

# شام للاتصالات



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## INFORMING REFUGEES: COMMUNICATION TO AND FOR SYRIANS IN JORDAN'S HOST COMMUNITIES

JORDAN

REPORT

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### About REACH

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH's mission is to strengthen evidence-based decision making by aid actors through efficient data collection, management and analysis before, during and after an emergency. By doing so, REACH contributes to ensuring that communities affected by emergencies receive the support they need. All REACH activities are conducted in support to and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information please visit our website: [www.reach-initiative.org](http://www.reach-initiative.org). You can contact us directly at: [geneva@reach-initiative.org](mailto:geneva@reach-initiative.org) and follow us on Twitter @REACH\_info.

## SUMMARY

Since the outbreak of conflict in 2011, there has been significant displacement from Syria into Jordan. In 2016, the Jordanian government estimated the total number of Syrians in the country to be over 1.2 million.<sup>1</sup> According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 79% of the 660,315 Syrian refugees registered in Jordan are living in host communities.<sup>2</sup> Humanitarian and governmental actors working to assist these Syrians employ a variety of mechanisms to communicate information about policy changes, as well as assistance and services provided to Syrians. This is predicated on the understanding that information, and awareness of where to seek it, is fundamental to enabling Syrians to exercise their rights and entitlements.

It is against this backdrop that aid actors need coherent and effective communication strategies to disseminate information. This requires addressing significant information gaps, with regards to the primary ways Syrians access, understand and use information about assistance and services. To this end, REACH, in partnership with the Department for International Development (DFID) and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), conducted an assessment of information consumption among Syrians living in Jordan. The primary research objectives of this assessment were to:

1. Survey information dissemination and evaluate perceived accuracy and reliability, focusing on primary formal and informal communication mechanisms accessed by Syrians;
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of particular information dissemination mechanisms used by humanitarian and governmental actors;
3. Understand how information disseminated is used in Syrian household decision making;
4. Highlight information gaps and the specific informational needs of Syrians living in host communities (urban<sup>3</sup> and hard-to-reach (HtR)).

The assessment, carried out between 12 April and 11 May 2017, consisted of 34 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Eighteen FGDs were conducted in Amman, Mafraq, Irbid and Zarqa governorates and 16 FGDs in HtR Syrian communities across multiple northern and southern governorates.<sup>4</sup> This included assessments of populations with limited access to information mechanisms.

## Key Findings:

### Informal Communication Mechanisms

- There were well established and far-reaching *informal communication mechanisms*. Information was sourced internally between Syrians in local neighbourhoods or living in host communities in the vicinity.<sup>5</sup>
- These networks were reported to be highly effective in disseminating information quickly and at low-cost through word-of-mouth communication. Means of communication ranged from in-person information exchange, phone calls, short message service (SMS), and social media platforms such as WhatsApp or Facebook.
- These mechanisms were heavily relied upon by all participants, especially in HtR communities.
- The primary disadvantage of informal communication mechanisms was that the information exchanged was largely reported to be unreliable and not comprehensive.
- However, informal communication mechanisms were used as a 'gate-way' that directed individuals towards relevant official information sources, and was therefore part of a more complex and dynamic information communication pathway.

<sup>1</sup> MOPIC, Government of Jordan. [Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2016-2018](#).

<sup>2</sup> [UNHCR Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal](#). Accessed 13.06.17.

<sup>3</sup> While some FGD conducted in HTR communities were also located in an urban setting, for the purpose on this report, urban will only refer to the Syrian population that was not in HTR communities.

<sup>4</sup> For further detail on the criteria used to identify these communities, please refer to the 'Methodology' section of the report.

<sup>5</sup> With the exception of the online community which referred to Syrians living in host communities across the country.

## Formal Communication Mechanisms

- The majority of participants in host communities and many in HtR communities were able to validate information they gained via informal communication mechanisms, through *formal communication mechanisms*.
- Formal sources of information included the Government of Jordan (GoJ) offices and public service facilities, United Nations (UN) agencies, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and local aid actors.
- Formal means of communication included both uni-directional (i.e. SMS, automated voice messaging (AVM), phone calls, flyers) and multi-directional (i.e. visit centres, homes and communities, help-lines and call centres) channels.
- Access to many formal communication mechanisms is predicated on registration with UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior (Mol) as residing in host communities. Consequently, participants that were non-registered or camp-registered but living in host communities after the bailout reported rarely engaging with formal communication mechanisms.
- Participants relying upon formal communication mechanisms reported information received to be comprehensive and trustworthy.
- Although there was generally a high level of trust expressed in formal communication mechanisms, Syrians often reported difficulties in accessing them. This was especially problematic for Syrians in HtR communities due to the financial cost of travelling to urban centres.

## Effectiveness of Information Dissemination Mechanisms and Preferred Channels

- Participants often reported difficulties in accessing reliable and formal multi-directional means of information (i.e. visit centres, help-lines) and repeatedly requested more official forums for feedback.
- Urban participants preferred using internet and social media (i.e. Facebook, Whatsapp) to access information.
- Participants requested a greater presence of formal aid actors on internet and social media platforms, such as Facebook, in order to further share information about services.
- However, several factors limiting access to internet and social media platforms were faced in HtR communities, including the cost of smartphones, internet network coverage and literacy. In these cases, field-visits emerged as an effective, positively perceived formal communication mechanism.
- The UNHCR-run help-line was reported to provide trustworthy information. However, participants reported facing difficulties in accessing the call centre and requested that the capacity of the call centre be expanded and help-lines diversified to be topic specific.

## Information Gaps

- Participant perception of formal communication mechanisms was often highly specific (i.e. to specific sectors or communication mechanisms). Consequently, where there were sectoral information gaps (i.e. healthcare), participants indicated the source best relied upon to address them.
- Humanitarian assistance and healthcare were the two most frequently selected informational needs; participants reported a general lack of information and high level of confusion about their entitlements.
- With a few exceptions, participants generally had a clear and comprehensive knowledge of where to seek information about public education services and work permit application processes. Where key information gaps emerged concerning work, it was around the technical issues involving employment rights such as legal risks and protections.
- Limited awareness of legal aid services highlighted a bottleneck inhibiting access to information. This is related to broader problems of informational needs and barriers to accessing services.
- Participants reported a lack of information on how to access impartial and private legal assistance to help with documentation and status issues. They specified preferring this information to come from a formal but non-governmental actor, such as an INGO or the UN.

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## List of Acronyms

<b>AVM</b>	Automated Voice Messaging
<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organization
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GoJ</b>	Government of Jordan
<b>HtR</b>	Hard-to-Reach
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>ITS</b>	Informal Tented Settlement
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-governmental Organization
<b>JHAS</b>	Jordan Health Aid Society
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education (Jordanian government)
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health (Jordanian government)
<b>Mol</b>	Ministry of Interior (Jordanian government)
<b>MoL</b>	Ministry of Labour (Jordanian government)
<b>NFI</b>	Non-Food Items
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>SRAD</b>	Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UVE</b>	Urban Verification Exercise
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

## Geographical Classifications

**Governorate:** The highest administrative boundary in Jordan below the national level.

## Terminology<sup>6</sup>

**Bailout:** The bailout process is where the Government of Jordan (GoJ) legally transfers Syrian registration status from residing in the camps to residing in host communities. However, some Syrians have moved out of the camp without going through the bailout process. Without official Ministry of Interior (Mol) registration, Syrians have restricted access to government and humanitarian services. Therefore, Syrians who use to live in camps and have not registered as living in host communities have to return to the camps in order to complete the bailout process and transfer their registration from camps to the host community.

- This process was legal (provided the refugee met certain requirements which included having a Jordanian relative under 35 sponsor them) until early 2015. After 14 July 2014, Mol stopped issuing Mol cards to refugees that had left the camps without going through the official bailout process. This prohibited UNHCR from issuing asylum seeker certificates to refugees that fell into this category.

**Formal Communication:** Communication from a registered charity, NGO, INGO, GoJ or UN agency.

**Local Aid Actors:** Participants often used local charities, NGOs and CBOs interchangeably during FGDs, therefore, for the purpose of this report, we have combined these different local aid actors under one term.

**Mechanism:** The way in which information is communicated between source and recipient. This includes phone calls, SMS, field visits, or talking in person.

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<sup>6</sup> A comprehensive overview of the context surrounding the UVE and the verification process can be found in the following report: NRC [Securing Status: Syrian refugees and the documentation of legal status, identity, and family relationships in Jordan](#), November 2016.

**Mol Cards:** All Syrians living in Jordan are required to register with Mol and receive a Mol card. This card is only valid in the district that it is issued in.

**Biometric Mol Cards ('new'):** The GoJ initiated the Urban Verification Exercise (UVE) in early 2015. The purpose of the exercise was to re-register/verify that all Syrians living in Jordan have a new biometric Mol card. These cards were thus coined "new Mol cards" and the cards issued before UVE were no longer deemed valid. The new Mol card is nationally recognised and allows Syrians to travel freely within Jordan. These cards also allow Syrians to apply for work permits through the MoL.

The new Mol Cards require every Syrian to present their Syrian identity document, their asylum seeker certificate and a proof of address and health certificate. Syrians that entered Jordan prior to the Syrian civil war do not require an asylum seeker certificate. The new Mol card is also district specific (allowing for access to services such as education, and medical care in those specific districts) and serves as proof of residency in a host community.

- Refugees living in camps also received new Mol cards which are only valid to refugees that continue to live in the camps – for the purpose of simplicity, this definition focused on the services available to new Mol card holders living outside of camps.

**Urban Verification Exercise (UVE):** Initiated by the GoJ in early 2015, this exercise was aimed at re-registering all Syrians living in Jordan and provide them with new biometric Mol cards. This exercise required that all Syrian nationals within Jordan register with the GoJ. Additionally, after registration, Syrians in both the host communities and camps would receive a new Mol card.

**Word-of-Mouth:** Transfer of information from person to person within a community.

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## INTRODUCTION

Significant displacement of Syrians across Jordan's northern border began in early 2011, coinciding with the start of the Syrian conflict. As of 13 June 2017, 660,315 Syrian refugees were registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Jordan.<sup>7</sup> An additional 610,170 non-registered Syrians were recorded as residing in Jordan according to the 2015 Department of Statistics (DOS) Census.<sup>8</sup> UNHCR has documented that 79% of these registered Syrian refugees are living in host communities.<sup>9</sup> To respond to the displacement crisis in Jordan, numerous actors have been operating in the country, including the United Nations (UN) system, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), the government of Jordan (GoJ) and local aid actors. These actors employ a wide variety of means to communicate important information around policy changes as well as assistance and services available for refugees. Coordination of communication has therefore become increasingly important in the Jordanian context.

Given protracted displacement, both humanitarian and governmental actors have made efforts to build community resilience and develop sustainable livelihood opportunities for Syrians in Jordan. This ranges from formal work permit applications to the Urban Verification Exercise (UVE), which began in 2015 with the aim to re-register/verify all refugees living in host communities in order to streamline entitlements to public services such as education and subsidized healthcare.<sup>10</sup> However, these are complex administrative processes, rolled out across a large population. Without access to sufficient and relevant information, many Syrians may miss out on crucial livelihood opportunities or essential public services.

REACH, in partnership with the Department for International Development (DFID) and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), conducted a three-month qualitative assessment of the primary informational needs of Syrians. The assessment investigated the ways in which information about assistance, services and government resources is accessed, understood and used. This required evaluating the effectiveness of information dissemination mechanisms employed by humanitarian and governmental actors through the identification of frequently used and relied upon informal and formal information mechanisms. This assessment sought to identify information gaps in beneficiary knowledge and understanding of advocacy, outreach and programmatic recommendations.

The assessment was carried out in April and May 2017 across the four governorates (Amman, Mafraq, Irbid, Zarqa) with the highest number of host community-registered refugees, as well as in several Hard-to-Reach (HtR) communities across multiple northern and southern governorates. This report first introduces the methodology designed and applied by REACH before outlining the key assessment findings organized into the following sections:

- Informal communication mechanisms;
- Formal communication mechanisms;
- Information gaps, including: documentation, legal aid and protection; humanitarian assistance;<sup>11</sup> healthcare services; work permits and employment rights; and education.

<sup>7</sup> [UNHCR Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal](#). Accessed 13.06.17.

<sup>8</sup> [Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Department of Statistics. 2016](#).

<sup>9</sup> The remaining 21% (141,178 individuals) are registered as living in formal refugee camps in Jordan. This assessment focuses on all Syrian refugees (both registered and non-registered) living in the host communities, which includes urban, peri-urban, and rural areas nationwide. Furthermore, a clear distinction will be made between refugees that are registered inside of formal camps and those that are registered in the host communities.

<sup>10</sup> A comprehensive overview of the context surrounding the UVE and the verification process can be found in the following report: NRC [Securing Status: Syrian refugees and the documentation of legal status, identity, and family relationships in Jordan](#), November 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Humanitarian assistance is defined as either in-kind (food-based or non-food item (NFI) assistance), or cash-based assistance. Across these different modalities, the forms of assistance discussed ranged from universal delivery to highly targeted and specified aid. This includes but is not limited to: WFP bread distributions, ad hoc winterization NFIs such as blankets from INGOs or local charities, rental payment stipends from INGOs, and UNHCR 'biometric cash assistance', referred to by participants as 'iris-scan assistance'.

## METHODOLOGY

**The primary objective of this assessment was to obtain a detailed understanding of the experiences and practices of Syrians regarding informational needs, consumption and usage, and to identify the preferred and most effective communication mechanisms.** The findings aim to support humanitarian and government actors in designing and improving communication strategies in Jordan, while identifying pre-existing information mechanisms that could be maximized. The specific research objectives were as follows:

1. Survey information dissemination and evaluate perceived accuracy and reliability, focusing on primary formal and informal communication mechanisms accessed by Syrians;
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of particular information dissemination mechanisms used by humanitarian and governmental actors;
3. Understand how information disseminated is used in Syrian household decision making;
4. Highlight information gaps and the specific informational needs of Syrians living in host communities (urban and HtR).

This assessment used qualitative research methods for the collection and analysis of primary data. Data was collected between 12 April and 11 May 2017 through 34 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), supplemented by four key informant interviews (KIIs). In addition, a preliminary desk review was conducted prior to the start of data collection to help inform the design of FGD questionnaires and sampling through determining criteria of HtR communities. REACH, in partnership with DFID, NRC and other relevant actors in the humanitarian community, sought input from beneficiaries to shape the design of the assessment's methodology and tools, and give additional context to the findings. This was done through a working group of local aid actors and UN agencies who were sent questionnaires for comments and feedback.

### Population of Interest

The population of interest includes all Syrians (registered and non-registered) living in Jordanian host communities. Eighteen of the 34 FGDs were conducted in Amman, Mafraq, Irbid and Zarqa governorates, which together host the majority (88.4%) of the registered Syrian refugee population in Jordan.<sup>12</sup> The remaining 16 FGDs were conducted in HtR communities where very few Syrians are registered. HtR communities were identified based on the following criteria:

- **Syrians living in informal tented settlement (ITS):**<sup>13</sup> these communities are characterized by high levels of vulnerability, mobility and insecurity due to their impermanent and often remote residence.
- **Syrians living in remote or isolated areas:** the southern governorates of Jordan have significantly lower numbers of registered refugees. These registered and non-registered Syrians tend to live in areas remote from urban centres and have access to fewer humanitarian services. This assessment focused on Tafilah<sup>14</sup> and Karak.<sup>15</sup>
- **Especially vulnerable Syrians:** Past research indicated acute legal and protection needs, and severely limited resources.<sup>16</sup> Many of these communities reside in Amman, with particularly vulnerable Syrians known to reside in Jabal al Nasser, in the east of inner-city Amman, and in Sahab, a small industrial centre in the southeast of Amman governorate.
- **Non-registered or camp-registered refugees who moved to host communities after the bailout.**

<sup>12</sup> The remaining population (76,876 individuals) reside in Balqa, Madaba, Jarash, Ajlun, Maan, and Aqaba governorates, or are dispersed across Jordan.

<sup>13</sup> UNHABITAT defines ITS as "unplanned settlements and areas where housing is not in compliance with current planning and building regulations". REACH and UNICEF. "Multi-Sector Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Informal Tented Settlements in Jordan." June 2014: 7.

<sup>14</sup> Tafilah has a registered Syrian refugee population of 1,547 (0.2% of the host community-registered population). This area is also recognized as especially vulnerable due to reports of social tensions between refugees and the host communities in 2014, when many of the refugees that settled there relocated. Families have since returned, although there has been very limited service provision and organization contact in the area since this time.

<sup>15</sup> Karak has registered Syrian refugee population of 8,531 (1.3% of the host community-registered population).

<sup>16</sup> "Multi-Sector Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Informal Tented Settlements in Jordan." June 2014: 7.

## Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

There was an average of 6 participants in each of the 34 FGDs (18 female and 16 male) that were carried out (see Table 1). For each population profile, a minimum of 4 FGDs (2 male and 2 female) were planned to reach the point of data saturation. Additional FGDs were conducted where the required level of information was not obtained.

Table 1: Number of FGDs and total participants by population profile, geographic area, and sex

Population Profile		Geographic Area	Female FGDs		Male FGDs	
			# of FGDs	# of participants	# of FGDs	# of participants
Urban Syrians		Amman	2	9	2	10
		Mafrq	2	12	2	11
		Irbid	4	26	2	10
		Zarqa	2	15	2	9
'Hard-to-reach' communities (Syrian)	Informal Tented Settlements (ITS)	Mafrq	2	15	2	10
		Ghour al-Safi – Karak	1	4	1	4
	Southern governorates	Al Husseiniah – Karak	1	5	1	6
		Tafilah	1	6	1	5
	Outer Amman	Jabal al Nasser	1	5	1	4
		Sahab	2	15	2	12
<b>Total</b>			<b>18</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>81</b>

The questionnaire used for the FGDs was semi-structured. To ensure the discussion was participant-led, the facilitator began discussion by asking participants to select key areas of informational interest, such as work permit registration, access to health services, and cash assistance. These key information interests were then used to guide the conversation (for further information see Annex 1: Focus Group Discussion Questionnaire).

## Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Four KIIs were conducted, two concurrently with the secondary data review phase and two at the midpoint of the FGD data collection cycle. These KIIs consisted of two interviews with UNHCR personnel, one interview with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and one interview with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The KIIs helped to identify HtR communities and contextualize themes emerging from group discussions, such as the work permit process.

## Challenges and Limitations

During data collection, the following challenges and limitations were experienced:

- **Limited number of KIIs conducted:** The total number of KIIs conducted (4) was less than planned (12), in part due to low response rate from potential KIIs contacted. However, the interviews conducted were highly informative and the working group meetings and desk reviews served as additional sources of contextual knowledge.
- **Further quantitative research needed:** Given the qualitative focus of this assessment, all findings are considered indicative. Further quantitative research into key areas of informational need is necessary to better understand and guide communication strategies of humanitarian organizations in Jordan, especially those relating to legal and protection concerns of Syrians.
- **Blurring between informational and service needs:** During data collection, participants repeatedly brought up issues concerning service needs rather than discussing their informational needs. This was despite facilitators doing their best to keep participants on topic.

## INFORMAL COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS

This section will explore the distinct sources, mechanisms and means involved in informal communication; that is, knowledge shared through actors that are not directly engaged in service delivery. This will be broken down into the following sub-sections:

- An outline of informal communication mechanisms, focusing predominantly on participants' discussions of community-sourced information received and shared through word-of-mouth communication.
- An analysis of the relative advantages and disadvantages of these communication processes against the backdrop of their role in broader (formal and informal) communication mechanisms.

### Informal Sources of Information

**Communities<sup>17</sup> were mentioned by nearly all participants as a regularly used source of information. This was predominantly discussed in the frame of word-of-mouth communication.** 'Community sources' included neighbours, relatives, friends and community members. Participants profiled sources according to where they received information. Examples are listed below, breaking down the trustworthiness<sup>18</sup> of the information:



**Sources with direct experience**, such as individuals that had enrolled their child in specific schools, were **seen as generally trustworthy. The more 'knowledgeable' the individual was perceived, the more reliable the information.** This usually applied to situations where the individual sharing information had direct experience with the services (i.e. health services, work permits, legal aid), as well as with individuals engaged in service delivery (i.e. teachers).



**Hear-say**, or information that had been shared by another individual with no known original source, was seen as untrustworthy information. **The general assumption was that hear-say information may have been distorted through being relayed via multiple sources.** Hear-say led to participants having difficulties in receiving information on potential humanitarian assistance or they received untrustworthy information.

### Informal Means of Communication

Most participants reported exchanging information in person between friends and family. If participants knew of an individual (relative, friend or community member) deemed 'knowledgeable' on an issue, they would actively approach them to seek information. The designation of a knowledgeable individual was applied on an ad hoc basis, according to the participant's judgement of a person's experience with services, for example, if a neighbour was known to have applied for a work permit.

**Participants also reported receiving and sharing information with their close social networks through phone calls and SMS.** However, this means of information exchange was discussed as being more purposeful; individuals would call or message each other with the direct intention of sharing specific information.

### Digital Platforms

**Participants regularly discussed the use of internet and social media platforms in the context of word-of-mouth communication. This was more commonly mentioned by Syrians in urban communities than by participants in HtR communities.** Usage applied to a broad range of informational needs, especially humanitarian aid, healthcare and education services. Participants almost exclusively used the following two platforms to exchange information:

<sup>17</sup> For this assessment, during FGDs when the term 'community' was discussed, participants usually referred to their immediate neighbourhood and the local Syrian refugee population living in host communities in the vicinity. When discussing the internet and social media, 'community' was expanded to include Syrian refugees living in Jordanian host communities across a much broader geographic area.

<sup>18</sup> Trustworthiness' is used to describe information, or perception of a source as providing information, that can be relied upon to be honest and truthful.

## WhatsApp

Mainly used by women. Although both men and women would **receive and share messages directly with close friends and relatives, women were more likely to be part of larger groups dedicated to sharing information about assistance and services.**

**The voice recording function reportedly facilitated engagement for participants that were illiterate.** It enabled them to share and receive information, indicating the potential of automated voice messaging (AVM) to reach particularly vulnerable groups.

Whatsapp was seen as an effective way to receive and share information. However, **the information was not always deemed trustworthy as it was not monitored by an official source.**

## Facebook

**Participants reported using Facebook groups established for the purpose of sharing information about assistance and services.** Participants named the groups they trusted and used the most, explaining that this was due to administrators that would screen posts and block people spreading rumours and misinformation. **The presence of a monitoring body or administrator was a critical aspect affecting the perceived trustworthiness of the information.**

Participants reported also being able to post information requests or give feedback through comments. This **facilitated multi-directional exchange of information** and encouraged crowd-sourcing and verification of information.

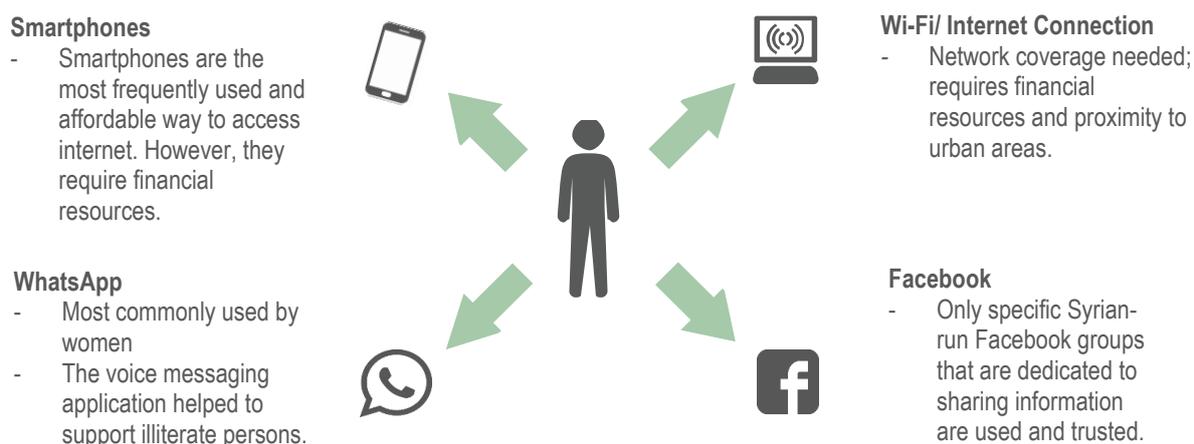
## Access to internet and social media platforms

**Use of internet and social media platforms varied according to differences in both age and gender.** Usage was more frequently reported by younger, often male, participants. Several female participants commented that their husbands and male relatives would not permit them to use the internet or social media platforms such as Facebook, but mentioned using them in secret.

The ability to use internet and social media depended on a variety of factors such as having the resources or ability to access the internet (see Figure 1). **Participants with limited/no internet access were therefore less engaged with these communication platforms.** Several barriers to access were repeatedly mentioned, especially in the 16 FGDs conducted in HtR communities;

- **Cost:** Male participants (mainly in HtR communities) explained that the cost of smartphones was too high. When they had smartphones, they reported not being able to afford data.
- **Education:** Many participants lacked necessary education about technology. Additionally, the level of illiteracy was higher in HtR communities (in one ITS group, all participants reported not being able to read or write).
- **Concern over monitoring:** Several male participants reported being reluctant to own a smartphone, citing fear over potential monitoring of social media applications, and potential consequences if authorities caught them calling people back home.
- **Network coverage:** Many participants lived in remote locations where network coverage was reportedly non-existent or poor.

Figure 1: Means and mechanisms of internet and social media use



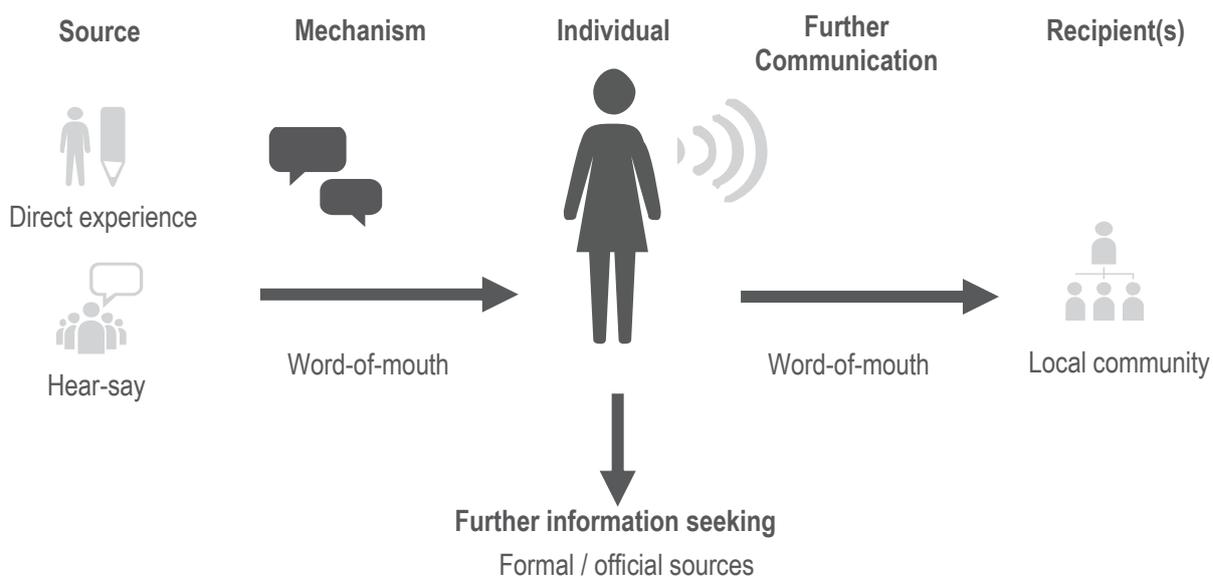
Many participants, especially the elderly, illiterate or those in HtR communities, reported that **for people who were unable to use the internet to seek information (whether due to lack of internet connection, knowledge of services, or smartphones access), community members would act as an intermediary source.** Younger community members in particular were reported to relay information they had obtained through these mechanisms, meaning that these platforms have an extended reach, beyond the network of internet users.

### Informal Communication Pathways

The trustworthiness of information accessed via word-of-mouth communication is highly dependent on the topic, the source of the information, and means through which it was shared. **Universally, word-of-mouth communication was not perceived as adequate on its own. In many cases, this type of informal communication highlighted new informational needs and the demand to address them.**

**Despite the disadvantages, almost all FGDs discussed word-of-mouth communication as a useful multi-directional communication pathway (see Figure 2).**

Figure 2: Word-of-mouth communication pathway



Dissemination of information through informal communication pathways **has several advantages and implications for communication policy going forward:**

- Informal communication pathways allowed information to be rapidly received and disseminated within communities. Thus, proving to be a **highly dynamic mechanisms for disseminating information across large groups of people in a short time period.**
- Information spread through word-of-mouth, internet and social media within community networks; this type of communication was seen as **an inexpensive and cost efficient way to share information. This was especially important for HtR communities**, where travel to urban centres to seek information was often prohibitively expensive and time consuming. For a number of FGDs, word-of-mouth communication was the only mechanism through which participants obtained information about humanitarian assistance and services.
- **Illiterate participants reported relying heavily on word-of-mouth communication as their primary information mechanism**, especially those from the ITS in Mafraq where higher rates of illiteracy were recorded.
- Although information from word-of-mouth communication was rarely seen as trustworthy, it was reportedly **used by participants as a 'gate-way' to more formal information sources. Thus making word-of-mouth communication pathways part of a more dynamic communication mechanism.**
- As multi-directional information mechanisms, utilizing informal communication pathways would allow aid actors to quickly disseminate information to large populations at low-cost, as well as **provide an avenue for feedback and queries.**

**The assessment results demonstrate that there is potential to capitalize on word-of-mouth communication and existing community information networks** by integrating them into broader communication strategies.

### **Preferred Informal Communication Mechanisms**

FGD participants consistently identified a **weakness or a lack of accessible forums involving formal information sources.**

**There was a high level of interest in a potential smartphone application that would allow refugees to share experiences and exchange information, as they currently do through WhatsApp and Facebook.** Participants were very enthusiastic when additional platforms for peer-to-peer information exchange were suggested, although almost all said that for additional platforms to be deemed reliable, they would need to be monitored by UNHCR, a trusted INGO or a local aid actor. **Similarly, there was interest in the potential for a website aggregating humanitarian services, as a way to coordinate and consolidate official sources of information into one easily accessible, trusted communication platform.**

**Enthusiasm for a potential website was greatest amongst participants that reported using Facebook as their primary information means.** Many participants also suggested that these groups could be utilized as platforms for information dissemination by UNHCR and INGOs. Furthermore, given issues of proximity, internet and social media platforms could help address challenges to accessing information faced by HtR communities (although this would not work for everyone given the above stated limitations to accessing internet and social media).

## FORMAL COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS

*Against the backdrop of informal communication mechanisms, understood as a preliminary step in a broader communication pathway, this section explores the different formal communication mechanisms that emerged through FGDs. The aim is to provide a brief overview of registration processes for Syrians in Jordan's host communities, upon which access to many of these formal communication mechanisms is predicated. This will then be broken down into the following sub-sections:*

- *An outline of formal sources of information and the areas of informational need that each source was cited as being used for.*
- *An analysis of the formal means of communication discussed, describing how they work, which groups use them, for what purpose, as well as their relative advantages and disadvantages, comprehensiveness<sup>19</sup>, reliability<sup>20</sup>, and trustworthiness<sup>21</sup> as described by participants. This will be divided into two overarching categories: uni-directional and multi-directional communication pathways.*

### Registration in Host Communities

**The Syrian registration system within Jordan is central to understanding access to formal and informal communication mechanisms for Syrians in host communities; especially the process of UVE.** Of the approximately 1.2 million Syrians residing in Jordan, over 600,000 are non-registered Syrians in need of registration UVE support.<sup>22</sup> The UVE began in 2015, led by Mol and the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate (SRAD) in cooperation with UNHCR. This was an effort to formalize the status of all Syrians living in Jordan through re-registration/verifying with the government, with the goal of providing them with biometric identification cards, known as 'new Mol cards'.<sup>23</sup>

All UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees residing in formal refugee camps were issued a new camp-based biometric Mol card, deemed valid only when the card holders are living in the camp. Additionally, registered Syrians (fitting the new MOI card requirements) living outside of formal refugee camps were also issued new biometric Mol cards. These cards grant freedom of movement throughout Jordan and also entitle holders living in host communities to access subsidized public healthcare and education services in the district that the card was issued in.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, registered Syrian refugees residing in host communities have been provided with a Zain SIM card. This enables them to receive information about renewal of their UNHCR asylum seeker certificate and general services, as well as the option to call UNHCR help-lines free of charge.<sup>25</sup>

**However, a number of participants in HtR communities were not formally registered in their host communities, and therefore unable to access many available information services (without registration, Syrians do not receive the UNHCR Zain SIM card and thus do not receive texts updates through that service).** These participants fell into one of the following categories:

1. **Non-registered with UNHCR or Mol**
2. **Syrians in host communities unable to complete the UVE:** although eligible, individuals lack certain necessary documents to successfully apply for a Mol card

<sup>19</sup> 'Comprehensiveness' relates to the clarity and detail of the information received and whether or not enough detail was given for the beneficiary to understand and use the information received i.e. if a text message regarding an assistance distribution was received, but the date or location of the distribution was not included, then the information provided is not comprehensive.

<sup>20</sup> 'Reliability' indicates that information, or mechanism by which the information is disseminated, is perceived to be dependable and consistently accessible.

<sup>21</sup> 'Trustworthiness' is used to describe information, or perception of a source as providing information, that can be relied upon to be honest and truthful.

<sup>22</sup> [Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Department of Statistics. 2016.](#)

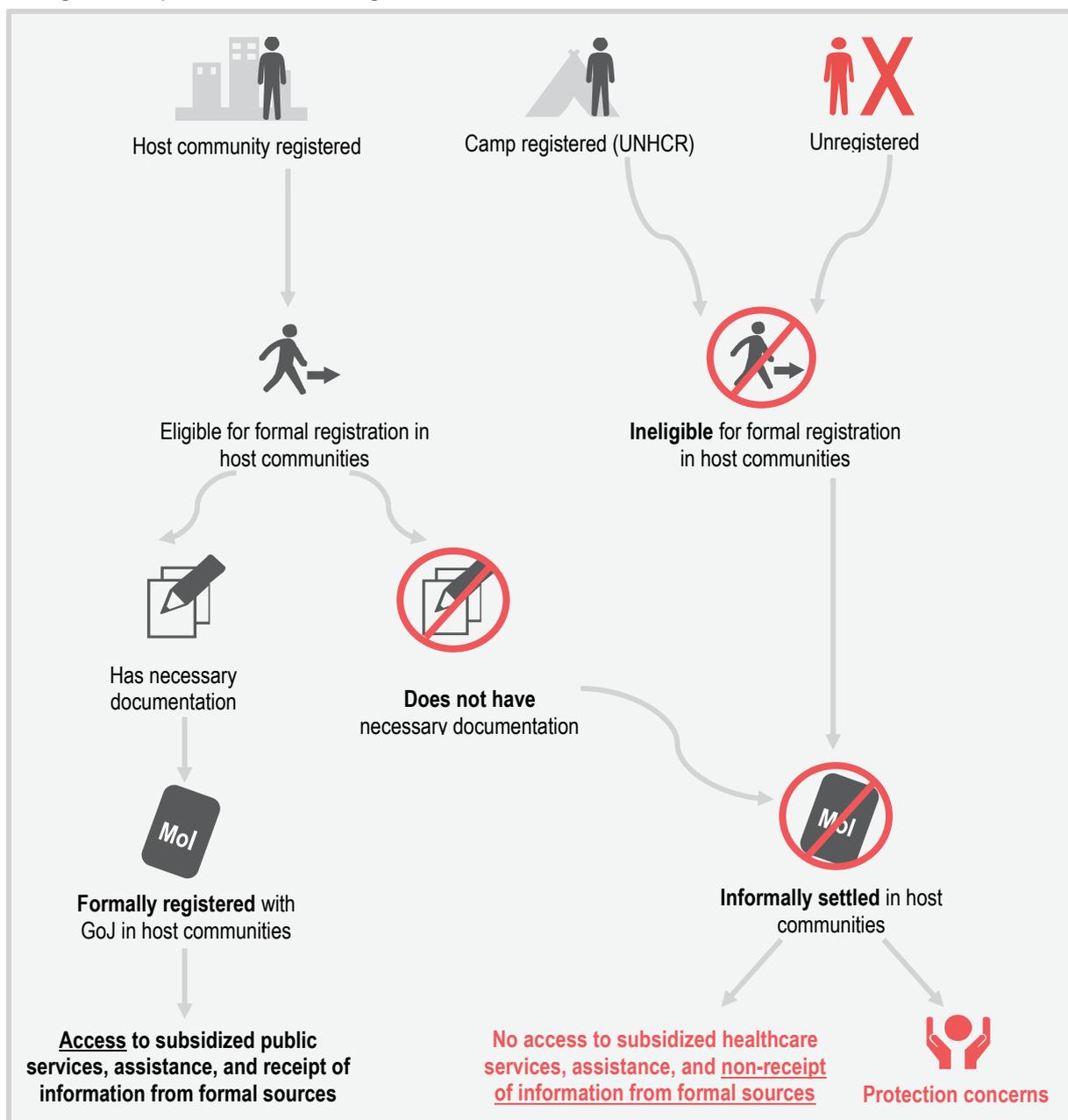
<sup>23</sup> All Syrians entering Jordan are required to register with the Ministry of Interior and obtain a Mol service card. Although registration with UNHCR in and of itself is not mandatory, to obtain a Mol card, refugees must present their asylum seeker certificate.

<sup>24</sup> For further information, see the desk review included in Annex 2.

<sup>25</sup> This programme is being rolled out across the country with 20-30% of registered host-communities refugee cases still to be covered. KII interview with UNHCR help-line staff. 08.06.2017.

3. **Registered in Zaatari or Azraq refugee camps but living in host communities:** individuals are formally registered with UNHCR and MoI as living in refugee camps, yet they left the camp to live in host communities without formal approval through the bailout system or as a special case (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Requirements of formal registration in host communities in accordance with the UVE since 2015<sup>26</sup>



These administrative procedures and requirements affecting the ability to formally register in host communities present a number of challenges with respect to:

- Freedom of movement throughout Jordan,
- Possession of officially recognized identification for Syrians,
- Use of government services like subsidized healthcare
- Receipt of humanitarian aid
- **Access to information from official sources regarding these services and entitlements**

<sup>26</sup> The only refugees that will fall under "non-receipt of information from formal sources" will be those not registered with UNHCR. Those registered but with no MOI and those registered in camps and living in urban areas receive and have access to information disseminated by UNHCR.

Camp-registered individuals living in host communities have potentially serious legal assistance and protection needs. Participants reported their informational needs, especially regarding legal services, were particularly acute.

## Formal Sources of Information

**Access to formal communication mechanisms on information such as subsidized healthcare and improved freedom of movement, is predicated on formal registration with UNHCR and MoI in host communities.** Participants relied upon formal sources to provide comprehensive and trustworthy information. However, formal communication mechanisms were often discussed as the second stage of a information pathway that began with informal community-based sources.

**Participant perception of formal sources was often highly specific.** For example, with the exception of some UN agencies, participants identified only one information source satisfying only one or two types of informational need. Consequently, where there were specific thematic information gaps, participants indicated the source best relied upon to address them.

Table 2: Overview of key sources, their relevant areas of informational need and means of communication

Source	Relevant information topics	Primary means of communication reported	Additional means of communication reported
UN agencies	Registration; documentation; resettlement; legal needs and protection; work permits; humanitarian assistance and services; healthcare; education (UNICEF specific); food (WFP specific)	Visiting help-desks and local offices; SMS and phone calls; help-line	Community visits; flyers and pamphlets; word-of-mouth
INGOs	Humanitarian assistance and services; legal aid	SMS and phone calls; visiting local offices; word-of-mouth	Community/home visits
Local aid actors	Humanitarian assistance and services; employment and work permits	SMS and phone; visiting local offices; word-of-mouth	Community/home visits
Public service facilities: healthcare and education	Healthcare; education	Visiting facilities: schools; JHAS clinics; hospitals; word-of-mouth	MoE; visiting UNHCR help-desks; UNHCR help-line and flyers
Government offices and directorates	Employment and work permits; Documentation and re-registration	Visiting offices and directorates	Word-of-mouth

\* Jordan Health Aid Society (JHAS), Ministry of Education (MoE), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), World Food Program (WFP)

### UN Agencies



**Several UN agencies were known and discussed by participants in all FGDs. This included UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP. They were seen as primary formal sources of information and were considered highly trustworthy.** The majority of participants had a clear understanding of the purpose and mandate of these organizations. However, the extent to which information from these sources was comprehensive or predictably accessible varied according to type of information discussed and the mechanism used.

### INGOs



**INGOs were only discussed in reference to humanitarian aid,** except in HtR communities such as al Husseiniah, Karak where participants also reported receiving legal aid from an INGO.

Although participants sometimes disagreed over their positive or negative experiences with certain organizations, **INGOs were generally perceived as trustworthy formal sources of information with comprehensive communication.** In this sense, they were clearly distinguished from smaller local aid actors. Where participants reported issues, it was due to conflicting information from multiple sources (i.e. word-of-mouth and INGO staff) or multiple means of communication from the same source (SMS updates and then in person at offices or centres).

## Local Aid Actors



The level of trust participants had in local aid actors significantly varied depending on the informational need and the notariaty of the local aid actor:

- **Humanitarian assistance and services:** participants tended to perceive information about humanitarian assistance and services obtained from some, smaller, less well known local aid actors to be untrustworthy and lacking detail. **Larger, more well known local aid actors, were considered reliable and authoritative.** Participants frequently reported negative experiences where they recieved information from smaller local aid actors that was incorrect, dishonest and/or only given to individuals with personal connections to staff.
- **Employment and work permits:** Several male FGDs in the HtR communities (Mafraq ITS, Karak – Ghour al-Safi, and Sahab) mentioned local aid actors that supported applications for agricultural labour permits. In the Mafraq ITS, several participants had heard via word-of-mouth about a local aid actor in a nearby village where they could get work permits for a small fee. This was confirmed when they went to visit local aid actor offices and received further information and support on applying for a permit.<sup>27</sup>

## Public Service Facilities



Discussions on public service facilities often intertwined access to information with access to the services themselves. In most cases, information about which facilities to go to was first received via word-of-mouth communication, and access depended on formal registration in host communities with UNHCR or MoI. **The use of public service facilities as formal sources of information was discussed in the context of two types of information and service needs:**

- **Healthcare:** JHAS clinics and public hospitals
- **Education:** public schools

## Government offices and directorates



For specific topics that the government is engaged in concerning service delivery, **participants reported seeking information directly from local relevant government directorates.** These included:

- **Ministry of Labour (MoL):** work permit applications
- **Ministry of Education (MoE):** formal school enrolment
- **Ministry of Interior (MoI):** registration and documentation

**This was most prevalently discussed amongst participants from urban communities in the four northern governorates (Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa). In all FGDs, government offices and directorates were**

<sup>27</sup> Although in general work permit applications are free of charge for beneficiaries, there is an exception made for the agricultural sector. Due to the transient nature of the work (as signified by this being mentioned by participants in the ITS in Mafraq and in Karak), it is possible to apply for a agricultural sector work permit as an individual, rather than through an employer. Agricultural cooperatives and CBOs facilitate this for a 10 JOD processing charge. KII with Dr Maha Kata, ILO. 01.05.2017

**reported to be trustworthy sources providing comprehensive information.** When participants were asked how they obtained information on service providers they reported either common knowledge or word-of-mouth communication. However, participants that were non-registered or were camp-registered but living in host communities after the bailout were reportedly unwilling to approach government sources. They considered that their informal status made them particularly vulnerable and reported concerns about penalty from authorities. They perceived this risk to outweigh their informational needs and consequently they chose not to seek information.

## Formal Means of Communication

Although participants generally trusted the information they received from formal sources, **the extent to which they saw the information from this source to be comprehensive or accessible varied.** This was in accordance to the type of information discussed, mechanism used and group geographic profile. The means of communication can be divided into two categories: uni-directional mechanisms, where information is disseminated without feedback pathways; or multi-directional mechanisms that establish platforms for FAQs and troubleshooting (see table 3).

### Uni-directional mechanisms

#### SMS, phone calls and AVM

**Every FGD with at least one participant formally registered in host communities reported receiving SMS and phone calls from UN agencies, indicating that messages were reaching the wider registered Syrian community.** These communications were generally to inform participants of annual documentation renewal requirements and monthly distribution updates. Overall, **participants reported that messages were comprehensive, including dates, times, locations and eligibility requirements.**

Table 3: Reported sources and purposes of phone-based information dissemination<sup>28</sup>

Source	SMS	Phone call	AVM	Purpose	Condition/ Beneficiary group
UNHCR	✓	✓	✓	Annual registration renewal, humanitarian assistance and distributions	Registered with UNHCR as a refugee living in host communities, up-to-date contact detail records with UNHCR, and in cases of cash assistance: being a current recipient.
UNHCR and MoL	✓	✗	✗	Work permit application processes	Registered with UNHCR as a refugee living in host communities, up-to-date contact detail records with UNHCR, and in cases of cash assistance: being a current recipient. Of working age.
WFP	✓	✗	✗	Annual registration renewal, humanitarian assistance and distributions	Up-to-date registration and contact detail records with WFP.
UNICEF, MoH and MoE	✓	✗	✗	Child vaccinations, school enrolment	Up-to-date registration and contact detail records with UNICEF. Registration of children and infants
INGOs, local aid actors	✓	✓	✗	Humanitarian assistance, distributions, and services	Requires previous knowledge of INGOs/ local aid actors and criteria for assistance to register on their mailing list by visiting the office. However, this did not necessitate registration with UNHCR or MoI in the host communities

\*Ministry of Health (MoH)

<sup>28</sup> This includes all purposes of communication through SMS and phone calls that were reported by participants, and is not necessarily an exhaustive list.

Participants received SMS and phone call messages from INGOs, UN agencies and local aid actors. **In most cases, only participants who had previously registered with aid actors received messages, however participants who had not registered sometimes reported having received messages from aid actors.** In these cases, participants were informed that their case had been referred by either community members or by another aid actor.

**SMS and phone calls rely on maintaining up-to-date contact detail records.** This can be a challenge in Jordan, where buying a new SIM card can often be cheaper than topping up an existing one. Consequently, many Syrians regularly change their phone number. As explained by a UNHCR help-line staff during a KII interview, a further reasoning behind the roll out of the UNHCR Zain SIM cards in host communities was to maintain consistent records of beneficiary contact details. This practice could be implemented through formal communication mechanisms, INGOs, or through further coordination of messaging between aid actors about upcoming distributions.

**SMS was consistently highlighted as the preferred means of communication by all FGDs, especially those in HtR communities** such as Tafilah and Sahab. Participants in Sahab reported that due to the weakness and inconsistency of the telephone network in their area, they could miss phone calls whereas SMS would always eventually come through. However, participants cited certain informational contexts in which SMS method was not inclusive. The below bullets detail these difficulties;

- **Overall, participants reported SMS as a comprehensive and reliable communication mechanism. However, SMS communication requires that participants be formally registered in host community or camps.** Consequently, if SMS communication was to be used to communicate on all humanitarian assistance topics, (i.e. legal aid and protection, registration, work permits) this communication would only be able to reach registered Syrian refugees and would miss the non-registered population.
- **While this is a quick and cost-efficient tool for sharing easily-digestible information, SMS is not a panacea.** When disseminating information about complex topics, such as work permit applications, messages were reported to not be comprehensive or detailed enough. This suggests room for improvement in SMS communication.
- **SMS was reported to be a problem for illiterate persons.** Alternatively, AVM, already used by UNHCR to disseminate information through various mechanisms<sup>29</sup>, could be more widely used by aid actors to effectively communicate with these vulnerable groups.

### Flyers and pamphlets

**Flyers and pamphlets were primarily discussed in relation to information about healthcare; participants mentioned flyers detailing local hospitals and clinics where they could receive subsidized healthcare** (providing presentation of a valid MoI card). The flyers were obtained from UNHCR staff at UNHCR help-desks or through house/community visits. Both male and female participants from Ghour al-Safi and Sahab reported that a UNHCR employee had recently visited them and distributed flyers indicating where the nearest UNHCR help-desk was, as well as the nearest clinics and hospitals where they could seek healthcare services (see Table 4).

<sup>29</sup> KII interview with UNHCR help-line staff. 08.06.2017.

Table 4: Reported sources and purposes of flyer- and pamphlet-based information dissemination

Source	Location	Purpose	Condition/ Beneficiary group
<b>UNHCR</b>	In office (UNHCR help-desks); house and community visits	Annual registration renewal; humanitarian assistance and distributions, and services; healthcare; location of offices and contact details	Awareness of location of UNHCR help-desks (if in-person visit); Registration with UNHCR.
<b>Other UN agencies</b>	In office; house and community visits; at distributions	Humanitarian assistance, distributions, and services; location of offices and contact details	Awareness of location of UNHCR help-desks (if in-person visit); Registration with UNHCR.
<b>INGOs, and local aid actors</b>	In office; house and community visits; at distributions	Humanitarian assistance, distributions, and services, location of offices and contact details	Awareness of location of offices (if in-person visit). <sup>30</sup> Generally requires previous knowledge of INGOs/local aid actors and criteria for assistance to register on their mailing list by visiting the office.

The flyers and pamphlets were generally considered an effective means to communicate detailed information. However, the majority of participants reported that the information on flyers concerning healthcare was often incorrect. It was unclear if the reason for this misinformation was due to information becoming quickly outdated, which would indicate that flyers may not be an appropriate medium for rapidly changing information. Furthermore, when discussing healthcare, participants highlighted significant information gaps concerning healthcare service costs and entitlements. **Participants requested that flyers contain more extensive information.**

### Multi-directional mechanisms

#### Visiting centres and local offices

When participants reported information gaps or misinformation, it was often due to not being able to verify information with staff at visiting centers and local offices. This highlights the importance of offices and aid actors having a physical presence in the area (i.e. host communities, camps, health and legal centers) when disseminating information. **Therefore, visiting centres and local offices are an important multi-directional means of information dissemination. This was discussed in three key ways:**

- 1. Importance of UNHCR help-desks:** Visiting centres and local offices, in areas highly populated by Syrian refugees, are concentrated to one area in order to help facilitate outreach, provide services,<sup>31</sup> and have staff present to answer questions. Participants were made aware of locations either through the UNHCR information services, or through word-of-mouth.
- 2. Visiting INGOs and local aid actors** was commonly cited as an important step to **verifying and accessing information about humanitarian assistance**, after being directed to offices through word-of-mouth communication. Participants also reported visiting centres to ask questions or file complaints.
- 3. Participants reported visiting public service facilities and government offices for information about specific issues that the facility or office was engaged in the service delivery of.** Participants were aware of the locations of these facilities and offices through word-of-mouth communication, general knowledge, or formal sources of information.

<sup>30</sup> However, this did not necessitate registration with UNHCR or Mol in host communities.

<sup>31</sup> Counselling services include counselling on protection issues, cash assistance and community services. UNHCR Services Guide for Refugees.

Table 5: Reported sources and purposes of in-person visits to help-desks and offices for information

Source	Purpose	Condition/ Beneficiary Group
<b>UNHCR 'help-desks' and other UN agency offices</b>	Annual registration renewal; Humanitarian assistance, distributions, and services; ask general questions or file complaints	Awareness of location of UNHCR help-desks and UN agency offices; Generally required registration with UNHCR as a refugee living in host communities
<b>INGOs, local aid actors</b>	Humanitarian assistance, distributions, and services; ask general questions or file complaints	Awareness of location of offices
<b>Public health service facilities and JHAS clinics</b>	General healthcare queries including: hospitals and clinics providing services, entitlements to subsidized healthcare; cost of treatments and services	Awareness of location; Generally required registration with UNHCR as a refugee living in host communities (to receive subsidized treatment)
<b>Public schools</b>	Enrolment of children in schools; general education needs	Registration with UNHCR (registration in host communities not required)
<b>MoL; MoE; Mol</b>	Work permit applications; formal school enrolment; registration (UVE) and documentation, respectively	Awareness of location; non-registered or camp-registered refugees living in host communities were generally reluctant to engage with government agencies and staff.

**Challenges to access were generally related to awareness (knowing where and when to go) and resources (being able to afford the cost and time taken to travel). This affected participant groups differently:**

- **Geographic proximity to urban centres impacted awareness of location and ability to access offices and facilities.** For example, participants living in urban communities displayed a higher level of knowledge of where help-desks and local facilities were located, compared to HtR communities.
- Although seeking in person information was reportedly highly effective, it was also expensive and time consuming, particularly in cases of limited information. **Participants in HtR communities discussed time and cost requirements of travelling to urban centres as being too great, and so they stopped visiting centres.** These challenges were most commonly reported in Karak and ITS communities.
- **This also highlighted the issues faced by mobile Syrian communities living in ITS.** Registration with UNHCR and the Mol is governorate specific, and access to certain services, assistance and information relating to them is tied to their governorate of registration. In order to allow flexibility and movement across Jordan it is possible for Syrian refugees to re-register in a new location. These Syrian communities living in ITS may have chosen not to avail themselves of this service, or they may not be aware of their entitlement to do so. If the latter, **both UN agencies and Mol could more effectively inform beneficiaries of their ability to re-register upon moving.**
- **Registration status was shown to significantly affect accessibility of offices.** Participants in Mafraq and Irbid reported that information on where and how to access these centres was mostly received through SMS, meaning that **the majority of participants informed were urban refugees officially registered with UNHCR and/or Mol in host communities.**
- Furthermore, participants that were either non-registered or camp-registered but moved to host communities after the bailout were **reluctant to seek information directly from formal sources, especially government offices and directorates, due to their vulnerable status.**

## Community and home visits

**Almost all FGDs discussing humanitarian assistance mentioned community or home visits from aid actors. Given the challenges to accessing offices and visit centres in-person, these were considered highly effective and positive means of communication in HtR communities.** Home visits were discussed in FGDs in ITS in Mafraq, Karak (al-Husseniah and Ghour al-Safi), and Sahab in outer Amman. Participants in these groups reported that UN and INGO employees had visited their communities to provide information about local services. In Mafraq, participants reported that INGOs had also assessed needs and provided community-based services such as education. **Many participants from these groups requested additional visits and community gatherings from known UN agencies and INGOs.**

Table 6: Reported sources and purposes of community and home based information dissemination

Source	Purpose	Condition/ Beneficiary group
UN agencies	Annual registration renewal, humanitarian assistance and distributions, and services; healthcare; location of offices and contact details	Registration with UNHCR, although community-based visits were reported to have reached non-registered and camp-registered Syrian refugees in certain areas.
INGOs	Humanitarian assistance, distributions, and services; education; location of offices and contact details	Pre-registration with the INGO on some occasions. Generally no specific pre-conditions were identified
Local aid actors	Humanitarian assistance, distributions, and services, location of offices and contact details	Pre-registration with the local aid actor on some occasions. Generally no specific pre-conditions were identified

**Community visits and home visits from UN agencies and recognized INGOs were perceived positively. However, participants reported that they were wary of home visits from organizations that were not known to them.** Female participants in Zarqa commented that INGOs should first call to make the household aware and to confirm the authenticity of any future visits, yet this was more commonly a concern with smaller local aid actors.

## UNHCR Help-line

**Aside from directly visiting service providers or help-desks, the most frequently discussed method of multi-directional communication was help-lines; specifically the UNHCR-run help-line.** Participants, who were registered with UNHCR, received the help-line number when they first arrived and registered in Jordan. Participants commonly reported contacting this help-line to follow up on the status of cash assistance applications.

The UNHCR help-line currently receives around 60,000 calls monthly but is only able to respond to around 60% of these calls.<sup>32</sup> **Participants reported that when contacting the help-line they often were not able to get through or were put on long holds,** most likely due to centre capacity limitations<sup>33</sup> and a high call volume. Furthermore, participants that had not received a UNHCR Zain SIM card<sup>34</sup> stated that phone credit could be costly (money and time) due to the long holds. For these reasons, while the UNHCR help-line was perceived to provide trustworthy information, **participants reported its accessibility to be limited.**

**Large participant awareness of the UNHCR help-line means that this has been a largely successful communication strategy that could be expanded upon to further meet informational needs.** Many participants requested that the help-line capacity be expanded, as well as suggesting topic-specific complaint and information channels (e.g. a hotline for healthcare related queries only).

<sup>32</sup> KI interview with UNHCR help-line staff. 08.06.2017.

<sup>33</sup> The help-line was set up in 2008 as an 'info-line' for Iraqi refugees, and has since expanded to accommodate for the Syrian refugee crisis. The centre currently has 14 agents and 30 communication portals. When calling the hotline, the server distributes the caller to any available portal (if none are available then the caller is told to try again and the call ended). Once the caller reaches a portal they are asked to answer a series of questions through an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) tree, to identify the nature of their call, and to verify their identity. Each call is held in a queue until an agent is available. If callers identify their issue as relating to health, detention, protection, or complaints, they are moved to the front of the queue.

<sup>34</sup> In response to complaints about the cost of calling the help-line, as well as refugees frequently changing their number (it is often cheaper to buy a new SIM card in Jordan than to top up credit), UNHCR has distributed non-expiring Zain SIM cards to all host-community registered refugees through which they can contact UNHCR free of charge. The majority of the population has received their card, with roughly 20-30% still to be covered. Camp-registered and non-registered Syrians are not entitled to receive this. KI interview with UNHCR help-line staff. 08.06.2017

## INFORMATION GAPS

This section will highlight information gaps that emerged through FGDs and the challenges to meeting these informational needs. This section will first provide an overview of selected topics of informational need, which will then be broken down into the following issue-based sub-sections:

- Documentation, legal aid, and protection concerns,
- Humanitarian assistance and services,
- Healthcare services,
- Work permits and employment rights,
- Education services.

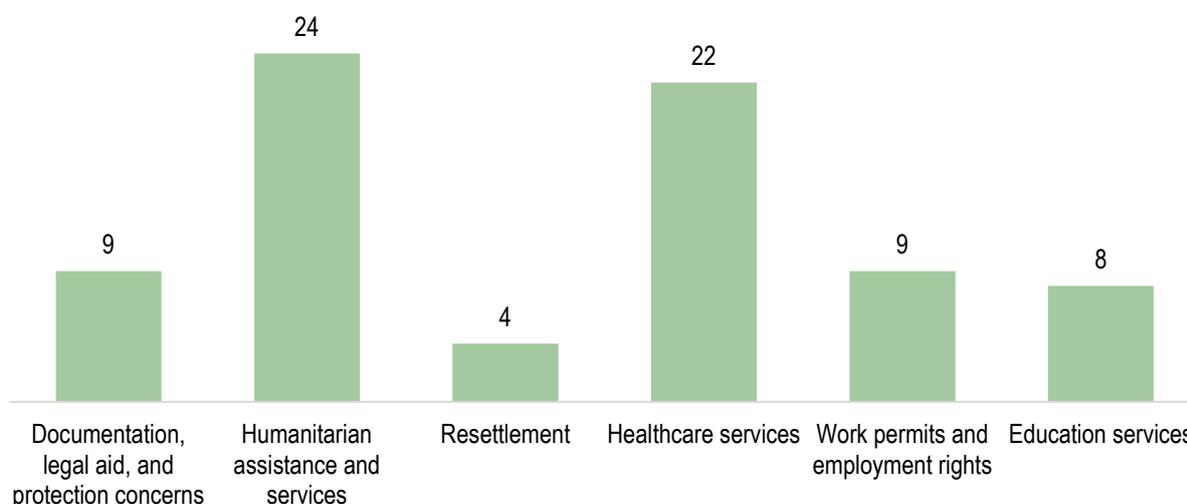
The following table provides a brief summary of the key information gaps outlined for each topic of informational need.

Table 7: Summary of key information gaps, by area of informational need

<b>Information Topic</b>	<b>Key Information Gaps</b>
<i>Documentation, legal aid, and protection concerns</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participants reported a lack of information on how to access legal assistance to help with documentation and status issues. They specifically wanted this information to come from a formal actor, such as an INGO or the UN</li> </ul>
<i>Humanitarian assistance and services – UNHCR Monthly Cash Assistance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participants that had applied for the UNHCR monthly cash assistance did not appear to understand the waiting list system. In particular, they did not seem to be aware of the entitlements associated with being on the waiting list, such as subsidized healthcare</li> </ul>
<i>Humanitarian assistance and services – INGOs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participants requested advanced notice of registration dates, and more comprehensive information on distributions, including times and places and eligibility criteria</li> <li>▪ Information about rent assistance, specifically in Zarqa town and governorate</li> </ul>
<i>Humanitarian assistance and services – Local aid actors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Information about complaint mechanisms to contact and report problems or incidents of exploitation</li> </ul>
<i>Healthcare services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There was a great deal of confusion around healthcare entitlements and registration assistance available to Syrians.</li> <li>▪ Participants requested more comprehensive information about what hospitals and clinics Syrians can go to, at what cost, and for what treatments.</li> <li>▪ Specific help-line dedicated to healthcare service and informational needs.</li> </ul>
<i>Work permits and employment rights</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assistance with technical issues and legal protections that surround employment rights.</li> <li>▪ Participants specifically wanted to know: if they were able to use permits across the qualified industrial zones; if permits were sector specific; if permits could still be used if the employer changed.</li> </ul>
<i>Education services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Information about additional education services such as: informal education, special needs education and support for children with disabilities, higher education and university opportunities, and scholarships</li> </ul>

## Selected Topics of Informational Need

Figure 4: Numbers of FGDs that selected each topic of informational need



**Humanitarian assistance and services was the most frequently selected topic of informational need by FGDs,<sup>35</sup> followed by healthcare** (see figure 4). For both of these topics, UNHCR cash assistance benefited participants as it entitles them to further subsidized healthcare in public hospitals.<sup>36</sup> However, **there were clear demographic differences in the chosen topics when analysed based on population profile and sex. These differences will be discussed for each topic individually.**

## Documentation, Legal Aid and Protection Concerns

Table 8: Demographic breakdown of FGDs selecting documentation, legal aid, and protection concerns as topics of informational need

Population profile	Female	Male	Of total
Urban Syrians	1	3	4/18
'Hard-to-reach'	1	4	5/16
Of total	2/18	7/16	9/34

- Information relating to legal aid, documentation and associated protection concerns was discussed as a **predominantly male responsibility**;
- **HtR communities had a greater proportion of FGDs** (33% compared to 22% of the other FGDs) reporting a need for more information relating to legal aid and documentation.

<sup>35</sup> Participants were encouraged to select two topics for discussion per FGD. However, in a number of groups a third or even fourth topic were also specifically discussed and have been included in the selection count.

<sup>36</sup> Cases that receive or are on the waiting list to receive UNHCR monthly cash assistance receive free public health care. Formally registered refugees receive public health care at a subsidized rate: the same cost as non-insured Jordanians. In addition, the Jordanian Health Aid Society (JHAS) will assess cases with specific medical needs and will provide access to further subsidized or free healthcare if they meet eligibility criteria. Non-registered or informally registered refugees are required to pay for public healthcare at the full costs of a foreign national, or seek private treatment.

## Key Information Gaps

### Documentation

Participants living in host communities, eligible to register with MoI, chose to focus on communication mechanisms associated with completing UVE.<sup>37</sup> Several participants reported that they had left essential documents behind in Syria preventing them from obtaining MoI cards. **Additionally, participants were not aware of formal information sources available on how to replace documents.**

### Legal Aid and Protection Concerns

Legal aid and protection services emerged as a highly relevant issue among participants. **Lack of awareness on where to access legal aid, as well as the inability to access services, resulted in protection concerns ranging from workplace exploitation to detention.** Participants indicated a need for formal, non-governmental legal assistance, preferably from an INGO or UN agency.

Despite participants reporting a lack of information, INGOs and local aid actors provide legal aid services and prioritize outreach to Syrians that are unregistered or camp-registered but living in host communities. **These findings suggest that information dissemination to Syrians could be improved.** Participants requested information be disseminated through field visits, indicating a preference for official information through informal communication sources such as community leaders, internet or social media.

**Addressing key gaps in informational needs concerning documentation and legal aid was therefore seen as a gateway to addressing broader problems resulting in barriers to accessing services.**

## Humanitarian Assistance and Services

Table 9: Demographic breakdown of FGDs selecting humanitarian assistance and services as a topic of informational need

Population profile	Female	Male	Of total
Urban Syrians	10	2	12/18
'Hard-to-reach'	8	4	12/16
Of total	18/18	6/16	24/34

- **Humanitarian assistance and services emerged as a predominantly female concern, with all female FGDs selecting this as a topic of informational need;**
- This was the most frequently chosen topic in both urban and HtR FGDs, though **selected by a slightly larger margin in HtR communities.**

## Key Information Gaps in Service Provision and Assistance

### Humanitarian Services: Resettlement

The majority of participants reported UNHCR as their sole source of resettlement information. Participants also reported that they were not fully aware of the criteria used for selecting resettlement cases. **However, this could be linked to an overall frustration with long resettlement wait times rather than actual lack of information.** Participants in the resettlement process reported that they were given a UNHCR number to call monthly in order to receive case updates. They further reported that this phone number was associated with a high call volume and long hold periods. **Several participants reported wanting more comprehensive information about resettlement (i.e. details on resettlement wait times/entitlements)**

<sup>37</sup> These include civil identity documents such as: marriage certificates, birth certificates, or an up-to-date 'family book': An official record holder of marriage and births to prove family linkages in Syria and Jordan.

### Humanitarian Assistance: UNHCR Biometric Cash Assistance

- **Participants requested greater clarity on the eligibility criteria** for UNHCR monthly cash assistance;
- Some participants that had applied for this service did not fully understand the waiting list system. In particular, participants **were not aware of assistance associated with waiting list entitlements.**

Humanitarian assistance concern overwhelmingly focused on UNHCR cash-based monthly assistance.<sup>38</sup> This assistance currently reaches around 20% of host-community registered Syrians, with many more on the waiting list.<sup>39</sup> **Although participants knew where to ask about application status, they reported that they did not receive comprehensive information;** many waited months or years while their case was under review.

Information gaps related to this assistance may be difficult to address. UNHCR is reluctant to publicly share entitlement criteria in order to prevent potential exploitation of the system. Furthermore, participants reported a lack of information while their case was under review or on the waiting list, suggesting that the problem may lie in frustration of not receiving assistance, rather than lack of information. **Participants indicated that they would benefit from greater understanding of the waiting list process and associated entitlements (i.e. healthcare).**

### Humanitarian Assistance: INGOs

- **Advanced notice of registration dates, and more comprehensive information on distributions** (i.e. time, place, eligibility criteria);
- **Information about rent assistance**, specifically in Zarqa and surrounding areas;
- Increased **accessibility of complaint mechanisms and help-lines.**

Participants, especially in HtR communities, reported struggling to **access timely information about humanitarian assistance from formal communication mechanisms as they lived in areas with** more limited access to INGO staff and offices. Participants requested that this information be disseminated more widely through social media, using specific Facebook sites set up for Syrians.

### Humanitarian Assistance: Local Aid Actors

- Information about **available complaint mechanisms.**

Many participants that discussed information on local aid actor assistance, reported experiences with fake distributions, excessively long waits, and general exploitation of refugee vulnerability. The UNHCR help-line can be used to submit complaints, which could be further emphasized. If Syrians were aware of their entitlement to report complaints to UNHCR or other official service providers, this would trigger an investigation, causing a de facto regulation of both local aid actors and INGOs.

## Healthcare Services

Table 10: Demographic breakdown of FGDs selecting healthcare services as a topic of informational need

Population profile	Female	Male	Of total
Urban Syrians	5	5	10/18
<b>'Hard-to-reach'</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12/16</b>
Of total	<b>13/18</b>	9/16	22/34

<sup>38</sup> This is a monthly cash sum, adjusted according to case size and need, transferred to a bank account that can be accessed via iris-scan technology from ATMs. Further information about UNHCR's Biometric Cash Assistance programme can be found [here](#).

<sup>39</sup> KI interview with UNHCR help-line staff. 08.06.2017. In April 2017, 28,407 cases (or 130,368 individuals) received monthly cash assistance totalling \$5,638,396 USD, with an additional 11,113 cases on the waiting list. [UNHCR Cash Assistance Dashboard. April 2017.](#)

## Key Information Gaps<sup>40</sup>

### Healthcare Entitlements

Information regarding healthcare entitlements emerged as a **primary topic of interest, particularly in female and HtR community FGDs**. Furthermore, entitlements to subsidized or free public health care for Syrians is interrelated with registration status and eligibility for UNHCR monthly financial assistance. Confusion over entitlements could therefore be clarified during the registration process with UNHCR and MoI. This is in addition to a need for further clarification of information gaps related to the overall healthcare service entitlement system.

### Healthcare Services

- More comprehensive and trustworthy information about **which hospitals and clinics Syrians refugees are entitled to go to**, at what cost, and for what treatments;
- **Information about the cost of certain treatments and services**, specifically; child-birth, post-natal care, blood tests, dental treatments, and medication for chronic illness;
- **Information about specialist doctors and treatments**, including location, cost, and availability of financial support;
- Information about the **JHAS criteria for emergency cases** when seeking treatment from public hospitals;
- Participants were not aware of **complaint mechanisms for healthcare related issues**.

Lack of awareness over entitlements was compounded by **miscommunication with hospitals and clinics**. In non-emergency cases, Syrians refugees are supposed to access JHAS clinics. However, participants reported a great deal of inconsistency in the information provided. For example, many participants reported being directed to a hospital, then told by hospital staff that they had been misinformed, these participants were later redirected to another facility.

**The need for reliable and accessible information was most acute in emergency cases.** Participants discussed difficulties in contacting JHAS and requesting treatment approval for emergency cases. Often, this meant not being able to access treatment. Several participants requested JHAS staff be present in hospitals in order to streamline this method of communication.

Finally, participants were not aware of any existing complaint mechanism. Although most participants were aware of the UNHCR help-line, they requested **a specific platform dedicated to healthcare service informational needs**.

## Work Permits and Employment Rights

Table 11: Demographic breakdown of FGDs selecting employment, permits, and worker rights as a topic of informational need

Population profile	Female	Male	Of total
<b>Urban Syrians</b>	1	4	5/18
'Hard-to-reach'	2	2	4/16
Of total	3/18	6/16	9/34

<sup>40</sup> As with humanitarian assistance, participants often blurred the discussion of informational needs with their experience with or need for services. However, this did lead to the reporting of narrativized experiences, through which particular areas of confusion and miscommunication could be pinpointed.

- **Information relating to employment, work permits and worker rights were primarily a male concern.** Where work was discussed in female FGDs, it was almost always mentioned in the context of male relatives or husbands seeking work and information relating to permits;
- Work permits and employment rights were **of almost equal concern to HtR and urban participants.**

## Key Information Gaps

### Work Permits

Participants were interested in better understanding which sources to contact in order **to receive information on work permit application.** Participants without work permits reported that they had received relevant information about how to file for a permit. However, a **good understanding of the permit application process was predicated on seeking information from MoL or UNHCR.** This may be a potential barrier for Syrians, living in HtR communities, in accessing information about work permit applications.

### Employment Rights

- **Participants lacked information about the technical issues (i.e. legal risks and protections) surrounding employment rights and specific legal questions about the remit of work permits.** This includes;
  - If permits are usable across the qualified industrial zones;
  - If permits are sector specific;
  - If permits could still be used if the employer changed.
- **Limited awareness of formal, non-governmental information mechanisms regarding employment and permits**

**Information gaps regarding legal risks and protections surrounding employment rights** related to documentation, legal aid and protection concerns. Thus participants requested more information regarding legal aid. There were significant implications of these questions not being answered, such as participants assuming that work permits would not be valid if they had not received information on transferring work permits. Consequently, participants perceived regulations to be inflexible and were concerned about work permit making them more visible to the authorities, and therefore more vulnerable to being caught if working informally. Several participants reported this as the reason for not applying for a permit.

**There was a general lack of knowledge of legal rights and protections in the work place.** Several FGDs, mainly male, reported permit sponsors demanding payment for applying for work permits on behalf of Syrians. This indicated both a confusion around the cost of work permits, as well as a lack of awareness about recourse to legal services in cases of exploitation. Several participants, especially in the HtR communities, reported that due to vulnerable or informal status, they had not sought assistance in work place exploitation.

## Education Services

Table 12: Demographic breakdown of FGDs selecting education services as a topic of informational need

Population profile	Female	Male	Of total
Urban Syrians	5	1	6/18
'Hard-to-reach'	0	2	2/16
Of total	5/18	3/16	8/34

- As with humanitarian assistance, education was largely seen as a female household responsibility and subsequently a **predominantly female informational need;**

- **Furthermore, education services were of greater interest to urban participants.** In most FGDs, participants mentioned informational needs concerning education services beyond public school, such as informal and tertiary school, for children aged 6 to 17.

### Key Information Gaps

Overall, participants with education service informational needs had a comprehensive knowledge of where to seek information about public school and of how to enrol their children. **Where information gaps emerged, they related to:**

- **Coordination between parents and school administration** once children were enrolled; several parents requested more information on school curriculum, as well as policies on harassment and bullying in the class room;
- **Documentation and status concerns preventing registration of children;** several participants wanted to know if there were any exceptions that would allow them to enrol their children in school without an Mol card, and if so, who to speak to about this, and the procedure to follow;
- **Additional education services such as informal education, special needs education and support for children with disabilities, higher education and university opportunities,** especially concerning scholarships.

In cases where there was a need for more information, most of the respondents knew where their local MoE directorate was. For HtR communities, many found support from UN agencies and INGOs, this the case in Ghour al Safi, Mafraq ITS, and Sahab.

Once in school, some groups in Ghor Safi and Mafraq, commented that they had experienced difficulties with coordination between school administration and parents. They indicated a want for a more accessible platform with comprehensive information about what happens in schools and what their children learn. **When information gaps emerged, they were only around sources of information on additional education services.**

There were cases in Mafraq where informational gaps concerning documentation and status were interrelated with education service informational needs. A few cases emerged where the participants reported not being able to register their children in school despite knowledge of general procedure. This was due to either participants not having correct paperwork to register their child, or being camp-registered Syrians residing in host-communities. **Furthermore, participants without correct paperwork (i.e. school diplomas, university degrees) were unsure how to access this information.**

## CONCLUSION

This report sought to provide greater insight into the complex networks of humanitarian and governmental communications with Syrians in Jordan's host communities. Specifically, it aimed to **shed light on the ways Syrians receive and exchange information disseminated in order to inform effective communication strategies**. This is predicated on the understanding that information, and awareness of where to seek it, is fundamental to enabling Syrians to exercise their rights and entitlements.

The primary research objective was to identify key informal and formal communication mechanisms accessed by Syrians, and their perceived accuracy and reliability. Findings highlighted **well established and far-reaching informal communication mechanisms sourced from within local communities, which are highly effective in disseminating information quickly and at low-cost through word-of-mouth communication**. The main disadvantage of these informal networks, however, was that the information exchanged was largely reported to be untrusted. Such mechanisms offered a 'gate-way' that directed individuals towards relevant official information sources. Therefore, even informal information became part of a more complex and dynamic information communication pathway. Conversely, although there was a high level of trust expressed in formal communication mechanisms, participants often reported difficulties in accessing these means of communication.

There is **potential to capitalize on the strengths of existing community networks and integrate them into broader communication strategies**. As discussed in relation to the use of internet and social media platforms, there are many trusted Facebook groups for Syrians in Jordan that could be further utilized by formal aid actors.

**Though uni-directional means of communication were reported to be largely successful, participants repeatedly requested more official communication mechanisms for two-way information exchange feedback**, especially multi-directional platforms that provided a feedback forum. Such forums would allow Syrians to ask questions and create a feedback and complaints channel. This could also be addressed by building upon existing official platforms, such as expanding the capacity of the UNHCR-run help-line. Strategies could also focus on establishing a coordinated communication mechanism such as a joint service provider website.

**Although internet and social media platforms emerged an effective communication mechanism, findings from HtR communities helped to identify the specific needs of vulnerable groups. More direct dissemination of communication, through in person field/staff visits, was seen as essential for these populations**. This was seen especially with participants with high rates of illiteracy or for whom internet access is not possible. Consequently, findings indicate the need for broader communication strategies with targeted, in-person outreach.

**Vulnerability was most commonly linked to documentation and registration. This presented a barrier to accessing formal means of communication**. These challenges were compounded by limited knowledge of where to seek information on available and impartial legal aid services. Consequently, a need for legal service information created a bottleneck in the communication pathways that prevented Syrians from accessing services and assistance.

These findings imply **a need for increased advocacy on behalf of Syrians regarding registration and documentation**, particularly for those that are non-registered, or previously camp-registered refugees that migrated to host communities after the bailout, or Syrians eligible to register but struggling to do so. Furthermore, the findings have **emphasized the need for more extensive and representative research into Syrians' needs concerning legal, administrative and casework services specifically**.

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: FGD Question Route

#### Focus group discussion question route

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##### Introduction

Fill in the OKD form with each participants' information:

##### Welcome and introduction (5 minutes)

- Hello, thank you for your willingness to participate in this session today. We appreciate your time as your point of view is important to us.
- The goal of this session is to gather information on the relevance and effectiveness of media used by humanitarian actors to disseminate information in Jordan, as well as well receive community opinions regarding means to improve the communication of information to refugees in the host communities in Jordan. This data collection exercise aims to inform the programming and planning of humanitarian agencies in the country. **Please answer all questions in reference to your sex and age group, and make it very clear if you are ever referring to other demographics.**
- All information you provide to us today will remain anonymous. I and the other group participants would appreciate if you do not discuss the comments made by members of the group outside of this discussion. If there are any questions or discussions that you do not wish to answer or participate in, you do not have to do so. However, we very much appreciate your involvement and ask you to participate as much as possible.
- This discussion will take no more than 1.5 hours. We appreciate your time and attention.

##### Ground Rules (2 minutes)

- It is very important that only one person speaks at a time. Though you may be tempted to jump in when someone else is talking, please wait until they have finished. We will be sure to listen to the opinions of everyone in the group.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- You do not have to agree with the views of other people in the group. It is important that everyone is able to express their own opinions openly so please respect what others have to say.

### Section 1: Information sources

*These questions aim to introduce the topic of information dissemination to the group and start discussions regarding available and preferred information sources. The engagement question is designed to narrow the focus of the discussion from a wide range of services or policies to a few that are of most interest to the group.*

1. **(Engagement question) For which issues or topics do you most frequently need or seek information? This can include information about accessing services (like education, health care, protection, or psychosocial services) receiving humanitarian assistance, government policies about obtaining work permits or Mol service cards, or any other area which I have not mentioned.**

- a. *Participatory exercise: While the facilitator moderates the discussion, the scribe records the answers provided from the group on a flipchart. Once all responses are recorded on the flipchart, the facilitator asks the participants to mark a dot next to their top three information areas. The 2-3 information areas with the highest number of dots will be selected to guide the discussion.*

[Repeat the following questions for each of the 2-3 information areas selected in the participatory exercise]

## Section 2: Information communication experiences

*The following questions aim to understand participants' past experiences in engaging with different information sources, how different factors surrounding information dissemination affect comprehension, and how the information is used*

**2.a. Describe a time where you received information about \_\_\_\_\_ where the information received fully met your needs. (Please get as much detail as possible about their understanding of the topic that they are discussing i.e. what information are they saying they do know such as regulations surrounding application for work permits or eligibility criteria for eye-scan assistance)**

### Discussion probes

- i. How was the information delivered to you, and was this an effective method? Did you seek the information or was it provided unprompted?
- ii. [If word-of-mouth/friends/neighbours/etc. is the method] Where does \_\_\_\_\_ obtain this information?
- iii. Describe how the information is shared – passed on verbally? Through social media? (if through social media, ask if through specific Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups, etc.)
- iv. Did you find the information provided to be clear and comprehensive? Was anything left out that you would have liked to have known?
- v. Do you feel that you understood the information you received?
- vi. What are the main advantages and disadvantages of this method of receiving information? i.e. is it trustworthy/reliable?
- vii. Were you able to use the information to make better decisions for yourself or for your household? Why or why not?

**2.b. What are the key areas of information you feel that you lack? Why do you think this is? (Hint: Are you unable to find information about the facility offering the service, such as location, operating hours, registration information, or cost of services? Are you lacking information about submitting feedback or complaints regarding a humanitarian NGO providing services or assistance? Are you lacking up-to-date information?)**

### Discussion probes

- i. How would you prefer to receive information about \_\_\_\_\_?
- ii. Did you seek any alternative or additional sources to corroborate the information you received, such as fellow community members or social media groups, or did you feel that this was not necessary? Why?
- iii. [If participants do not seem to have a clear understanding of the issue] It seems there is some confusion regarding the process for \_\_\_\_\_. How has a lack of clarity affected your ability to use this information to obtain \_\_\_\_\_ (work permits, enroll children in school, etc.)?
- iv. [If participants do seem to have a clear understanding of the issue] It seems that everyone is familiar with the process for \_\_\_\_\_. If information is not the issue, what are some other reasons for why individuals in your community do not obtain \_\_\_\_\_ (work permits, enroll children in school, etc.)?
- v. What has been the impact of this lack of information on how you access services or exercise legal entitlements?

**3.a. Describe a time where you received information about \_\_\_\_\_, where the information received did not fully meet your needs.**

### Discussion probes

- i. How was the information delivered to you? Did you find this to be an effective method? Why or why not? Did you seek the information or was it provided unprompted?
- ii. What are the challenges you typically face when information is provided to you through this method?
- iii. Did you find the information to be confusing or difficult to understand?
- iv. Do you find the information source/ channel to be trustworthy? Why?
- v. Was the information you received incomplete? What additional information would you have liked to receive?
- vi. Did you receive the information too late to actually use it in your personal or household decision making?
- vii. Do you feel that you understood the information that you did receive?
- viii. Where there any advantages to receiving information via this method? i.e. is it trustworthy/ reliable?
- ix. Given the challenges you've described, did you try to seek out alternative sources to clarify or confirm the information you received, such as fellow community members or social media groups? What sources, and why?

**3.b. What are the key areas of information you feel that you lack? Why do you think this is?** (Hint: Are you unable to find information about the facility offering the service, such as location, operating hours, registration information, or cost of services? Are you lacking information about submitting feedback or complaints regarding a humanitarian NGO providing services or assistance? Are you lacking up-to-date information?)

**Discussion probes**

- i. How would you prefer to receive information about \_\_\_\_\_?
- ii. [If participants do not seem to have a clear understanding of the issue] It seems there is some confusion regarding the process for \_\_\_\_\_. How has a lack of clarity affected your ability to use this information to obtain \_\_\_\_\_ (work permits, enroll children in school, etc.)?
- iii. [If participants do seem to have a clear understanding of the issue] It seems that everyone is familiar with the process for \_\_\_\_\_. If information is not the issue, what are some other reasons for why individuals in your community do not obtain \_\_\_\_\_ (work permits, enroll children in school, etc.)?

**4. Have you ever faced a situation where two sources of information provided inaccurate or contradictory information? Please describe the situation.**

**Discussion probes**

- i. What were the two sources?
- ii. How did the information differ?
- iii. Did this impact your ability to use the information effectively? How so?
- iv. Has receiving this contradictory information affected how you view these information sources?
- v. Do you feel that either of these sources are less reliable or trustworthy as a result? Why or why not?

**5. Describe a situation where you have received information that helped you or your household make a major decision.**

**Discussion probes**

- i. What was the information source/channel? Was the information delivered to you unprompted, or did you actively consult the source?
- ii. What kind of impact did receiving this information have on your decision making process?
- iii. Did the information you received help you access specific services, assistance, or legal entitlements that you otherwise would not have been able to access?
- iv. What can be done in the future to ensure that information dissemination provides greater support to your decision making process? (Hint: repetition of the information, multi-channel communications).

**6. Do you feel that access to information about \_\_\_\_\_ is dependent on any other factors, such as age, disability, literacy, or access to/possession of communications technology?**

### Section 3: Information Communication Technology

*The following questions aim to understand participants' level of engagement with information communication technologies, and willingness to engage with new platforms. If you feel that issues such as internet and chat application use has been adequately discussed, please move past question 7.*

**7. Would you be comfortable using the internet to access information about \_\_\_\_\_? Why or why not?**

#### Discussion probes

- i. Have you ever used UNHCR's services advisor? If so, describe your experience using the website and your frequency of use.
- ii. Do social media sites like Facebook play a role in how you access information? If so, describe your experience using such mediums and your frequency of use.
- iii. Do you use chat applications like Whatsapp or Viber to receive or share information with friends, family, neighbours, or other members of your community? If so, describe your experience using chat groups or messages and your frequency of use.

**8. What are your opinions about a smart-phone application that would allow you to access the experiences of other Syrian refugees in your geographic area with a particular service?**

#### Discussion probes

- i. What could be potential advantages and drawbacks of a digital tool like this?
- ii. Would particular groups in your community be more inclined to use it, for example men versus women, specific age groups, persons with disabilities, or others?