RESULTS MONITORING SURVEY & SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT REPORT

A Bhutanese refugee woman runs her grain milling business in a refugee settlement located in Beldangi, Jhapa District. UNHCR and partners provided her with additional business support. © UNHCR / Roshan Sharma Nepal

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UNHCR's Results Monitoring Survey (RMS) in Nepal facilitates and streamlines survey-based data collection and monitors impact and outcome level results as part of Nepal's Multi-Year Strategy (2023–2027). The primary objective of the RMS is to provide quality and timely data to enable UNHCR Nepal to improve its evidence–based planning and programming, allocate resources more effectively, demonstrate accountability, and inform communications and advocacy efforts.

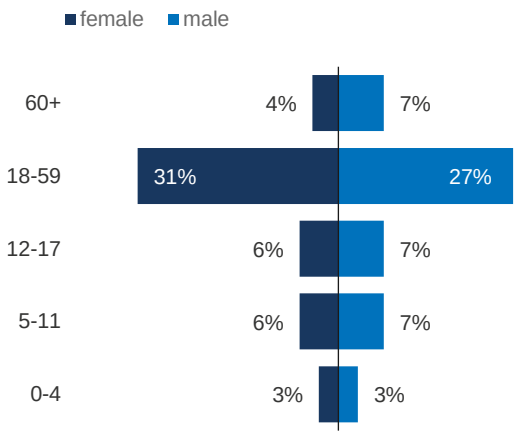
UNHCR developed a standard RMS questionnaire which was integrated into Nepal's 2023 Socio-Economic Assessment (SEA) survey, with the same methodology and targeted populations like in 2022. Both RMS and SEA surveys were conducted in Jhapa, Morang and Kathmandu districts with information collected from 360 refugee and asylum-seeker households (225 in Jhapa, 59 in Morang and 76 in Kathmandu).

Background Characteristics

6 percent of individuals were under 5 years old, 13 percent were aged 5-11 and another 13 percent were between 12-17 years old. People aged 60 and above accounted for 11 percent of the population. Approximately two-thirds of the population were married (67 percent). The average household size was 3.5 persons and about three quarter (76 percent) of household heads were male.

Figure 1

Demographics of RMS respondents | 2023



Note: figures do not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding
Source: UNHCR Nepal RMS
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A Bhutanese refugee man crafts a bamboo bed in his workshop within the refugee settlement in Beldangi, Jhapa District. © UNHCR / Roshan Sharma Nepal

Identity Credentials

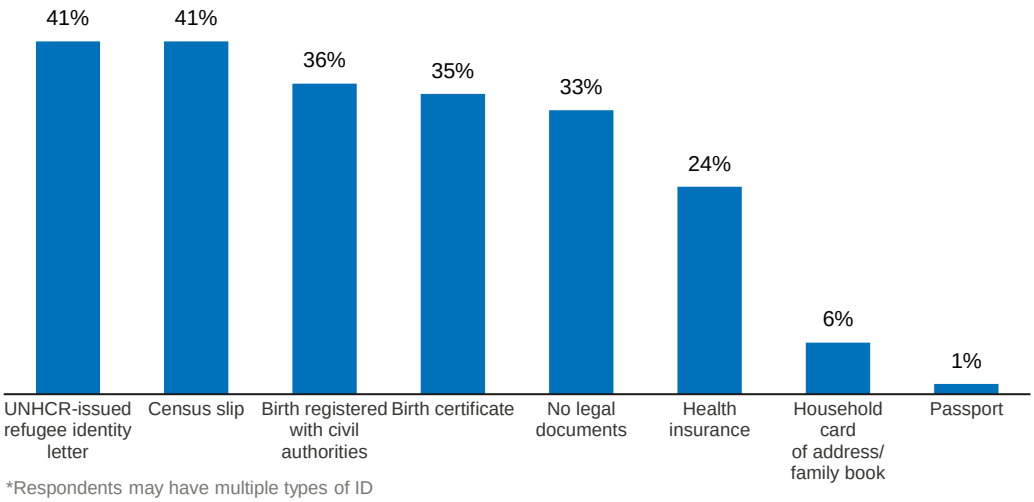
53 percent of respondents aged 5 years and above hold health insurance cards, 51 percent civil/government issued ID cards, 29 percent birth certificates[1], 20 percent UNHCR-issued refugee identity letters, 12 percent marriage certificates and 11 percent passports. 19 percent of respondents aged 5 years and above do not possess any documentation that could establish their identity. Most refugee ID cards issued by the Government of Nepal are held in Jhapa (63 percent) and Morang (61 percent), largely because of the Government verification and documentation exercise carried out in 2022 and 2023 for Bhutanese refugees aged 16 and above based on the 2021 Cabinet decision on the inclusion of Bhutanese refugees. 46 percent of passport holders are in Kathmandu, with Morang and Jhapa trailing behind at three percent each.

[1] *This may include birth certificates issued by a civil registry office in Nepal or elsewhere, and birth notifications by hospitals.*

Figure 3

Percentage of respondents holding types of ID (0 - 4 years)*

Respondents may have multiple types of ID



*Respondents may have multiple types of ID
Source: UNHCR Nepal RMS
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As for children under the age of 5, 41 percent hold UNHCR-issued refugee identity letters and census slips, 36 percent had their births registered with civil authorities, 35 percent own birth certificates, 24 percent hold health insurance cards, 6 percent had a household card of address or family book and only one percent own passports. 33 percent of respondents under the age of 5 had no legal proof of their identity. 100 percent of children below the age of 5 in Kathmandu were issued with a UNHCR-issued refugee identity letter. Census slips were issued only to Bhutanese refugee children in Jhapa (65 percent) and Morang (75 percent).

Access to Health Services

94 percent of children had received measles and rubella vaccines; 79 percent had received two doses and 22 percent only one dose.

31 percent of household members visited a health centre or consulted a health practitioner in the past 30 days,[2] marking an 8 percent increase from 23 percent in 2022. This rise was particularly notable in Kathmandu, where 43 percent of households said they visited a health centre or consulted a health practitioner in 2023, up from 29 percent in 2022. Health care was sought mostly due to illness (68 percent) and for general check-ups (24 percent). No child was born at home, with 71 percent of deliveries taking place in public health facilities and 29 percent in private health facilities. Only one percent of respondents said

[2] *Results referring to a specific time frame should be understood from the time of surveying.*

they could not access health services when needed in the past 30 days, a decrease from 6 percent in 2022.

39 percent of respondents reported they usually sought health care assistance from private facilities and 22 percent from public facilities; 25 percent from pharmacies. Around 15 percent of the population depended on health partners supported by UNHCR, notably prevalent in Kathmandu (90 percent). This is a substantial decrease from 48 percent in 2022. No respondents in Jhapa or Morang reported seeking care from UNHCR-supported health partners in 2023.

Up to 61 percent said they use public transportation to visit health care facilities. The population in Morang (99 percent) and Kathmandu (73 percent) rely more on public transportation compared to those in Jhapa (45 percent).

Education (5 – 24 years) and Community Activities

96 percent of household members aged between 5 and 24 years have at some point attended school. Within this group, 77 percent are currently attending school or college.

62 percent of students currently attending schools are at the primary level, approximately a quarter (26 percent) are currently enrolled at the secondary level, 11 percent in childhood education or pre-primary and one percent each at secondary-technical and vocational education training (TVET) and tertiary level. The proportion of the household population currently enrolled at the primary school level is the highest in Kathmandu (69 percent).

In Jhapa, Morang and Kathmandu, half (50 percent) attend private schools or colleges and 47 percent attend government/public schools or colleges. About two percent attend schools or colleges supported by non-governmental organizations while only one percent attend schools or colleges supported by religious or faith-based organizations.

Among the household members aged between 5 and 17 years who are not attending school, 55 percent said they cannot afford school-related expenses (this is likely related to private school fees as UNHCR Nepal provides CBI for all refugee children enrolled in government schools). 9 percent mentioned the absence of culturally or religiously appropriate educational programmes. These reasons were all cited in Kathmandu. The remaining 36 percent in Jhapa and Morang cited ‘other’ reasons.

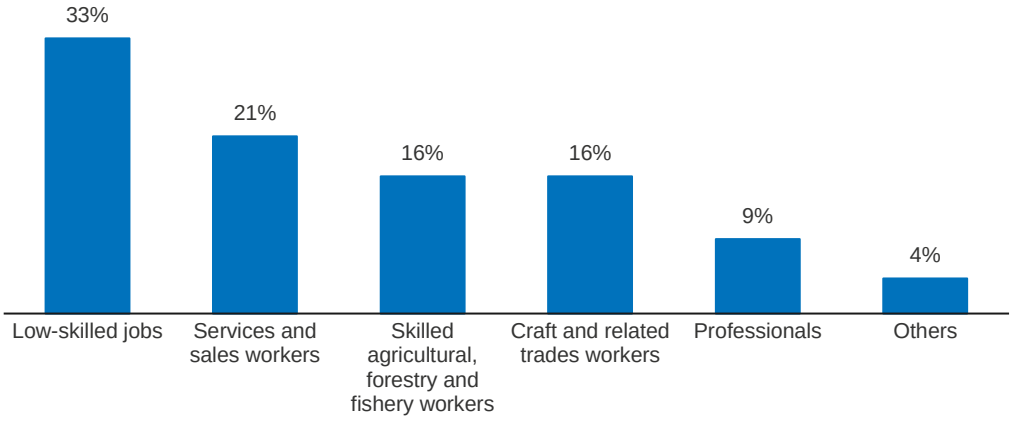
Among the household population aged between 5 and 17 years, around 17 percent participated in community activities in the last month. 93 percent of these participants participated one to four times and the vast majority (98 percent) said the place where those activities took place was physically safe, with adults present.

Economic Activities (18 – 64 years)

50 percent of respondents reported working in the last seven days. 22 percent were engaged in their own businesses, farming, or other income generating activities, while 21 percent worked for pay. In addition, 18 percent contributed to family businesses or farming.

Figure 4

Percentage of working age respondents engaged in professions | 2023



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Source: UNHCR Nepal RMS
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In the past seven days, respondents' primary occupations were as follows: 33 percent of respondents were in low-skilled jobs, 21 percent worked as services and sales workers, 16 percent were skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, 16 percent were craft and related trades workers, and 9 percent were professionals. 53 percent (51 percent in Jhapa, 34 percent in Morang and 86 percent in Kathmandu) worked outside the refugee settlement while 36 percent (44 percent in Jhapa, 34 percent in Morang and 14 percent in Kathmandu) worked within the settlement.

Nearly one third (32 percent) of respondents indicated that their employer's primary activity was in construction, mainly in Kathmandu (54 percent). 23 percent were engaged in agriculture, forestry, fishery, and livestock industries, with most of the latter being respondents from Morang (42 percent). Another 20 percent were involved in wholesale or retail trade and 16 percent in services.

38 percent each were paid as part of their own business and as incentive workers[3], 16 percent were paid employees, four percent worked as helpers in a family or household business and three percent were compensated as paid apprentices, volunteers or interns. Slightly more than half (51 percent) worked more than 40 hours a week with the highest proportion in Jhapa (61 percent). Only about one percent worked less than 10 hours per week.

Among those currently employed, 38 percent each said their skills correspond to the requirements for their tasks or that they possess the skills to undertake more complex duties. 23 percent said their skills need to be further developed to carry out some of the tasks and duties. 21 percent sought additional or other work in the past four weeks. The proportion of people seeking additional work was higher in Kathmandu (68 percent). 61 percent expressed their willingness to work more hours if they were paid.

Among those currently unemployed, only 22 percent were taking the initiative to find a job or start a business. 58 percent said that they were engaged in household or family responsibilities (73 percent of those being female respondents), 20 percent were affected by a long-term illness, injury or with a disability, 8 percent each were studying or training or were engaged in farming or fishing to cover household expenses, and the remaining one percent were engaged in unpaid voluntary, community or charity work.

[3] 55 respondents stated they work as incentive workers. UNHCR pays 25 incentive workers through partners. Respondents working as incentive workers mostly stated they work in farms (6 respondents) and private businesses (47 respondents).

A Bhutanese refugee with disabilities produces a traditional muda (stool) at a workshop in Beldangi's refugee settlement, Jhapa, District. The workshop is run by the Bhutanese Refugee Community-Based Organization for Persons with Disabilities (BRAD). ©UNHCR / Roshan Sharma Nepal

Migration of Household Members and Relatives

36 percent of respondents said their household members migrated within Nepal as a coping strategy. 85 percent of respondents reported having relatives who settled abroad, with particularly high rates among respondents in Morang (97 percent) and Jhapa (90 percent). This is linked to the 2007–2016 large-scale group resettlement programme for Bhutanese refugees. Among respondents whose family members were resettled abroad, 86 percent were resettled in the United States of America. 82 percent of the respondents in Nepal said they are in regular contact with their relatives living abroad.

Expectation Related to Livelihood Assistance

Over half of respondents (54 percent) agreed with the statement "*I cannot access livelihood opportunities in Nepal and need assistance finding work*".
Most respondents (69 percent) said they can afford fewer goods and services compared to the same time last year. 28 percent said they can afford the same while a small number (three percent) said they can afford more.

Ownership of Bank Account and ATM/Debit Card

Almost two thirds (61 percent) of respondents have an account in a bank or financial institution. Having an individual account for each family member was much more common in Kathmandu (90 percent) compared to Morang (58 percent) and Jhapa (55 percent). 54 percent said they own personal ATM/debit cards; 5 percent said they used mobile phones to make payments, buy various items, or send and receive money in the past 12 months.

Safety and Security

34 percent of all respondents indicated they felt very safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark, with figures showing 30 percent for men and 37 percent for women.16 percent felt fairly safe (16 percent for men and 15 percent for women) while 23 percent felt a bit unsafe (28 percent for men and 19 percent for women) as did 27 percent who felt very unsafe (26 percent for men and 28 percent for women). Most respondents in Kathmandu (81 percent) and Morang (95 percent) said they felt very safe or fairly safe compared to Jhapa, where only 26 percent felt very safe or fairly safe. There were variances in safety perceptions between age groups. Over half (54 percent) of respondents aged 18–24 said they felt very safe. Respondents aged 50–59 and 60+ were less likely to feel very safe (25 percent and 26 percent, respectively). The age group most likely to feel very unsafe is the 60+ demographic, with 41 percent saying they felt very unsafe.

Most respondents said they know how to help a person who has experienced gender-based violence in accessing safety/security services and medical care (85 percent each). However, a lower percentage of respondents knew how to help survivors of gender-based violence access services related to psycho-social support (55 percent) and legal assistance (57 percent).

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