



Tension in Jordanian Communities:

Rapid Assessment

Jordan
January 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to the increasing tension and unrest in Jordanian communities, Global Communities conducted a rapid assessment in 2 Northern Governorates and 3 Southern Governorates focused on identifying causes and potential solutions. The assessment began with the understanding that the primary complaints of the most vocal groups include the effects of the prolonged economic downturn, a perceived lack of government responsiveness to citizen requests for reform, and an overload of demand for municipal and governorate-level services as Syrian refugees continue to cross the border. Therefore, the assessment is divided into two components: (1) unrest in Jordanian communities, and (2) challenges related to the increasing number of Syrians living in Jordanian communities.

The assessment used a combination of tools including surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews and targeting Jordanians, Syrian refugees, and government officials. Over 400 Jordanians were surveyed door-to-door (330+) and online (70+), and over 200 Syrians were surveyed door-to-door. To further the understanding of the situation and to hear from different perspectives, the assessment team also conducted interviews with governors' office representatives, municipal offices, and national ministry officials.

Key Findings: Unrest in Jordanian Communities

The surveys and focus groups confirmed several key issues in Jordanian communities. Jordanians have little trust in the National Parliament and other government leaders (only about 10% of respondents indicated they were a trusted partner). A majority of Jordanians (59% of respondents) feel that there has been tension in their community in the past two years and some of the primary causes of that tension are unemployment, increasing costs, and corruption (32%, 21% and 19% of respondents respectively). People are generally dissatisfied with government response to their needs and with the level of citizen participation in decisions (only 13% and 7% of respondents respectively indicated satisfaction, with 36% of respondents saying that there is no citizen participation in decisions).

The most commonly cited frustrations and community challenges fall into three categories: economic (including unemployment, poverty and increasing prices), trust in government (in particular related to corruption, *wasta*, and the lack of transparency in recent privatizations), and public services (especially waste management, education, health care, small infrastructure and the lack of coordination among public service providers).

Additionally, interviews with officials at various levels of government have confirmed that there is a lack of positive interactions and trust between citizens and government. The government officials recognize that they are not always representative of the citizens they work with, and that there has been a historic lack of transparency in the process of selecting government representatives, including the governorate and sub-district level advisory councils and municipal leaders (at least in the past several years since municipal elections have been postponed). Government officials also recognize that there are not mechanisms for citizen participation and input in decision-making. At the municipal level, officials also acknowledged that budgets and other resources are being further strained by increasing demand for services (due to increased populations and other factors) and that service delivery is suffering in quality, increasing in cost, and becoming less accessible.

Global Communities' recommendations based on the assessment are to work on citizen participation through three sets of actors:

- First, with **citizens** themselves (specifically including private sector stakeholders) to raise their understanding of the rights *and* responsibilities that come with the type of democracy they have been asking their government for, and to build their capacity to participate in and even lead discussion of their most critical challenges;

- Second, with **CBOs and CSOs** (including business associations) to strengthen their long-term managerial skills and their technical skills for improved service delivery, advocacy and constituent outreach; and
- Third, with **government** actors (targeting the Ministry of Interior, governorate-level agencies, and municipal service provision) to improve their ability for citizen outreach and response, participatory planning, communication, and coordination.

Key Findings: Syrians Living in Jordanian Communities

The surveys and focus groups have also confirmed that the influx of Syrian refugees has created real challenges for Jordanian host communities and Syrian themselves. The rapid increase in population has created an unsustainable burden for public services such as waste disposal, water, electricity, education, and health care. The increase in population has coincided with the continued economic downturn and the decrease in subsidies for staple products in Jordan, causing higher prices for food and rent, and exacerbating high unemployment rates. Both Jordanians and Syrians acknowledge these issues and recognize that the Syrian refugee population has contributed to the challenges and frustrations, however, both groups feel that the relationship between Jordanians and Syrians is positive. Jordanians continue to feel sympathy for the Syrians' situation and are treating Syrians as their guests in Jordan.

Still, Syrians are also feeling some specific frustrations for their situation. They are particularly sensitive to higher prices in Jordan, and are struggling to find jobs – especially ones that pay a fair wage. They have also faced difficulties finding homes at an affordable rent. Many Syrian children have not been able to continue their education in Jordan, or they are having trouble at school. Syrians have stated that there is not consistent or sufficient assistance to meet their needs, and that in some of the Southern governorates of Jordan, Syrians are not receiving assistance. Many Syrians have not registered with UNHCR, due to the difficulty in registration, the lack of perceived value in registration, or fear of problems should they provide personal details to UNHCR. Additionally, there are no services to help refugees adapt to the significant changes in their lives, increasing their vulnerability in the community.

Global Communities recommendations based on the assessment are to focus on immediate and longer-term needs of both Syrians and Jordanians:

- **Improve coordination** among CBOs, NGOs, government and UN agencies working with Syrian refugees.
- **Support public service delivery in Jordanian communities** to meet immediate demands, and to strengthen service providers.
- **Provide assistance to underserved Syrian communities** by empowering CBOs to conduct local needs assessments and deliver necessary aid where it has not yet reached.
- **Encourage local economic development** with support to new and small enterprises that create jobs, increase income, and address unmet demand for goods and services.
- **Provide psychosocial support** to help Syrian refugees adapt to their new situation and reduce vulnerability and victimization within their own community or in Jordan.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two years, Jordan has experienced some extraordinary changes. Jordanians have felt increasing frustration regarding the economic situation, corruption and lack of government response to citizen calls for reform. The “Arab Spring” has also brought a newfound feeling of freedom to express those frustrations, leading to more vocal challenges for government transformation in the form of strikes and protests, as well as complaints and opinions broadcast by traditional and social media. At the same time, significant demographic changes have taken place in Jordanian communities, primarily due to escalating conflict in Syria driving more and more refugees to move to Jordan. Current estimates vary from 300,000 to as high as 750,000 Syrians living in Jordan as of January 2013.

In response to the worsening situation in one of the most stable countries in the region, Global Communities mobilized a team to conduct a rapid assessment of tension and unrest in Jordanian communities, with a particular focus on the Northern border governorates of Ma'raq and Irbid, and the Southern governorates with poverty pockets and more frequent incidences of unrest, Ma'an, Karak and Tafileh. The primary objective of the assessment was to develop a better understanding of the causes and potential solutions to the difficult changes taking place in Jordan, in order to enhance the Global Communities/Jordan Program's ability to provide relevant services to decrease tensions. Based on these assessment findings, Global Communities/Jordan is starting several pilot projects to respond to some of the highest priority needs identified. Additionally, this assessment report is intended to be available as a resource to the humanitarian assistance and development community in Jordan.

METHODOLOGY

The field assessment used a mixed-method approach, including unique surveys for Jordanians and Syrian refugees living in Jordanian communities, complemented by a series of focus groups and interviews with key government stakeholders. The surveys, focus groups and interviews all aimed to capture data in two distinct but related areas: increased tension and unrest in Jordanian communities, and Syrian refugees living in Jordanian communities. In terms of unrest in Jordanian communities, questions were designed to draw out perceived changes in security and tension over the past two years, the causes of tension in Jordanian communities, trusted partners for finding solutions, and government responsiveness to citizens. To improve understanding of the situation for Syrian refugees, questions focused on the relationship between Syrians and Jordanians, the needs of Syrian refugees, and the needs of communities where Syrians are living. Focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and the “Jordanian community” surveys covered both topics, while the “Syrian” surveys only asked questions regarding the situation of Syrians living in Jordanian communities.

Unrest in Jordanian Communities: Door-to-Door Survey Respondents				
Governorate	Total	Male	Female	Youth (18-30)
Ma'raq	67	63	4	0
Irbid	86	31	55	39
Ma'an	60	24	36	20
Tafileh ¹	60	44	14	34
Karak	60	42	18	25
TOTAL	333	204	127	118

Unrest in Jordanian Communities: Online Survey Respondents			
Governorate	Total	Male	Female
Ma'raq	1	0	1
Irbid	4	4	0
Ma'an	2	1	1
Tafileh	1	1	0
Karak	12	6	6
Amman	35	17	18
Balqa	3	1	2
Zarqa	5	2	3
Ajloun	2	2	0
Aqaba	8	1	7
Madaba	2	2	0
TOTAL	75	37	38

¹ Two respondents in Tafileh did not provide their gender

All surveys, focus groups guidelines, and interview guidelines were created in English and translated into Arabic. Five focus groups were held, led by Global Communities facilitators with a total number of participants in excess of 200. The focus group sessions were generally held in community centers or offices of community-based organizations. After focus groups sessions, CBO volunteers were trained on administration of both sets of surveys: those

Syrians Living in Jordanian Communities: Door-to-Door Survey Respondents				
Governorate	Total	Male	Female	Youth (18-30)
Ma'raq ²	50	44	5	17
Irbid	56	42	14	14
Ma'an	38	14	24	9
Tafileh	29	24	5	12
Karak	40	15	25	9
TOTAL	214	140	73	52

for Jordanian community members and those for Syrians living in the same communities. A total of 409 "Jordanian community" surveys were completed door-to-door (334 – 5 governorates) and online (75 – 11 governorates), and 214 "Syrian refugee" surveys were completed door-to-door (5 governorates). Data from the door-to-door surveys was input by a Global Communities partner with oversight from Global Communities/Jordan staff, and the data was analyzed by the Global Communities team. Focus group discussions were recorded by co-facilitators, either Global Communities staff or staff of the CBO hosting the focus group. The results of those discussions were compiled for analysis as well.

FINDINGS

Findings are divided between the results and insights targeting tension in Jordanian communities and those targeting challenges related to Syrians living in Jordanian communities.

Unrest in Jordanian Communities

Demographic Details

Survey enumerators and focus group facilitators collected some basic demographic information to determine the profile of the participants and their households. The door-to-door survey reached a total of 334 Jordanians from Ma'raq, Irbid, Ma'an, Karak and Tafileh, of which 39% of respondents were female. The online survey reached 75 additional Jordanians of which nearly half (46%) stated they were from Amman and just over half (51%) of the 75 were female. Of the total sample of Jordanians, 68% were married, and 54% identified as head of household. The average household size of respondents was just under 6, including an average of approximately 2 children under 18 years of age. The online survey respondents averaged smaller families and fewer children than the door-to-door survey respondents. As many of the questions are about local issues and changes in the community, it is also important to note that approximately two-thirds (67%) of all respondents have lived in their community for more than 5 years.

Conflict and Safety

The surveys and focus groups confirmed that there has been tension in Jordanian Communities in the past two years. 59% of survey respondents said that there has been tension, 45% said that it has been increasing, and 37% said that it has included violence. The primary groups involved in conflict are tribal or family (31%) or youth (29%), with citizen-government conflict being the third most commonly cited (24%). The most commonly cited cause of conflict was unemployment (32%). Increasing costs (21%) and corruption (19%) were also among the more frequent responses.

In general, Jordanians still feel quite safe and secure with over 80% of respondents saying they feel safe in Jordan (81%), in their town (83%), and in their neighborhood (85%), and 92% saying they feel safe in their home. Still, just over half of respondents said they felt less secure in the past two years (51%). For those who felt less secure or unsafe, the top reasons given were demographic changes (26% of respondents), increased violence (24%), increased crime (23%), and protests (23%).

² One respondent in Ma'raq did not provide their gender

There were some regional differences in responses related to conflict and safety. For example, respondents from Tafileh were much more likely to say that there has been tension in their community in the past two years (85%), while Mafraq and Karak residents were significantly less likely (37% and 40% respectively). While there were variations in responses by governorate, respondents from each governorate most often named unemployment as a cause of conflict except Karak (20% of respondents their named traditional conflict as a cause). That said, a higher percentage of respondents from Ma'an than those from other governorates named unemployment (45%), increasing costs (35%), and corruption (30%) as a cause of conflict.

Focus group participants in all regions confirmed that tension and conflict exist in their communities and has been increasing over the past two years. The discussions indicated that conflict between citizens and government, and among tribes have been the two most common manifestations, though in almost every session, there was also mention of increasing violence among students at university. In naming causes of conflict, participants tended to focus on economic issues such as increasing prices and lack of employment opportunities, and social equity and transparency issues such as corruption, wasta (or connections used to gain favors), and a lack of government responsiveness to citizens. There was little regional difference in participant identified causes of conflict.

Public Services, Government Responsiveness, Citizen Participation and Leadership

Survey respondents indicated a general lack of satisfaction with government services and responsiveness. Education was the most appreciated public service with 35% of respondents saying they were satisfied. A majority of respondents were partly satisfied with most services, in particular, social services (56%), water/electricity (53%), health care (52%) and municipal services (50%). Nearly half of respondents (49%) said they were unsatisfied with the level of citizen participation in local decisions, with another 44% partly satisfied (i.e., only 7% stated they were satisfied). Also, 87% of respondents were either partly satisfied or unsatisfied with local government responsiveness to citizen needs.

The assessment survey also asked about citizen participation in the response to community challenges. Respondents indicated that they have most commonly participated in CBO activities (42%), and meetings with community leaders (40%). Meetings with government were the next most common (34%) and improvement projects and protests were the least common (30% each).

In terms of trusted partners for community issues, respondents indicated that they rarely turn to government officials when they notice an issue in their community (13% local government official, 9% national government official, and 8% parliament member) and that they have a lack of trust for government officials (about 11% indicated they fully trust any level of government official, with 48% of respondents answering that they have no trust in parliament members). Respondents indicated they were most likely to turn to tribal leaders (41%) and community leaders (29%) for issues in their community, and not surprisingly, 38% stated that they fully trust tribal leaders. The second most trusted partner for community needs were CBOs with 29% of respondents saying the fully trust and 50% saying they partially trust CBOs.

Additionally, respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of several strategies for reducing tension in their community. The most commonly cited effective strategies were increased citizen participation in decision-making (44%), increased role of CBOs (41%), and increased coordination among government and non-governmental organizations (39%).

Both in focus groups and through surveys, several themes emerged regarding critical community challenges, with surprisingly little difference from region to region. The most common responses fall into three categories:

- Economic, including unemployment, increasing prices and poverty;
- Trust in Government, in particular related to corruption, privatization, and wasta; and
- Public Services, most often waste management, education, health care, and small infrastructure as well as the lack of coordination of services.

Interviews with government officials at various levels echoed the findings of the surveys and focus groups. While governorate-level officials were more careful in selecting their words regarding citizen-government relations, at the municipal level, officials acknowledged a number of challenges. Services have been suffering from increasing populations and decreasing budgets. In particular, waste management has been a significant and visible challenge in urban locations and was often cited. The lack of coordination among government and non-government service providers was also mentioned as a cause of duplication of efforts and waste of resources. The “executive committee,” a governorate-level forum composed of the directors of the governorate offices of national ministries, is meant to improve coordination, but both civil society actors and government officials recognized that it is not always an effective group or effort.

Government officials at various levels, including national, also acknowledged the challenges related to organizing real citizen participation in decision-making and facilitating citizen-driven solutions to community issues. Municipal “representatives” have not been elected in several years as a result of postponed elections waiting for a new municipal election law. The governorate-level advisory council is a group selected by the governor to play a role in outreach, but again, government officials acknowledged that it is not necessarily representative of the citizens of the governorate and is not a trusted community partner to fulfill its role effectively. Additionally, government officials generally recognized that there is a lack of transparency in the selection process for representatives.

Recommendations

Based on the assessment of tension and cohesion in Jordanian communities, Global Communities recommends working to increase citizen participation and empowerment through three target audiences:

- **Citizens** (specifically including private sector stakeholders) – in order to create space for citizens to take a more active, and potentially a lead, role in the transformation to a more responsive government and non-government system for community needs, while maintaining the stability and security that Jordanians value. It will be crucial to raise citizen understanding of both the rights *and* the responsibilities that come with the type of democracy they have been asking for, and to build citizen capacity to participate in and even lead discussion of their most critical challenges. This can be accomplished through training and coaching activities; mobilization of community members and leaders through a transparent system; small and matching grant funds for citizen-prioritized projects that reinforce participation; and creation of mechanisms for continued two-way communication between community members and leaders.
- **CBOs and CSOs** (including business associations) – in order to strengthen managerial skills and technical skills targeting improved service delivery, advocacy and constituent outreach. The majority of CBOs and CSOs lack resources, technical skills and organizational management experience. However, they are a trusted partner in many communities, and an integral part of cost-effective and sustainable services for community members. This work would include training and individualized capacity building on both organizational management functions and constituent-driven projects; competitively awarded matching grant funds for projects that increase community cohesion, mitigate tension, increase tolerance, and encourage coordination; and formation and/or strengthening of CSO support organizations to ensure sustainability of technical resources for continued organizational development.
- **Government** actors (including Ministry of Interior, governorate-level agencies, and municipal service provision managers) – in order to increase government responsiveness to citizens, and to nurture a culture of transparency and accountability in government. In particular, it will be necessary to improve government’s ability for citizen outreach and response, participatory planning, communication, and coordination. This can be encouraged through training and capacity building on good governance, citizen participation, community facilitation, budgeting and financial management, and communication; in-kind provision of tools and technologies that allow for increased outreach, two-way communication, and coordination of services; and creation of mechanisms for continued interaction between government and civil society.

Demographic Details

All of the Jordanians participating in the survey about unrest in their communities were also asked whether there were Syrians living in their community. Those who responded “yes” (75% or a total of 275 respondents) were then asked a series of questions about relations between Syrians and the host community. Of those, 38% of respondents were female, 69% are married, and 57% identified as head of household. The average household size was just under 6 (with a median household size of 6) and the average age of respondents was reported at 38 (with a median age of 38). Additionally, 26 (10%) respondents said they were hosting Syrians in their home.

Syrians living in Jordanian communities were also targeted with a survey that focused on their relationship with Jordanian community members, their plans, and their needs. The survey reached 214 Syrians in Mafraq, Irbid, Ma’an, Karak and Tafileh. While 34% of Syrian respondents were female, the ratio of male and female respondents varied considerably by governorate with 63% of Ma’an and Karak surveys reaching female respondents but only 10% in Mafraq and 17% in Tafileh. Of the 214 Syrians surveyed, 82% were married and 73% identified as head of household. The average household size was just over 5 (with a median of 5), including an average of just over 2 children under 18 years of age. The average age of respondents was 37 with a median of 36, and 29% of respondents were youth (61 respondents provided an age between 18 and 30). The largest portion of respondents came from Homs (47%), followed by Daraa (19%), Damascus (17%), and Aleppo (8%).

Syrian refugees’ living situation

The survey targeting Syrian refugees included a number of questions regarding the Syrians’ current living situation in Jordan: shelter, assistance, education, livelihoods, and services.

Shelter

The Syrian refugees surveyed have been in Jordan an average of 10 months, though approximately 5% of respondents had been in Jordan for only 2 months or less. The vast majority (88%) are renting a home rather than being hosted. Nearly one-third of respondents (30%, or 62 respondents) have moved at least once since arriving in Jordan. Of those who have moved, the primary reason given for moving within Jordan was high or increasing rent (48%), followed by work (30%), lack of space (21%) and lack of services (21%).

Moving to Jordan

Syrian respondents most commonly chose Jordan because it was the nearest country/border (57%), and the safest country (42%). Other reasons cited were friends or relatives living in Jordan (29%), accepting of Syrians (26%), and ability to work in Jordan (9%). Most Syrian respondents (71%) said that they were scheduled to become registered with UNHCR, with many of those not registered explaining that they did not know how (43%). Others complained that they did not have time to go to UNHCR to register, they were afraid to register, the wait for registration was too long, or they saw no reason to register.

Jordan houses significant numbers of ‘unofficial refugees’ that are not registered with either UNHCR or the GOJ. The assessment focused on both official and unofficial refugees with the highest concentration of unofficial refugees surveyed being in the south of Jordan. These unofficial refugees remain off the radar of any formal assistance mechanisms (GOJ, UN, USAID, etc.) and are reliant on the generosity of the host communities in which they reside. Roughly 2/3 (65%) of refugees surveyed in the south did want to officially register with UNHCR or the GOJ for fear that they would be sent to Zaatari camp. Because of this, they choose to remain anonymous and reside in the shadows of Jordanian society reliant on aid coming from Jordanian families and communities. Because of their anonymity, these unofficial refugees reside in extremely vulnerable positions without access to the formal channels of humanitarian assistance being provided.

In general, Syrian refugees stated that they planned to move back to Syria as soon as possible, including if their house is damaged (67%), if the school system is not operating (66%), and if there are no employment opportunities (62%). On average, Syrians felt that their stay in Jordan would last only 13

months (median expected length of stay was only 11 months). In contrast, on average, Jordanians expect Syrians to stay in Jordan for over 3 years, with the longest responses being 10-15 years.

Assistance

Almost three-quarters of respondents (74%) have received assistance since arriving in Jordan. Assistance can come from official channels (via GOJ programs, UN or USAID assistance) or unofficial channels (host communities providing informal support). Assistance has most often been in the form of food (92% of those receiving assistance), cash (60%), and living supplies (56%). Respondents stated that the assistance they've received has come from UN Agencies (62% of those receiving assistance), CBOs (57%), the Government of Jordan (43%), International Organizations (40%), and family and friends (38%). When asked who they have asked for assistance, 14% of respondents said no one. The most common requests for assistance went to UN Agencies (56%) and CBOs (50%).

Education

Many of the Syrian households surveyed had educated members with 21% having a university graduate and 17% having a high school graduate. Only 5% of Syrian households surveyed had an illiterate family member. On average, Syrian households had just under 2 school age children (with a median value of 1), with 61% of households surveyed having at least 1 school aged child. Many school aged children have not continued their education in Jordan: average of less than 1 child per household continuing their education with only 43% of households surveyed sending at least 1 school aged child to continue their education in Jordan.

Livelihoods

Syrian refugees surveyed had worked in a number of professions in Syria, most notably construction and related trades (22%). A number had worked in other professions with distinct skills, such as teacher (6%), mechanic (4%), doctor/medicine (3%), accountant (2%), and lawyer (2%). Others had worked in food services (6%), clothing (5%), or farming (3%). Fewer than half of Syrian survey respondents (41%) said that they are currently employed. Of those currently working, less than half (44%) are in the same field of work as they had been in Syria. The most common type of current employment was casual labor (32% of respondents, equal to 79% of those currently working). Another 7% of respondents (16% of those working) are working in their own business. Only 22% of those surveyed stated that other family members were working in Jordan, with 44% of respondents indicating that neither they nor anyone else in their family were working. The most commonly cited sources of family income were assistance from NGOs/Government (37%) and assistance from the UN (35%), 14% of respondents indicating that they received charity from others and 13% indicating that they receive remittances.

Services

Syrian refugees are using local public services in Jordan. Survey respondents cited use of municipal services (75%), health services (68%), transportation (54%), and education (47%). In general, respondents indicated satisfaction with services: 51% of respondents stated that they are satisfied with municipal services and an additional 31% are partly satisfied (total of 82% satisfied or partly satisfied). For health services, 81% were either satisfied or partly satisfied; for education, 79%; for transportation 70%.

Syrian refugees have also participated in activities in their community. Survey respondents have participated in CBO activities (19% of respondents), religious activities (9%), and local improvement projects (6%), as well as a handful of events specifically about the situation in Syria.

Relationship between Jordanians and Syrians

The surveys and focus groups confirmed that Jordanians are feeling the impact of Syrian refugees in their community. However there is surprisingly little tension between the two groups.

Jordanians were much more likely to acknowledge the disadvantages to having Syrians in their community than the advantages. Jordanians most often acknowledged as advantages increased income for landlords (47% of Jordanian respondents), increased income for local shops (36%), and skilled labor added to local labor force (33%). Jordanians most commonly agreed that disadvantages of Syrians in

their community included increased pressure on government services such as waste collection and water supply (71% of Jordanian respondents), increased competition for jobs (66%), higher rent (64%), and sharing education and health resources (52%).

Approximately one quarter (26%) of Jordanian respondents stated that their family has felt tension with Syrians, with the primary causes named as social differences (14%), misunderstandings (12%), and increasing costs (11%). Only 13% of Syrian respondents stated that their family has experienced tension with Jordanians, with the primary causes named as misunderstandings (6%) and shared resources (3%).

Each group was also asked how often they felt that Jordanians were taking advantage of Syrians in various ways. The majority of Syrian respondents felt that Jordanians were taking advantage of Syrians by often or very often charging high rent (83%) and often or very often paying low wages (77%). A majority of Syrians also felt that Jordanians were rarely or never taking advantage of Syrians by marrying young girls (73%). Jordanians generally agreed that Syrians were often or very often charged high rents (72%) and paid low wages (68%). However, Jordanians were less certain about how often young Syrian girls are taken advantage of (46% responded often or very often, 35% rarely or never).

Jordanians were also asked to select from several choices how they felt about the Syrians in their community, and Syrians were asked how they think Jordanians would respond to the same question. A majority of both groups felt that Jordanians have sympathy for the Syrian situation with relatively few answering that they do not want to share services or compete for jobs:

Choices:	Jordanian Response	Syrian Prediction of Jordanian Response
Syrians are guests of Jordanians and welcome in Jordan	47%	49%
Jordanians feel sympathy for the Syrian situation	70%	57%
Jordanians do not want to compete for jobs	25%	17%
Jordanians do not want to share services	16%	18%
Jordanians feel Syrians are a burden to the community	23%	28%
Jordanians prefer that Syrians live in special camps	20%	12%

Interestingly, Jordanians more often felt sympathy for the situation than Syrians expected them to (70% vs. 57%), and Jordanians were less likely to feel that Syrians are a burden on the community than Syrians predicted (23% vs. 28%). In terms of living in special camps, a large majority of Syrians specifically responded that they prefer to live in Jordanian communities than in together with other Syrians in camps (71%).

When asked to rate their relationship with Jordanians overall, 51% of Syrian survey respondents felt it was positive, 46% felt it was neutral, and only 3% felt it was negative.

Focus group participants confirmed that there are frustrations and challenges to large population increases due to Syrian refugees, but that there is relatively little tension between Syrians and Jordanians.

Jordanian focus group participants echoed that, with the influx of Syrians, rental and food prices have increased, there is increased competition for jobs, and there is increased pressure on services such as waste disposal, water, electricity, education and health. Still, Jordanian focus group participants also said that Syrians are welcome in Jordan and that relationships have been positive. The culture, language and traditions are generally the same which eases tension, however, some Jordanians noted several small cultural differences that may cause problems in the future: in particular, Syrians tend to stay awake later at night than Jordanians, and tend to congregate in public spaces – but without open spaces in many Jordanian communities, Syrians have been gathering in the street. In some of the poorer Jordanian communities (such as Mafraq and Tafileh), several Jordanians felt that it is unfair for Syrians to receive

financial and food aid when the Jordanians living next to them have as few or fewer resources for themselves.

Syrian focus group participants tended to agree that the relationship between Syrians and Jordanians has been positive overall. They did note that there has been some violence against Syrian children at schools. Syrian refugees also expressed several complaints:

- Expenses are very high in Jordan.
- It has been challenging to send children to school in Jordan due to the high cost of transportation and that Jordanian schools are difficult for Syrian students.
- There has been some corruption or favoritism in the distribution of assistance to refugees.
- There are very few job opportunities for Syrians and many of the jobs that Syrians can find pay very little.

The top needs cited by Syrians in focus groups were:

- Income is the top priority and most Syrians are currently reliant on charity alone.
- Rent assistance is another top priority need for a great number of refugees.
- There are areas of Jordan where Syrian refugees have received almost no assistance – such as in Tafileh.
- Assistance has been inconsistent and insufficient for basic needs (in particular, shelter and food).
- There is a lack of attention to psychosocial needs, risks, and coping strategies for refugees.

Recommendations

Based on the assessment of the situation for Syrian refugees living in Jordanian communities, Global Communities recommends several strategies for targeting assistance to specific needs of the community:

- **Extension of Assistance to Underserved Communities and Unregistered Refugees** – some governorates of Jordan, in particular in the South, have sufficient refugees to merit assistance, but have been largely ignored by assistance providers to date due to insufficient information on the number of refugees and their needs. *The fact that many refugees in Jordan remain unregistered means that this population group is significantly underserved with any form of humanitarian assistance.* Global Communities recommends empowering CBOs in these communities to identify needs and to work with donors and partner organizations in other parts of the country to address refugees' most urgent needs.
- **Economic Opportunity** – Syrians and Jordanians are both struggling with the increased competition for fewer open jobs. However, with the increased population in many Jordanian communities, there is an opportunity for entrepreneurs to meet the increased demand for goods and services with new businesses. Projects to support new and small enterprises to address unmet demand can have a significant impact on income and jobs, as well as reducing frustration of residents that have been lacking access to goods and services. Some of these businesses will support the public service needs mentioned above, for example, providing waste disposal or transportation. *Most importantly, by creating livelihoods opportunities targeting host communities and Syrian refugees, purchasing power can be increased thereby reducing the reliance of refugee populations on handouts from their Jordan hosts.*
- **Short- and Long-term Support to Public Services in Jordanian Communities** – the rapid influx of Syrian refugees to Jordanian communities has created serious challenges to public service delivery. Waste disposal, education and health have been identified as services with particular need to adapt. Short-term assistance to service providers will help to alleviate the immediate need in communities, and strengthening of those providers will lead to longer-term resilience to future shocks (increases, decreases or demographic changes in population).
- **Improved Coordination** – there are a number of CBOs, NGOs, government and UN agencies that are all working with Syrian refugees. Increased and improved coordination will help ensure that assistance is more consistent and meets the needs of Syrians.
- **Psychosocial Support** – Syrian refugees are experiencing the challenges of relocation for the first time. Many of them are struggling to adapt to their new situation and have become more vulnerable to victimization within their own community or in Jordan. CBOs or other outreach

organizations/agencies in Jordan must be trained to identify vulnerable refugees and to provide psychosocial support for Syrians to develop strategies for coping with their situation.

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