.<sup>33</sup> Adolescent boys are also subject to harassment from employers and other boys in the market and streets when they are not attending school but out looking for work or engaging in a number of informal jobs. Girls are also subject to harassment in schools and on the way to school.<sup>34</sup> This has been one of the reasons that families may have opted to keep their girls inside their homes and not allow them to attend school. It is their protection mechanism from unwanted sexual advances or other types of physical harassment. Girls interviewed in December 2013 indicated that they had been spat at, hit with water and fists, as well as called all sorts of names by other girls (often Jordanian) attending school or in stores near schools. Girls are also at risk of harassment and attack in the market place and other open spaces in the camps (near WASH facilities or in distribution lines). Finally, girls are at risk of being harassed inside the homes by fathers, brothers and sometimes mothers.

For women, sexual harassment in informal work environments is a high risk as well as the markets and open spaces in the camps.<sup>35</sup> Stories and rumors about harassment, whether real or not, are also a driving force that makes women more fearful of going out of their homes or trailers and thus limits their mobility.<sup>36</sup> In the camps, women reported fears of the market areas and the bathrooms; however a safety audit<sup>37</sup> of the Zaatari camp, conducted in late 2013, did indicate tremendous improvements<sup>38</sup> in this department.

Men worry about their safety as well as that of their families.<sup>39</sup> Particularly in Amman and some of the larger cities, men fear police harassment when walking in the streets because they can be seen by the police as seeking employment or going to work (illegally).

## Methodology

This study is based on an extensive literature review, preliminary interviews and field research that included in-depth interviews, focus group meetings and (participant) observation. The literature research provided information on assessments and actions in the field by key organizations and government entities, documentation of needs and gaps, project description of implemented and planned programs, in addition to effective research tools. Given the large number of assessments during the almost three years of the crisis, the literature review helped refine the research questions, determine the key actors in the field to be interviewed and assess feasibility of a short-timeframe research project. To refine further the research questions and expand contacts and document research, a series of preliminary interviews was conducted over Skype with UN and international NGO actors who are key players on issues of gender and women's empowerment in Jordan.

Field research was conducted for a month during December 2013<sup>40</sup> and included in-depth interviews with key informants, including staff and leaders from 25

UN agencies, international NGOs (including religious based, emergency response and development agencies) and local Jordanian organizations. Two focus group meetings with groups of Syrian refugee women and girls in urban settings were also conducted, as well as unstructured interviews with numerous refugees in urban and camp settings.<sup>41</sup> Finally, site visits were conducted to five community and women's centers run by local and international NGOs in the Zaatari refugee camp and in Amman, Zarqa, Irbid and Dhleil, where programs were observed and participants (beneficiaries) were informally interviewed.

### Limitations

There were challenges in securing interviews with some key organizations, which despite repeated attempts were not available during the time of the field research. While an interview with UNHCR co-chair of the Child Protection sub-group was possible, it was not possible to secure interviews with other key UNHCR staff. In December 2013, a huge snow storm hit Jordan and things were shut down for about five days. Many meetings had to be rescheduled and some, including with UNRWA and the Institute for Family Health (of Noor Al-Hussein Foundation), were not possible given the limited timeframe.

## Major Findings: Needs, Gaps and Opportunities

The humanitarian community, after years of rhetoric, has clearly begun to better understand and integrate gender into its planning and programming. This is true across sectors. The introduction of the GenCap advisor, the use of the gender marker and the investment of several humanitarian organizations in developing gender policies and programming, have clearly had a positive impact on the situation. However, gender integration is still largely confined to addressing the differing

needs of women, men, girls and boys and, for the most part, does not tackle the broader goal of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

### Needs

As UNHCR began coordinating the response to the crisis, it gathered sex- and age-disaggregated data. This, however, did not translate into planning and programs that took gender and age into consideration effectively as most assessments eventually revealed. Reviewing the needs assessments<sup>42</sup> and earlier reports by various UN agencies and other international organizations clearly indicates some level of gender awareness, including separate sections on and an articulation of the different needs of women, men, boys and girls. Nonetheless full integration of gender into the planning and implementation of services and programs was not common practice in the early stages of response to the crisis.

At the end of 2013, it was, however, clear that most international organizations, as well as the various UN agencies, were mostly aware of the gaps and trying to integrate gender in the planning process and in some of the programming and were beginning to have conversations on the need for better monitoring and follow-up in this regard. The latest Regional Response Plan (RRP6) includes gender markers for each of the sector plans. This has been a direct result of the work of the GenCap advisor, who arrived in Jordan in March 2013. Key informants of the international NGOs indicated the recent interest among many organizations to include a gender advisor, a protection officer or a gender coordinator among their staff. Several mentioned that their organizations had recently gone through a gender audit or had hired an external gender consultant to provide key recommendations around how the organization could incorporate gender into its programming and activities. A few others already had a gender policy on record for several years that they used as a guide in implementing their programs and planning their activities. It is evident that the presence of the GenCap advisor, in addition to the ongoing public debates and conversations in vari-

ous international forums and media reports—both sensational and factual—have had an impact on the sector. Local organizations, on the other hand, do not seem to have changed their policies or practices around gender. Women's rights organizations and those already invested in such issues use gender as an important lens to assess needs and plan programs. However, other organizations appear to be only paying lip service to the issue; sending staff to participate in gender trainings but not necessarily incorporating gender into their organizations as a whole or their programs.

Most data and statistics gathered in the various agencies' needs assessments include information that is segregated by sex and age. This data, however, had not always been used effectively in planning of programs. Nonetheless, there have been many lessons learned along the way in the past two years. Evaluations and changes were sometimes based on a direct result of demands and complaints of the refugees themselves, while others were based on monitoring and evaluation including focus group meetings and surveys that requested feedback from refugees and still others were based on donor demands for gender inclusion. Almost all organizations, for example, indicated that they made sure that their on-the-ground teams conducting house to house visits and surveys were composed of both men and women. The inclusion of women in assessment teams enabled organizations to access women in households, start to build relations with them and gather valuable data.

Most organizations also cited improvements in distribution systems over the last two years. For example, a separate line for women in food and other distribution a separate welcoming hall for single women or women-headed households, were finally introduced at the end of 2013.

### *Food Security, Distribution and Nutrition*

The food security and distribution sector had taken many necessary steps to incorporate gender into their service provisions by the end of 2013. Assessments and feedback regarding their distribution strategies<sup>43</sup>

in the first year and a half were used to continue to transform these processes to more effectively address the gendered needs of the refugee population. There are currently separate distribution lines for men and women. The challenge continues to be around the long waiting time, which is difficult in severe weather, and for women heads of household with young children. Women, in particular, indicated they were subject to harassment while they waited for many hours in the sun. Food vouchers generate additional problems with price fixing and manipulation of stores in addition to the restrictions on many products, such as milk or formula for nursing babies.<sup>44</sup> While direct food provisions and food vouchers may increase nutritional intake by refugees, they also generate feelings of stigma and humiliation and levels of frustration due to lack of control over what one eats and when.<sup>45</sup> Cash vouchers may address these problems and are slowly replacing food distributions and food vouchers outside the camp as well as inside the camp. However, the cash vouchers are distributed to the head of the household as per registration at UNHCR and may reinforce gender hierarchies.

The food security sector had begun to take into consideration pregnant and lactating women's needs and to ensure that they are receiving the right amount of nourishment. The World Food Program's (WFP) assessment on malnutrition found rates that fall within the international range, with 5.1% in urban communities and 5.9% inside the camp.<sup>46</sup> The WFP is planning to distribute highly nutritious food for children who are five years old and younger and for lactating and pregnant mothers and implement mass distribution in the camp for children under the age of two to ensure proper nourishment in 2014. Finally, it is distributing nutritious bars for boys and girls in schools. Data collected by sex and age helps in creating programs and distributions that cater to the different needs by sex and age categories. WFP recently carried out a gender policy evaluation in planning and programming.

The participation of the Food Distribution and Security sector in planning and implementing RRP6 has ensured that gender markers are included in plans and monitoring and thus will begin to ensure that gender is ad-

equately incorporated in implementation of programs. Even though men may benefit from higher protein intake due to cultural factors, which often results in them eating the best quality food, eating first and eating bigger portions, WFP is providing food vouchers considering each member of the family at equal value. Similarly, the food baskets are also calculated for each person. This equality, however, may not necessarily ensure meeting the gendered needs as age and sex play an important role in the kinds of nutrition one needs, and as such, dependence (in the camps for example) on food distribution may mean that specialized food needs for young children may not be met.<sup>47</sup> Such programs are followed by regular assessments and post-distribution monitoring, which is often done on a daily basis. As resources dwindle, there are tremendous risks for reduced quantity and quality of food, which is likely to affect women and the elderly first as they will reduce their consumption to support growing children.<sup>48</sup>

### *Health, Including Reproductive and Mental Health*

The health sector has consistently worked to address the different needs of men, women, girls and boys. From the onset it gathered disaggregated data around the specific needs of men and women. While the sector realized early on that clinics and hospitals needed to have female staff and doctors as it was not possible for many Syrian women to be seen by male doctors, clinics continued to be mostly staffed by male doctors and medical professionals.<sup>49</sup> This was particularly important for reproductive health.<sup>50</sup> One of the challenges in this area has been the lack of female gynecologists and reproductive health practitioners and the difficulty of having female medical staff working late shifts. As a result, many clinics run by international organizations as well as by the Ministry of Health continue to be mostly populated by male staff, resulting in reduced access by women to such services. Additionally, the rural Syrian population is not necessarily accustomed to routine gynecological exams and such visits are almost unheard of for unmarried women.

Several of the organizations involved in the sector, including UNFPA, are working to build the capacity of local staff as well as Syrian volunteers to provide support in this area. It was also evident that reproductive health services are not commonly provided for men. There seems to be more attention from organizations and donors to maternal and infant health. There are many organizations providing birth kits for mothers, as well as monthly diaper services. In the Zaatari camp, several hospitals provide for deliveries, both natural as well as cesarean. Nonetheless, in many of the host communities women were not always aware of where delivery services are provided and local women and community-based organizations (CBOs) were continuously providing support from their own pockets to cover deliveries.

In terms of children's health, there were conflicting references to whether Syrian refugees had vaccinated their children while in Syria. Some indicated that this was not a regular practice, while others insisted that vaccination did take place but that the refugees did not have the proper documentation to prove it. Nonetheless, the health sector did initiate a widescale vaccination campaign for polio, measles and other illnesses.<sup>51</sup> Overcrowding in the camps, the schools and the various shelters where refugees reside creates conditions that make health problems such as lice an ongoing problem.

The Syrian refugee population as a whole is in need of psychosocial and mental health support.<sup>52</sup> It became evident early on in the field research that this kind of support cannot be provided for the family as a unit and requires specific programming per age and gender. Currently a number of programs are providing psychosocial support to children of different ages, including the creation of safe spaces. Several organizations are implementing a series of fun and therapeutic activities at the safe spaces both inside the camp and outside. There are similar programs targeting young men and women. These programs administer different shifts that correlate with the school shifts and that cater to young women or young men separately. Challenges of attracting and providing access to both young men and young women persist.<sup>53</sup> These are due in part to perception

about lack of safety resulting in parents not allowing their daughters to leave the house. For the young men, there is pressure to find employment or participate in the ongoing war in Syria.

Many organizations are also providing psychosocial counseling and mental health support to women through individual or group therapy. There are fewer organizations working to address such issues directly with men. Men face stress from the lack of fulfillment of their expected gender role as breadwinners and protectors.<sup>54</sup> There is, however, more specialized help targeting a sub-group of men who have been tortured or disabled during the war, working with them to get accustomed to their new environment, including the use of prosthetics.

### *Non-Food Items (NFIs)*

In general, most NFI distributions did not initially take into consideration the various needs of men, women, girls and boys. Male heads of households, as well as male street-leaders (in the camp),<sup>55</sup> were not necessarily the best positioned to identify the needs of every member of the household or street, and as such it was important to consult with women. Similarly, the protection needs of women heads of household and single women are not sufficiently addressed in the distribution of NFIs, during which they may have to wait for a long time to receive items. They report being sexually harassed by passersby or being humiliated by comments referring to the lack of a “man” who can take care of their needs. They also have a hard time receiving such distribution items as they often are not able to leave their children alone at home for extended periods. This has led to many of them sending their children in their stead, which has raised questions regarding children’s access to education. Children may be harassed by older boys who may steal the items. “Women reported having been the object of unwanted attention during distributions and agencies flag that some women were asked for sexual favors in exchange of humanitarian goods,” one key informant explained.<sup>56</sup> “In camps, distribution sites are considered the second

highest area of risk of physical violence for adult women, after the home.”<sup>57</sup>

Various organizations experimented with different distribution methods and many realized the importance of home delivery to ensure that it is women who receive the needed material/item and that they have a choice in what they receive. Most organizations distributing NFIs currently ensure that their assessment and distribution teams are composed of both men and women and that in matters related to the household, women are consulted.

Hygiene kits were not included in WFP vouchers and the cash assistance provided was not sufficient to purchase them.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, NGOs began trying to provide these much-needed kits. Operation Mercy consulted with Syrian women directly in putting together the hygiene kit based on what the women felt was necessary. For example, diapers and sanitary pads were not included in traditional NFI distributions, which eventually led organizations to provide specialized distributions that include such items needed by mothers and women. Action Aid distribution bags include a paper explaining the rationale for the items and the quantity of material provided based on the size of the household to keep beneficiaries well informed. Additionally, items were counted in front of beneficiaries at the time of distribution to ensure transparency and accountability.

### *Education*

According to UNICEF, 78% of school-aged refugee children in Zaatari camp and 50-95% in host communities across Jordan are *not* attending school regularly.<sup>59</sup> There have been tremendous challenges around incorporating children into the educational system in Jordan despite the government’s policy to open up Jordanian public schools to Syrian refugee children. Schools, inside the camp as well as in the host communities, are overcrowded; a problem that had existed even prior to the influx of refugees. As a result, the Jordanian Ministry of Education created a two-shift program whereby the morning shift is directed to Jordanian students and the

evening shift is directed to Syrian refugee children.<sup>60</sup>

Inside the camp, but even more so outside, the educational needs of young women and girls have been difficult to address. The perceived lack of safety has meant that families prefer not to send their daughters to school. Additionally, transportation and other school costs, despite the fact that schooling is free, are sometimes a contributing factor in the decision of parents whether or not to send their children to school.<sup>61</sup> The ongoing bullying by other children inside the school and on the way to school, despite the fact that schools are sex segregated, has also contributed to the dropping out of both girls and boys from school.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, students talked about levels of discrimination<sup>63</sup> they experienced not only from students but also from teachers, including refusing to turn on heating systems for their evening classes. “I couldn’t write a word on the exam because my hands were shaking and I was so cold,” a 14-year-old girl said.<sup>64</sup>

While many organizations are preoccupied with access to school, very few are addressing quality of schooling or the educational environment that young girls and boys are faced with in schools and in their homes. The challenges of survival as a refugee may be too daunting for parents to consider what kind of a learning environment they are able to provide for their children in their homes/shelters.<sup>65</sup> Lack of parents’ interest in the education of their children, feelings of uselessness about going to school, the use of a different curriculum than the children studied inside Syria and military recruitment are, in addition to the above mentioned challenges, among the reasons cited by NGO workers and parents for why boys drop out of school. The Child Protection sub-working group is beginning to look into the issue of recruitment of young men into the war. However, there is no adequate data as of yet to understand the severity of this problem<sup>66</sup> but work is underway to better understand what is taking place and combat child recruitment.<sup>67</sup>

Given that some students may have already missed one or two years of schooling while in Syria due to the con-

flict, reintegration into school becomes almost impossible.<sup>68</sup> Vocational or life skills programs are being implemented by various organizations inside the camp as well as outside. These target both young men and young women who are out of school. While most organizations indicated that the choice of skills trainings provided was a result of focus group meetings and conversations with the beneficiaries themselves, the types of programming continues to be channeled along stereotypical gender lines. Typically, young women are learning hairstyling, beautician techniques, jewelry making and sewing, while young men are learning carpentry, agriculture and welding. Many organizations, however, are offering computer and language skills for both.

### *Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)*

WASH workers reported that given the urgency of providing services to a large influx of refugees into the newly established camp in 2012, services did not initially take into full consideration the different needs of women, men, girls and boys. While separate bathrooms were constructed, these bathrooms were very close to each other. There was no adequate lighting and there were no doors or locks on the toilets. This fostered a sense of insecurity among the female population of the camp.<sup>69</sup> The challenge with security of the camp has meant that light bulbs and locks continue to be stolen even after they had been mounted.<sup>70</sup> Toilets continue to be largely unclean.<sup>71</sup> These challenges prompted people to build their own bathrooms, which has heightened the challenges around the sewage systems and generated additional public health hazards (rats, insects, illnesses).<sup>72</sup> The inter-agency WASH assessment found that refugees in temporary shelters (often tents) do not have access to toilets, thus the majority may practice open defecation and only six percent are using communal toilets. “Most communal toilets are not gender segregated, which raises protection risks for children and women and potentially limits these groups’ usage further.”<sup>73</sup>

Water distribution presented a challenge in the camp community with assumptions made about water qual-

ity and usage that did not match the perceptions of families. While water is tested, Zaatari camp residents believe that the water is responsible for illnesses<sup>74</sup> due to its taste (which is different from what they are used to in Syria). Given the scarcity of water resources in Jordan, conversations were necessary regarding water preservation. Limited availability of water had led to reduced bathing in many areas, which resulted in poor hygiene and other public health problems.

Organizations have been working on a diversity of strategies to address challenges in incorporating gender into WASH services. Coupling water delivery with hygiene promotion ensures that women, girls and boys are trained on safe water collection and conservation at home. Organizations such as ACTED, active in the WASH services in the camp, target men, women, boys and girls with specific public health and hygiene messages through the activities (school, work, meeting places, extra-curricular activities, etc.) that they are each involved in and where possibly risky behaviors need to be curtailed.

### *Shelter*

The Zaatari camp was quickly constructed and rapidly expanded as the situation intensified with large influxes of refugees entering Jordan. The urgency of the situation has been the excuse given for a hasty planning and implementation process that did not initially take the various needs of men, women, girls and boys into consideration.<sup>75</sup> Overcrowding in the camps further heightened these challenges. The lack of adequate security meant an inability to fully manage the camp and ensure the safety of all of its residents. Currently the camp is a lot more organized, with most residents living in trailers rather than tents. Distribution of trailers took into consideration vulnerability criteria that UNHCR determined, which ensured that female-headed households, single woman and households with many young children were adequately sheltered.<sup>76</sup>

The situation is by far more precarious for those living outside of the refugee camp. Living conditions often

severely compromise the safety of women and girls.<sup>77</sup> The tremendous increase in the cost of rent, including for almost uninhabitable spaces, has meant that several Syrian families are likely to be crammed into a small space. Female-headed households appear to be particularly vulnerable to the whims of landlords and subject to physical and sexual exploitation.<sup>78</sup>

There is also a challenge of housing single unaccompanied men or boys<sup>79</sup> who have either been separated from their families or whose families were left behind. The ability to find adequate housing given the cultural limitations on having unrelated men in the household have made this population particularly vulnerable.

### *Protection*

While most of the issues identified above have protection implications, additional protection concerns are discussed below. The early marriage of young women undermines their right to education and safety.<sup>80</sup> Studies by UN Women have shown that this is a cultural practice that many refugees brought with them from rural Syria.<sup>81</sup> The custom often entailed both men and women marrying at a young age. The legal marriage of age in Syria is 16 for girls; however, in Jordan, as a result of a large-scale campaign waged by the women's rights movement, the legal age for marriage is 18. There is some evidence to indicate that a shift may be taking place where young women are marrying older men rather than young men their age while in Jordan.<sup>82</sup> "There are indications that the current breakdown in social structures, loss of livelihoods and parental concerns over the ability to ensure their daughters' safety and security as a result of conflict and displacement may be exacerbating existing harmful cultural practices, including early marriage."<sup>83</sup>

The lack of registration of marriages and childbirths are additional problems that can further disadvantage women and children. When marriages are not registered, a woman has no recourse to justice or legal rights if, for example, her husband deserts her, is injured or dies. Similarly, her children may not be registered and will

lack access to rights and may be assigned the legal category of a bastard child if and when at a later stage the mother tries to register them with an absent or dead “husband.” There are cultural and logistical challenges around registration of marriages that organizations are only now beginning to address. UNHCR has done work with the sheikhs inside the Zaatari camp, providing training on mandatory reporting of underage marriages. UNHCR is also starting a religious court inside Zaatari, which should promote better documentation of marriages and births.

Intimate partner and domestic violence in homes, particularly targeting women and girls, is becoming more common, while challenges for reporting remain, especially in the case of sexual violence.<sup>84</sup> This kind of violence may be aggravated by the fact that households are socially isolated, suffering from tremendous financial stress and lack of privacy due to overcrowding, which all contribute to increasing tensions that sometimes lead to violence, often perpetrated by a male head of household.<sup>85</sup> The sub-working groups on GBV and CP have been working on several projects and studies to address such challenges. The Standard Operating Procedures (discussed in more detail below) was a step in that direction. “From January to November 2013, 2,476 Syrian SGBV survivors were supported with multi-sectoral services in Jordan (1,469 women, 669 girls, 168 men and 169 boys).”<sup>86</sup> For 2014, the GBV sub-working group identified four important areas of intervention: forced and early marriage; domestic violence; survival sex; and sexual violence. Women seeking “bail out”<sup>87</sup> from the camp are now being provided with counseling to ensure their safety. Among males, boys under 12 years are at the highest risk of physical violence, while girls between 12-17 years old are at the highest risk among females.<sup>88</sup>

Vulnerability criteria developed by UNHCR and used by others often do take into consideration gendered needs and power relations. Vulnerability criteria often prioritize female headed-households with no income, families with a large number of small children, families with disabilities or serious health concern and so on.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) uses vulnerability criteria that measure an individual’s risk of GBV and this takes into consideration registration status, marital status, married to whom (that is, there are different legal implications for marriage to a Jordanian than to a Syrian), age, schooling, work, number of people in the household and disability. Handicap International also has its own vulnerability criterion<sup>89</sup> that takes into consideration issues of disability and mobility.<sup>90</sup>

## Gaps

The tremendous needs identified in the previous section, along with the large number of refugees in Jordan, most of whom reside outside of camps, has meant there are gaps in providing all kinds of services. While basic needs are being met inside the camp, the ability to fully know how much these needs are actually being met outside the camp is very limited. All organizations interviewed indicated that they are working at full capacity but that they also receive ongoing requests from refugees for more services. Requests are also starting to come from Jordanians who themselves live in poverty pockets that have been exacerbated as public services get strained to meet the demands.<sup>91</sup> The nature of short-term funding of aid (generally from 3 – 12 months depending on the service and the donor) means that organizations continuously run out of items to distribute or cannot provide the same service over a long period. This diminishes trust by the refugees in these organizations and contributes to ongoing intermittent gaps in services.

## *Services for Specific Sections of the Population*

The majority of organizations interviewed<sup>92</sup> identified a lack or shortage of services that target men specifically. While many others clearly indicated that it is women, girls and boys that constitute the majority of more vulnerable populations that are in need of specific attention and programming and that men are not particularly disenfranchised as a whole, nonetheless, men were provided with fewer services addressing their specific needs. For example, many organizations



discussed the lack of expertise and skills in programming psychosocial and mental health support for men; this is exacerbated by the fact that men are less likely to seek such out such programs. Establishing mental health programs that preserve the dignity of these men and provides them with much-needed support is a delicate process.

Many organizations also identified a major gap in the provision of services to older persons, especially older women. Given that older persons are likely to require specialized medical care that is not covered by UNHCR, they often find themselves in a precarious situation and subject to abuse, including harassment, and refusal of services at clinics or neglect by families unable to pay for costly medications and other health services. Similarly, populations with special needs and/or disabilities face challenges in procuring services and attending programs.

Another vulnerable population mentioned by key informants is the Syrian Palestinian refugee population that once again find themselves as refugees, this time in Jordan. They are being housed mostly in the Palestinian refugee camps within Jordan and UNRWA was conducting an assessment in December 2013 to understand better the needs and challenges they face.

Several organizations also indicated the almost complete lack of services and programs addressing the needs of the LGBTIQI population. In 2013, UNHCR organized a training for its partners, other UN agencies and international NGOs, on addressing the needs of this population. No local NGOs or governmental entities were included in this training, which can be considered a missed opportunity to raise such issues and advance the human rights of these populations. Groups are just beginning to think about the ways in which their programming and services may benefit the sexual minority population and the kinds of actions it can take after identification to ensure protection.

Additionally, working with sex workers continues to be a difficult endeavor. International Relief and Develop-

ment (IRD), the only organization that mentioned such an initiative, has managed to identify some of the public houses in the Zarqa region and ensure that at least 100 sex workers are receiving regular medical check-ups and have adequate medical awareness on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. Through the medical check-ups they have also incorporated protection messages and conversations on negotiating with clients.

### *Information Pathways*

Access to information was identified as a serious problem to accessing services and programs. This particular problem affects women and girls more than men and boys. A study by UN Women had indicated that women and girls residing in urban and rural areas in Jordan are mostly confined to their house and have limited access to information about services as well as limited access to such services. Some 83% of those surveyed indicated they were not aware of any services on GBV.<sup>93</sup> The survey confirmed that refugees were aware of food, health and educational services (more than 70%), yet they were not aware of other services, legal, safety and security, mental health and psychosocial support, and women and children's centers.

### *Referral Coordination and Accountability*

As UN agencies and international organizations work harder to coordinate efforts and ensure proper referral mechanisms for various kinds of services, referral and accountability continue to be a challenge. An enormous amount of effort was reported by UN actors as having gone into producing the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)<sup>94</sup> on protection issues (including for GBV and child protection), which was done in coordination with government agencies, UN agencies and international organizations. The SOPs identified referral pathways to procure services and/or report incidents. However, ensuring follow-up and accountability continues to be a problem. Organizations reported that in some instances hotlines or phone numbers of orga-

nizations expected to provide counseling or other such services are not responded to and that there may not be any follow-up taken to provide needed support. This tremendously affects women, girls and boys whose lives may rely on ensuring timely responses and follow-up. When an organization observes risky situations or is approached by its beneficiaries seeking assistance with challenging circumstances, including cases of domestic violence, its ability to ensure that the referral pathways work appropriately (meaning the hotline is answered and assistance is provided) would possibly constitute the difference between life and death.

## Opportunities

### *Opportunities for Positive Social Change*

Despite the fact that the situation of being a refugee is extremely stressful, frightening and sometimes dangerous, it still holds some possibilities for social change towards greater gender equality. It is precisely because what is familiar and known is replaced by what is unfamiliar and unknown, that the exploration of different roles and different ways of thinking becomes possible. While such a stressful situation may lead communities to turn toward increased policing and vigilance of behavior in order to protect family members and traditional values, it may also lead to social change as a strategy of survival. Moments of major political transformations, including wars and conflicts, provide opportunities for a transgression of stereotypical gender roles and expectations, even if temporarily. For refugees in Jordan, the situation is no different than in any similar crisis around the world where women may find themselves stepping outside their prescribed gender roles to ensure their own safety and survival and that of their families. “Conflicts can also bring about reflections and possibilities for change; war brings about transformation in gender roles which I think may also be happening now; but we have to also seize the opportunity,” one informant reflected.<sup>95</sup> For example, IRD introduced a girls’ football team in the Zaatari refugee camp that was coached by

members of the Jordanian Football Association and the Norwegian Football Association. This is an opportunity that may never have been possible in a rural conservative area of Syria.

### *Role of Local Women’s Groups in Promoting Refugee Women’s Empowerment*

Most of the organizations working in the humanitarian aid context that were interviewed found it difficult to articulate consciously the number of opportunities that have either been missed or taken up to support gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment. This is an indication that such issues and strategic opportunities are not at the forefront of their planning and programming. While many humanitarian organizations are working to address women’s practical needs, local feminist and women’s rights organizations are at the forefront in promoting women and girls’ empowerment. It was largely the local women’s rights organizations that saw an opportunity in the kinds of services and programs they were providing, particularly to Syrian women and girls, to enhance women’s self-confidence, raise their awareness and contribute to their empowerment. Such questions are always central to these organizations’ work and, as such, they are fully integrated in all of the activities and programs they create, including service provision. Local women’s organizations spoke of the shifts they witnessed among the women and girls attending their programs in terms of their knowledge, behaviors and future outlook. This also impacted the men, particularly if they were also targeted in programs.

It was clear that concerted attention to issues such as GBV did not take place until at least a year into the crisis. While the Zaatari camp was opened in early 2012, the first prevention of GBV training and mainstreaming efforts did not take place until August 2013 when UNFPA invited IRC to implement such a program. The GenCap advisor arrived in Jordan in March 2013. She observed that “while needs assessments included information about what was happening with the distinct needs for women and girls as well as men and boys,

there was not a lot of focused work that addressed those particular needs.”<sup>96</sup>

There could have been plenty of opportunities for international organizations to work with local women’s rights organizations in Jordan and benefit from their expertise and knowledge about gender and women’s rights issues.

The increased attention in 2013 to issues of gender has provided an important opportunity to push for women’s empowerment. Now is the time to start asking more serious questions about women’s participation in the governance and political structures and other areas of society and go beyond a focus on meeting practical needs to seriously addressing strategic needs and power dynamics. While women’s practical needs are important to meet in the context of refugee status, strategic needs are also important. Women have practical needs as caretakers, including the need for food, shelter, water and safety. “Strategic needs, however, needs for more control over their lives, needs for property rights, for political participation to help shape public decisions and for a safe space for women outside the household, for example, women’s shelters offering protection from domestic violence.”<sup>97</sup>

### *Build Government Capacity and Collaboration*

The process of creating the SOPs on GBV and child protection was cited by many organizations interviewed as an important opportunity towards building the capacity of international and local organizations and government departments as well as raising awareness of such future issues, which all contributes to gender equality. A number of government ministries, including the Ministry of Awqaf,<sup>98</sup> participated in the SOP process, which included a discussion of international treaties and standards as well as local laws and policies, highlighting the discrepancies in many instances. This engagement of government entities provided an important opportunity for longer-term change in laws, processes, ideas and behaviors of institutions as well as individual citizens. Nonetheless, the process seems

to have overlooked the existing referral pathways that women’s rights organizations in Jordan had already established. These local women’s rights groups were not brought into the discussions and thus an opportunity to build on their strengths and to foster improved relationship between them and governmental and quasi-governmental organizations for the benefit of gender equality in Jordan was missed.

Other kinds of collaborations with large-scale governmental and quasi-governmental organizations of Jordan may present important opportunities to raise awareness on issues of gender inequality/equality and to begin to shift certain discriminatory behaviors and policies. Additionally, working closely with CBOs and widows’ associations located in remote areas of Jordan has also been identified by some as an opportunity for dialogue and support change. However, in many instances these conversations continue to be timid, focusing on women’s difference from men (assuming difference is defined biologically rather than socially constructed), focusing on needs and not as much on power relations.

Working with Syrian refugees in administering services and organizing door-to-door surveys is also an important opportunity towards change. Most of these individuals are being trained by the collaborating organization on specific skills and analysis helping them to identify vulnerable populations and challenging circumstances. This acts as a process of consciousness-raising and allows for the questioning of assumed realities about gender roles and expectations.

### *Build on Positive but Limited Attempts to Collect and Use Sex- and Age-disaggregated Data*

During the initial stages of registration disaggregated data was gathered; however, it was collected via a conversation with the presumed head of household, often male. Direct access to women and children was thus often mediated via the men. As such, information from organizations and UN agencies to members of the family was also transmitted via men. In the refugee camp the

structure of street leaders, who most often are men was another mechanism by which flow of information and gathering of data was mediated by men. A new governance structure in the Zaatari camp is supposed to take into consideration gender power relations.<sup>99</sup> However, as of December 2013, there have been constant delays in implementing it, particularly in relation to women's full involvement, according to most key informants.

### *Vocational Training and Cash-for-Work Opportunities*

As mentioned above, many of the life skills and vocational training programs continue to channel men and women into gender specific vocations. There is clearly a challenge here between what is ideal and what is feasible in terms of trainings and cultural acceptability. Nonetheless, it is important to go beyond the boundaries of what is seen as gender-appropriate training. Additionally the majority of life skills training and cash-for-work programs continue to employ mostly men, especially in the refugee camp. Women are only employed in cleaning and cooking activities. Organizations providing vocational and life-skills training programs should consider providing training and safe spaces for women to partake in non-traditional vocations, especially given that the majority of refugees are women, including a large number of female-headed households, and that there may be more space for changes in socially accepted gender roles as refugees than there were inside Syria.

### *Opportunities for Working with Men and Boys*

As identified by the UN,<sup>100</sup> working with men and boys on gender equality and GBV is critical. As an example, two young sisters visiting a women's center, one 15 years old, married, with a one-year-old child and the other 16 years old, married with two children, were convinced of the need to space their children, particularly now that their situation was precarious. However, they both exclaimed, "But what about my husband?"<sup>101</sup> The women's rights activists at the center realized that unless they are also able to change the perspective

and behavior of men of the community, the situation and status of women will not improve.

Engaging men on issues of women's status, value and rights is an important opportunity that seems to be mostly missed. While many of the groups working on GBV did mention the need to work with men, very few had well established programs to that effect. If men are not able to work, it may be important to involve them in productive areas of social change.

## Recommendations Based on Best Practices and Model Programs

### *Empowering Women and Girls*

#### *Working with Local Women's Rights Organizations*

Working with local nongovernmental women's rights and feminist organizations can be a highly effective way of promoting women's empowerment and gender equality. These organizations have a mission of gender equality and a political vision of how to achieve it in society. They are also accustomed to implementing culturally and contextually appropriate programs and in some cases providing services that aim to advance the agenda of women's rights and promote gender equality. As such, they are the best equipped to contribute to programming in this area. Such groups are supporting the empowerment of Syrian refugee women and girls through peer, legal and psychosocial counseling, a diversity of training courses, lectures and information sharing and engaging women and girls in identifying solutions to the problems they face. They also use creative strategies, particularly when working with young women that raise awareness, address stresses, while providing a creative outlet through art and exercise. It

is in this context where the strongest impact around difficult issues such as early marriage and GBV is visible. The ongoing exchanges and programs addressing young women and their mothers have resulted in decreased risk of early marriage for young girls.<sup>102</sup>

### *Building the Capacity of Women, Girls, Activists and Staff*

Building the capacity of local activists and staff of NGOs and governmental agencies produces long-term impacts. Similarly, building the capacity of Syrian refugee men and women has tremendous long-term impact. Supporting the ability of Syrian women and girls to speak on their own behalf is a successful strategy towards empowering women and girls and addressing difficult issues. UNFPA and IRC provided training in film animation to groups of adolescent girls in the Zaatar camp. One group of girls chose to work on early marriage and another on sexual harassment; they wrote the film script and created the drawings to produce a two-minute film on each issue. During the 16 Days of Action on Violence against Women campaign,<sup>103</sup> the film on early marriage was shown at the center in front of friends and family and the girls then introduced themselves and discussed the issue. A similar project was implemented by IRC in Irbid at the women's center, where a group of young women participated in a play, writing the script and acting the roles. "I had a message I wanted to share with everyone: who we are as girls and what are our rights. I was able to pass it on to more than 100 people through this play and they will in turn share it with others," explained a 15-year-old Syrian girl when asked about why she participated in this project and what it meant to her.<sup>104</sup>

### *Creating Safe Spaces*

Whether it is fathers or husbands not allowing their daughters or wives to leave the house or women themselves preferring not to venture out into the streets due to perceived and experienced threats and harassment, the intention is protection. As such, creating spaces

where Syrian women and girls can feel safe and supported would alleviate this concern and ensure more access to services. Women's centers and other community spaces that ensure women only programs or women-only spaces foster a sense of safety and facilitate the development of community networks and linkages. Those organizations that have created safe spaces for women report success in earning trust and creating longer-term impact on women's and girls' self-esteem and the strength of their social networks. Similarly child-friendly and child-safe centers allow children to gain more confidence and help address the various psychosocial challenges that children face.

## *Supporting Host Communities and Refugees*

### *Long-term planning*

At this stage of the crisis it is critical for donors and engaged UN and international and local NGOs to consider a shift from emergency support to programs that build resilience and can have longer-term impact on the Syrian population, including upon return, as well as benefit the Jordanian population. Building the capacity of Syrians and Jordanians to withstand crisis and to learn new skills is essential to supporting advancement of gender equality in the long run. Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development – Legal Aid (ARDD-Legal aid) has envisioned a program for 2014 where women would be trained to be gender water ambassadors. This program will allow Jordanian and Syrian women to receive a certificate or a Master's degree in water management in partnership with the University of Jordan. These ambassadors will "raise the awareness of their community; have a tangible role to play as women in areas of concern to the whole community." Such long-term projects that take gender and power dynamics into consideration and break through traditional gender stereotypical vocations are likely to create long-lasting change.

The Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) urban shelter program is a great example of long-term planning that

also meets current needs and takes gender into consideration. The NRC program aims to relocate Syrian refugees into more livable shelters through supporting Jordanian landlords to finish construction on their lodging and rent them out for free to Syrian refugees. Three teams are involved in this project: one team identifies the Jordanian unfinished structures, creates the agreements with the landlord and constructs and finishes the lodging; the second team identifies beneficiaries via a detailed vulnerability assessment that takes gender into consideration and matches them with a household and a landlord; and the third team monitors the housing and property rights, ensures the new tenants have access to services and pays special attention to any vulnerabilities that may have arisen in the process. As refugees may be moving into a new setting, ensuring ongoing protection and access to services will be very important, particularly as the families benefiting from relocation may often be the most vulnerable, made up of single women or female-headed households with many children. Therefore, the NRC team continues to monitor the situation, making adjustments as necessary.

### *Projects That Benefit the Host Community*

Interventions where both the refugee and host community benefit and where results are observed immediately help to reduce tensions and conflict between the refugee and host communities. IRD administered a number of quick-impact, short-term community development projects, such as bus stop development (with benches, shelters and regular schedules) and rehabilitation of wells, public gardens and children's playgrounds. These projects reduce conflict within the community and between Jordanians and Syrians, made dealing with everyday life more bearable and benefited every member of the community. The involvement of Syrian and Jordanian youth in these projects also helped reduce tensions and harassment, a serious problem that many youths face as discussed above.

### *Building Local Capacity*

Building the local capacity of governmental organizations, institutes, the private sector and NGOs is a key element of long-term change. Medical centers associated with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Services or large-scale organizations such as the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHOUND), are receiving trainings from health care NGO providers on interaction with a diversity of patients (men, women, girls and boys) suffering from trauma and displacement and learning to tailor their practices and processes to address these different needs. They are also receiving training as part of the SOPs on protection issues, including identifying, reporting, managing and supporting those with protection concerns. SOP trainings also clarify processes of when it is appropriate and necessary to report offenders to authorities and what kinds of justice mechanisms are available for survivors of sexual and GBV. It also provides training on managing all these issues, with distinct attention to cultural and gendered power dynamics in Syrian and Jordanian societies. These strategies will enable a large cadre to be more informed of these issues, more compassionate and, most importantly, more vigilant about "doing no harm" and facilitating access to justice mechanisms in a way that is attuned to gendered power dynamics.

### *Establishing Community Centers/Working with CBOs*

Establishing community centers that can act as a safe space for women, men, girls and boys from both the Jordanian and Syrian communities is an important avenue to building trust with service providers, as well as for conducting outreach, meeting the gendered needs and administering programs with long-term impact. Community centers can be safe spaces for the whole family to receive information and services in a non-confrontational manner that may allow for discussion about gender roles and gender equality. In areas where CBOs already have community centers organizations are working through them to implement a variety of ac-

tivities aimed at strengthening relationships between Syrians and Jordanians and to support impoverished communities of both nationalities. IRD, in collaboration with a number of CBOs, is organizing sports events, medical days, social events and community solutions, such as cleaning campaigns during Ramadan, that bring various sectors of the community, civil society and government together.

## Engaging Refugees in Identifying Solutions to Their Problems

### *Leadership Development and Capacity Building*

Leadership development is a crucial ingredient of women's empowerment and promotion of gender equality. ARDD-Legal Aid has created a program of citizen journalists, where women are trained and empowered to take up the role of citizen journalist. Five Syrian refugee women are trained in communication and writing skills and encouraged to collect and write stories about the community. These stories are then shared with different stakeholders and possible media outlets. They each submit a story a week. It provides women with important skills, allows them to think creatively and investigate deeply the problems the community is facing and allows stakeholders to gain more accurate information about particular challenges, such as early marriage. ARDD is also working with Syrian lawyers to build their capacity and understanding of the differences between Syrian and Jordanian laws and legal processes. This enables lawyers to provide legal advice in their communities and allows ARDD to understand issues facing the refugees, such as the lack of registration of Syrian marriages.

Action Aid has developed a community management program in sector nine of the Zaatari camp whereby three leadership circles in every bloc made up of 10-15 people (each circle including (at least) two women, one male youth and one female youth). These circles take responsibility for the bloc and engage with leaders from circles in other blocs. Each circle has to represent the

geographic composition of the bloc, making sure that all the villages in the bloc are represented. Each circle has two volunteers who facilitate the regular meetings and draft reports of their meetings. The circles work together to address local challenges and to manage distributions by Action Aid. They work together to identify the root causes of the problems the community is facing through a participatory vulnerability assessment (PVA), where they learn to ask probing questions to get at the root cause of a particular problem and identify the actors. They are then able to mobilize and advocate for change with the appropriate stakeholders. The circles gather information on needs and manage the distribution of various kinds of resources, namely NFIs, while Action Aid staff conduct random checks to monitor the work of the circles and their collaboration with and representation of their community. While men were hesitant in the beginning about their wives participating in the circles, with time and through interaction with Action Aid, they have come to value that participation and are proud of how their women are becoming more vocal and taking steps to help the community.

### *Relationship Building and Consistency*

Building strong relationships of trust with a community is key to identifying the needs of the population based on age and sex. Organizations and refugees stressed the importance of trust, clarity and consistency. Working with a small set of the population consistently may be more effective than doing programs en masse and intermittently. "We believe that we first need to work with them and allow them to trust us for a long time before conducting any assessment. With building strong relationships and being clear about what we can and cannot offer, then we do not need to ask, they talk to us and call us and ask us questions," a key informant stated.<sup>105</sup>

### *Working with Syrian Volunteers*

Save the Children International and Un Ponte Per (UPP)/Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) are creating child protection committees that play an important role

in minimizing the risks to adolescent girls and raising awareness within the community of child protection risks and issues, including early marriage. The committees are made up of teachers, volunteers, mothers and others in the community who are also able to identify issues and bring them to the organizations' attention for assistance. Other NGOs are ensuring that these types of committees walk children to and from school, and in the process identify risks and safety zones. IRD has also hired a team of 500 mostly women refugees to be community outreach walkers/community health walkers, trained in outreach methodology and basic communication skills. IRD's experience has proven that working with Syrian women volunteers as walkers is the most effective approach, as they will be accepted and welcomed by Syrian women in their household while men or non-Syrians will not be. They discuss health issues and fill out a detailed survey, and conduct a visual assessment of the household, which they note after the visit. This is an important strategy to identify vulnerable populations while building the skills of and providing financial support to Syrian women volunteers and building good relationship with refugees based on trust and commonality that allow for better information sharing and strengthened programming.

### *Door-to-Door Assessment and Distribution*

Many organizations have realized the need to seek information from women and not only from the presumed head of the household on relevant questions around needs, security perceptions, livelihood capacities and the content of assistance kits. Door-to-door questionnaires, visits and distribution allow for more intimate and stronger relationships that ensure more direct access to relevant information and direct feedback on the kinds of services provided. Additionally, this approach has allowed organizations to begin taking into account the opinions and needs of children by asking them directly, where possible, such as in child-friendly spaces and classrooms.

## **Advancing Gender Mainstreaming**

### *Sex- and Age-disaggregated Data*

The collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data is only valuable if used. The data captured needs to be collated and analyzed to assess implications for programming and short- and longer-term planning. How many children are of school age within the refugee population, where are they located and what does this mean for planning with the Jordanian Ministry of Education, for example. While the humanitarian community has become better at collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data, the analysis and use of that data to improve planning and responses, needs to be strengthened.

### *Gender Analysis*

Only through understanding time use, asset allocation and control over resources between men and women can programs and planning address power dynamics and promote more equitable gender relations. Conducting a gender analysis allows programmers and planners to identify how these issues play out within a population or community. And, yet, humanitarian workers, including emergency response teams, often fail to undertake gender analysis and use that analysis to inform both gender-targeted and gender-mainstreamed programming.

### *Empowerment and Potential*

Humanitarian practitioners increasingly recognize the different needs of women, men, girls and boys, and design and implement programs based on those differing needs. Seldom, however, do humanitarian workers move beyond addressing needs to helping population groups achieve their potential. Promoting gender equality necessitates moving beyond meeting needs to creating opportunities and realizing potential. A needs-based approach will not achieve the UN-mandated goal of gender equality and equal opportunities for all.



### *GenCap advisor*

The deployment of the GenCap advisor and the receptivity that came along with it are key to better integration of gender into all aspects of the humanitarian response. For the first time since the crisis began, gender is now integrated into the response plan, RRP6 (Regional Response Plan #6).<sup>106</sup> This has meant that all sectors had to submit their RRP6 plans with gender markers. The GenCap advisor had a chance to review these plans as they were shared and to provide feedback on areas that required improvements. The political will of the leadership of UNHCR in Jordan has meant that this issue is taken seriously by all the sectors and has moved “from being an optional thing to something that was designed and required by senior management.”<sup>107</sup> As RRP6 rolls out, all sectors will have to do monitoring and provide reporting on indicators reflecting the gender marker. The GenCap advisor will gather this data from the sectors and hold regular meetings with the sector coordinators to analyze and understand the data and figure out ways to alter plans and ensure full implementation to meet goals.

Trainings on the gender marker were conducted for all sectors and there are plans to offer more in-depth trainings in 2014. Each sector has two gender focal points whose responsibility is to act as champions on this issue in all sector coordinating and planning meetings and ensure compliance with the gender marker standards. UNHCR plans to include gender in the RRP7 for the whole regional response to the crisis, thus expanding inclusion to both Lebanon and Turkey.

### *Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Development on GBV and Child Protection*

As mentioned above, the process of producing the SOPs allowed for the buy-in and ownership of all agencies involved in those sectors. It linked the international agencies and the local institutions and pushed for agreements on issues of protection and rights. SOPs create standardization and mainstreaming of processes

that identify victims and perpetrators, clarify procedures and actions to be taken to provide protection and access to mechanisms of justice. In 2014, more trainings on the SOPs will be conducted and they could have tremendous impact on the receiving organizations and entities. Because the SOPs have been fully endorsed and taken up by government institutions, including ministries and family centers, this allows for the protection working group to train the staff of all of these centers and institutes affiliated with the government, as well as have access to the police and government staff. There will also be a process of ongoing learning and modification through on-the-ground work and monitoring. Once case managers and staff of all organizations are well trained and referral mechanisms are working well, this will contribute to improved practices around protection and bring issues of violence that women, girls and boys face to the forefront.

### *Internal Gender Strategy*

Organizations with the most impact are those that have a gender policy that is well integrated through all their activities, from planning to monitoring. This includes a good gender analysis in the initial stage of project development looking at power relations, access and control of resources by men, women, girls and boys, assessing the impact of the organization's actions on these groups through regular monitoring and making needed modifications, ensuring that all partner organizations share the same commitment to gender equality and have the right tools and skills to achieve it in their work and, finally, realizing that positive discrimination may be necessary to correct historical imbalances. Organizations should ensure that all of their new hires, as well as the more veteran staff, have received gender trainings and understand how the organization's gender policy impacts their activities and roles within the organization.

### *Incorporating GBV and Child Protection Issues with Other Programming*

Given the sensitive nature of these issues, including messages about GBV and child protection within other more “neutral” programs is an important strategy to address these issues without generating a sense of defensiveness. The International Medical Corps (IMC) is linking GBV with health services as an entry point into further conversations. Given the trust relationship women and men build with the health care providers, they are more open to listening to GBV and child protection concerns from them and taking in the information provided. As such, training medical professionals and staff of health centers on GBV and gender mainstreaming is essential. Additionally, women may come to clinics for stress-related problems and with time it will become clear that the issue is domestic violence, thus this strategy addresses the need for safety and for cultural sensitivity. Ensuring that all signs and posters created by all other programs or service providers are gender sensitive and adhere to protection norms is also very important. Incorporating protection messages with other work, information materials and programs can shift cultural sensitivities and practices around this issue.

## Conclusion

The humanitarian community, after years of rhetoric, has clearly begun to better understand and integrate gender into its planning and programming. This is true across sectors. The introduction of the GenCap advisor, the use of the gender marker and the investment of several humanitarian organizations in developing gender policies and programming, have clearly had a positive impact on the situation. However, gender integration is still largely confined to addressing the differing needs of women, men, girls and boys and, for the most part, does not tackle the broader goal of promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment.

When thinking about gender, the immediate response is that yes, we do direct our services to the most vulnerable, thus women and children (both boys and girls). Ideas around gender appear to continue to mostly be connected to women, to needs and to vulnerability. However, the focus should not only be on vulnerabilities as it promotes a notion of victimhood rather than survival and equality. There needs to be a shift so that gender integration goes beyond the notion of need into the notion of potential. Instead of only thinking about what women and girls need, it is important to consider empowerment and possibilities.

For longer-lasting change, women and girls need to be seen as agents of change and creators of possibilities. Only a few organizations were able to describe what they saw to be the creative potential of women and girls (and men and boys) and their ability to transform the conditions of their current difficult situation. Thinking in terms of potential may also allow for better grasping of opportunities to promote gender equality. Programming and planning must now move beyond addressing the differing needs of women, men, girls and boys to creating equal access and opportunities, advancing social inclusion, tapping potential and planning for and working towards gender equality and a more gender-equitable world.

The WRC report assessed only the Syrian refugee response in Jordan and may not be reflective of the response in the other impacted countries. Additionally, as the Syrian crisis has generated significant resources, programmatic responses and involvement of many agencies’ best and brightest emergency response and program staff, gender integration in the response may not be reflective of such in less visible, less well-resourced responses in other crisis situations.

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## Appendix I: Interview Questions for NGOs, UN and Other Agencies

- 1) Biographical Information
  - a. Name:
  - b. Position:
  - c. Name of Organization/Entity:
  - d. Length of period the organization has been working with refugee population:
  - e. Length of period of the interviewee's work with refugee population:

### Needs

- 2) Based on your experience working on-the-ground directly with the Syrian (female, youth, male, etc.) refugee population in the refugee camps and outside, what do you feel are the current needs of the population?
  - a. Can you discuss in terms of the population as a whole.
  - b. Discuss in terms of women (girls, young, older, head of households, etc.)
  - c. Discuss in terms of men (boys, young, older, etc.)
- 3) What were the strategies used to identify these needs (assessment, observation, conversations, etc.)? What assessment tools did your organization utilize?
- 4) Do you feel that those needs have changed over time? Explain.

### Program/Services

- 1) Explain the specifics of the programs you are involved in? (Target population/beneficiaries, Issues addressed, Types of services, Language, Space, Timing, Evaluation, Other)
- 2) In which areas (camps or governorates and towns) are you working?
- 3) Are you doing work directly with refugees or with implementing partners? Explain.
- 4) How did the organization plan this/these program(s)/service(s)? Was gender used as a variable in the planning process? Was it used from the beginning or not? Explain. At what point was it used and why?

- 5) Does your organization use the IASC guidance on gender integration? If so, explain how you have followed them? If not, why?
- 6) Is gender analysis used in the ongoing assessment? Explain.
- 7) Do your programs promote equal access and opportunity to women and girls (men and boys)? Explain how.
- 8) Is the population you are working with receptive to the programs you are implementing? How is their reaction to the program?
- 9) Is the population you are working with aware of the programs and services you offer? How do you outreach?
- 10) Who are the other players that you collaborate with closely in programming?
- 11) Are there any other groups working on the same issues/with the same populations that your organization is? If so, how do you ensure coordination rather than duplication of efforts?

## Gaps

- 12) Do you see any gaps in the types of services and programs provided for each sector of the population? If so, what are they?
- 13) What is your assessment as to why do these gaps exist?
- 14) How is your organization working to fill these gaps?
- 15) What would be a model way to address needs and gaps in your opinion? (Discuss process and result).
- 16) Is there a specific sub-set of the population you feel that their needs have not been met? Who is being left out?

## Good Practices/Opportunities

- 17) Can you describe good models or practices that you are either involved in or have witnessed that:
  - a. promote gender equality
  - b. ensure protection of women and girls
  - c. meet the needs of boys and men
- 18) What opportunities are there that organizations can capitalize on to support women's and girls' empowerment?



- 19) Have you encountered any people-oriented (meaning by the Syrian refugees themselves) solutions/projects/programs to:
- a. address challenges in the camp,
  - b. advance women's and girls' protection,
  - c. support women and girls' empowerment and
  - d. address the needs of boys and men
- 20) What have been your learnings thus far in addressing the needs, gaps and ensuring protection for women, girls, men and boys?

## Appendix II: Key Site Visits

- UN Women – Oasis Center for Women in Zaatari Camp
- International Rescue Committee (IRC) – Women’s Center in Irbid
- Arab Women’s Organization of Jordan (AWO) – Counseling space at Dhleil Women’s Organization in Dhleil (near Zarqa)
- Family Guidance and Awareness Center – Safe Space for Children in Zarqa
- Jesuit Refugee Services (JRC) – Life Skills Program in Amman

## Appendix III: Key In-depth Interviews (Informants) - List of Organizations

### Intra-governmental Agencies

- The Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap) of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)
- Global Protection Cluster – GBV Area of Responsibility (GPC)
- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- World Food Program (WFP)

### International NGOs

- Action Aid
- Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- Global Communities Partners for Good (Formerly Cooperative Housing Foundation International) - CHP
- Handicap International (HI)
- International Medical Corps (IMC)
- International Relief and Development (IRD)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
- Operation Mercy
- Save the Children-International
- Un Ponte Per (UPP)

### Local NGOs

- Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development – Legal Aid (ARDD)
- Arab Women’s Organization of Jordan (AWO)
- Dhleil Women’s Organization
- Family Guidance and Awareness Center (FGAC)
- Jordanian Women’s Union (JWU)

### Faith-based Charities/NGOs

- Jesuit Refugee Services (JRC)
- Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

## Notes

1 <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>.

2 Ibid.

3 In the various reports and assessments, transliteration of the name of the refugee camp is varied including Za'atari, Zaatari, Za'tari, etc. Throughout this report Zaatari will be used unless there is a direct quote from another report.

4 References to lawlessness and disorganization of the Zaatari camp can be found in many of the reports and assessments including by UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and Davis & Taylor 2013. "There were some security concerns raised earlier this year regarding limited law and order and poor governance structures. Protests, violence and vandalism were rife, thus disrupting the day-to-day operations and exacerbating tensions among the camp population. Resources from the camp were regularly stolen or vandalized due to lack of community governance structure. Over the course of 2013, the Syrian Refugee Camp Directorate worked to improve security measure" (UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP 2014, p7). However, the same report indicates that by the end of 2013, there have been considerable successes in improving the security situation including reduced thefts, vandalisms and tensions.

5 It seems that due to political considerations and the decrease of the number of new arrivals, plans for Azraq have been put (permanently, some argue) on hold.

6 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP, Joint Assessment Review (2014, 6).

7 IASC 2006, 1

8 UNHCR, *Age, Gender and Diversity Policy: Working with people and communities for equality and protection*, June 1, 2011, [www.unhcr.org/4e7757449.html](http://www.unhcr.org/4e7757449.html).

9 IASC, *Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings*, September 2005, <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/downloadDoc.aspx?docID=4402>.

10 A quick glance at the website of UNHCR Syrian Refugee Response in Jordan provides an idea at the large quantity of assessments and reports produced in the past

two years: [data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Language\[\]=1&Country\[\]=107](http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Language[]=1&Country[]=107).

11 Davis & Taylor 2013, p. 3.

12 Bennett 2013, Davis & Taylor 2013.

13 Davis & Taylor 2013, 3.

14 According to CARE's assessment, "household coping strategies are being considerably stretched as additional members have come from Syria, police campaigns prevent many who would like to find work from doing so, additional labor in the market has made paid employment harder to find and CBOs are providing less assistance" (2013, 28). WFP's Joint Assessment Mission (2013) found that families had spent down their jewelry and savings (p. 9).

15 In UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP 2014 report on many assessments, distance was identified as a primary challenge to accessing services primarily health care. "Refugees in rural areas often struggle to access services due to the distance to the health facility" (2014, p. 20); REACH (11/2013).

16 CARE's study of Syrians in host communities indicates that 34% of surveyed households had no income, while 66% had an average income of 190JD. However, household expenditures averaged 300JD with more than half of that going to rent (150-200JD). The shortfall between expenses and income across the survey was 185JD. Most were paying for rent at a rate much higher than the market value (p. 12-13, 15). Georgetown's study (2013) indicated rent has increased three fold and reports of exploitation are increasing (Davis & Taylor, p. 13-14); ACTED & MEU (2013); Oxfam GB (2013).

17 REACH (11/2013); CARE (2013); Oxfam GB (2013).

18 I saw UNHCR tents in very remote and rugged areas of Wadi Araba in the south for example. It was not clear whether these were for local Bedouin or for Syrian refugees. Nonetheless, the terrain in parts of the south is very underdeveloped in terms of mobility (dirt roads and no public transportation) that make it hard to imagine how refugees would be able to access services; IRC (3/2013).

19 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014), CARE (2013), Oxfam GB (2013), UPP (2012), CHP (2012), IRC (3/2013, 3/2013), & ACTED & MEU (2013).

- 20 "An analysis of households in host communities found that most of them have exhausted their savings" (UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP 2014); Oxfam (2013).
- 21 Refugees can procure a working permit legally speaking; however, such permits are very expensive and the process to achieve them is complicated. Georgetown's report indicated that Jordanian government was "no longer issuing work permits for Syrians and has adopted increasingly stringent 'policies' that include penalties, business closures, worksite raids, and deportations to Za'atari Camp, aimed at preventing Syrians from competing for already limited employment opportunities" (Davis & Taylor 2013, 11).
- 22 Interview with NGO worker, Amman, Jordan, Dec. 8, 2013.
- 23 Interview with NGO worker, Amman, Jordan, Dec. 10, 2013.
- 24 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014, 10), Ministry of Labor estimates about 30,000 Syrian children in the labor market.
- 25 There were anecdotal references to survival sex, including women exchanging protection or housing for their families with sexual and other favors to landlords and kafeels (Jordanian guarantor that can facilitate their exit from camp to urban settings). No accurate data is available that allows for an assessment of the gravity of such a problem and most informants indicated that media stories were exaggerated and sensational. Various reports also refer to survival sex anecdotally, UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014), IRC (3/2013, 4), UNWOMEN (2013) or fears of sexual requests in exchange for favors UPP (2012, 10).
- 26 For more on this refer to UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014) and ACTED & MEU (2013), particularly on how female-headed households are less likely to have acceptable living conditions.
- 27 CARE (2013); 37% of households had poor or no kitchens and 55% had poor sanitations (p. 20), most of the habitation was in crowded and had environmental hazards (damp) (p. 34).
- 28 Davis & Taylor (2013, 13-14).
- 29 IRC (3/2013), Doedens et als (2013), UNPA (10/2013).
- 30 UNICEF (2013), CARE (2013) & UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014, 22-23).
- 31 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014, 6-11), UPP (2012), IRC (3/2013, 8/2013), Mercy Corps (2012, 2013).
- 32 [http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/working\\_group.php?Page=Country&LocationId=107&Id=11](http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/working_group.php?Page=Country&LocationId=107&Id=11).
- 33 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014), NRC (2013), IRC (2013), IMC & UNICEF (2013), Inter-Agency CP & GBV Assessment 2013).
- 34 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014), NRC (2013), IRC (3/2013, 8/2013), UPP (2013), UN Women (2013), Inter-Agency CP & GBV Assessment 2013), IMC & UNICEF (2013).
- 35 UN Women (2013), UPP (2013), IRC (3/2013, 8/2013), UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014, 6-11), Inter-Agency CP & GBV Assessment 2013).
- 36 UN Women (2013), IRC (3/2013, 8/2013), UPP (2013), Mercy Corps (2012, 2013).
- 37 A Safety Audit was mentioned in at least two interviews with different UN agencies. No report articulating actual research and findings of the Safety Audit was publicly available.
- 38 "There are certain protection concerns associated with WASH facilities, which have been described as one area of risk for women and children. These concerns have been addressed by the provision of lighting and the increased monitoring of these facilities (UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP 2014, 18); Inter-Agency Child Protection and GBV Assessment (2013).
- 39 IMC & UNICEF (2012), UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014), Oxfam GB (2013), ACTED & MEI (2013), IRC (3/2013, 8/2013).
- 40 For detailed list of key informant interviews, sample interview questions and a list of site visits, please refer to Appendices I-III.
- 41 This included six young women and 30 women.
- 42 For more information, please review early documents on the UNHCR site: and RRP1, RRP2 (identifies women and children as particularly vulnerable population), RRP3 (more

differentiation, youth, girls and some data on protection issues). The brief report on achievements of RRP5 (2013) continues to rarely differentiate among men, women, girls and boys and instead uses categories such as refugees, individuals and beneficiaries in delineating outcomes of activities and services, while the lengthier year-end Report to RRP5 does provide a more nuanced analysis of response by sex and age.

43 Oxfam GB (2013), ACTED & MEI (2013).

44 WFP (JAM) 2013, "Perception that shop owners abusing use of vouchers by selling at inconsistent prices and often increasing cost for Syrians using the voucher... Specialized baby food and infant milk not available in normal shops/supermarkets. GoJ [Government of Jordan] require only pharmacies can sell these" p. 7.

45 Davis & Taylor 2013, 15.

46 UNICEF 2013, p. 5 & 29.

47 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014, 21).

48 "The most frequently practiced coping strategies are relying on less preferred and less expensive food (83 per cent in communities and 68 per cent in Zaatari), reducing the number of meals consumed (67 per cent in communities and 58 per cent in Zaatari), limiting meal portion size (61 per cent in communities and 47 per cent in Zaatari), borrowing food or cash to buy food (36 per cent in communities and 32 per cent in Zaatari) and reducing the consumption by adults in order for small children to eat (23 per cent in communities and 33 per cent in Zaatari)" (UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP 2014, 15).

49 CARE (2013, 34), IRC (3/2013, 8/2013, 2013).

50 UNFPA (10/2013), Doedens et als (2013), IRC (2013).

51 UNICEF (2013, 29).

52 IMC & UNICEF (2012, 2013), JHAS (2013), UPP (2013), UN Women (2013), IRC (2013).

53 NRC (2013), IMC & UNICEF (2013), Questscope (2013), IRC (2013), UPP (2013).

54 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014), IMC & UNICEF (2012), IRC (2013).

55 Street leaders are supposed to be bloc leaders that liaise between the residents of the bloc and the management of the camp. The new governance structure of the Zaatari camp that developed in 2013 was supposed to move away from this model into one based on more shared leadership including governance committees.

56 CARE 2013, p. 5, 35-36.

57 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP 2014, 8.

58 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014, 17), ACTED & MEI (2013), Oxfam GB (2013).

59 UNICEF 2013, p. 20. 50% in the northern governorates are out of school and about 95% in the Jordan valley. CARE's study in Amman and other governorates found that over 60% of school-age children were not being sent to school (2013, p. 32). However, UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP's recent joint assessment indicates that "as of December 2013, in both camp settings and host communities in Jordan, 106,269 children, or 78 percent of those that are eligible, are enrolled in public schools (primary and secondary education)" (2014, p. 22). It also references a not yet published Home Visit (HV) study that reveals 13% of those enrolled are not attending school.

60 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014) joint assessment indicates that 13% of public schools are currently implementing the second shift to accommodate Syrian children, p. 5.

61 CARE (2013, p. 32), UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014, 22), Questscope (2013), CHP (2012), IRC (2013), UPP (2013).

62 UNICEF's study revealed that while parents indicate the lack of interest of their children in education as a main reason for lack of attendance, "the majority of primary and secondary school-aged children themselves report that they would like to go to school. They say their key reasons for non-attendance (or drop out) are violence and harassment en route to and from school and between students at school, corporal punishment, insecurity about leaving their family even for a few hours, having to help at home or work to earn money, the distance to school and the lack of appropriate toilets" (p. 18); UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014); Questscope (2014).

63 "Syrian boys and girls have reported discrimination

against themselves and their parents by teachers and principals” (UNICEF 2013, 20).

64 Conversation with participant during a focus group meeting, Irbid, Jordan, Dec. 24, 2013.

65 UNICEF discusses the compromised learning environment at schools and homes (2013, 19), including large class sizes, corporal punishment, lack of resources, clothes and shoes, and the constant flow of visitors. Davis & Taylor (2013) reiterated the emotional reserve needed from parents to support their children’s education. “That parents are unable to either get their children into school or provide them with the emotional support to keep them there may be another contributing factor to low enrollment” (Davis & Taylor 2013, 10).

66 UNICEF (2013, p. 13).

67 “The assessment also reported that some boys are being recruited by Syrian armed groups in certain cases, with the guardian’s consent. SRCD and UNHCR prevent all children from returning to Syria without a guardian, but once refugees do return, it is difficult to influence their subsequent decisions. Further monitoring and research is taking place on this issue, with UNICEF and UNHCR working on a Joint Action Plan to combat and prevent child recruitment” (UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP 2014, 10).

68 “The longer the disruption, the less the incentives to re-enroll – only 7% of the children who have lost more than a year are currently in school in Za’atari camp” (UNICEF 2013, 19).

69 UNICEF (2013) found that “82% of women, 28% of girls age 12 and over and 39% of boys and girls age 11 and under” do not feel safe using the WASH facilities in the camp at night (p. 25).

70 “The deteriorating security situation in Za’atari camp and increasing vandalism and theft has resulted in over \$1 million dollars of damage and has meant service providers are reluctant to install new infrastructure such as additional lighting” (UNICEF 2013, 24).

71 UNICEF acknowledged that keeping toilets and shower units in Zaatari is a challenge (2013, 24); Oxfam GB (2013).

72 UNICEF 2013, p. 24; REACH’s (2014) recent study

commissioned by UNICEF of the Zaatari camp reveals that 4,184 household use private toilets with 56% disposing of wastewater (including grey-washing and black –toilet) via storage at the household level via pits, barrels, tanks and 26% through surface run (ditch or throwing on ground), p. 20.

73 UNHCR, UNICEF, & WFP 2014, 19.

74 UNICEF 2013, p. 24.

75 In Azraq, for example, site planners constructed small plots of six units maximum per WASH facility as opposed to the current structure at Zaatari where latrines are communal, creating more risks and decreased cleanliness.

76 “By the end of 2013, the shelter situation had improved significantly, with other 17,000 trailers provided in Zaatari and only 2,500 tents remaining. The objective is to replace all tents with solid structures by early 2014” (UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP 2014, 16).

77 Oxfam GB (2013), IRC (2013), CHP (2012).

78 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014), UPP (2012), Mercy Corps (2012, 2013), Oxfam (2013).

79 UNICEF (2013, 12-13), UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014).

80 Although in many instances, it was not identified by Syrians themselves as a problem, which is likely because it is considered acceptable culturally in rural Syria.

81 UN Women (2013, p. 3, 29-33), 51.3% of women and 13% of men in this study were married before the age of 18 and before arriving to Jordan... 44% identified normal age of marriage for girls to be between 15 and 17; UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014), CARE (2013, p. 35), IMC & UNICEF (2013), UPP (2012), IRC (2013).

82 UNICEF 2013, 14.

83 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP 2014, 8.

84 “Humanitarian agencies face significant challenges with regard to under-reporting, particularly for sexual violence, with cultural constraints and isolation in the home contributing as barriers to disclosure. Existing data on a number of protection risks, including SGBV, represents a small proportion of the actual number of incidents” (UNCHR,



UNICEF & WFP 2014, 8).

85 Mercy Corps (2013), UN Women (2013).

86 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP 2014, 8.

86 The bail-out system allows Syrians to leave the refugee camp if a Jordanian national bails them out (sponsors them). There have been reports of abuse of this system, including various scams and sexual exploits (UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP 2014).

88 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014).

89 Handicap International 1-6/2013, 2/2014.

90 According to Handicap International, "there is a need for increased, regular and comprehensive collection of data on sex, age and disability for OP [older people], PwD [People with Disabilities], PwI [People with Injuries] and the needs related to their vulnerabilities. The lack of [available] detailed vulnerability data and related protection risks among refugees from Syria in host countries and IDPs inside Syria, increases the invisibility of vulnerable groups" (2014, 1). For more information, see Handicap International 11/2012, 11/2012 and 1-6/2013.

91 The Jordanian government has taken steps to address tensions as poor Jordanians blame Syrians for the lack of resources and inability of government services to meet the demand. Numerous key informants stressed that Jordanians have come asking for aid wondering why humanitarian aid is only being offered to refugees, while they themselves suffer from poverty; <http://www.hcspjordan.org/>, assessments of tensions' increase include Mercy Corps (2012, 2013) and Acted & MEI (2013).

92 For complete list, refer to Appendix III.

93 UN Women 2013, 26.

94 UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP (2014, 9). SOP English, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=3143>.

95 Interview with NGO worker, Amman, Jordan, Dec. 8, 2013.

96 Interview with GenCap advisor in Amman, Jordan, Dec. 4, 2013.

97 IASC 2006.

98 Ministry of Religious Affairs.

99 The Zaatari Governance Plan has been in place since mid-2013 and it aimed to address security issues. "The plan includes the appointment of appropriate civil administration representatives and the establishment of committees providing equitable voice to women and men" (UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP 2014, 7).

100 Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched a campaign to end violence against women; one of its main components is leveraging the efforts of men towards the goal. <http://endviolence.un.org/>.

101 Conversation with Syrian refugee women during a site visit, Dhleil, Zarqa Governorate, Jordan, Dec. 9, 2013.

102 While there is no data yet that can account for such a declaration, there is anecdotal evidence that young women and girls who are part of women's rights organizations programs are constantly engaged in programs and have regular interaction with staff of the organizations making it highly unlikely that they would be easily married off at a young age. Additionally, several of the women's rights organizations presented numerous stories about how their engagement with mothers of young women who were considering marrying their daughter led to them postponing marriage until a later date,

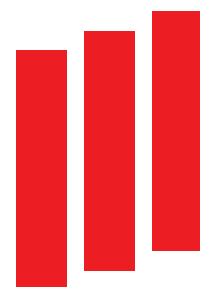
103 UNFPA, Regional Situation Report, Dec 2013, p. 4.

104 Conversation with participant during a focus group meeting, Irbid, Jordan, Dec. 24, 2013.

105 Though this comment was mentioned by Action Aid staff to reiterate the importance of building relations of trust, it was echoed in several other interviews with key informants.

106 [http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Language\[\]=1&Country\[\]=107&Search=RRP6](http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Language[]=1&Country[]=107&Search=RRP6).

107 GenCap advisor, interview, Amman, Jordan, December 4, 2013.



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