

## FACT SHEET # 1

# REACH ASSESSMENT OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN HOST COMMUNITIES, ERBIL GOVERNORATE, IRAQ

20 JANUARY 2013

### BACKGROUND

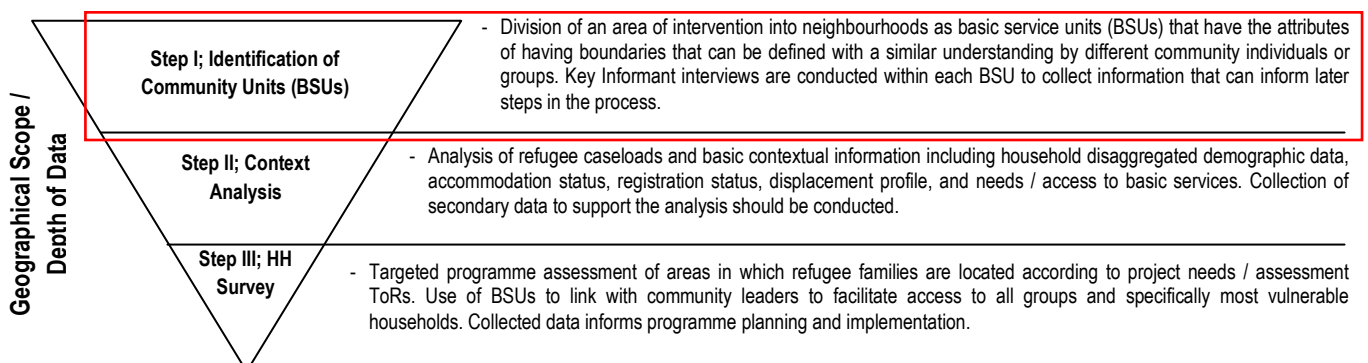
Of the over 793,597 Syrian refugees estimated in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt as of 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013, 106,697 have registered with UNHCR in Iraq<sup>1</sup>. In the Kurdistan region a number of factors including: (a) the onset of winter conditions; (b) a continuing influx of new refugee arrivals from Syria causing an increased stress on host community infrastructure and services; and (c) weakened coping mechanisms within refugee communities living in hosted conditions given the prolonged period of displacement; are causing increased pressure on individual refugee families, forcing many to be drawn towards the choice to either relocate towards the main refugee camp in Domiz, Dohuk Governorate, or consider a return to Syria. With the carrying capacity of Domiz camp limited, the focus of the humanitarian community is to support refugees hosted within communities across Kurdistan. The major challenge for actors on the ground however lies in identifying the refugee families hosted in communities across villages and cities of Iraq, and accessing baseline information that would allow for a quicker and more effective targeting of resources necessary to launch relevant and timely responses.

The data presented in this factsheet represents the preliminary findings of a first phase of an assessment (see methodology summary section below for more details) carried out between the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2012 and the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2013 in Erbil Governorate, Iraq as part of a UNHCR funded project aimed at addressing the information deficit existing in relation to refugees hosted in cities and villages around the region. All numbers of total refugee populations are based on Key Informant Interviews and final results are still in the process of verification and completion. It is important to note that numbers are not gathered through a registration process or household interviews but are estimated figures based on key informant information. What is important to highlight with this level of assessment is where concentrations of refugees are gathering and what trends in vulnerabilities and perceived issues are identified. As the **REACH database** is progressively updated and verified further updates to these factsheets will be prepared, contributing to a wider analysis at the Governorate level.

### Summary of the Assessment Methodology

The assessment methodology is based on a three step approach to data collection that gradually sharpens the understanding of the context both in terms of geographical focus as well as depth of data; as shown in the figure below. The objective of this process is to provide humanitarian actors with information that allows them to make informed decisions with regards to their targeting specific areas or locations based on their programme planning needs. As such the REACH methodology focuses primarily on steps I & II. The definition of the terms of reference (TORs) for step III is left to the individual actors' prerogative.

This factsheet is based on the results of step I, in which Basic Service Units were identified based on a focus group discussion with members of a given target area. Key informant interviews were then organised with members of each BSU. These key informant interviews focused on identifying the general caseload, profile of displacement, and overall living conditions of the refugees that are hosted in each of the BSUs within the area of interest. It is the results of these interviews that are presented here.

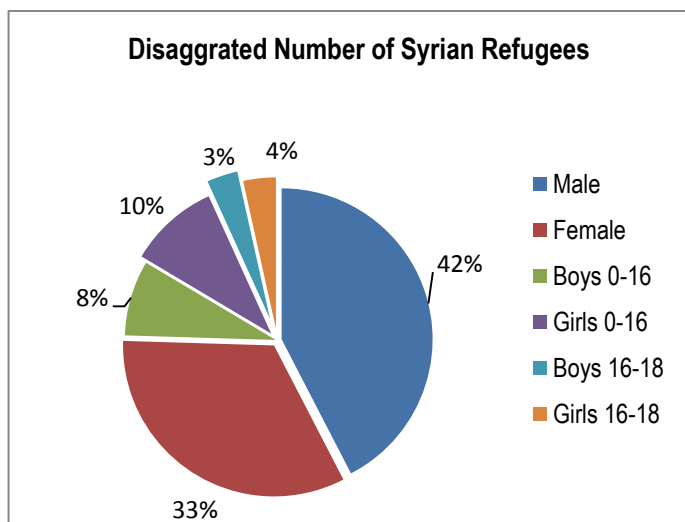


<sup>1</sup> Source : UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response; Information Sharing Portal, 22/01/2013

## OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

A total of **260** Basic Service Units have been identified to date in which key informant group interviews were conducted in the Erbil Governorate; **156** of these were completed in rural areas of the Governorate and **104** within the city of Erbil. These interviews were conducted with up to four individuals representing both the hosts and refugees within a given community. These included: the Mukhtar for a given area, an informal community leader / member of a CBO, as well as two representatives (wherever possible one male and one female) of the refugee community.

For the purpose of the **Key Informant Interviews**, all single individuals were considered as 1 member family units. Nonetheless, to ensure a comprehensive overview of the refugee context at this stage in the process one question within the interview required that the refugee data be disaggregated between Iraqi returnees and Syrian refugees and further between families (multi-member groups) and singles (individuals who left their families behind elsewhere). Through this process a total of **1538** refugee families and **919** singles (estimated **6412** individuals) have been identified within **260** BSUs between the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2012 and the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2013. The preliminary results show **58** Iraqi returnee families in Erbil Governorate.



Annex 1 of this factsheet maps the geographic coverage of the assessment completed to date, as well as the remaining areas of coverage currently under assessment. Figure 1 shows the 10 basic service units currently hosting the highest number of refugee families.

Basic Service Units	Est. # Families
<i>Names are provided as phonetic representations of their Arabic or Kurdish original</i>	
Marina/108 (Erbil City)	150
Pirkot New (Rural)	121
Badawa 1 (Erbil City)	70
Havalan (Erbil City)	50
Baharinwe (Erbil City)	50
Shurtawa (Erbil City)	50
Farmanbaran (Erbil City)	48
Salahaddin 1 (Erbil City)	40
Rizgari 3 (Erbil City)	40
Saladdir 2 (Erbil City)	35

Figure 1, Breakdown of Refugee Numbers per BSU

### Displacement Profile

As part of the key informant interviews, the assessment team sought to identify the primary areas of origin in Syria from which refugees in Erbil Governorate originated. Preliminary findings show the following sub-districts in Syria as locations from which refugees were most commonly displaced: Ain al Arab (**21%**) (Aleppo Governorate), Afrin (**20%**) (Aleppo Governorate), Hassakeh (**17%**) (Al-Hassakeh Governorate) and Qamishli (**14%**) (Al-Hassakeh Governorate) (Annex 3, primary areas of origins)

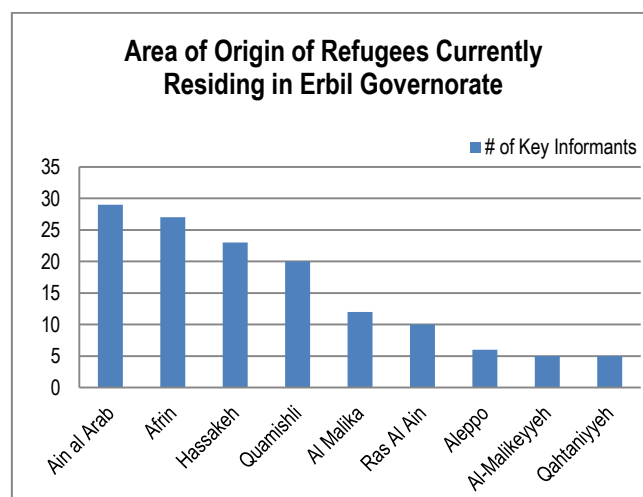


Figure 2: 9 main areas of origin of Syrian refugees in Erbil Governorate

According to the key informants, the majority of refugee families (**65%**) have been living in their current accommodation/ location in Erbil since 2 to 6 months. Around one quarter of families (**23%**) have arrived over 6 months ago.

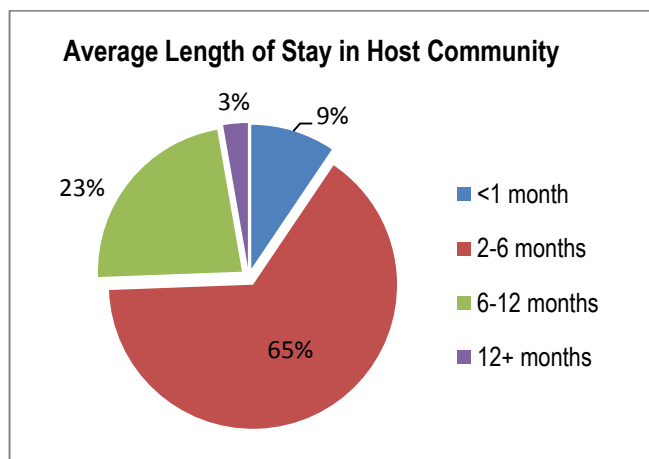


Figure 3: Duration of stay of Syrian refugees in Erbil host community

Between August and November 2012, key informants reported that **54** families, representing **5.5%** of the estimated number of total refugee families in Erbil City, have left the BSU in Erbil City they were settled in; including Havalan (Havalan neighbourhood), Kariz/415 (Ankawa neighbourhood), Shadi (Shadi neighbourhood) and Mufti (Mufti neighbourhood) to go back in Syria and more specifically in Hassakeh or Ain Al Arab Governorates, with one further family reported having moved elsewhere within the Erbil Governorate.

## Vulnerability Analysis

A key objective of the assessment was to gain an enhanced understanding of key factors that affect refugee families' vulnerability. As part of the assessment, key informants were asked to identify particularly vulnerable populations within the refugee community. Figure 4 below shows the number of families that pertain to particularly vulnerable groups or contain specific persons of concern (PoCs). Furthermore, **17** orphans have been identified by the key informants.)

Female headed HHs	Widows without support	Older person at risk
15	13	67

Serious medical condition	Disability	Family 10+	Child headed HHs
3	22	11	0

Figure 4: Breakdown of specific vulnerability reported by key informants (# of families)

## Registration

A key mechanism for governmental and non-governmental agencies involved in protection activities to provide protection-service/support to the refugee community are the registration structures within the Directory of Displacement and Migration (DDM) and/or UNHCR/PARC. Although the majority of the refugee population was reported as having registered with DDM and/or UNHCR, key informant groups in **51** BSUs indicated a need of additional assistance to ensure that all refugees are registered. In approximately **47** cases, the registration process is still pending. In only a marginal number of cases the key informants indicated that refugee families were not aware of either the procedure or requirements necessary to complete their registration. The key informant interviews further reported that a large segment of the refugee families are lacking Syrian national identification documentation.

## Shelter

Key informants reported that the large majority of the refugee families in Erbil Governorate are settled in brick or concrete houses reportedly in good conditions. According to the information collected **13** cases of refugee families living in public buildings are reported.

Note however, that although no cases were reported of refugee families in Erbil Governorate settled in tent, caravan or transitional structures, given the nature of key informant interviews the possibility that individual families may face issues including internal damage to individual accommodation units and/ or overcrowding, should not be discounted. This will be assessed further as part of the household interviews which REACH is in the process of rolling out as part of step II of the methodology.

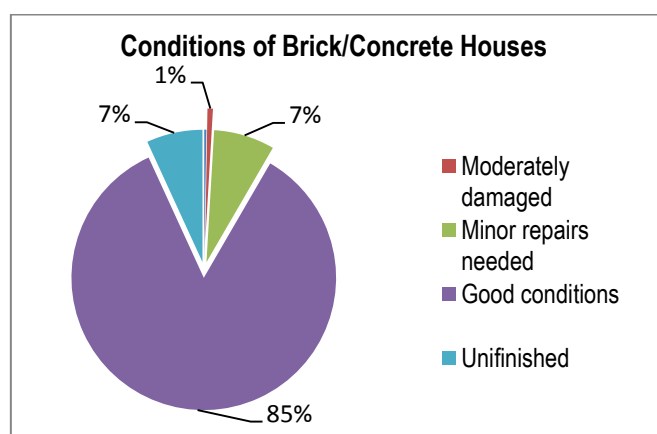


Figure 5: Conditions of the houses the refugees are mainly settled in.

## Evictions

The key informants were also questioned about forcible evictions of refugee families that may have occurred in their area. Only **3**

cases of eviction were collected in which it was reported that the families were evicted by the landlord or the neighbours. However, the data collected does not specify the reasons why those families have been evicted.

### Security

9 key informant groups indicated that there had been security incidents in the past 3 months. However, no details regarding the type of kind of incident were given. 2 key informant groups also reported some tensions between refugees and the local community, in Ankawa and Shimonawa neighbourhoods (Erbil City).

### Livelihoods

An estimated number of 1347 families are reported having at least one member over 15 years old gainfully employed; with the majority (83.6%) involved in daily labour. At this stage of the assessment, an estimated number of 87 children under 14 are reported to be currently working, the majority of which (66%) being reported in rural areas.

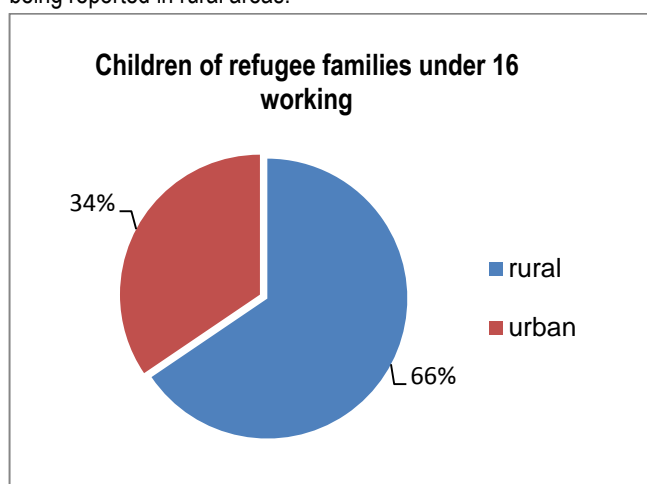


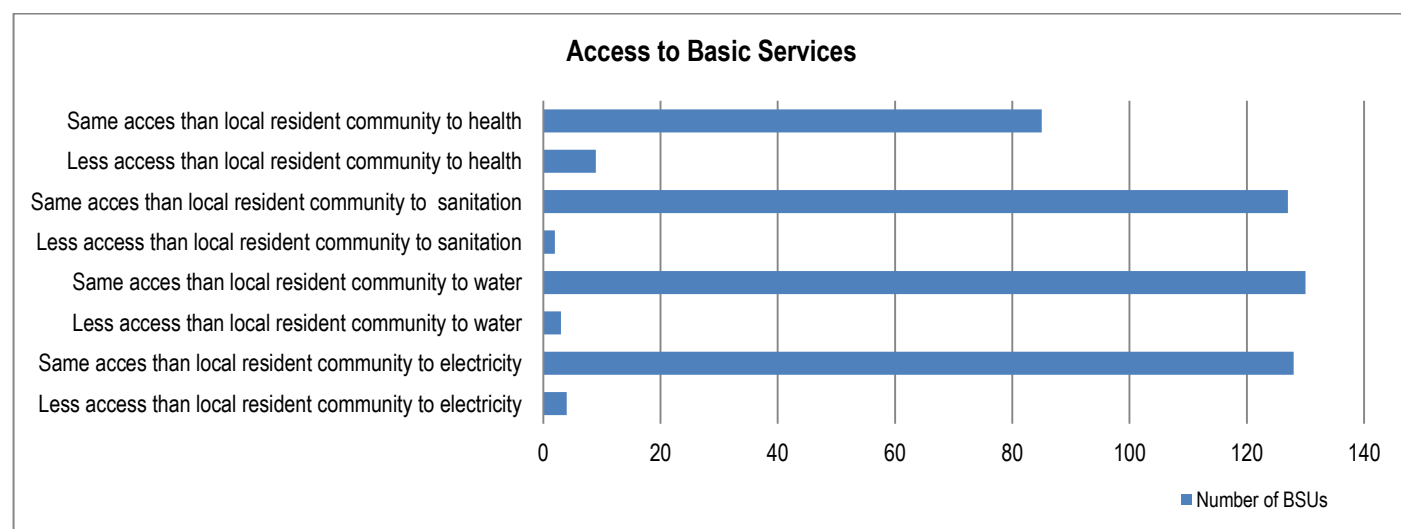
Figure 6, Refugee children which are reported working

### Access to Basic Services

The key informants were asked about the access of the refugee community to basic services within their area. The assessment also sought to understand the level of access for the refugees to these services.

Overall key informants reported that the refugee community in Erbil Governorate has access to electricity, water and sanitation to the same extent as local residents, via national networks, as displayed in Figure 7. While this may generally be the case, it is only at the time of the household-level assessment that this statement can be verified, as it is likely that despite the availability of services, individual refugee families may in fact not be able to do so for financial or other reasons.

Figure 7, Level of access to basic services for refugee families



## Water

Water sources were generally reported by all key informants, as working adequately. In majority (69%), the key informants groups perceive the quality of water as potable. However, a third of the key informants (30%) maintain that the water is only good for washing or cooking.

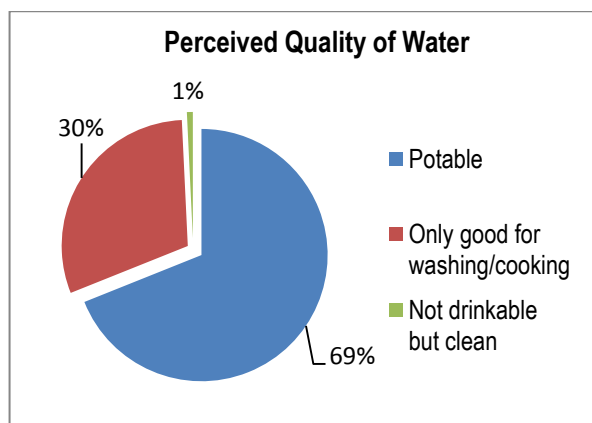


Figure 8, Key informants perception of the quality of water

## Sanitation

According to the interviews conducted, in 100% of interviews respondents indicated that refugee families had access to sanitary facilities. In 90% of the BSUs, the sanitary facilities are perceived as being in good conditions, and in 10% they are in poor conditions but still usable. Further details will be collected at the household level at which time a more developed analysis of the sanitation infrastructure can be undertaken.

Other questions asked to the key informants aimed at identifying the living conditions in each community not only for refugee families but for the residents in general, like the presence of sewage flow in the streets in their area and the existence of a garbage collection and disposal system.

In 95% of the cases, the key informants confirmed that garbage collection and disposal were being organized by municipal authorities and, in a very few cases, by volunteer groups. The 5% that indicated not having that kind of waste management services are located primarily in rural areas of Erbil Governorate.

## Presence of Sewage in the Street

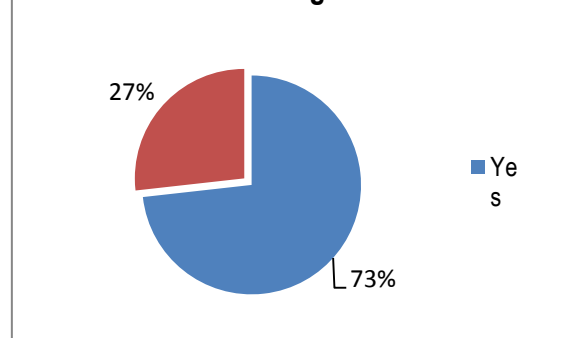


Figure 9, Presence of sewage at the time of the assessment

## Health

The majority of key informant groups indicated that there were no serious health concerns in the area or special medical cases within the refugee community; however, a total of 10 BSUs did indicate that serious health concerns were prevalent within their communities. Interestingly, preliminary results of the assessment indicate that a third of the refugee families do not have access to health services. However, as indicated in Figure 7, the majority of families which do have access to health services consider their access to the services the same as the residents. A deeper analysis of the obstacles to the access to health services is required to have a complete understanding of the situation. However, the key informant assessment indicates that the improvement of access to health services is a top priority within the refugee context.

## Access to Information

The key informants were also asked how the refugees received information concerning services available to them. The assessment reflects that the majority of the refugee community receive and exchange information via their relatives, other Syrian families, or through the medium of television. It is important to note that neither security forces including military or police officers nor registration points were ever mentioned as potential information sources by key informants.

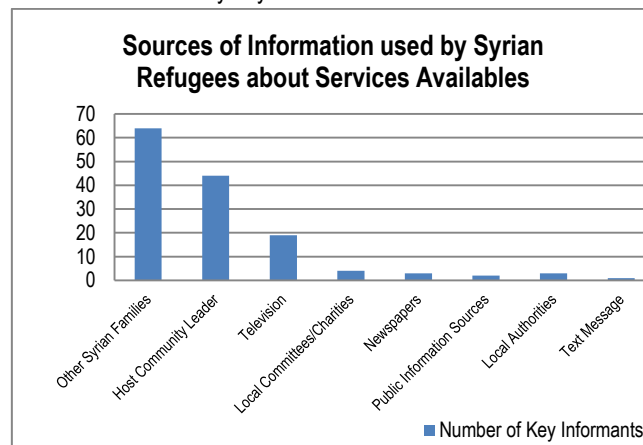


Figure 10, Usage of sources of information by the refugee community

## Needs Analysis

As part of this assessment, key informants groups were asked what currently represents the area of greatest concern at the household level. As reflected in Figure 10, it is apparent that shelter, health and cash for rent represent the greatest concerns for Syrian refugee families.

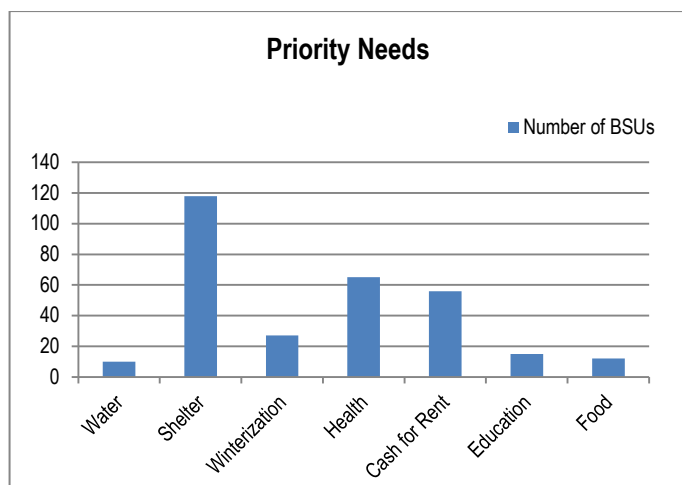


Figure 11, Priority needs of Syrian Refugees in BSUs reported by the key informants

## Education

Regarding school attendance, the preliminary results indicate **48** BSUs in which an estimated number of **273** children are not enrolled/ attending school. As reflected in Figure 12, overcrowding of schools and language barriers were the main reasons for this statistic.

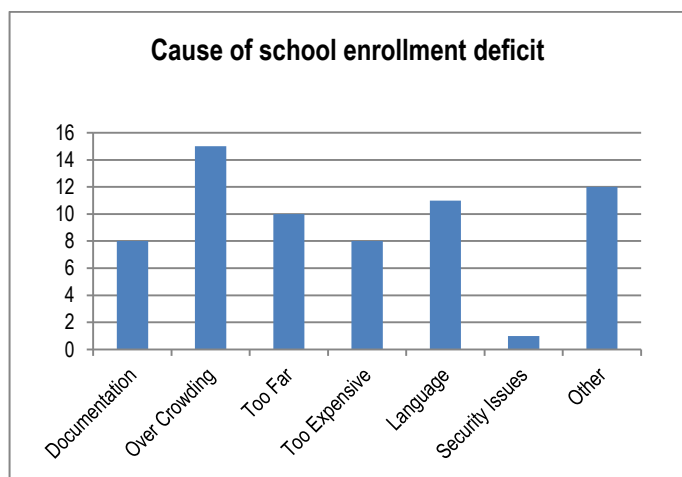


Figure 12, Reasons why refugee children are not attending school according to key informants.



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## REACH

REACH was formed in 2010 as a joint initiative of two INGOs (ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives) and a UN program (UNOSAT). The purpose of REACH is to promote and facilitate the development of information products that enhance the humanitarian community's capacity to make decisions and plan in emergency, reconstruction and development contexts.

At country level, REACH teams are deployed to countries experiencing emergencies or at-risk-of-crisis in order to facilitate interagency collection, organisation and dissemination of key humanitarian related information. Country-level deployments are conducted within the framework of partnerships with individual actors as well as aid coordination bodies, including UN agencies, clusters, inter-cluster initiatives, and other interagency initiatives.

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