



Learning Brief: Gender Study

Conditional Cash Project for Vulnerable Syrian and Jordanian Children in Irbid, Jordan

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Executive summary

Approximately four million people have fled the conflict in Syria, a large number being women and children.

More than half a million are registered as refugees in Jordan. The **'Conditional Cash Project for Vulnerable Syrian and Jordanian Children in Irbid, Jordan'** sought to relieve the economic pressure by providing payments for monthly rental bills, whilst encouraging children to attend school or informal educational centres.

In October 2015, qualitative research was conducted using focus group discussions and interviews with beneficiaries. The objective was to assess how the programme may have influenced gender roles. In addition, the research aimed to identify the barriers people encountered when accessing basic public services and humanitarian aid, and provided an insight into the individual experiences and challenges faced by women and men, and boys and girls. The limited number of interviewees, however, only provides a snapshot of the situation of Syrian refugees in Irbid.

The findings from the study aim to contribute to the growing body of evidence calling for gender, age and disability to be mainstreamed within all humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, it concludes with steps forward for Islamic Relief and other humanitarian organisations, calling for more capacity building and sharing of knowledge to local partners. Through working in collaboration, aid agencies can provide refugees with the appropriate support, shelter and education and, in turn, increase access to livelihood activities.

Key observations:

- Due to significant stress from fleeing into Jordan, their status as refugees and the change in pattern of mobility, the traditional gendered roles in households have changed
- Both male and female adults reported that women (especially widows and single women) have become more independent and self-reliant due to their new circumstances
- Women felt burdened by the multiple tasks required of them since there is no longer a family or community support network
- Adults stressed the need for more psychosocial support
- Investment is required to enrol a large number of young boys and girls into school or informal education to minimise harm
- There are complaints from both men and women about the lack of access to public services, e.g. health care, due to economical restraints and fear of discrimination
- Shelter remains an urgent need for all and the provision of shelter and education promotes sustainable family life and an establishment of routine
- All adults and children expressed concerns regarding security and fears of harassment and assault, and, in response, the movement of women and girls is restricted by the men in family
- The lack of services and access to education for boys and girls with disability was stressed by the community and key actors

Introduction

More than four million people have fled Syria since the start of conflict and a large number are women and children¹. It has been described as one of the largest refugee exodus in recent history, with over 638,633 registered refugees in Jordan alone. A report by the UN estimated that four in every five Syrians are now living in poverty, with 30% living in abject poverty.²

The **‘Conditional Cash Project for Vulnerable Syrian and Jordanian Children in Irbid, Jordan’** project was funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and implemented by Islamic Relief Jordan (IRJ), and the Islamic Centre Charitable Society (ICCS). The aim of the project was to support vulnerable Syrian refugees and Jordanian families living in poverty through interventions in the education and shelter sectors; an example of which was offering families conditional cash assistance to cover monthly rental bills if their children attended or returned to school (see more at Annex 1 and 2).

This study seeks to assess how the project impacted girls and boys, and men and women individually, as well as the family as a whole unit. Additionally, this study seeks to identify how the project may have influenced gender roles, access to and control over resources, gender specific needs and family cohesion. Also, it aims to identify if there were any gender related barriers in the project access and participation, as well as protection concerns.

To be able to address these points, we conducted interviews and focus group discussions with all key personnel involved and beneficiaries of the project. The findings presented in this report aim to contribute to the ongoing call for projects to be gender sensitive within humanitarian action.

Furthermore, this brings the case for inclusive programming where assistance is adapted to meet different needs and build on the capacities of those that may be marginalised during humanitarian assistance. The study concludes with detailed suggestions and actions for Islamic Relief Worldwide to help design and implement future gender sensitive and transformative programmes.

Methodology

This small scale gender study utilised qualitative methods to identify and analyse the impact of the project on the lives of girls and boys, and men and women individually, and their families. The study was conducted by two gender personnel from the international office and supported by the Jordan Project Manager, and one Irbid field officer.

Four focus group discussions were conducted over two days, with the size of groups varying from three to six respondents³. In addition, semi-structured interviews with IRJ social workers and ICCS teachers also took place. Both Syrian and Jordanian beneficiaries were invited to participate in the study. Greater participation was anticipated, however voluntary attendance and difficulties getting to the event resulted in reduced attendance by Syrian refugees and no interaction with Jordanian beneficiaries.

Despite the challenging environment, the study was still able to cast an eye on a number of issues, including lack of psychosocial support for adults, limited availability of services and infrastructure to enable children with impairments to go to informal and formal education, as well as offering useful insights to add to the growing body of evidence needed to promote inclusive programming.

¹ UNHCR: Stories from Syrian Refugee <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/syria.php>

² BBC Syria The Story of the Conflict <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-26116868>

³ Focus Group Discussion: Male=n3 Female=n4 Boys=n6 Girls=n5 Interviews: Teachers: 2; Faith Leader:1; Social Worker: 5

The conversations with beneficiaries, observations from teachers and social workers, and existing research will be triangulated to bring veracity to the data collection and analysed.

Findings

Gender roles

The civil war in Syria has caused a refugee crisis in the neighbouring countries, including Jordan. The United Commission of Refugees has registered approximately 638,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan⁴, with over 80% living in urban areas close to border governorates and in the capital, Amman, rather than in camps⁵.

The significant stress of flight from war, their new status as refugees in Jordan and the change in patterns of mobility and lifestyle has resulted in a shift in traditional gendered roles⁶. Both male and female participants in the focus groups reported that their new life in Jordan had changed their roles in the household. This is particularly true for women, who, according to both men and women, have become more independent and self-reliant.

Findings from the focus groups evidenced that the majority of Syrian women initially came to Jordan with their children, and their husbands subsequently followed. This reality meant that women had to undertake more activities that were traditionally assumed by men. Through adopting additional responsibilities and receiving little support in rearing their children, due mainly to the disappearance of community, social and family networks, women were forced to become more self-reliant.

As refugees in Jordan, women reported feeling pressured and burdened by the multiple tasks they were to manage, overloaded with activities and responsibilities both within the household and outside their home.

Women described their new life in Jordan as tough, but, due in part to their change in roles and responsibilities, have subsequently found more independence. They are more vocal in communicating their needs and sharing their opinions in household matters, which has been echoed by the men in the male focus discussion groups.

Furthermore, women reported that legal restrictions preventing men from finding work in Jordan meant that their husbands were unable to fulfil their traditional role as breadwinners. This role of men, as providers, was appreciated by women back in Syria and interviewed women felt resentful about the conflict and change in gender roles. The situation for Syrian women in Jordan is no different than in similar crisis and disasters, where women find themselves stepping outside their prescribed gender roles to ensure their own safety and survival and that of their families.

A man in the male focus group reported that their wives have more social freedom in Jordan than they had in Syria. The men all agreed that with the new found freedom their wives experienced in Jordan, their opinions are sought and appreciated, especially with regard to childcare activities. However, ultimate authority and decision-making over household activities and wellbeing was still held by men.

⁴ UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response Information Sharing Portal <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>

⁵ D, Carrion, Syria Refugee in Jordan Confronting Difficult Truth

https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20150921SyrianRefugeesCarrion.pdf

⁶ This was also reported by Oxfam & ABAAD in 2013 and Care in 2014 in their studies, respectively: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/shifting-sands-changing-gender-roles-among-refugees-in-lebanon-300408>, <http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/Report-Kobane-Refugees-Rapid-Gender-Protection-Assessment.pdf>

One father described this new period of female empowerment as a/the 'century of women'. They explained that all genders play a part in household chores, responsibilities and roles. Particularly with their children attending school, this has created a routine and restored some normality to family life after the start of the conflict and their flight to Jordan.

The boys mentioned how they went to school in Syria and never needed to work. Their new life in Jordan has been difficult and they reported how they and/or older male siblings work in restaurants, grocery, farming or construction to financially support their families. Additionally, boys mentioned that they support their mothers and family in household chores, one boy mentioned how he supports his sister, who has special needs, learn to read and write.

Girls reported no change in their roles and tasks at home in comparison to their lives in Syria. In addition to attending school, they support their mothers in cooking and housekeeping chores.

The discussion with the boys highlighted the issue that with children starting to attend school full-time, both parents were forced into work to be able to provide for the family needs. This new reality meant that many of the boys mentioned that they do not receive any support or help in homework and reported that they either do their school work with their friends or alone.

Access to and control over resources and services

Education

Equally, girls and boys had the chance to enrol in classes and no cultural barriers were identified that would marginalise anyone. The parents appreciated the necessity for both girls and boys to study, speaking highly of education and the need of it for the children. One father shared that he could not read himself. The desire to better their children's future prospect was a driving force for fathers to allow them to attend school.

However, the demand for the education of Syrian refugees in Irbid outgrew the capacity of the programme. As the project regulated, a maximum of three children from a family can be enrolled in ICCS activities. Smaller families could enrol all of their children on a weekly school day, whereby larger families had to prioritise which of their children to enrol, often this was the youngest.

As a result, the major difficulties for enrolment were identified for adolescent boys and girls from large families. Boys were often required to work during school time and support their families financially, whilst adolescent girls with younger siblings were expected to support their mothers in the housework and care work. Some mothers said that their older boys did not want to attend school as they found it less relevant to them.

The programme and budget design did not take into consideration the high fertility rate of Syrian women. The average size of a Syrian family in Jordan is approximately seven individuals, while the average number of children under 18 was approximately three per family⁷. Younger siblings were given priority over older sibling, which increases the risk of child abuse and exploitation such as child labour, and early and forced marriage. To minimise the risk, adolescent children should have been prioritised, however this example raises the issue for more investment into schools, vocational training and informal educational centres.

Some mothers reported that when children missed a day in ICCS when the stationary materials were distributed, they could not obtain these at the later date, resulting in materials being shared amongst siblings. Young girls also stated that one of the reasons they missed school was the

⁷ CHF International Syrian Refugee Crisis Rapid Assessment Jordan 2012 file:///C:/Users/sharifa.abdulaziz/Downloads/CHFJordan.refugee-Assessment-Report.12.07.19.pdf

necessity to attend UNHCR points with their parents to renew their refugee cards. They also reported difficulties in accessing latrines in ICCS due to their unbearable hygiene level.⁸

Humanitarian assistance

Families reported that their basic needs are not met. Even though the project helped them significantly with paying rent, they struggled with the supply of food and non-food items that were not a focus of this project. The sanitary towels that they had been provided with by cluster humanitarian distributions were causing allergies, and families had to take loans to buy better quality products to manage their menstrual cycle. Young girls (aged 8-13) had very low awareness on menstruation and were shy to talk about it.

Women noted that humanitarian organisations are keener to support female headed households. Therefore, women would often visit distribution points rather than men. They highlighted this to demonstrate the easy access and willingness of the humanitarian community to support and provide relief. However, both men and women expressed concerns for their security within the community and how that restricts their movements, especially those of both women and girls.

Other considerations

Some women, mainly living alone with children in Irbid, mentioned that they attended Qur'an classes in the mosques or attended meetings of women's groups held in religious centres. This seemed to be the only additional activity they took part in outside of a living place and grocery shopping nearby.

Women complained about difficulties in accessing public hospitals and health centres in Irbid. In need, they could easily access pharmacies. The main reason behind this was because of the lack of economic resources to be able to see a medical professional, treatments and fear of stigma and discrimination from Jordanian medical professionals.

Practical and strategic gender needs

The study highlights the need to identify both practical and strategic needs from a gender perspective. Practical needs are basic and immediate needs, whilst strategic needs are the long-term needs of Syrian refugees that should be considered by humanitarian agencies. The programme eased hardship by fulfilling the needs of the family with regard to shelter and education, however the interviews identified other needs that are beyond the scope of this project, but that must be noted by humanitarian actors.

The project supported the shelter needs of Syrian refugees by providing conditional cash transfers. Occasionally some families received delayed payments for shelter because the student attendee sheets from ICCS had not been supplied on time. As a result, some families had to take loans to pay for their rent on time and IRJ transferred money to landlords who were already paid by tenants themselves, making it more difficult for families to recover their funds from landlords.

Shelter remains to be an urgent need for men, women, girls and boys. Everyone has the right to adequate shelter or housing; it is founded on the principles of humanity and reflected on international laws, including principles of the right to life with dignity, right to protection and security.

⁸ ICCS are supported by both IR Jordan and UNICEF, the learning from this study will be shared with the management and shared with all existing partners to ensure that all the points raised will be addressed.

Shelter is necessary to provide security and protection from climate and to promote resistance to ill health and disease. The programme promoted human dignity and sustained family and community life as it enabled people to recover from conflict and displacement.

Practical gender needs

1. Hygiene awareness and hygiene kits – females

Interviewed women mentioned the dire need for basic hygiene items like shampoo and sanitary towels. They also indicated the need for raising awareness on hygiene issues amongst refugee communities and, as observed within the girls focus group, it is important to increase their knowledge on development and menstruation.

2. Psycho-social support for women

Women, whose husbands were still in Syria, revealed the emotional and psychological difficulties of dealing with the tough realities of their lives. They admitted that they express their sorrow and grief only inwardly; in the times of breakdown their coping strategy is to cry, sleep or isolate themselves in lonely places in order to contain their fears and pain. One woman reported that she sought psycho-therapy once and she found it very helpful to talk through her issues with a specialist. This service, however, has been very much limited in access for women in general, and humanitarian actors need to pay more attention to psycho-social wellbeing, emotional and psychological needs of adult Syrian refugees. At present these services are easily accessible for children – the ICCS expanded its facility and introduced counselling services through a comprehensive referral system for acute and complex cases to specialist services.

3. Educational provision

By providing weekly educational activities to children, the project has responded to the immediate needs of children to a certain extent. Many children expressed that they would like to attend ICCS more frequently. Whilst mothers appreciated the extra-curricular activities for their children, they recommended that children would benefit more if they were held outside of the educational centres and in less crowded and more available venues.

One aspect that was highlighted by both the fathers and boys focus groups was the need to be equally educated as Jordanian children. After many years outside of formal education due to the conflict and displacement, the boys described that they felt inferior to their Jordanian peers and how they wished they had more help and support in improving their English writing and speaking skills.

In Syria, children were taught French as a foreign language and English is taught as an additional foreign language in Jordan. In the ICCS centre, accelerated learning courses are being offered to the students. Fathers described that Jordanian children's education was much better than their own children's, and that they were at a lower level due to the lack of English language skills. Learning a new language requires more time and practice, and both parents and children suggested the need for more frequent English classes.

Strategic gender needs

1. Economic opportunities – a way forward

The situation of Syrian refugees in Irbid can only change if they are given sustainable solutions to make a living independently. Providing opportunities for income generation is fundamental in re-establishing livelihoods and empowering communities. Both women from female headed households and men living with their families in Irbid expressed their desperation to work. A number of Syrian women used to work before the civil war and possess skill sets that can help them generate income for survival and self-reliance. However, organisations such as Islamic Relief need to be more innovative and ensure that the opportunities offered to both women and men are not simply

structured to conform to perceived gendered roles, e.g. women in tailoring classes and men in mechanic classes.

To respond to the strategic gender needs of Syrian families and protracted nature of the crises, suitable economic opportunities need to be created. Whilst the political situation may restrict Syrians to work legally, Islamic Relief should join efforts of the international community, firstly to advocate for the right to work for Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries. Secondly, to advocate for more funding to be allocated to address the needs in this conflict and to ensure that countries who promise to contribute to the Syrian Response Plan fulfil their promise.

Thirdly, to advocate for the Jordanian government to engender an environment of genuine self-reliance, where refugees are provided with long-term support to utilise their own skills and experience by removing the restriction of access to certain professions, and support the process of applying for a work permit. This is a critical aspect of re-affirming a refugee's sense of dignity, which is a key principle in the rights of refugees in Islam.

Safety and protection issues

Families raised serious safety concerns and stated that they restricted their movements outside the home, particularly for girls and women. This raises a serious concern about the movement of women and girls to distribution points to access humanitarian assistance. As mentioned above, women expressed that many humanitarian organisations are willing to support and provide assistance to woman; however, men mentioned they restricted the movement of their wives and daughters – this could prevent the access of services to women and girls. Furthermore, women and girls are at risk of harassment and assault whilst on route to distribution centres. Strategies to increase access for women and girls and address security concerns need to be designed and implemented.

Both male and female participants reported that they do not leave their homes unless necessary, such as shopping for groceries etc. Girls, in particular, were restricted from leaving home because their parents were concerned about harassment and insecurity. Women reported numerous incidences of verbal assaults and harassment on the streets.

Women also raised concerns about the risk of kidnapping of children in some areas around Irbid. This fear was not unique to the Syrian refugee population, but was also found in the Jordanian host communities. These fears and concerns prevented women from arranging and taking family trips to gardens, shopping malls and playgrounds, which were places they would visit before the conflict in Syria.

Fathers reported that fear has become an integral part of their lives, which started at the beginning of the conflict and that they have carried throughout their flight out of Syria and continue to hold on to as they settle in to their new lives in Jordan.

A father described Irbid as 'safe' and the similarities it holds to the different areas they are from in Syria – the fertile land, people and communities. However, they reported preventing the movement of their wives and daughters in the area if they deemed the outing unnecessary.

The police were not recognised by Syrian families as an institution where they could seek justice and report their security concerns and incidents. There is a code of silence within the Syrian community. They see no benefit in speaking or seeking support or reporting incidences to any form of authority. One father described it as "opening the door to more problems" for himself and his family. Another father shared an incident where to lessen the tension and mediate the conflict between his family and his Jordanian neighbour; he bought toys and sweets for his neighbour's children.

Both Syrian boys and girls reported they felt safe at school and in the ICCS centres. However, Syrian boys mentioned that they faced difficulties during their travels from school to home and back. Boys after the age of 10 were not provided transport to ICCS and were encouraged to either take public transport or walk to the centre with their sibling. Boys complained of tiredness and fear of being bullied by other children along their way. Limited transport was provided to girls to reassure some families and encouraged them to allow girls to attend the centre and schools, some girls, however, had to walk in groups to school for 20 minutes or take a taxi in areas where transport could not be provided due to resource constraints.

Family wellbeing

The ongoing war in Syria has created fractured families. The situation within the refugee community can be used as a case for a broader definition of family. Families can form an important framework for the promotion and protection of human rights, particularly of individuals within the family unit. Fractured and broken families were highlighted during the mothers' focus group where widowed women, or those whose husbands were still in Syria, described how they missed their husbands. Many children are growing up within female-headed households and the UNHCR reported in 2013 that there were, in fact, 41,962 households led by women.⁹

The conflict has taken a psychological toll on refugee children. A teacher from ICCS described how they needed to build the capacity of the centres and develop a referral system with other local NGOs and MSF to provide psychosocial support, as there are reports from parents and social workers of children wetting the bed, being hyperactive and showcasing violent behaviour.

Interviews with IR Jordan's social workers and teachers reported an improvement in the wellbeing of the family unit as a result of this project. Families were more enthusiastic and motivated around the education of the children, especially after they saw a massive improvement in their writing and reading.

The project also supported Jordanian families, with one social worker that worked closely with these families noticing the improvement in the family dynamics. In her earlier home-visits she observed domestic violence and the absence of a father figure – the fathers were either suffering from alcoholism, or were in and out of prison. The cash assistance she observed in her home visits and speaking to affected families reduced stress, which consequently reduced incidences of violence in the home and fathers were more present in the lives of their children.

Children attending school created structure and schedule in the family's daily routine, which was reported to have improved the family wellbeing by fathers and mothers. Children going to school increased the daily tasks for both parents, but because of their refreshed insight into the importance and benefits of education, they were willing to take up these tasks and responsibilities.

There is a renewed excitement for both parents and children. Children attending school raised their hopes and aspirations, as well as those of their parents. The ongoing hardship and violence associated with the Syrian conflict and their new status as refugees in Jordan has pervasive effects on the mental health and psychological wellbeing of Syrian refugees.¹⁰ The programme eased the hardship of accessing the needs of the family to education and rent payment, which mothers reported feeling less 'depressed' about in consequence to this support. Fathers reported an improvement of relationships in their family which may be associated with the new dynamic and better communication of family in regards to the household needs. Whilst most

⁹UNHCR The Future of Syria: Refugee Children in Crisis <http://unhcr.org/FutureOfSyria/scarred.html>

¹⁰ UNHCR Culture, Context and Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing of Syrian 2015 <http://www.unhcr.org/55f6b90f9.pdf>

interviewed women left or lost their husbands in Syria, their perspectives on family dynamics, in the light of their new gender roles, were quite different. The women expressed they felt overwhelmed and required further support in managing their family matters in their new gendered roles.

Emerging themes and suggested priority actions

With the ongoing call for all humanitarian actions to be gender sensitive in order to facilitate maximum impact of the project, there is a need to ensure:

- Equitable access to humanitarian assistance for women, men, girls and boys of different age and ability
- Aid should be responsive to differential needs of women, men girls and boys of different ages and abilities

The interviews and focus groups brought into light the increased need for understanding of gender issues, not only amongst refugees and host communities and their leaders, but also within Islamic Relief Jordan and ICCS. This would facilitate a journey of understanding, questioning and institutionalising learning and principles around gender justice.

The programme was set out to reduce the monetary burden of rent and access to education, the programme did not seek to engage with the community to explore how the conflict and the programme is changing gender identities and roles. This was an oversight of the programme as described by those involved in the study. Many reported the need for safe spaces and psycho-social support for men, women, boys and girls to address the loss or missing of a husband or stress they may feel due to the lack of work and the new responsibilities they now hold. There remains a gap in ensuring access to counselling services to help refugees deal with their experience and tension of the changing roles, especially described by mothers.

The specific need of education for vulnerable groups, including children with disability was not properly mainstreamed. The ICCS centres as well as Jordanian schools don't have the additional facilities to include children with disabilities. The designing, planning and implementation of the programme should have been informed by gender and diversity analysis to ensure that future programmes can integrate the rights and needs of girls and boys with special needs and disability.

Communities should have been closely consulted and encouraged to participate in the developing and evaluation of the programmes to validate their knowledge of their community and harness their skills and capacity.

Conversations regarding security and safety brought to light the need and importance for activities to be organised to build understanding between refugees and host communities to increase tolerance. Organisations, governments authorities, local religious leaders need to work together to enforce laws to protect refugees in Jordan. Work is also needed to improve refugees' knowledge of their rights and how they can claim justice. This can be facilitated by religious leaders/Imams who from the beginning of the conflict were very involved in building the community cohesion and mobilising host communities to provide support for refugees from Syria. In addition, this is suggested as women confided that they feel more comfortable in seeking support and reassurance at mosques and faith leaders. Furthermore, to build the trust and confidence of security officials in the Syrian community, focal points and safe spaces should be created in mosques and other places of worship.

In Syria, there was high percentage of attendance of girls and boys in primary school and secondary. The economic pressure on families who fled to Jordan meant that children faced years without

formal education, and many were forced into child labour or early marriage. The project was able to ease the access of children into education. By easing the access of education and providing financial support for shelter, this prevented early marriage of girls in the targeted families.

However, the traditional gendered roles were not challenged, which may explain why a few of the boys who attended the focus discussion groups mentioned how they still continue working. Boys are entering the workforce to help provide for their families, they, unlike girls, face more pressure to earn money. Gender sensitive policy and programme design and implementation have the potential to reduce vulnerability and increase the effectiveness of social protection. This was highlighted by fathers suggesting for future programmes to transfer funds directly to families as opposed to landlords. To further promote the right to quality education and support the right of refugees to adequate shelter, conditional cash transfer was encouraged. Additionally, the aim was to sustain family and community life that had been witnessed especially with reports mentioning the positive role of neighbours and landlords in the role of educating children.

Gender inequality is one of the most persistent causes, consequences and manifestation of unequal power relations. Understanding gender and incorporating it within our programmes can, therefore, significantly enhance our understanding of power and privilege¹¹.

Gender and power analysis, if conducted in the beginning, would have been able to inform design, implementation and evaluation, especially with regard to the power relation between families and their landlords. Mitigating factors would have been put in place to reduce families' vulnerability to financial abuse and exploitation from their landlords. This key social issue would have been highlighted – refugees having less power – and addressed to avoid abuse, further victimisation and exploitation.

Religious and non-religious groups were all subjected to surveillance and monitoring by government security services in Syria before the conflict. Places of worship would be monitored and sermons controlled, and mosques were often closed between prayers.¹² Due to these restrictions, many Syrian Muslims would not gather in the mosques for religious classes. However, as reported by a faith leader, high numbers of female refugees compared to male refugees now attend religious classes at mosques. Additionally, female refugees, unlike their male counterparts, are more comfortable seeking support from faith leaders in the community for conflict resolution and loans. This reinforces the importance of engaging with religious leaders in reducing social vulnerabilities and risks, and increasingly building their capacity in conflict resolution and protection incorporating a gender component.

To further support the reduction of dropout from schools, more engagement and improvement of literacy skills of the parents should be sought. Boys mentioned the lack of support they receive from adults at home with their homework; this may be due to low literacy levels amongst parents and increased productive activities by both parents. Education experts encourage parents to share books and be involved with their children's homework. This develops a routine of reading at home and sets a pattern that demonstrates the importance of good literacy skills to children. More important, it opens communication channels for children to express and talk about their feelings and their day. Also, the involvement of parents in their children's education can play as a significant factor in education success of children.¹³

¹¹ D, Koester Gender and Power, 2015 <http://publications.dlprog.org/Gender&Power.pdf>

¹² US Department of State, International Religious Freedom Report Syria 2007 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2007/90221.htm>

Lessons Learned: Possible steps forward

This study contributes to the growing body of evidence calling for the improvement of humanitarian assistance by mainstreaming age, gender and disability. The study highlighted a number of lessons to be integrated in future Islamic Relief programmes, including:

1. Gender and power analysis, and the collection of Sex, Age and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD)
 - a. Improve our skills and practice to integrate gender and power analysis into planning, designing and implementation of programmes, and understanding that to deconstruct the concept of 'affected population,' gender and power analysis should be carried out to inform programme planning, design and implementation of the specific needs, capacities and threats faced by women and girls, boys and men.
 - b. Improve our skills and practice in the collection and use of SADDD to improve our programmes and collect learnings.
2. Equal and meaningful participation
 - a. Improve the involvement of women and men, boys and girls in decisions about the assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.
 - b. Build on existing skills and techniques to enable the meaningful participation of boys and girls.
 - c. Islamic Relief Jordan's staff composition of male and female allowed the reaching of men and women, boys and girls. However, investment is needed to build the capacity and awareness of gender and GBV within Islamic Relief Jordan team and ICCS staff to change their attitudes on gender and of affected people as 'recipients' to agents of change. Improve the skills to analyse obstacles for participation, and create innovative techniques and measures to address the most important obstacles that some groups may face such those with impairment.
 - d. Investment is needed to find alternative and innovative informal channels of communication to enable more members of the community to participate, such as women with children and those with impairments.
3. Increase access
 - a. More investment to support the enrolment of a large number of children to formal and informal education, and vocational training.
 - b. Improve the mainstreaming of age, gender and disability perspective to education and training programmes to both IR and partner office to be able to adopt measures that promote, respect and guarantee the safety of boys and girls with/or without impairments in education settings i.e. transportation and provision of adequate sanitation supplies and facilities.
 - c. More investment in research and creation of new strategies focusing on adolescent boys and girls to prevent drop outs and minimise their risk to child labour and forced marriage.
 - d. Islamic Relief will advocate that humanitarian agencies should prioritise shelter response in host communities such as Irbid. This would stabilise families and reduce the most destructive coping mechanisms, such as early and forced marriage, and child labour. Basic household needs, especially rent, continues to be the highest single household expenditure. The depletion of savings, decreased access to humanitarian assistance and no legal income opportunity.

Until there is an increase access of refugee women and men to legal livelihood opportunities, the provision of shelter and support of rent programmes should continue to be supported and funded.

4. Safety and dignity

- a. Investment in building the capacity of IRJ and ICCS staff in how to prevent and responds to GBV, and child abuse and exploitation. To strengthen referral system to refer cases of violence, abuse and exploitation.
- b. Seeking strategic partnerships with organisations and stakeholders to promote gender mainstreaming in other sectors such as health and protection to increase refugee women and men, boys and girls knowledge and claim to their rights and justice.
- c. Designing a GBV programme with faith incorporated to encourage the participation of religious leaders and, consequently, engaging men and boys in the promoting gender justice and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls.
- d. Investment of faith leaders to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls and support their creation of 'safe spaces' in places of worship where women and girls are able to access information on services provided to survivors of violence, especially as women have described their increased involvement and participation in places of worship.

5. Accountability

- a. To further promote accountability in all IR programmes, a better fully function system should be designed and implemented, and accessible to all abilities.
- b. Regular training and awareness of the IR code of conduct, gender and GBV should take place to prevent misconduct, abuse and exploitation of beneficiaries.

Annex

Annex 1: Project background

Project description: The project is targeting vulnerable families to provide rent support and, at the same time, ensuring that the children have accessibility to quality education. The project is providing a complete package of services whereby shelter and education needs of the targeted families and children are fulfilled. Additionally, the project is providing added value of refugee protection and child protection services.

Beneficiaries are identified based on IRJ's detailed case assessments and vulnerability criteria. A set of vulnerability criteria was developed by IRJ and consists of several categories – family income, family size, gender of household head, number of elderly/sick/children in each household, household disability, receiving food voucher and social worker team recommendation.

Outcome: 3,947 children (70% Syrian and 30% Jordanian) children who are out of school have secured access to appropriate formal/non-formal/or informal education to learn and develop.

Outputs:

1. Referral mechanism is built with ICCS and increased number of children referred to various types of education
2. Families are assessed through door to door visits
3. 3,947 children are referred to formal, informal or non-formal education by ICCS and Save the Children
4. Payment for children from Syrian families and children from Jordanian families is made towards their house rent for Syrian refugees and other bills (such as electricity/water/food) for Jordanian families

The project targeted the following:

1. Female and male school leavers between the age of 7-16
2. Poor female headed household Syrian refugees
3. Elderly people
4. People with disabilities

Annex 2: No. of families and children within the cash for rent programme

| No. | Area | Families in their charge | Children in their charge | Females | Males |
|-----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-------|
| 001 | Works exclusively with Jordanians | 448 | 803 | 485 | 318 |
| 002 | Ramtha centre | 239 | 482 | 216 | 266 |
| 003 | Irbid (town and some surrounding village) | 358 | 767 | 324 | 434 |
| 004 | Dir Abu Saeed | 223 | 470 | 240 | 232 |
| 005 | Sareh Centre | 54 | 107 | 51 | 56 |
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Annex 3: The number of female and male headed households in the cash for rent programme at the time of study

| Types of Households | No. |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Female Headed Households | 286 |
| Male Headed Households | 589 |

Annex 4: Questions

Pupils (girls and boys separate, 12-17 years old)

We would like to learn about your experience in attending the school.

1. When did you enrol and how do you enjoy time in school since then? What's your experience in the school?

Access

2. How has enrolment in the school changed/affected your life in your family and community? (**benefits, shortcomings, challenges etc.*)
3. Have you faced any difficulties to benefitting from the classes or any school activities?

Needs

4. How do you access the following (in school/home) (**any differences between boys and girls*):
 - Water
 - Food
 - Clothes
 - Stationary
 - Health services
5. What do you do after school?
6. Do you participate in extracurricular activities after school?
7. What else would you like to do to meet your aspirations?

Safety

8. Do you feel safe in school?
9. Do you feel safe traveling back and forth from school or activities you attend?
10. Are there any areas in the school where you feel unsafe?
11. Have you heard of any upsetting situations (violence) in the school or community? What was it?

Roles

12. Do your siblings go to school too? (if not, what do they do?)
13. What were your responsibilities at home before joining the school? (*how do you help your family?*)
14. What are your house responsibilities now when you attend school?

Family

15. Has anything changed in your family since you joined the school?
16. Did anyone in your family attend school previously?
17. Do you get support from your family in regards to school activities and homework?

Girls:

18. Do you attend school when you are period?
19. Do you feel comfortable attending?
20. Are there facilities for you to dispose of your sanitary towels?
21. If you started your period at school is there anywhere you can access products and etc?
22. Is there anyone at school or at home you can speak to in regards to personal hygiene and periods?
23. In menses how do girls cope with school activities and maintaining the hygiene?

Parents

We would like to learn about your experience in IR's project

Ice breaker: How did your family benefit from the project? Are you satisfied? Who benefited the most from your family?

Access

1. How the project affected your ability in sending children to school? Have you faced any difficulties in sending your daughters or sons to school? / Why?
2. Who does take the decision of sending your children to school (your spouse, family etc?)
3. Have you faced any difficulties in sending your daughters or sons to school?
4. Have you been consulted in the project design of IR? Are you happy how IR involved you in the programme?

Safety

5. Do you have any safety concerns when sending your children to school? What are they?
6. In this community is there a place where women and girls feel unsafe or try to avoid? (Day? Night?) What issues make them feel unsafe?
7. In this community is there a place where men and boys feel unsafe or try to avoid? (Day? Night?) What issues make them feel unsafe?
8. From whom can women and girls seek assistance in case of a security problem?
9. Is there a place or a person women and girls can seek help, advice or assistance?
10. From whom can men and boys seek assistance in case of a security problem?
11. Is there a place or person men and boys can seek help, advice or assistance?

Roles

12. (for refugees only) What is the main difference in your roles and responsibilities in your family here in comparison to in Syria?
13. Before the programme how was your family life and situation?
14. How IR programme had any impact on the relations in the family/community?
15. Since you sent your children to school how did your daily schedule change?
 - a. Do you have more responsibilities at home?

Needs

1. How has the IR project helped in meeting your household needs?
2. Who is most vulnerable in your family/community? What are they vulnerable to, and why? How did project assist them? Or did the project assist them?
3. Has the project responded to any of the consequences of the conflict and displacement on women, men, boys and girls?
4. Do you face any difficulties for paying the rent or life expenses?
5. Has the project helped you to access and have control over the following and how:
 - Water
 - Food
 - Clothes
 - Stationary
 - Health services

Key informants

1. How has IR project influenced the lives of girls?
2. How has IR project influenced the lives of boys?
3. How has IR project influenced the lives of families?
4. Has any groups faced difficulties to benefit from this project? Why?

5. Has the project promoted justice between females and males? How?

Extra questions for teachers

1. Are there places where girls can go to voice concerns?
2. Are there places where boys can go to voice concerns?
3. According to you, what could be done in this community to create a safe environment for girls?
4. According to you, what could be done in this community to create a safe environment for boys?
5. Is there any difference in the educational level of boys and girls?
6. Is there any difference in the educational achievement between boys and girls?
7. Was there anything you did to improve the teaching environment for the children?

Extra questions for ICCS

1. Is the referral system considerate of specific vulnerabilities of girls and boys?
2. What's the proportion of boys and girls being referred to your educational centres?
3. What's the proportion of boys and girls attending extracurricular school activities?
4. For what social groups is easier to enrol and attend classes? (**e.g. refugees*)
5. Are there any vulnerabilities that the project didn't take into account?



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