Research Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the impact of graduation from UNHCR MPCA on out-of-camp refugee households in KR-I
IRQ2214
Iraq

October 2022
V1

IMPACT Shaping practices
Influencing policies
Impacting lives

1. Executive Summary

Country of intervention	Iraq					
Type of Emergency	□	Natural disaster	**x**	Conflict	□	Other *(specify)*
Type of Crisis	□	Sudden onset	□	Slow onset	**x**	Protracted
Mandating Body/ Agency	*UNHCR*					
IMPACT Project Code	*10AUE*					
Overall Research Timeframe *(from research design to final outputs / M&E)*	11/10/2022 to 31/12/2022					

Research Timeframe		
	1. Pilot/ training: 06/11/2022	6. Preliminary presentation: N/A
	2. Start collect data: 07/11/2022	7. Outputs sent for validation: 20/12/2022
	3. Data collected: 15/11/2022	8. Outputs published: 30/12/2022
	4. Data analysed: 27/11/2022	9. Final presentation: N/A
	5. Data sent for validation: 27/11/2022	

Number of assessments		
	x	Single assessment (one cycle)
	□	Multi assessment (more than one cycle)

Humanitarian milestones	**Milestone**		**Deadline**
	x	Donor plan/strategy	31/12/2022
	□	Inter-cluster plan/strategy	_ _/_ _/_ _ _ _
	□	Cluster plan/strategy	_ _/_ _/_ _ _ _
	□	NGO platform plan/strategy	_ _/_ _/_ _ _ _
	□	Other (Specify):	_ _/_ _/_ _ _ _

Audience Type & Dissemination	**Audience type**	**Dissemination**
	x Strategic	□ General Product Mailing (e.g. mail to NGO consortium; HCT participants; Donors)
	x Programmatic	□ Cluster Mailing (Education, Shelter and WASH) and presentation of findings at next cluster meeting
	x Operational	
	□ [Other, Specify]	□ Presentation of findings (e.g. at HCT meeting; Cluster meeting)

			□ Website Dissemination (Relief Web & REACH Resource Centre) **x** Bilateral dissemination to UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders as agreed with UNHCR
Detailed dissemination plan required	□	Yes	**x**	No
General Objective	To better understand how the process of graduating[1] from UNHCR multi-purposes cash assistance (MPCA) assistance has impacted out-of-camp refugee households in Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) and to inform UNHCR's MPCA strategy for 2023 in light of a potential discontinuation of the programme as part of the plan to transition away from the humanitarian architecture in Iraq.
Specific Objective(s)	• Identify the potential changes in out-of-camp refugee households' basic needs and coping strategies from when they were enrolled in UNHCR MPCA programme to when they graduated (either in November/December 2021 or April/March 2022). • Gauge ex-beneficiary households' perceptions around whether and how the graduation process was communicated to them, as well as how UNHCR's communication process could be improved. • Explore unintended consequences of households' graduation from the programme on their level of vulnerability to inform UNHCR's strategy for 2023 on a potential discontinuation of MPCA.

Research Questions	1) According to participants, have household basic needs and coping strategies changed (if at all) after graduating from MPCA? If so, how?
	 2) According to participants, has graduation from UNHCR MPCA produced any unintended results (positive and/or negative) for target households? If so, how did these occur?
	 3) According to participants, are any positive results likely to be sustained after graduation (in the short, medium and long term)? If so, in what circumstances?
	    a. Has UNHCR MPCA supported households in securing higher and more consistent forms of income that are not largely dependent on humanitarian assistance?
	    b. Has UNHCR MPCA supported target households in overcoming or mitigating barriers to generating a sufficient and consistent income? If yes, how? If not, why?
	 4) What are participants' perceptions of how the graduation process was communicated (if at all) to target households?

Geographic Coverage	All three governorates of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I; Duhok, Erbil and Al-Sulaymaniyah) where UNHCR and implementing partners provide MPCA to refugee households.

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[1] A "graduating household" is defined by UNHCR as a household that is no longer considered as vulnerable according to the Protection Monitoring Tool (PMT) scoring after having been provided a 12-month cycle of assistance.

Secondary data sources	• UNHCR and partners' beneficiary lists of out-of-camp refugee households who have received MPCA assistance and have now graduated from the programme
	• IMPACT's bi-monthly PDM of UNHCR's 2022 MPCA for out-of-camp refugees in Iraq[2]
	• "The Household Economy Approach," Save the Children, 2008.
	• "From Extreme Poverty to Sustainable Livelihoods: A Technical Guide to the Graduation Approach," Partnership for Economic Inclusion, 2018.

Population(s) *Select all that apply*	□	IDPs in camp	□	IDPs in informal sites
	□	IDPs in host communities	□	IDPs [Other, Specify]
	□	Refugees in camp	x	Refugees in informal sites
	x	Refugees in host communities	□	Refugees [Other, Specify]
	□	Host communities	□	[Other, Specify]

Stratification *Select type(s) and enter number of strata*	x	Geographical #:3 Governoratates in KR-I (Dohuk, Erbil and Al-Sulaymaniyah) Population size per strata is known? X Yes □ No	□	Group #: _ _ _ Population size per strata is known? □ Yes □ No	□	*[Other Specify]* #: _ _ Population size per strata is known? □ Yes □ No

Data collection tool(s)	□	Structured (Quantitative)	x	Semi-structured (Qualitative)

	Sampling method	**Data collection method**
Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 2	x Purposive □ Snowballing □ [Other, Specify]	□ Key informant interview (Target #):_ _ _ _ _ □ Individual interview (Target #):_ _ _ _ _ x Focus group discussion (Target #):12 FGDs (4 sex-segregated FGDs per each governorate, with 6 to 8 participants) □ [Other, Specify] (Target #):_ _ _ _ _

Target level of precision if probability sampling	_ _% level of confidence	_ _+/- % margin of error

Data management platform(s)	X	IMPACT	x	UNHCR
	□	[Other, Specify]		

Expected ouput type(s)	□	Situation overview #: _ _	X	Report #: 01 (between 10 to 15 pages maximum)	□	Profile #: _ _
	□	Presentation (Preliminary findings) #: _ _	□	Presentation (Final) #: _ _	□	Factsheet #: _ _
	□	Interactive dashboard #:_	□	Webmap #: _ _	□	Map #: _ _
	□	[Other, Specify] #: _ _				

Access	□	Public (available on IMPACT website and other humanitarian platforms)
	x	Restricted (bilateral dissemination to UNHCR only)

Visibility	*IMPACT*
	Donor: *UNHCR*
	Coordination Framework: *N/A*
	Partners: *N/A*

2.   Rationale

2.1 Background

As a result of both domestic and regional conflict, Iraq has experienced protracted instability and displacement for decades. Since the Syrian civil war began in 2011, millions of refugees have fled Syria and taken refuge in its neighboring countries.[3] Unrest in other countries like Iran, Turkey, and Yemen has also compounded the mass displacement of people and has given rise to a regional refugee crisis.[4] According to UNHCR's figures from August 2022, approximately 265,384 Syrian refugees reside in Iraq, of which the vast majority have been living in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I).[5] Furthermore, around 38,790 non-Syrian refugees are currently registered with UNHCR across Iraq.[6] In order to improve access to services and meet basic needs, local officials as well as local and international humanitarian organisations have been providing assistance to refugee households in need. Cash assistance programmes for refugees in Iraq, specifically Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) distributions, have been a life-saving measure provided by UNHCR and its implementing partners across Iraq since 2015.[7]

For their 2021-2022 MPCA programming, UNHCR, instead of only focusing on immediate short-term household needs and providing one-off cash assistance payments, has shifted its programming towards providing monthly cash assistance of 370,000 IQD (equivalent to 250 USD)[8] to eligible refugees for a duration of up to 12 months. Eligibility of refugees to receive MPCA by UNHCR in 2022 is based on a Proxy Means Testing (PMT).[9] If, after having been provided a 12-month cycle of MPCA, beneficiary households are no longer considered as vulnerable based on a new round of PMT, then UNHCR considers those households as "graduating" from the programme and will no longer provide assistance to them. To inform future MPCA programming, IMPACT Initiatives (IMPACT) will conduct an analysis of the impact of this process of graduating from MPCA on out-of-camp refugee households in terms of meeting basic needs, adopting coping mechanisms, households' perceptions of the longevity of the outcomes and impacts of this assistance, and communication around the graduation process.

2.2 Intended impact

How a household obtains access to food and cash income often determines which shocks or hazards will affect it, as well as to what degree (that is, how vulnerable the household is to a specific shock). As part of UNHCR's efforts to better understand the effects of discontinuation of MPCA programing through graduation on the vulnerability status of target out-of-camp refugee households in KR-I, IMPACT will be conducting a qualitative evaluation of the results (positive and/or negative) of such graduation process. If/when negative results are identified, IMPACT will also aim to collect the necessary information for UNHCR to mitigate such issues and, where needed, correct the course of action of MPCA programming.

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[3] IOM Syria Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2020. Figures from January 2020. Accessed 10.05.2020.

[4] UNHCR Global Focus: Middle-East. Accessed on 10.05.2020.

[5] https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/5.

[6] UNHCR Fact sheet Iraq January 2022. Figures from January 2020. Accessed 15.04.2020.

[7] Vulnerability Assessment and Targeting Review 2019 - Multipurpose Cash Assistance in Iraq. Accessed 10.04.2020.

[8] Exchange rate from 17 February 2022 (1 USD = 1,460 IQD). Source xe.com.

[9] UNHCR, Internal resource

3.   Methodology

3.1 Methodology overview

At the center of this assessment is a participatory approach to research that aims to ensure that the voices of those whose lives should have been improved by UNHCR MPCA programme are central to the findings reported. As such, this assessment will employ a qualitative methodology to better understand the impact of graduation from UNHCR MPCA programme on out-of-camp refugee households. A semi-structured tool will be used to facilitate a total of 12 FGDs with 6 to 8 participants each to be conducted across KR-I (more details on the distribution of FGDs in the section below). Data collection activities will be conducted in November 2022. A final report (of approximately 10 to 15 pages) presenting key findings from the FGDs will be drafted and shared with UNHCR in December for review and finalization.

3.2 Population of interest

This assessment covers out-of-camp refugee beneficiary households in the three governorates of KR-I (Dohuk, Erbil and Al-Sulaymaniyah) that graduated from UNHCR MPCA programmes between November/December 2021 and April/March 2022.

The unit of analysis for this assessment will be the household. UNHCR will provide IMPACT a full list of beneficiary households who graduated from the MPCA programme for sampling purposes.

3.3 Secondary data review

The following documentation from UNHCR has served as guidance to inform the assessment methodology and the questionnaire design:

- UNHCR and partners' beneficiary lists of refugee households referred to MPCA assistance following eligibility assessment.
- IMPACT's bi-monthly PDM of UNHCR's 2022 MPCA for out-of-camp refugees in Iraq.[10]
- The Household Economy Approach," Save the Children, 2008.
- "From Extreme Poverty to Sustainable Livelihoods: A Technical Guide to the Graduation Approach," Partnership for Economic Inclusion, 2018.

3.4 Primary Data Collection

Primary data collection activities for this assessment will consist of 12 sex-segregated in-person FGDs conducted across three governorates (4 per governorate), with 6 to 8 participants each. Participants (that is, the heads of household who used to cash out the assistance) to the FGDs will be selected from a UNHCR list of households who graduated from MPCA between November/December 2021 and April/March 2022. IMPACT Assessment Officer will filter the list by governorate and sex to then randomly select between 6 to 8 participants (plus a buffer of 4 people in case of non-response) per FGD in case from each location (see Table 1 below for the distribution of FGDs). IMPACT Field Staff will then contact the selected participants via phone to: i) cross-check their identity to ensure that they are the same individuals in the UNHCR's graduation lists; ii) administer a short screener to cross-check the frequency and amount of assistance participants used to receive as per UNHCR's lists and to better understand what their needs were at the time of receiving assistance; iii) schedule a day and time for the FGD to be conducted. A further check will be done on the day of the FGD, where participants will be asked to provide proof of identity to ensure that only those individuals who are registered in UNHCR's lists can participate in the FGD. IMPACT will use a semi-structured tool translated into Arabic and piloted at least two days before the start of data collection to ensure that the questions asked are relevant and clear.

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[10] Reports available upon request to UNHCR.

FGDs will be conducted in open and secure spaces, respecting social distancing protocols in line with [IMPACT Data Collection during COVID-19 Guidelines](#), and facilitated by two IMPACT staff consisting of both AOs and field staff/enumerators that are of the same sex of participants (e.g., female staff will facilitate FGDs with female participants). FGDs will be recorded for transcription and analysis purposes, and IMPACT will ask participants' consent to record the discussion. Should a minimum of one participant not give consent to be recorded, IMPACT staff will proceed with facilitating the FGD without recording it and taking detailed notes of the discussion. Lastly, for each FGD conducted, IMPACT staff will fill out a debrief form that aims at capturing non-verbal information as well as potential challenges with the questions asked (e.g., questions that are perceived as sensitive). Such debrief forms, alongside any operational challenges, will be the focus of daily debrief sessions that the IMPACT field and assessment team will hold to ensure that proper action is taken in case problems are identified. Findings from the FGDs will be indicative only.

Table 1: Distribution of FGDs by governorate and gender of participants

FGDs	Dohuk		Erbil		Al-Sulaymaniyah		Total	
Gender of FGD participants	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Number of FGDs	2	2	2	2	1*	3	5	7
Number of Participants per FGD	7/8		8		8		95	

*In Al-Sulaymaniyah the equal ratio male to female FGDs could not be respected as not enough households with female head of households graduated from the programme and therefore not enough participants could be selected from UNHCR lists.

Covid-19 SoPs

Given the rapid spread of COVID-19, the specific risks to already vulnerable communities, the importance of the humanitarian principle of "Do No Harm" as well as general considerations for "Duty of Care" (i.e. ensuring both field staff and local communities are not spreading and/ or exposed to the risk of contracting COVID-19 due to data collection activities), IMPACT, with inputs and review support from WHO and Global Health Cluster colleagues, has developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)[18] to guide research teams on how to undertake data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SOPs for data collection during COVID-19 will be strictly followed to ensure the safety of participants and IMPACT staff.

3.5 Data Processing & Analysis

Once the FGDs have been transcribed, in line with [IMPACT Qualitative Analysis Minimum Standards Checklist](#), transcripts will be used as a basis for filling out a [Data Saturation and Analysis Grid](#) (DSAG) in Excel on an ongoing basis throughout data collection. IMPACT Assessment Officer will analyze the transcripts by looking at most commonly reported answers, potential disagreements across geographies, groups and/or individuals, as well as cross-cutting themes. The DSAG will also include a "Method Report" and "Key Findings" summaries which will also present any relevant findings from the [debrief forms](#). When analyzing the data, IMPACT staff will also look at the graduation time (either November/December 2021 or April/March 2022) to explore the potential differences between short- and medium-term impact (six months and one year respectively). Findings from the analysis will be indicative only.

Key findings from this analysis will then be presented in a report (approximately between 8 to 10 pages long) that will be shared with UNHCR for review. Once feedback has been implemented, IMPACT will share a final version of the report with UNHCR for internal and/or external dissemination to relevant stakeholders.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Table 2: Description of roles and responsibilities

Task Description	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
Research design	*IMPACT Assessment Officer (AO)*	*IMPACT Research Manager (RM)*	*IMPACT HQ Research Design & Data (RDD) Unit; UNHCR Focal Point*	*IMPACT Country Coordinator (CC); IMPACT Deputy Country Coordinator (DCC)*
Supervising data collection	*IMPACT AO; IMPACT Field Manager*	*IMPACT RM*	*IMPACT CC; IMPACT DCC*	*UNHCR Focal Point*
Data processing (checking, cleaning)	*IMPACT AO*	*IMPACT RM*	*IMPACT HQ RDDU*	*IMPACT DCC*
Data analysis	*IMPACT AO*	*IMPACT RM*	*IMPACT HQ RDDU*	*IMPACT DCC*
Output production	*IMPACT AO*	*IMPACT RM*	*IMPACT HQ Research Reporting Unit (RRU); UNHCR focal point*	*IMPACT CC; IMPACT DCC*
Dissemination	*IMPACT RM*	*IMPACT RM*	*IMPACT DCC: IMPACT CC*	*UNHCR focal point*
Monitoring & Evaluation	*IMPACT Project Development Officer (PDO)*	*IMPACT RM*	*IMPACT DCC; IMPACT CC*	*HQ*
Lessons learned	*IMPACT AO*	*IMPACT RM*	*IMPACT HQ RDDU*	*UNHCR focal point*

Responsible: *the person(s) who executes the task*

Accountable: *the person who validates the completion of the task and is accountable of the final output or milestone*

Consulted: *the person(s) who must be consulted when the task is implemented*

Informed: *the person(s) who need to be informed when the task is completed*

4. Key ethcial considerations and related risks

The proposed research design meets / does not meet the following criteria:

The proposed research design…	Yes/ No	Details if no (including mitigation)
… Has been coordinated with relevant stakeholders to **avoid unnecessary duplication** of data collection efforts?	Yes	
… **Respects respondents, their rights and dignity** (*specifically by: seeking informed consent, designing length of survey/ discussion while being considerate of participants' time, ensuring accurate reporting of information provided*)?	Yes	
… Does not **expose data collectors to any risks as a direct result** of participation in data collection?	No	Data collection for this assessment will be conducted in person. However, to ensure the protection of data collectors from COVID-19, the field staff will strictly follow IMPACT SoPs for collecting data during COVID-19 to prevent catching and/or spreading the virus. Moreover, to ensure the protection of data collectors from security incidents on the ground, all staff movements will have to go through ACTED in-country security approval and monitoring during deployment.
… Does not **expose respondents / their communities to any risks as a direct result** of participation in data collection?	No	Data collection for this assessment will be conducted in person. However, to ensure the protection of data collectors from COVID-19, the field staff will strictly follow IMPACT SoPs for collecting data during COVID-19 to prevent catching and/or spreading the virus.
… Does not involve **collecting information on specific topics which may be stressful and/ or re-traumatising** for research participants (both respondents and data collectors)?	Yes	
… Does not involve **data collection with minors** i.e. anyone less than 18 years old?	Yes	
… Does not involve **data collection with other vulnerable groups** e.g. persons with disabilities, victims/ survivors of protection incidents, etc.?	Yes	
… Follows IMPACT SOPs for management of **personally identifiable information**?	Yes	

5. Data Analysis Plan

See separate Excel file.

6. Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

IMPACT Objective	External M&E Indicator	Internal M&E Indicator	Focal point	Tool	Will indicator be tracked?
Humanitarian stakeholders are accessing IMPACT products	Number of humanitarian organisations accessing IMPACT services/products Number of individuals accessing IMPACT services/products	# of downloads of x product from Resource Center	Country request to HQ	User_log	No
		# of downloads of x product from Relief Web	Country request to HQ		No
		# of downloads of x product from Country level platforms	Country team		No
		# of page clicks on x product from REACH global newsletter	Country request to HQ		No
		# of page clicks on x product from country newsletter, sendingBlue, bit.ly	Country team		No
		# of visits to x webmap/x dashboard	Country request to HQ		No
IMPACT activities contribute to better program implementation and coordination of the humanitarian response	Number of humanitarian organisations utilizing IMPACT services/products	# references in HPC documents (HNO, SRP, Flash appeals, Cluster/sector strategies)	Country team	Reference_log	*No*
		# references in single agency documents			*No*
Humanitarian stakeholders are using IMPACT products	Humanitarian actors use IMPACT evidence/products as a basis for decision making, aid planning and delivery	Perceived relevance of IMPACT country-programs	Country team	Usage_Feedback *and* Usage_Survey template	*Usage and feedback survey to be administered to UNHCR after the end of the assessment.*
		Perceived usefulness and influence of IMPACT outputs			
		Recommendations to strengthen IMPACT programs			

	Number of humanitarian documents (HNO, HRP, cluster/agency strategic plans, etc.) directly informed by IMPACT products	Perceived capacity of IMPACT staff			
		Perceived quality of outputs/programs			
		Recommendations to strengthen IMPACT programs			
Humanitarian stakeholders are engaged in IMPACT programs throughout the research cycle	Number and/or percentage of humanitarian organizations directly contributing to IMPACT programs *(providing resources, participating to presentations, etc.)*	# of organisations providing resources (i.e.staff, vehicles, meeting space, budget, etc.) for activity implementation	Country team	Engagement _log	No
		# of organisations/clusters inputting in research design and joint analysis			No
		# of organisations/clusters attending briefings on findings;			No