



MULTI-SECTOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF HOSTING COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

ASSESSMENT REPORT

MARCH 2015



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Before any attempt at analysis is made, it is important to briefly take note of context. Territories under the control of the Kurdistan Regional Government have absorbed multiple bouts of large scale, protracted external and internal displacement. The latest, and most severe round, was internal and although caused by the spillover of conflict from neighbouring Syria, displaced an estimated 1.6 million individuals. An estimated 1.2 million of these individuals now reside in the KRI, scattered across areas already hosting significant numbers of Syrian refugees. Since then, no comprehensive attempt has been made to assess or even establish a baseline to document and gauge the effects of these crises on the hosting communities of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

This report presents findings and analysis across the sectors of demographics, livelihoods, food security, education, health as well as social cohesion for hosting communities across 22 districts of the KRI. Key findings from the assessment include, but are by no means limited to, the following:

- **Demographics:** Minors under the age of 18 constitute 65% of all individuals, whilst minors under the age of 12 account for a third (30%) of the host community population, thus indicating a high rate of dependency and highlighting a very young population. The proportion of dependents relative to the economically active is highest in Dahuk, in particular the KRG-administered districts of Ninewa. Nearly 5% of households were female-headed, reaching 6% in KRG-administered Diyala.
- **Livelihoods:** Over 20% of households relied on the public sector as their primary source of livelihood, whilst 16% relied on the public security sector for an income. This means that the public sector (as measured through civil service and security agency employment) accounts for over a third (36%) of primary livelihood sources across the KRI. This is followed by agriculture, which accounted for the primary livelihoods of 20% of households; the proportion engaged in agriculture was highest in Sulaymaniyah governorate (where 25% derived their income from it) and lowest in Erbil where less than 10% did. Incomes were highest in Erbil (over 1000 USD) and lowest in Sulaymaniyah (600 USD); the opposite is true for debt loads. Although child labour rates are lower across the KRI (an estimated 4%), they reach a high of 10% in Sulaymaniyah and 27% in Khanaqin district of Diyala governorate.
- **Food Security:** Food insecurity was not found to be prevalent at all, with less than 1% of households falling below the acceptable threshold for food consumption. Over 60% of households relied on store or market bought food as a primary food source, whilst nearly a third (32%) relied on government assistance. The rate of dependence on government assistance was highest in Sulaymaniyah, where 45% relied on the government to source food. That said, where dependence was greatest, food consumption patterns and nutritional intake were also lowest; residents of Sulaymaniyah have, on average, a 15 point lower Food Consumption Score than other parts of the KRI, indicating widespread, entrenched but likely moderate food access issues relative to the rest of the KRI.
- **Education:** Attendance rates in formal education are, at 93%, relatively high for all school-aged children. Rates of attendance were highest in Dahuk (despite the comparatively higher caseload of displaced populations) and lowest in Sulaymaniyah governorate, reaching a low of 75% in Khanaqin district. Sulaymaniyah also hosted the highest proportion of school-aged children attending triple-shifted schools, suggesting a deficit of education infrastructure across the governorate as a whole
- **Health:** Immunisation rates for polio and measles for at-risk minors aged 0-59 months were relatively high, but did vary considerably by district of residence. Rates of immunisation against polio stood at an estimated 82% across the KRI, reaching a low of 74% in Erbil and a high of 92% in Dahuk. The same pattern held for measles, albeit on a smaller scale; immunisation rates stood at 97% across the KRI, reaching a high of 100% in Dahuk and a low of 92% in Erbil, indicating inequalities in vaccination service coverage. Over a fifth (23%) of

households were found to host pregnant and/or lactating women, making access to reproductive care essential. Whilst access to antenatal services was generally quite high (standing at nearly 90% of all pregnant women), access to postnatal care was much lower and was reportedly accessed by 73% of lactating women. Antenatal care access rates were generally much higher in Erbil (100% of women) and Sulaymaniyah (91% of women), but approximately 15-20 percentage points lower in Dahuk, indicating a service coverage gap in this governorate.

- **Social Cohesion:** Perceptions of hospitality towards displaced populations were generally favourable or neutral across the KRI as a whole. Over 60% of households held neutral views towards displaced sub-populations; interestingly, the proportion of households which felt that hospitality levels had decreased was not highest in areas hosting large numbers of displaced refugees and IDPs. In fact, the opposite is true, with perceived hospitality levels highest in Dahuk and lowest in Sulaymaniyah governorate. Conversely, perceived costs of basic needs followed a predictable trend; where the concentration of displaced individuals is highest (i.e. Dahuk and Ninewa governorates), the perception that the prices of basic needs have increased was also highest. While hospitality levels and inter-group cohesion are not reported to have declined significantly as a result of both displacement crises, perceived costs and increased labour market competition could become fault lines for future tensions. Generally, where there is a greater caseload of displaced persons, perceptions of increased competition over resources are also greater.

With mounting pressure on services, ever increasing resource scarcity and an institutional shift to a longer term approach fast emerging through the Humanitarian Response Framework, it is imperative that a coherent tool for vulnerability analysis is developed. Whilst inter-group cohesion – understood from the vantage point of hosting communities – does not appear to be under a great strain at present, this should be considered as a fortuitous state of affairs that could change significantly as long-term displacement exerts greater upward pressure on demand for services and competition for resources. With labour market saturation, the risk of deflation in real incomes and inflation of housing costs for particularly at-risk segments of the population, it is vital that humanitarian actors develop a clear and consistent understanding of the risks, constraints and above all, opportunities that the current status quo offers.

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List of Acronyms

FCS	Food Consumption Score
Gol	Government of Iraq
HCNA	Host Community Needs Assessment
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization of Migration
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
MCNA	Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment
MSNA	Multi-Sector Needs Assessment

PDS	Public Distribution System
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

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About REACH Initiative

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH was created in 2010 to facilitate the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted in support to and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information about REACH and to access our information products, please visit: www.reach-initiative.org. You can also write to us at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us @REACH_info

INTRODUCTION

REACH Initiative (REACH) has been actively supporting information management efforts undertaken by humanitarian actors in Iraq since September 2012 and has, at times, been requested to conduct large-scale multi-sector assessments to aid the planning effort. To date, no such assessment has been done to establish a baseline for the KRI's hosting communities and in the aftermath of the IDP crisis and the continued Syrian refugee crisis, such an exercise becomes all the more imperative.

With mounting pressure on employment and incomes, natural resources and rent, there has been a concerted effort to establish parallel structures and services to manage the needs of displaced groups in formal refugee and IDP camps. Ultimately, however, camps cannot house the totality of those displaced within the confines of the KRI and the additional demand that they generate for natural resources and services will have to eventually be met in non-camp settings. Indeed, the majority of the caseload of both displacement crises reside in non-camp settings, with 81% of IDP households¹ and at least 69% of refugee households²³ in the KRI living in non-camp settings. With these figures in mind, there will continue to be an impact of displacement on the hosting community population in the long term, and while humanitarian efforts continue to be focused on the displaced populations themselves, attention must be paid to the hosting communities and their changing needs within this context.

However, the long-term effects of these on the hosting community sub-population have yet to be established or even observed, even as the combined effects of the displacement crises continue to heighten vulnerability and risk across all groups. Seeing as no comprehensive, comparable dataset exists, the findings presented in this report should not be interpreted as an impact evaluation of the displacement crises, but rather as a baseline in itself.

Although hosting communities are socioeconomically dominant and have not had livelihoods disrupted by conflict directly, particular sub-groups and regions within the hosting community remain more at-risk or vulnerable than others, placing vulnerable sub-groups within the host community at greater risk of displacement-driven pressure on livelihoods. These are generally low skilled labourers and those engaged in small business and entrepreneurship, segments of the labour market exposed to more competition from displaced groups. As they are progressively substituted by or competed with internally displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees in segments of the labour market where host communities traditionally dominate, their abilities to service their own needs will likely diminish, with negative consequences across all other welfare outcomes and indicators. This phenomenon is already embryonic and likely growing in sectors such as food security and livelihoods, where incomes are key to self-sufficiency.

In order to provide an overview of the situation of host communities in the KRI, the first part of the report provides a detailed overview of the methodological approach designed and used by REACH for this assessment, including the challenges and limitations faced over the course of the project. The second part of the report outlines sector specific assessment findings on demographics, livelihoods, food security education and health across 22 districts of the KRI, northern Ninewa and northern Diyala.

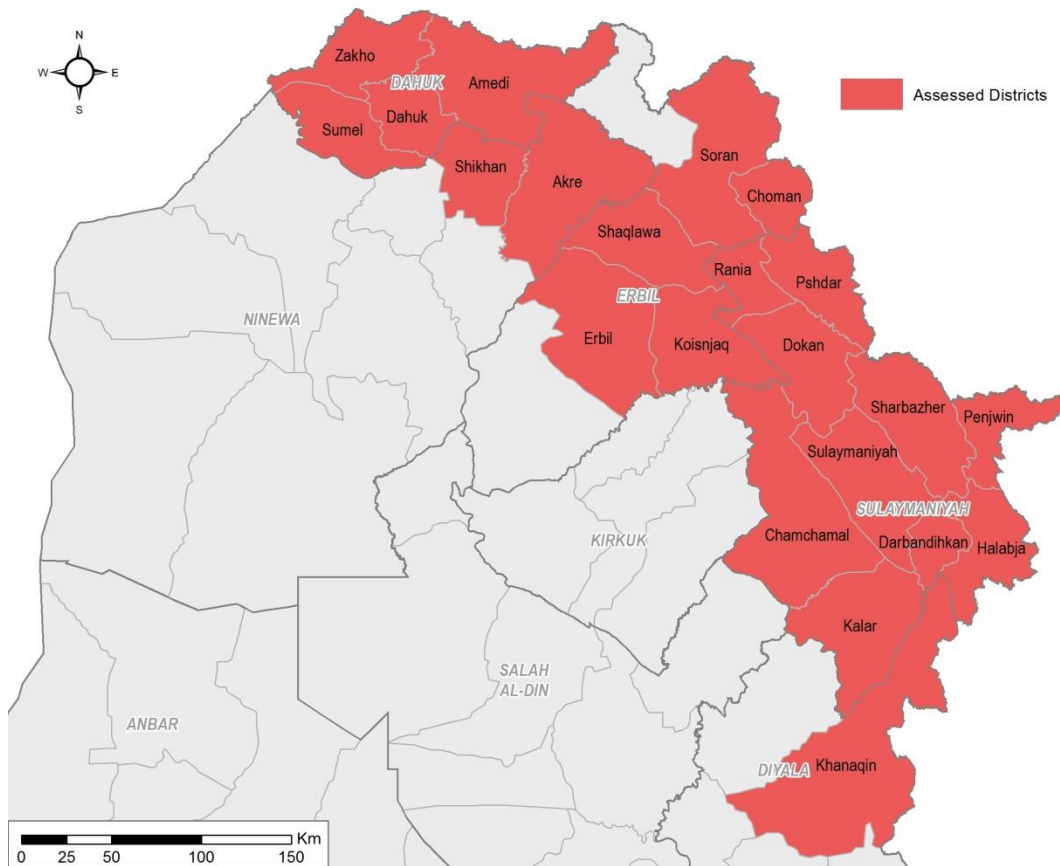
¹ International Organization for Migration (IOM), Displacement Tracking Matrix, Round 18: April 2015

² United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Information Kit – Syrian Refugees in Iraq, April 2015

³ Statistics from the UNHCR information kit are derived from UNHCR registration figures, registration rates are higher in camp than non-camp settings, and in some cases refugees registered in camps reside outside in the host community. As a result 69% of Syrian refugees registered being in non-camp settings under-represents the total non-camp population.

METHODOLOGY

Map 1: Districts Assessed in the Host Community Needs Assessment



Sampling

Owing to a lack of up-to-date census figures, the sampling frame for this assessment was designed assuming an infinite statistical population (>100,000) to yield statistically significant findings at both district and governorate level. Probability sampling was used, meaning that findings are representative to a **95% confidence interval and a 10% margin of error at district level, and 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error at governorate level**. Due to the lack of credible population figures, sample sizes could not be weighted to reflect the uneven distributions of populations across the assessed governorates⁴, meaning that comparative analyses are significant at district level only, whilst findings and comparisons at governorate level remain indicative.

Data collection

Data collection was planned and conducted in two phases. The first phase (December 2014 – January 2015) involved gathering input from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), sector partners and implementing agencies on the proposed list of indicators, whilst ensuring comparability with the Syrian refugee MSNA (in both camps and non-camps) as well as the IDP MCNA. This was done with a view to compiling three comprehensive, standardized datasets to facilitate comparisons between all three sub-populations, IDP, refugee and host-community, residing within the KRI.

⁴ Please see Table 1 below for the district and governorate-level sampling frames.

Once the proposed list of indicators was finalized and approved by sector leads and partners, phase two (January – February 2015) – the data collection phase – was initiated. Here, mixed-sex teams of REACH enumerators were trained in the questionnaire and in probabilistic sampling technique across all four REACH bases. The entirety of data collection was done using ODK mobile data collection platform using smart-phone and GPS-enabled technology to reduce the incidence of inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the data collection, cleaning and analysis processes, whilst also enabling the geo-referencing of all collected data.

Each household was requested to answer a comprehensive, multi-sectoral survey designed to allow REACH to develop a dataset on the welfare, needs and vulnerabilities affecting host community households and to inform any common response strategies. For the purpose of this assessment, a household was defined as a set of individuals or families sharing a corresponding set of shelters or a compound. Where appropriate, this was done on a self-defined basis⁵. No individual household or household identifiers were collected; this approach ensured households could provide information in confidence, thereby reducing respondent bias and mitigating any potential protection concerns which may arise as a result.

In total 2297 household-level surveys were conducted in 20 districts of the KRI. Al-Shikhan and Akre districts of KRG administered Ninewa were also included. Each district was sampled at a 95% level of confidence, with a 10% margin of error. Due to access issues at the start of data collection, Akre and Bardarash were sampled as separate districts.⁶ The total breakdown of samples is as follows:

Table 1: Sample size per district

Governorate	District	Sample
Dahuk	Amedi	101
	Dahuk	102
	Sumel	97
	Zakho	99
Erbil	Choman	100
	Erbil	114
	Koisanjaq	100
	Shaqlawā	90
	Soran	103
Ninewa	Akre	96
	Al Shikhan	100
	Bardarash	100
Sulaymaniyah	Chamchamal	95
	Darbandikhan	100
	Dokan	100
	Halabja	100
	Kalar	100
	Khanaqin	100
	Penjwin	100
	Pshdar	100
	Rania	100
	Sharbazher	100
	Sulaymaniyah	100

⁵ This means that where enumerators were unclear, heads of households were requested to delineate household boundaries themselves to ensure that no overlaps occurred during data collection.

⁶ Akre district of Ninewa is functionally administered by the KRG as a part of Dahuk governorate. KRG functionally divides the district into two districts, the north and west being Akre, with Bardarash to the south and east. The REACH Initiative's reflection of this administrative division in the sample does not constitute endorsement.

Challenges and Limitations

REACH faced no significant challenges during data collection or analysis. The only, but somewhat minor, challenge worth highlighting was the non-response rate for certain indicators which hosting community households felt were inappropriate to divulge. These included household incomes, coping strategies and exclusive breastfeeding rates, for instance, but it is important to note that less than 2% of households refused to answer all questions.

The only limitation to report is the issue of verification of the veracity of responses to certain questions. One example is that of vaccination rates; given the limited knowledge that some households possess regarding health issues, as well as poor record-keeping, it is difficult to verify whether at-risk minors aged 0-59 months had truly received polio and/or measles vaccinations, for example. This also holds true for questions with longer recall periods, including those attempting to gauge fuel or water scarcity over the course of 30 days prior to the survey and waiting times at public service delivery points over the course of 2012, prior to both rounds of external and internal displacement crises. As such, further research or complementary secondary data is recommended.

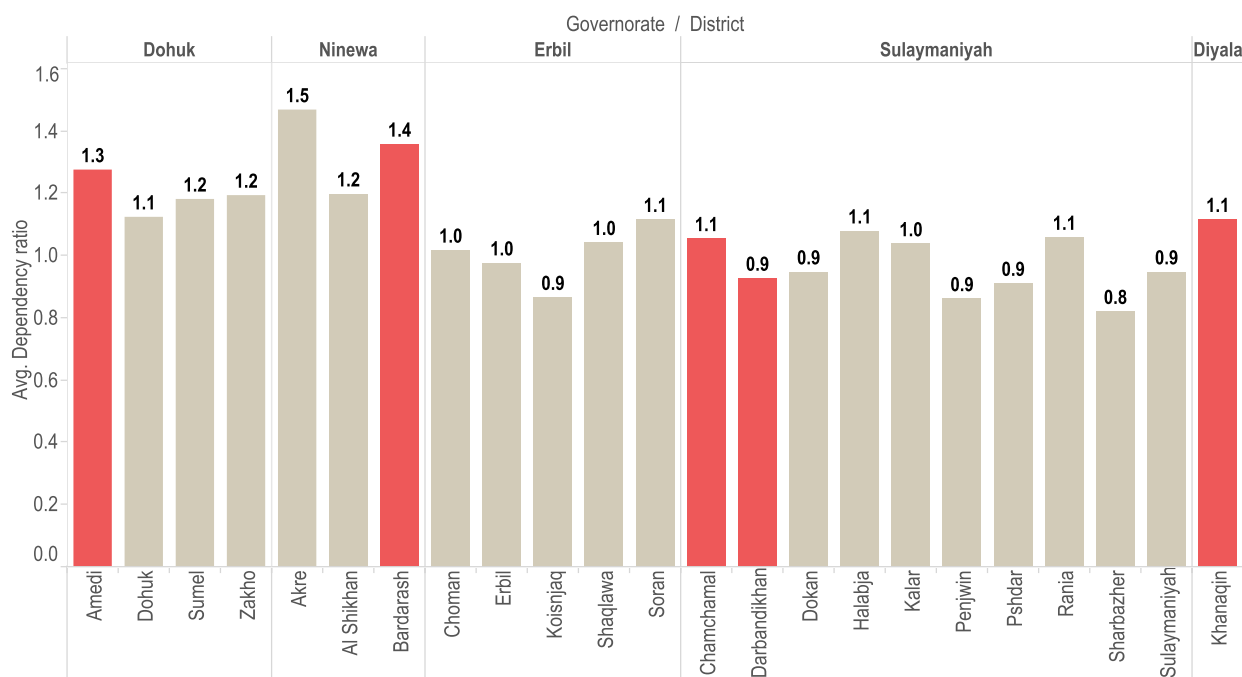
KEY FINDINGS

Demographic profiling

No startling or anomalous demographic trends can be gleaned from the data. Although the hosting community population is young, households are generally large (averaging 6 individuals per household) and, on average, host more dependents than economically active individuals, this is largely in line with demographic trends across the wider Middle East and North Africa region. Combined, minors under the age of 18 and senior persons over the age of 60⁷ constitute nearly half (48%) of all individuals within this sub-population of the KRI. Disaggregated further, minors account for 43% of the total hosting community population. This indicates that the rate of dependency in the KRI is similar to regional norms.

The only significant finding is one which defies commonly held assumptions regarding the relationship between income, wealth and the rate of dependency established in other parts of the (mostly developing) world. The general consensus in academia, policy and practice is that where incomes and wealth are lower, the rate of dependency – particularly for minors – is higher, yielding young populations and larger households. That said, the opposite appears to be true in some parts of the KRI.

Figure 1: Average dependency ratio by district



For instance, there are, at times, significant variations in average dependency ratios⁸ across districts which appear to be determined by livelihoods outcomes and other socioeconomic attributes unique to each governorate. Dependency ratios are generally highest in Dahuk and KRG-administered Ninewa – reaching a high of 1.5 in Akre district – and lowest in Sulaymaniyah. In Sulaymaniyah, where incomes are lowest of any governorate of the KRI, the rate of dependency is lower and households are, on average, much smaller than elsewhere. REACH believes

⁷ Both demographic populations are generally assumed to be economically dependent sub-groups within a given household or statistical population.

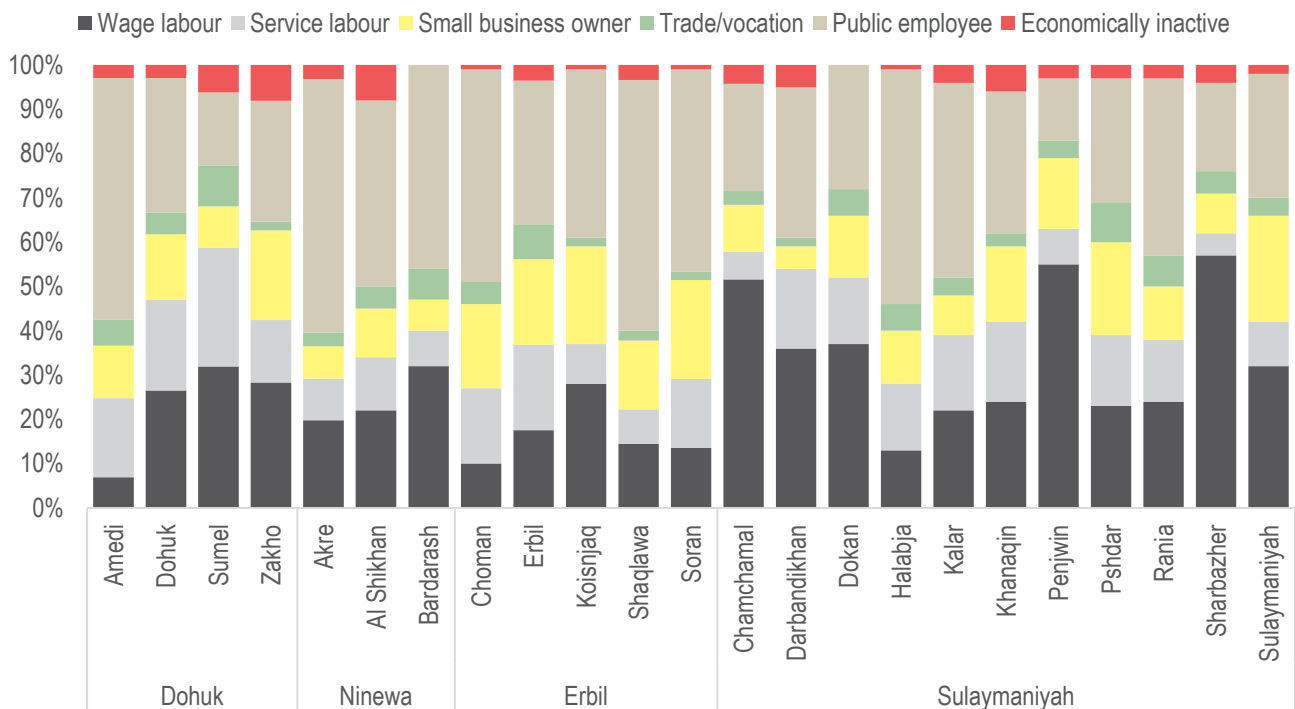
⁸ In economics and demography, the dependency ratio is an age-population ratio of those typically not in the labor force (the dependent part) and those typically in the labor force (the productive part). It is used to measure the pressure on productive population. The dependency ratio for this particular assessment was modeled adapted from the OECD standard by defining economically inactive as individuals as those between 0–1700 years and those over 60 years of age. It was calculated by dividing the total number of dependents by the total number of potentially economically active individuals in each household.

that this should be construed as a coping behaviour; where incomes are lower, households resort to limiting the number of dependents each economically active individual supports, thus decreasing pressure on the household as a whole.

Livelihoods

Generally, households tend to engage in livelihood activities which are naturally grouped at two loci of the labour market; the low skilled, manual and service labour sector and the public sector, either as civil servants or public security officials. The former – which includes agricultural waged labour, skilled wage labour and low skill service labour – sustains nearly a third (31%) of all households, whilst the public sector accounts for the primary livelihood activities of an estimated 37% of hosting community households. **Conversely, only 3% of households were reported to be economically inactive, which may be explained by the high rate of absorption into the public sector relative to the rest of the economy.** Skilled service labour was not found to be prevalent and accounted for an estimated 10% of primary livelihood activities, although there is a clear divergence in the rate of access to this livelihood source between districts.

Figure 2: Proportion (%) of households by primary source of livelihood

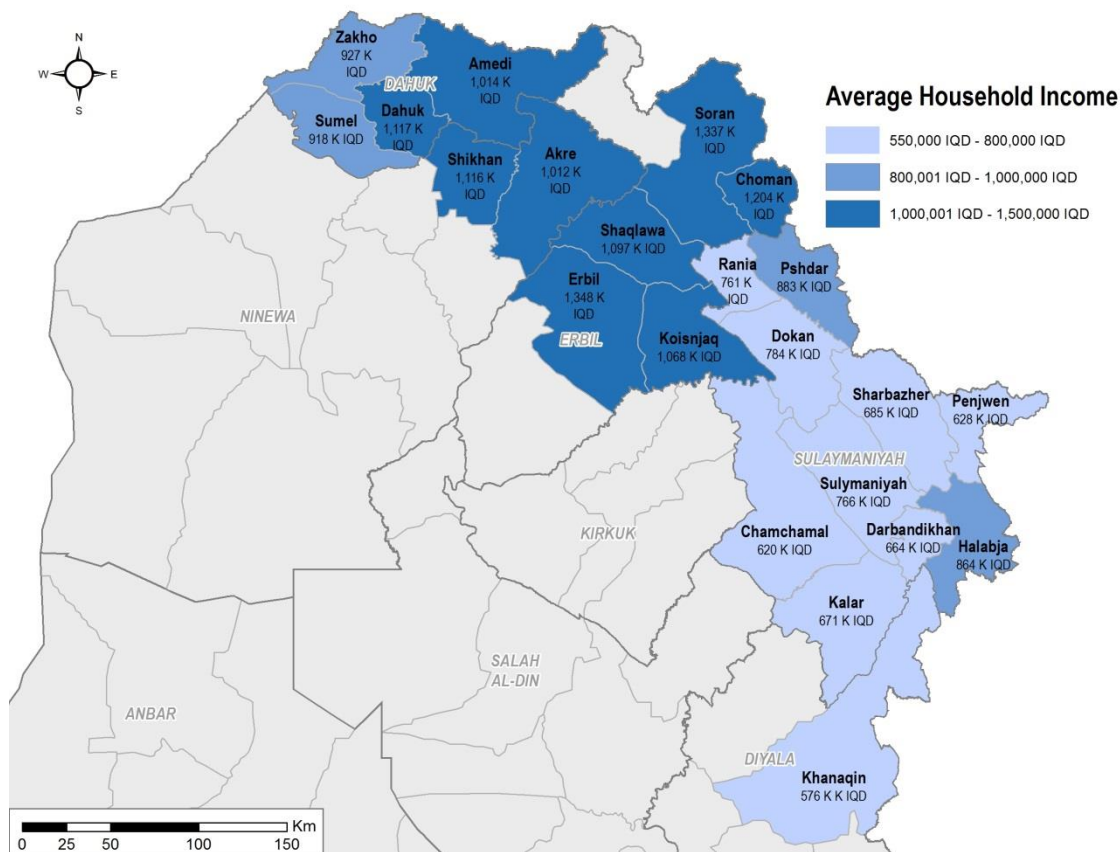


Business ownership – a proxy for private sector activity – accounted for 15% of livelihood activities, less than half of the proportion supported by the public sector. Private enterprise follows no clear pattern and in fact runs against the trend of urban agglomeration commonly observed in other parts of the world. Though provincial capitals do, in general, host sizeable proportions of households engaged in private enterprise, outliers persist. For instance, the rural district of Zakho displays a higher rate of private economic activity than Dahuk district, the governorate's capital. The same holds true for the districts of Soran and Koisnjaq, both of which host higher proportions of households engaged in private enterprise than Erbil. Unknown and unobserved variables such as stricter regulations, higher capital requirements and higher degrees of competition likely limit private sector activity, although at present, these are beyond the scope of this assessment.

Households engaged in agricultural waged labour are clustered in predominantly rural districts outside of governorate capitals. At an estimated 20% or more, the proportion of households engaged in this form of livelihood activity is consistent across essentially all governorates except Erbil, where approximately 10% were active in the agricultural labour sector but where a fifth (20%) were engaged in other types of private sector activity, particularly business ownership. Host to the highest proportion of the KRI's population, at 25%, Sulaymaniyah governorate is also host to the highest proportion of households engaged in agricultural waged labour. A heavy reliance on this form of livelihood can be noted in Chamchamal, Penjwin and Sharbazher districts, where upwards of 40% of households were engaged in agricultural labour for sustenance.

Above all, this illustrates a heavy dependence on agriculture as a source of income for the KRI as a whole, but is also indicative of an unbalanced economy and segmented labour market. Private sector activity, including industrial and service enterprises, is heavily concentrated in the regional capital of Erbil, whilst the primary and public sectors combined absorb over 70% of the remainder of economic activity at household level.

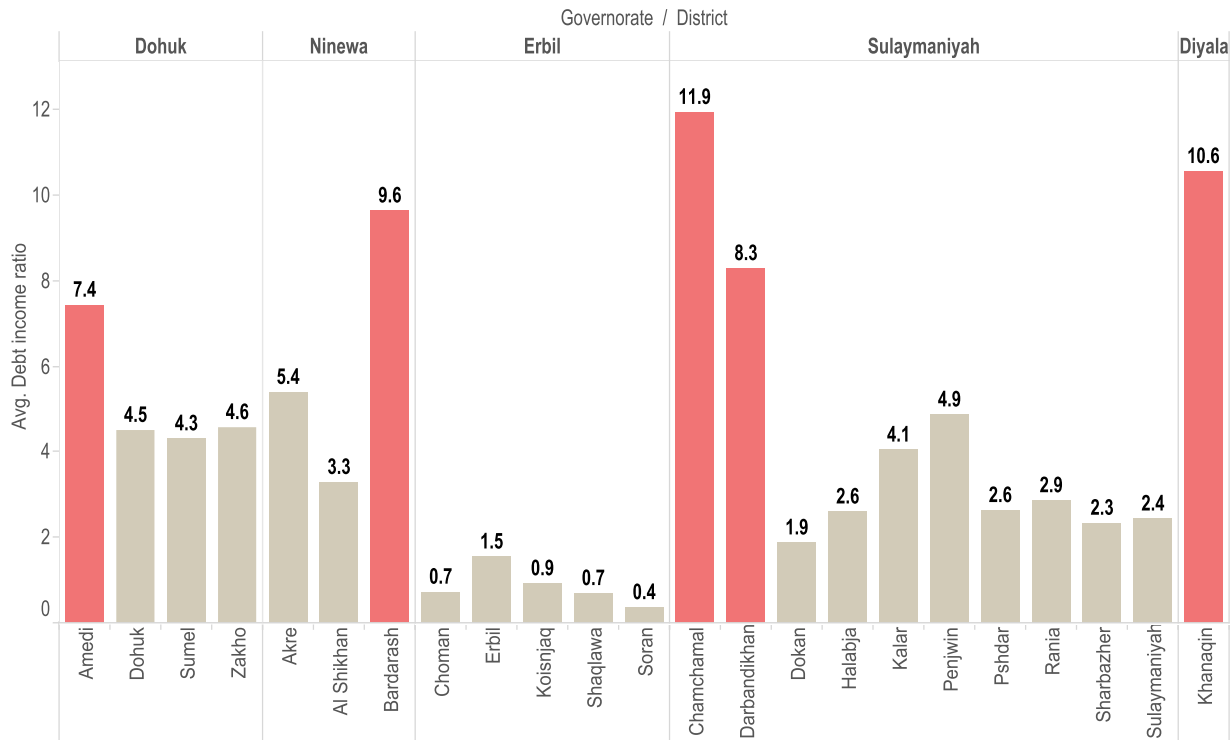
Map 2: Average Household Income



While income inequalities are prevalent within the KRI, they are primarily linked to geographic location, rather than other potential factors such as socio-economic status. Residence in a particular governorate and district appear to determine incomes more so than skills, with minor (and not unexpected) variation noted once findings are disaggregated by livelihood activities. The average monthly incomes for households with primary livelihoods of agricultural waged labour (544 USD) and low-skilled service labour (519 USD) are lower than other households, with those households with skilled service labour (976 USD per month) as their primary income source earning more on average than other livelihoods types. As is to be expected, incomes are highest in Erbil governorate (an average of 1012 USD) and lowest in Sulaymaniyah governorate (an average of 606 USD, or nearly half of the figure for Erbil). District level findings reveal even more striking inequalities in that ostensibly all of the lowest average incomes in the KRI are clustered within the Sulaymaniyah and KRG-administered Diyala districts. Khanaqin district,

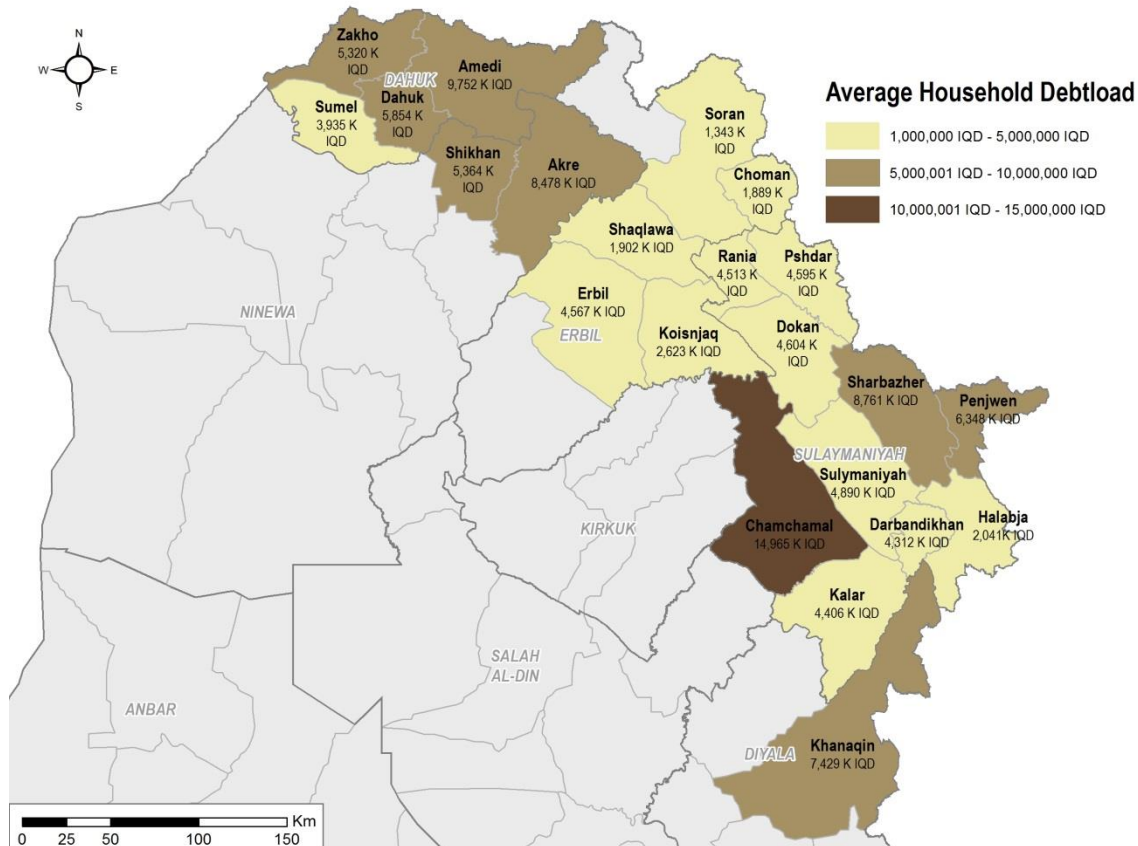
where average incomes are approximately 476 (USD), is poorest. Darbandikhan and Chamchamal perform slightly better, with average incomes at 480 USD and 517 USD, respectively. Collectively, these represent the poorest districts of the KRI.

Figure 3: Average debt-income ratios by district



Average debt-load and debt-income ratios – a measure of aggregate debt relative to total monthly incomes – suggest a heavy, long-term debt burden for hosting community households. Again, clear spatial inequalities can be observed. Geographic differences in debt accumulation generally mirror the trends in income levels outlined above. Overall, where incomes are higher the propensity to resort to debt-fuelled consumption appears to be lower and vice versa. Households residing in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah governorates illustrate this trend well. Generally, households tend to accumulate debt when income-expenditure gaps – or where incomes are simply inadequate to service aggregate household needs – cannot be bridged by any other means.

Map 3: Average debt levels



That said, the burden of debt is highest in Chamchamal in both relative and absolute terms. With the third lowest average incomes (517 USD) and the second highest average debt load (5,120 USD), Chamchamal emerges as one of the poorest and most vulnerable districts of the KRI. The same holds true for Khanaqin (which displays similar levels of aggregate debt relative to total incomes), Darbandikhan and Bardarash. At governorate level, however, debt-income ratios are highest in Dahuk and KRG-administered Ninewa, averaging at 5.2 and 6.1, respectively. Much as is the case with agricultural labour, for instance, households residing across these two governorates demonstrate a substantial reliance on debt to supplement incomes which cannot service needs. In fact, the heavy reliance on agriculture and other forms of manual labour, coupled with higher numbers of dependents, may well increase the propensity of households to borrow.

Table 2: Linear regression model for household debt loads; negative effects highlighted in red

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
district_chamchamal	3515.941	1239.686	.079	2.836	.005
district_amed	3744.055	1203.893	.087	3.110	.002
district_bardarash	4312.567	1219.575	.099	3.536	.000
agricultural_waged_labour	1348.847	641.270	.010	.388	.006
trade_vocation	2646.178	937.340	.064	2.823	.005

To quantify the effects of the variables explored thus far in the analysis on aggregate household debt, a linear regression model was fitted for districts of residence and livelihood types⁹. Variables that were indicated as insignificant were removed stepwise to obtain a model where all remaining variables were statistically significant at the 6% level or more, enabling us to draw the following conclusions.

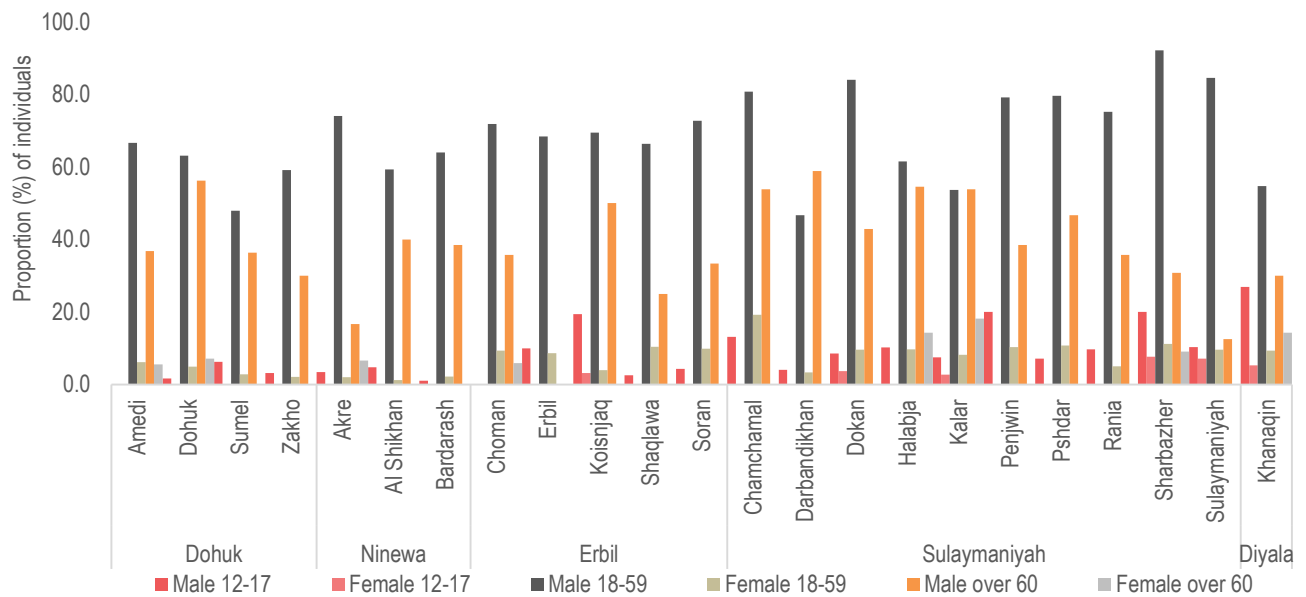
The sex of head of household and most other professions and districts of residence were found to have no significant effect on debt burdens. Although residing in Khanaqin district was found to have a net negative effect on debt held by households, increasing it by 2,300 USD, findings were significant only at the 10% level and were thus excluded from the model, despite being statistically robust.¹⁰

That said, residing in Chamchamal increased debt by 3,515 USD, whilst residence in Bardarash or Amedi was found to increase aggregate debt loads by 4,312 USD and 3,744 USD, respectively. This reinforces the hypothesis posited above that the propensity to resort to borrowing to meet needs or sustain consumption levels is higher (and not due to chance) across these districts. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this assessment to gauge the nature or scope of supply of debt in the KRI, we can infer that this might be due to weaker purchasing power, lower incomes, less stringent financial regulations or widely available informal borrowing practices, to name a few. The primary point is that debt levels are not random, but are defined by a variety of factors. This assessment is able to gauge the influence of some of these factors, but a complete picture of debt levels requires more detailed study.

⁹ Where districts of residence were dummy variables created from nominal variables, and livelihood types were dummy variables created from previously categorical variables.

¹⁰ Findings below the 40% level are excluded

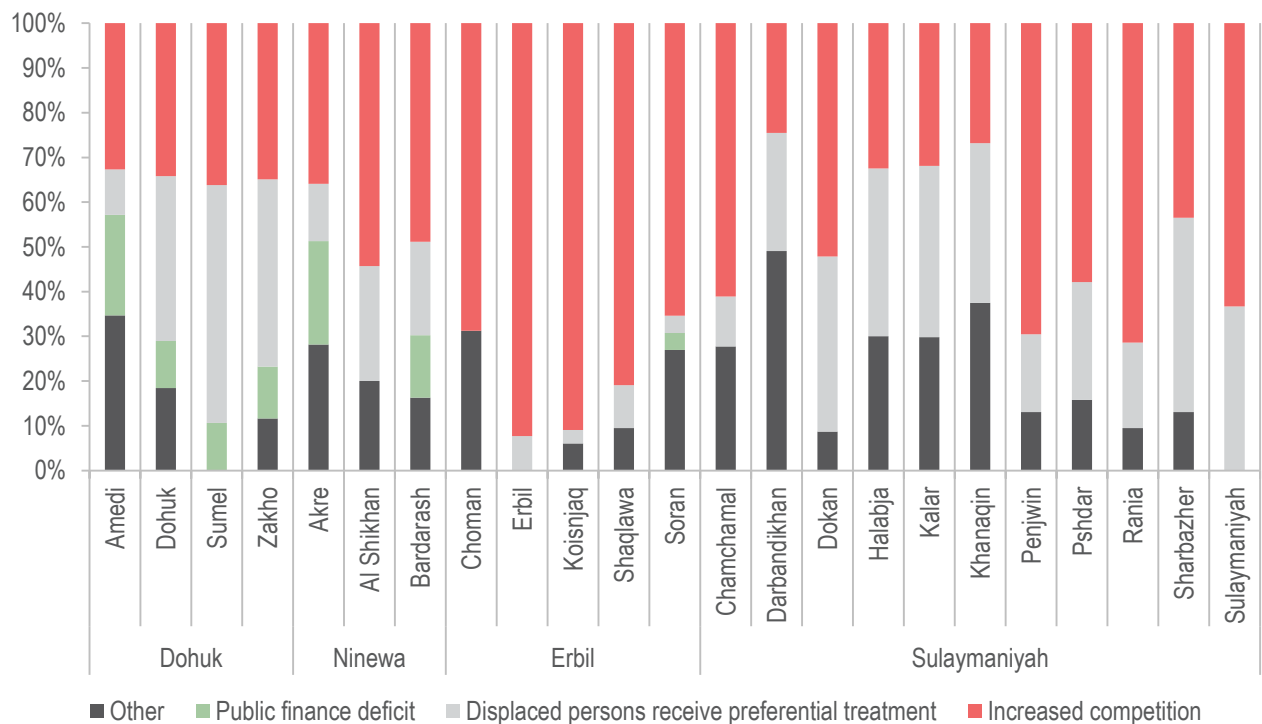
Figure 4: Employment rate (%) by demographic group



The distribution of labour and employment amongst demographic groups was heavily skewed towards males, particularly those belonging to the 18-59 age bracket. Nearly 70% of males aged 18-59 were employed in comparison to 35% of males over 60 and 10% of males aged 12-17. Though the rate of employment amongst the older male demographic groups is relatively consistent across districts, the rate of child labour is not. Child labour is primarily concentrated in Sulaymaniyah governorate, in particular the districts of Khanaqin, Sharbazher, Penjwin, Chamchamal and Halabja where it registers at 27%, 20%, 20%, 13% and 10%, respectively. This means that in addition to a higher propensity to accumulate debt, households residing across the districts of Sulaymaniyah also resort to child labour to supplement incomes. The same pattern holds true for female cohorts aged 12-17, albeit it to a far lesser extent.

In addition, not only is the labour market segmented in terms of employment, but also in terms of gender. For instance, whilst an estimated 40% of males are employed, only 5% of their female counterparts are. Though this can at least partially be explained by conservative social norms and the fact that over a third of households are engaged primarily in manual labour, it can also be argued that the absorption and long-term integration of women into the labour market is extremely low across the KRI as a whole.

Figure 5: Proportion (%) of households by primary issues in accessing employment



An estimated 35% of households reported experiencing problems in accessing employment. Delving further, problems were consistently reported at a higher rate across regions disproportionately affected by the refugee and internal displacement crises. For instance, 44% of households residing in Dahuk and 40% of households residing in Ninewa reported experiencing problems, 34% of households in Erbil and less than a third (30%) did so in Sulaymaniyah. Whilst causality cannot be firmly established at this stage, the effects of both displacement crises on the internal labour markets of these regions of the KRI should not be underestimated.

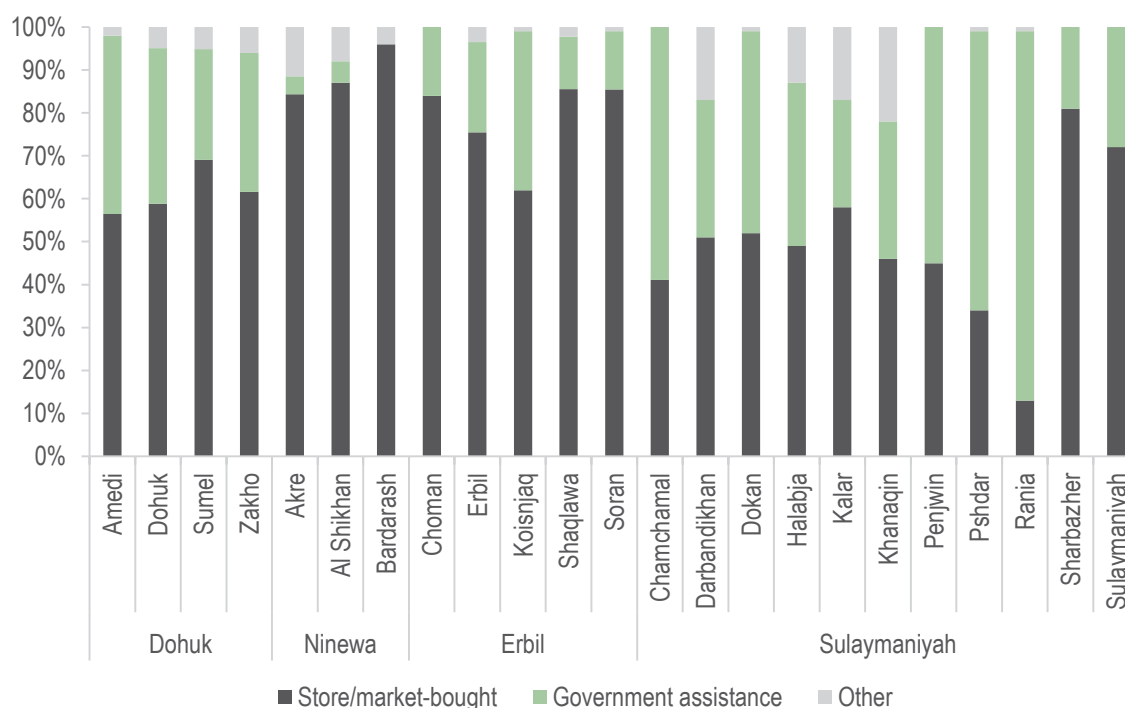
Increased competition and preferential treatment for displaced sub-populations were reported as the most common barriers to accessing employment, though it is worth noting that the two are not mutually exclusive and should be viewed as essentially two sides of the same coin. That said, increases in labour market competition were reported by an estimated half (51%) of households, whilst over a fifth (26%) were of the view that employers favoured displaced groups when selecting who to hire. Districts where households relied primarily on manual labour – agricultural and construction work – and which host significant numbers of displaced households appear to be disproportionately affected by the exponential increases in demand for employment and labour market saturation. This is especially the case in Dahuk governorate and parts of Sulaymaniyah which hosted significant numbers of refugee and internally displaced households and where the primary agricultural or manual labour sector was most common.

The issue is that displaced groups naturally gravitate towards informal or casual livelihood sources, rendering hosting communities where these are also prevalent the most susceptible to labour market substitution. For instance, equal proportions of households in Dahuk and KRG-administered Ninewa governorates reported preferential treatment for displaced groups (35%) and increased competition (35%) as the primary barriers to accessing employment. This trend holds for most of the districts in the affected areas, including districts such as Chamchamal, Kalar, Sulaymaniyah and Khanaqin across Sulaymaniyah governorate. In Erbil, where an estimated 80% of households reported increases in competition, the primary trigger is likely the fact that as the regional capital and the locus of economic agglomeration it naturally attracts migrant workers, meaning that increases in labour market competition cannot be solely attributed to increases in displaced populations.

Food Security

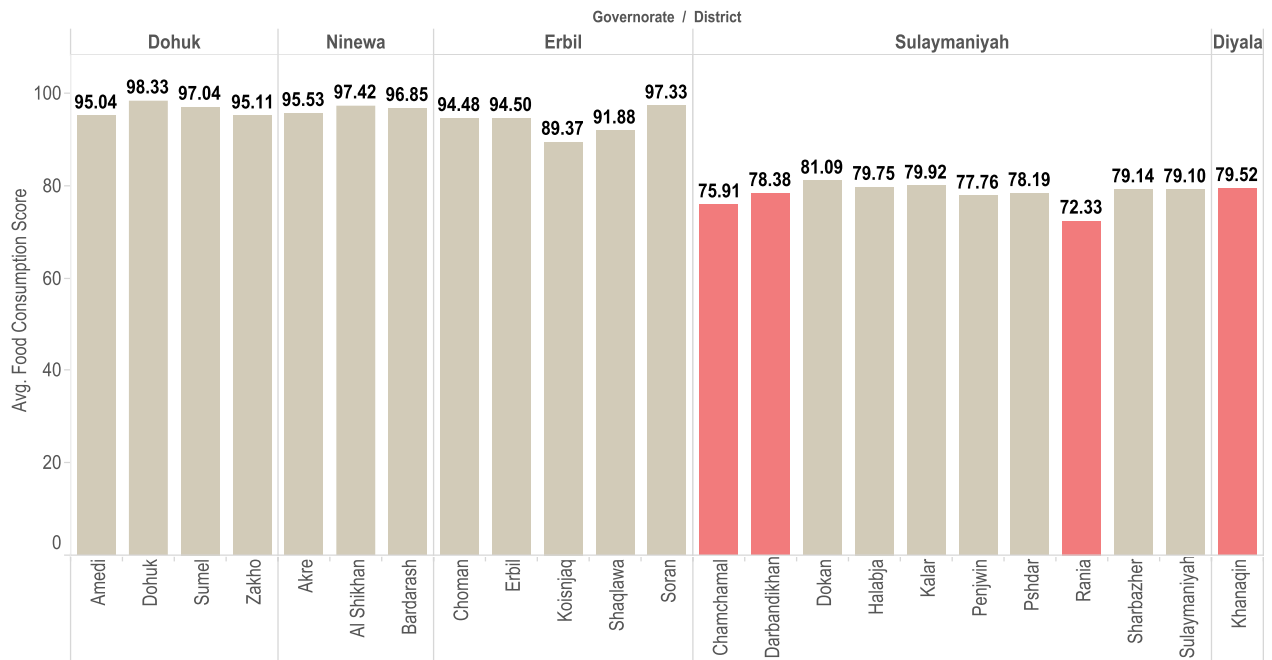
63% of households acquire food by means of private purchases. Although this is to be expected of a geographically fixed and – largely – gainfully employed hosting community population, a KRI-wide figure conceals important differences between governorates and districts. Privately purchased food accounted for nearly 80% of primary food sources in Erbil; again, understandable given that this region is the locus of economic activity with the highest *per capita* incomes of the KRI. Though government assistance via the federal Public Distribution System (PDS) accounts for approximately a third (32%) of primary food sources, it feeds an estimated 45% of households in Sulaymaniyah and nearly 40% of households in Dahuk and KRG-administered Ninewa. Dependence on assistance to access food is thus highest in Sulaymaniyah in both relative and absolute terms, making Sulaymaniyah the most food insecure governorate of the KRI.

Figure 6: Proportion (%) of households by primary source of food



Dependence rates were highest in Rania, Pshdar and Chamchamal, where 87%, 65% and 59% of households relied on the PDS to access food, respectively. As noted above, these are also some of the poorest districts of the KRI in terms of *per capita* incomes, indicating extensive supply and demand-side access barriers. Whilst a third (32%) of households in Khanaqin relied on the PDS, over a fifth (21%) also relied on store or market credit as a primary food source. This suggests three things; that the PDS in KRG-administered Diyala does not service all those in-need, that the scope of the assistance package does not furnish the totality of a given household's needs or that personal preferences for other food sources are at play. For instance, 55% of those who relied on store or market credit as a primary food source also relied on the PDS as a secondary food source. Though these remain unknown and unobserved variables, the point to grasp is that households vulnerable to food insecurity have an inherent tendency to diversify food sources to overcome access barriers. Against this backdrop, although the rates of dependence on assistance to access food were highest in Rania, Pshdar and Chamchamal, food access barriers – particularly income – seem to be highest in Khanaqin.

Figure 7: Average Food Consumption Scores by district



With only an estimated 1% fell below the acceptable threshold for food consumption, food insecurity was not found to be prevalent at all. The issue, though, is not the categorisation of households but the size and scope of dietary intakes, displayed above using average district-level Food Consumption Score (FCS). That said, a clear trend of inverse proportionality emerges here; where dependence on aid is highest, the amount and nutritional value of food consumed is lowest. For instance, scores in Sulaymaniyah are, on average, 16 points lower than in Erbil and 18 points lower than in Dahuk, meaning that although residents of Sulaymaniyah are not necessarily food insecure, they do experience greater supply or demand side barriers in accessing food.

This is then clearly reflected in food consumption patterns across the governorate as a whole; whilst the PDS may well furnish needs enough to sustain long-term consumption, the nutritional value and amount of food consumed is clearly lower than in other governorates. Rania, Chamchamal and Khanaqin districts, where sizeable majorities rely on the PDS to access food, illustrate this trend well. This, in turn, also makes them more vulnerable to or at-risk of food insecurity in the instance of an exogenous shock such as the cessation or scaling back of the PDS, for example.

In order to quantify the effects of different variables and household attributes on aggregate food consumption scores, a linear regression model was fitted for districts of residence, primary food sources and livelihood types¹¹. Variables which were found to be insignificant were removed stepwise to obtain a model where all remaining variables were statistically significant at approximately the 5% level or less, enabling a comprehensive, representative analysis of results. The sex of the head of household, most primary sources of livelihood and most districts of residence outside of Sulaymaniyah had no statistically significant effects on a given household's FCS.

¹¹ Where districts of residence were dummy variables created from nominal variables, and livelihood types were dummy variables created from previously categorical variables.

Table 3: Linear regression for Food Consumption Score; positive effects in green, negative effects in red

Coefficients ^a						
Modelway	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
district_sulaymaniyah	-15.085	1.657	-.199	-9.101	.000	
district_kalar	-13.362	1.669	-.176	-8.007	.000	
district_halabja	-13.688	1.666	-.180	-8.218	.000	
district_dokan	-11.323	1.665	-.149	-6.801	.000	
district_khanaqin	-12.591	1.678	-.166	-7.502	.000	
district_rania	-16.659	1.699	-.220	-9.803	.000	
district_pshdar	-12.607	1.675	-.166	-7.527	.000	
district_darbandikhan	-13.788	1.680	-.182	-8.209	.000	
district_penjwin	-12.977	1.685	-.171	-7.702	.000	
district_sharbazher	-14.794	1.674	-.195	-8.839	.000	
district_chamchamal	-14.563	1.706	-.187	-8.539	.000	
government_assistance	-14.671	1.658	-.186	-8.312	.000	
district_dahuk	5.280	1.650	.070	3.200	.001	
district_sumel	3.888	1.675	.051	2.321	.002	
public_security	2.267	.860	.054	2.635	.005	
agricultural_waged_labour	-3.386	.838	-.087	-4.040	.000	
no_livelihood	-10.039	1.550	-.116	-6.478	.000	

a. Dependent Variable: FCS_score

Of all primary food sources, only reliance on government assistance was found to have a statistically significant, and negative, effect. Overall, reliance on the PDS reduces FCS by nearly 15 points. All districts of Sulaymaniyah governorate had a negative effect on FCS; the effect was most pronounced in Rania where the foregone value of food consumed was nearly 17 points. That said, given that the rate of reliance on government assistance was highest in Sulaymaniyah governorate, these two variables are likely not mutually exclusive but still do not account for the full spectrum of variables leading to such a difference in outcomes between Sulaymaniyah and the rest of the KRI. That said, residence in Dahuk and Sumel districts had a positive (albeit small) effect on FCS, yielding a gain of 5 and 4 points, respectively. This finding mirrors the trend in income inequality observed above.

This model confirms the hypothesis posited above; although food insecurity is not prevalent by any measure, the residents of poorer districts who are compelled to rely on government assistance to service food needs are more at-risk of food insecurity should this assistance be discontinued or scaled back. Delving further, their nutritional intake is also considerably lower than counterparts residing in Erbil or Dahuk.

Education

Attendance rates in formal education are overall high, but do vary substantially by demographic group and, to a lesser extent, district. Estimated attendance rates for all school-aged children are over 90% across the KRI; disaggregated further, these reach a low of 75% in Khanaqin and a high of 98% in Amedi districts for all school-aged groups. That said, age appears to be a stronger determinant of attendance than district or governorate of residence; generally, attendance rates amongst younger cohorts are higher and tend to dissipate with age.

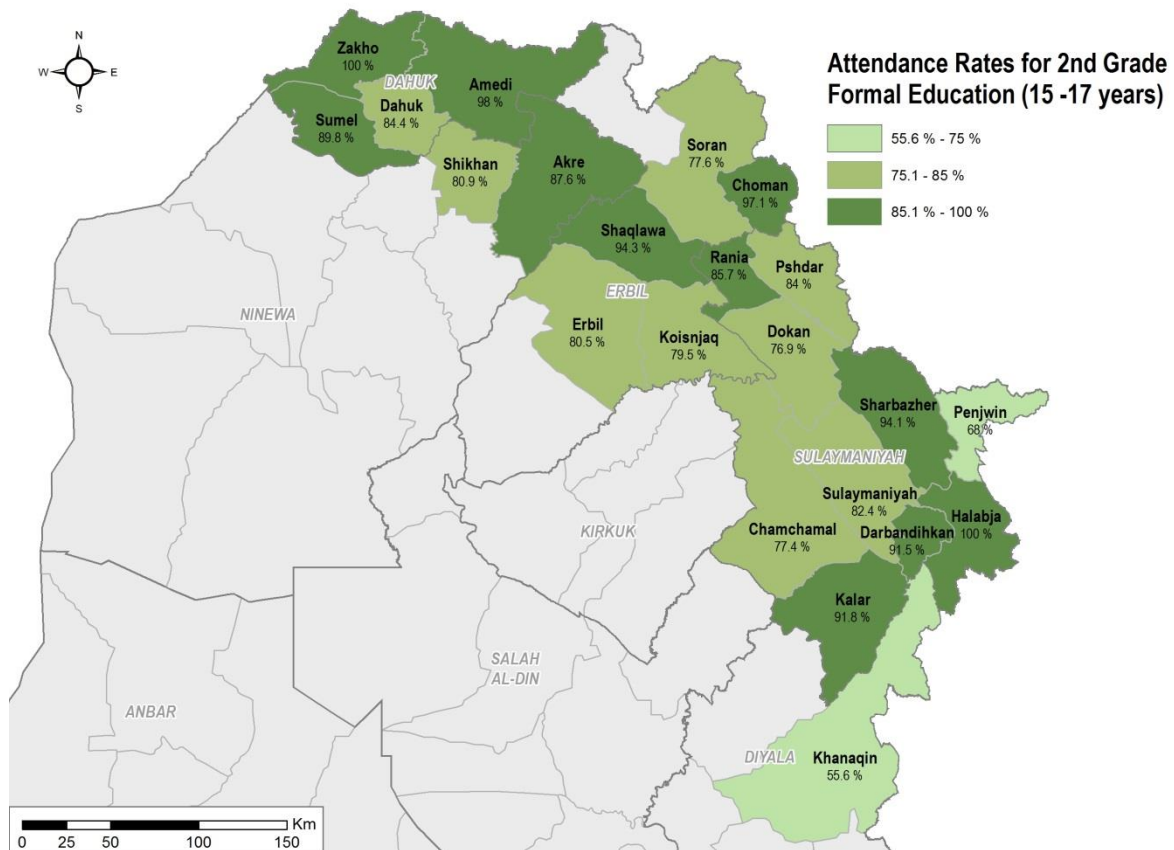
Table 4: Attendance rates (%) for school-aged children aged 6-17 by district

District	Male 6-11	Female 6-11	Male 12-14	Female 12-14	Male 15-17	Female 15-17
Amedi	100.0	97.6	97.3	96.2	100.0	95.5
Dahuk	93.0	97.9	96.4	95.5	86.7	80.0
Sumel	100.0	90.9	96.3	100.0	89.2	90.5
Zakho	92.3	94.3	100.0	93.1	100.0	100.0
Akre	98.6	90.0	100.0	70.3	93.5	76.9
Al Shikhan	97.9	100.0	90.0	95.5	87.9	74.2
Bardarash	95.7	89.1	91.7	91.2	95.2	73.1
Choman	94.4	92.0	92.6	100.0	94.1	94.7
Erbil	90.2	96.3	100.0	92.6	78.3	85.7
Koisanjaq	97.6	100.0	75.0	88.2	83.3	71.4
Shaqlawā	90.6	96.4	100.0	85.7	94.4	93.8
Soran	100.0	91.1	100.0	100.0	76.0	79.3
Chamchamal	100.0	100.0	89.5	100.0	78.9	75.0
Darbandikhan	100.0	100.0	84.2	100.0	96.7	90.5
Dokan	96.3	96.0	100.0	100.0	80.0	75.0
Halabja	100.0	97.1	95.2	100.0	94.4	91.7
Kalar	95.1	90.0	100.0	94.7	92.0	88.9
Penjwin	97.0	95.2	80.0	100.0	60.0	73.3
Pshdar	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	88.9	71.4
Rania	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	80.0	100.0
Sharbazher	91.7	100.0	71.4	88.9	92.3	100.0
Sulaymaniyah	100.0	89.5	94.7	85.7	80.0	85.7
Khanaqin	92.5	91.7	83.3	66.7	50.0	64.3

Spatially, no significant variation can be observed across governorates or districts; amongst these, Khanaqin district in KRG-administered Diyala registers the lowest attendance rates in formal education of any district in the KRI, with a visibly sharp decline in attendance rates for older cohorts aged 12-17. Despite this being a general trend across the KRI, the drop in attendance is particularly acute in Khanaqin, with an estimated 75% of school-aged children reportedly out of school.

Age appears to be a stronger determinant of attendance than districts of residence (although the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive as the supply of education may drop for older groups in certain areas). On the whole, the proportion of school-aged girls attending school is slightly lower than the proportion of boys, although this phenomenon does not appear to follow any specific district-level trend. Where it is most visible is for girls aged 15-17; as noted previously, rates of attendance exhibit an exponential decline once the 15-17 age threshold is passed, but interestingly the decline is more pronounced for girls, rather than boys. A greater proportion of girls than boys within this age group do not attend school across 15 districts of the KRI. The same pattern holds for the 12-14 age group, albeit on a slightly smaller scale across 11 districts of the KRI.

Map 4: Education rates (15-17 years) by district

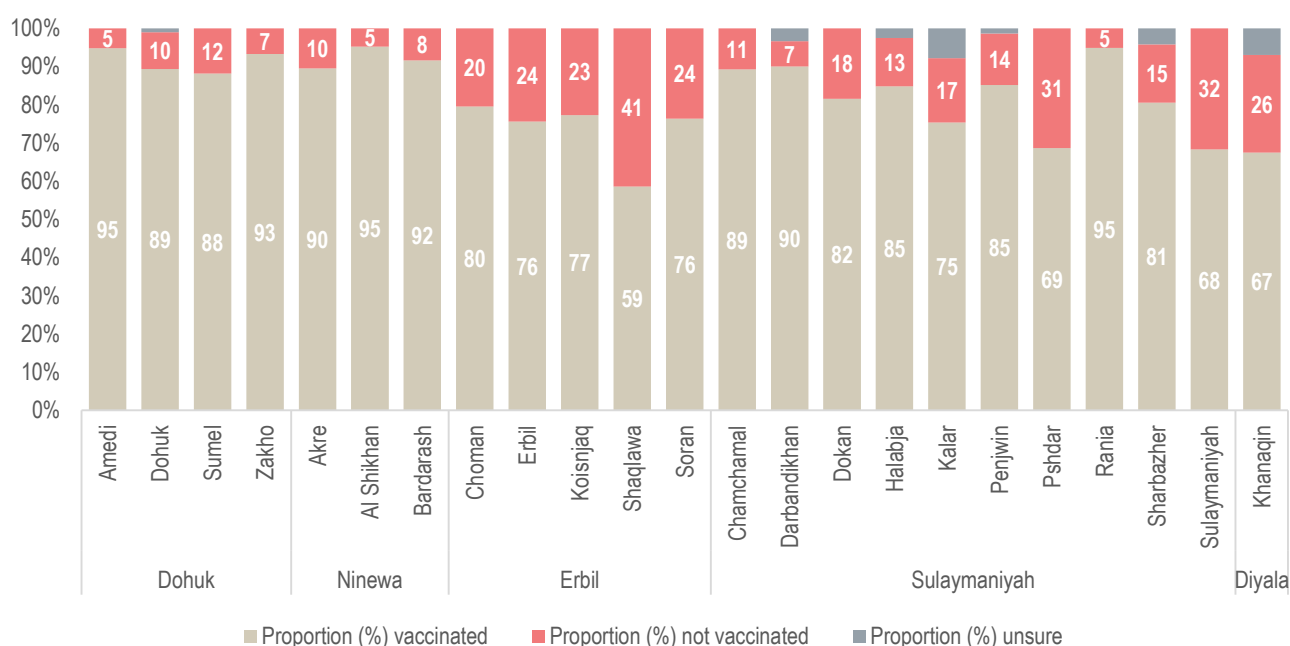


For boys aged 12-17, over 75% of cases of non-attendance are explained by child labour across all assessed districts, but with only 1% of girls aged 12-17 engaged in income generating activities, the same reasoning cannot be applied to this demographic group. For instance, nearly a third (30%) of all cases of non-attendance amongst girls aged 15-17 were attributed to a lack of funds; given that schooling is heavily subsidised and essentially free in the KRI, this does not withstand scrutiny. A further 20% were reported as having never attended school in the KRI, rendering them ineligible for formal education. That said, it can be argued that conservative social norms pull girls within this age group out of school and place restrictions on their engagement with peers outside of the home. An alternative reason may be protection whereby parents and heads of households prevent attendance due to perceived risks of harassment, violence and bodily harm.

Health

The KRI's hosting community population performs relatively well on most health outcomes. Key outliers, however, include immunization rates for polio and measles as well as access to obstetric care for pregnant and lactating women. Although immunization rates for polio are generally higher than the Syrian refugee population, for instance, they still fall below the rate needed to ensure herd immunity. The same holds true for measles which is endemic to the KRI and Iraq proper.

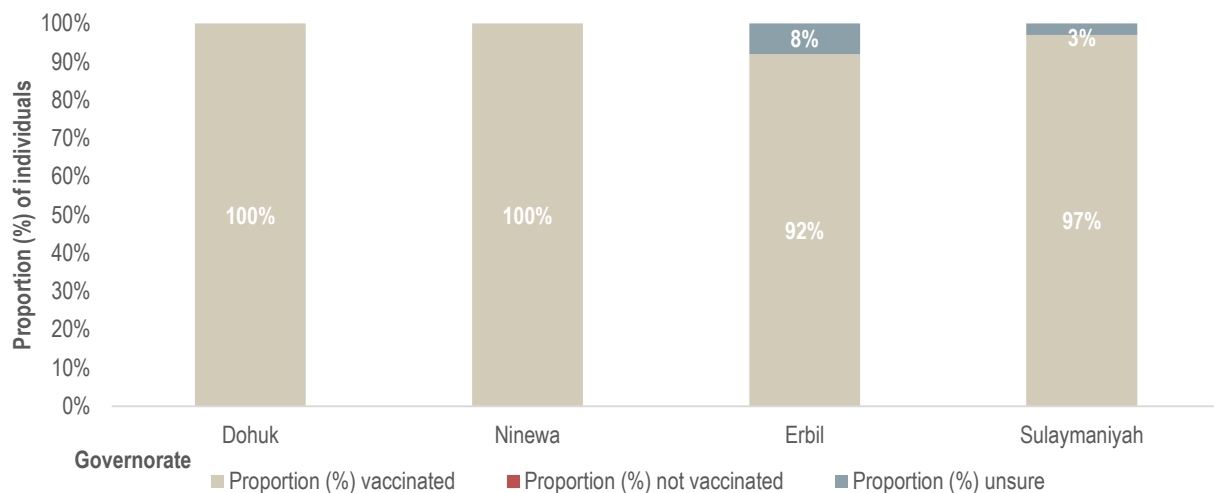
Figure 8: Polio immunisation rates for at-risk minors aged 0-59 months



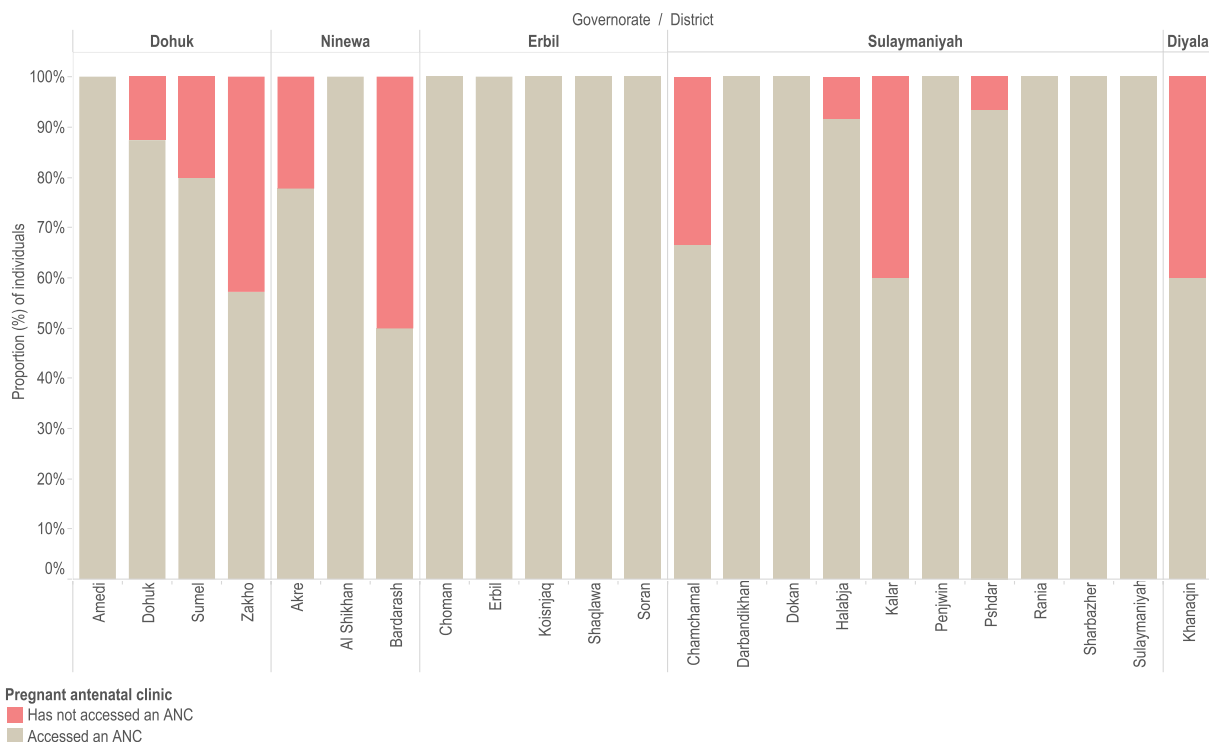
Polio immunisation rates for at-risk minors aged 0-59 months are generally highest in Dahuk and Ninewa (approximately 92%) and lowest in Erbil governorate (74%) in proportional terms. In contrast, data from independent verification exercises after the polio vaccination campaign indicate an overall coverage of approximately 90%. The difference in findings may be due to a variety of reasons including methodological differences between the two assessments as well as actual differences in immunisation service coverage across geographic areas. In itself, this runs against previously established trends where Erbil generally performs better on service access, livelihoods and welfare indicators. Immunisation rates stood at 81% in Sulaymaniyah – the largest and most populous governorate – meaning that in absolute terms, the number of at-risk children may well be higher than in Erbil.

Delving further, non-immunisation rates are relatively constant in Erbil governorate, with Shaqlawa as the only major outlier, indicating that service coverage may well be lower in this district than elsewhere. A similar pattern holds in Sulaymaniyah; relatively stable coverage with pockets where immunization service coverage is seemingly lower than elsewhere (including in Pshdar, Sulaymaniyah and Khannaqin districts at 31%, 32% and 26% non-immunisation rates, respectively).

The same pattern holds for measles immunization rates for at-risk minors aged 9-24 months; coverage is highest in Dahuk and KRG-administered Ninewa (100%, respectively), followed by Sulaymaniyah (97%) and lowest in Erbil (92%) governorates. Interestingly, there were no reported instances of non-immunisation for this demographic group which means that the issue then becomes determining the veracity of responses. Whilst polio can be colloquially described as “two drops”, measles is less well known and no record of the vaccination is made, making verification difficult. This recall bias explains why no households reported no vaccination, but instead opted for a “do not know” response.

Figure 9: Measles immunisation rates for minors aged 6-59 months

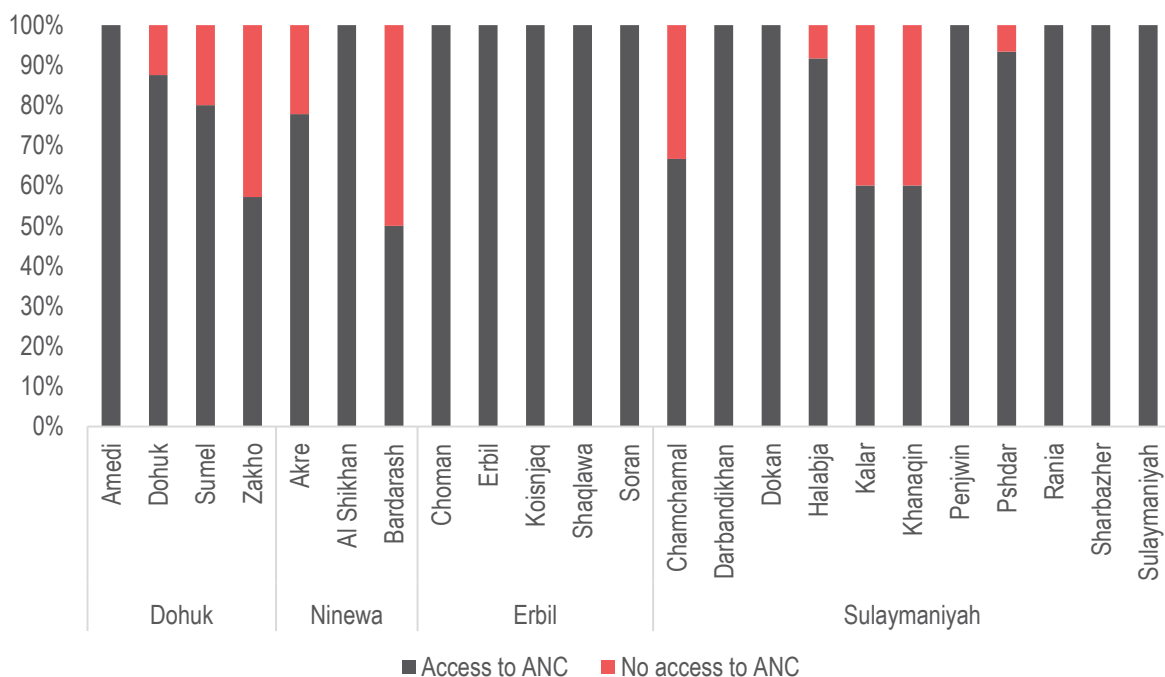
KRI-wide immunization rates stand at an estimated 97%, with minor variation across governorates. The same pattern holds for measles immunization rates for at-risk minors aged 9-24 months as for polio; coverage is highest in Dahuk and KRG-administered Ninewa (100%, respectively), followed by Sulaymaniyah (97%) and lowest in Erbil (92%) governorates. Interestingly, there were no reported instances of non-immunisation for this demographic group which means that the issue then becomes determining the veracity of responses. Whilst polio can be colloquially described as “two drops”, measles is less well known and no record of the vaccination is made, making verification difficult. This recall bias explains why no households reported no vaccination, but instead opted for a “do not know” response.

Figure 10: Proportion (%) of pregnant women accessing antenatal clinics

Over a fifth (23%) of households were found to host pregnant and/or lactating women at the time of the assessment across all districts of the KRI, making regular and unimpeded access to obstetric care a priority across effectively all areas. Overall, 10% of pregnant women have not accessed antenatal care, indicating modest rates of non-access which may be linked either to access constraints or personal choices in health seeking behaviour. District-level figures are more revealing, however; rates of no access were highest in Dahuk and KRG-administered Ninewa (at an estimated 23% of all pregnant women), reaching a high of 43% in Zakho district. Conversely, access rates were highest in Erbil, where all pregnant women purportedly had access to antenatal care. In Sulaymaniyah, access to antenatal care was lowest in Chamchamal, Kalar and Khanaqin, some of the poorest districts of the KRI which also performed poorly on other welfare indicators such as food consumption and immunisation rates.

That said, though the inequality in access rates is striking, inequality itself is to be expected. As the provincial capital, the scope of service provision is generally expected to be better, despite the fact that gaps in service coverage are the opposite of that which can be observed for immunisation rates against infectious diseases noted above.

Figure 11: Proportion (%) of lactating women accessing post-natal care



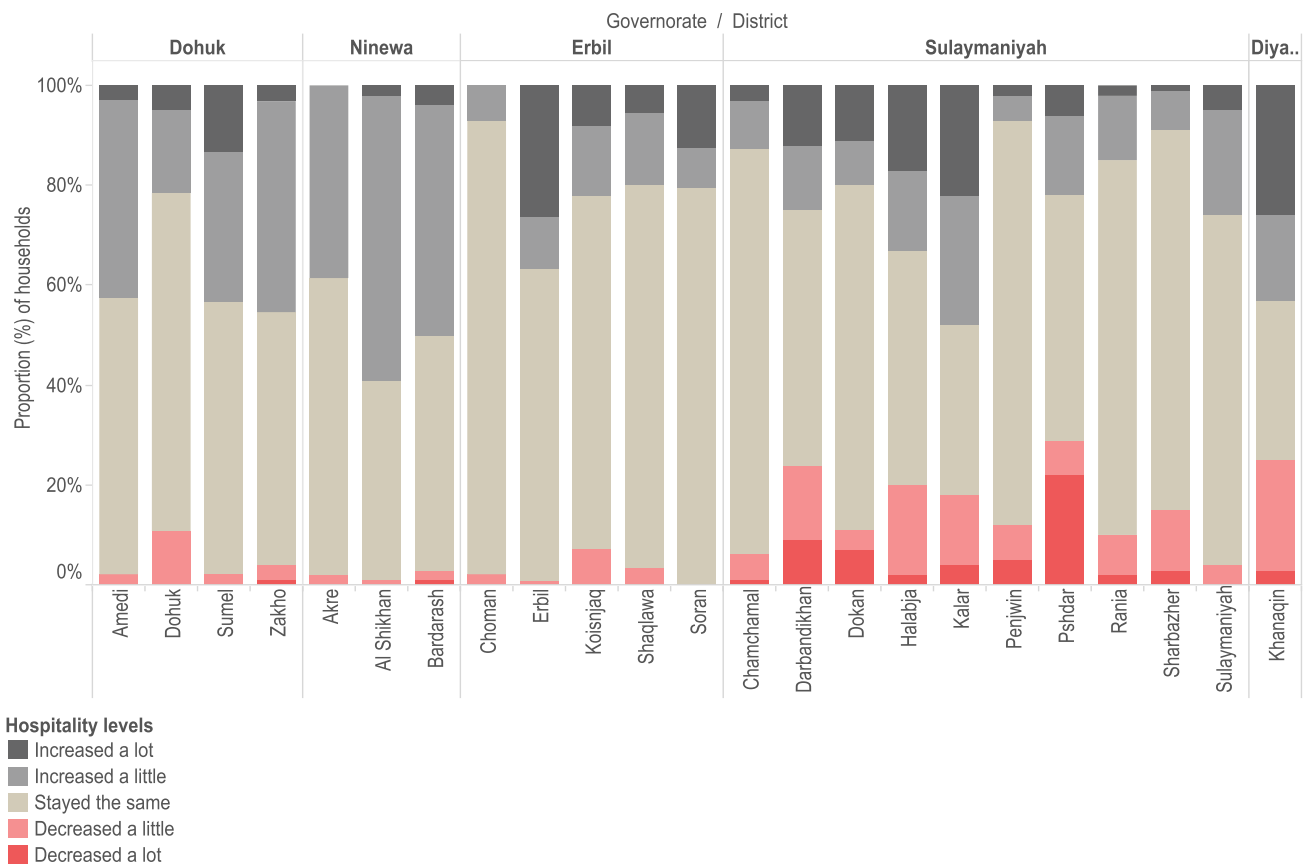
With an estimated 27% of lactating women reported as not accessing essential post-natal care, access to postnatal services was generally poorer than access to antenatal services, with all districts but Darbandikhan and Sharbazher registering varying levels of non-access. Erbil illustrates the disparity well; though all pregnant women reported accessing antenatal care, nearly a third (31%) did not access postnatal care across the governorate and 67% did not access it in Koisnjaq district. Access rates were better in Sulaymaniyah – where over a fifth (22%) reported access – but the same trend emerges with key outliers such as Chamchamal and Sulaymaniyah districts registering non-access rates of 60% and 50%, respectively. The key issue here becomes Sulaymaniyah which runs against a commonly observed trend where regional or governorate capitals and urbanized centres generally have better service coverage. That said, it might then be argued that the issue is not only one of supply, but also usage. Put simply, it is not that postnatal services are unavailable across the KRI, rather that lactating women opt not to access them due to personal preference, a lack of awareness of the existence or importance of these services, or both.

Social Cohesion

Any exercise in measuring social cohesion through a household survey is bound to limit the scope of analysis and insight that it can offer. Seeing as no qualitative methods were integrated into this assessment, the analysis presented here should be interpreted as indicative of overarching trends as measured by perceived hospitality levels, fluctuations in costs of basic needs, perceived quality of public services and other proxy metrics. It is also important to take note of the fact that the findings presented here are representative of the views of one – albeit the most numerous and socio-economically dominant – sub-population of the KRI and any attempt at measuring aggregate levels of social cohesion must integrate and compare findings from across IDP, refugee and host-community groups.

Findings are overall nuanced and region and context-specific. Across the KRI, the vast majority of households are of the view that hospitality levels have stayed the same or increased in the 3 months prior to the assessment¹², whereas significantly greater proportions reported that the cost of basic needs had increased, pointing to a potential fault line in the short-to-medium term. No relationship or correlation could be found between perceptions of cost, livelihood activities, incomes and perceived hospitality levels, suggesting that this is determined by a combination of unknown and unobserved variables such as personal views, preferences and experiences, for instance. Equally, sizeable proportions held a favourable or neutral view of public service provision in the KRI, although as with income levels, differences between districts do exist, suggesting that perceptions of quality are determined by areas of residence.

Figure 12: Proportion (%) of households by perceived levels of hospitality towards displaced populations (3 months)



¹² As noted above, methodological limitations to gauging an inherently subjective and qualitative indicator may have contributed to this outcome. It may also be that households are not willing to share such sensitive information in a household level interview, meaning that further research is recommended.

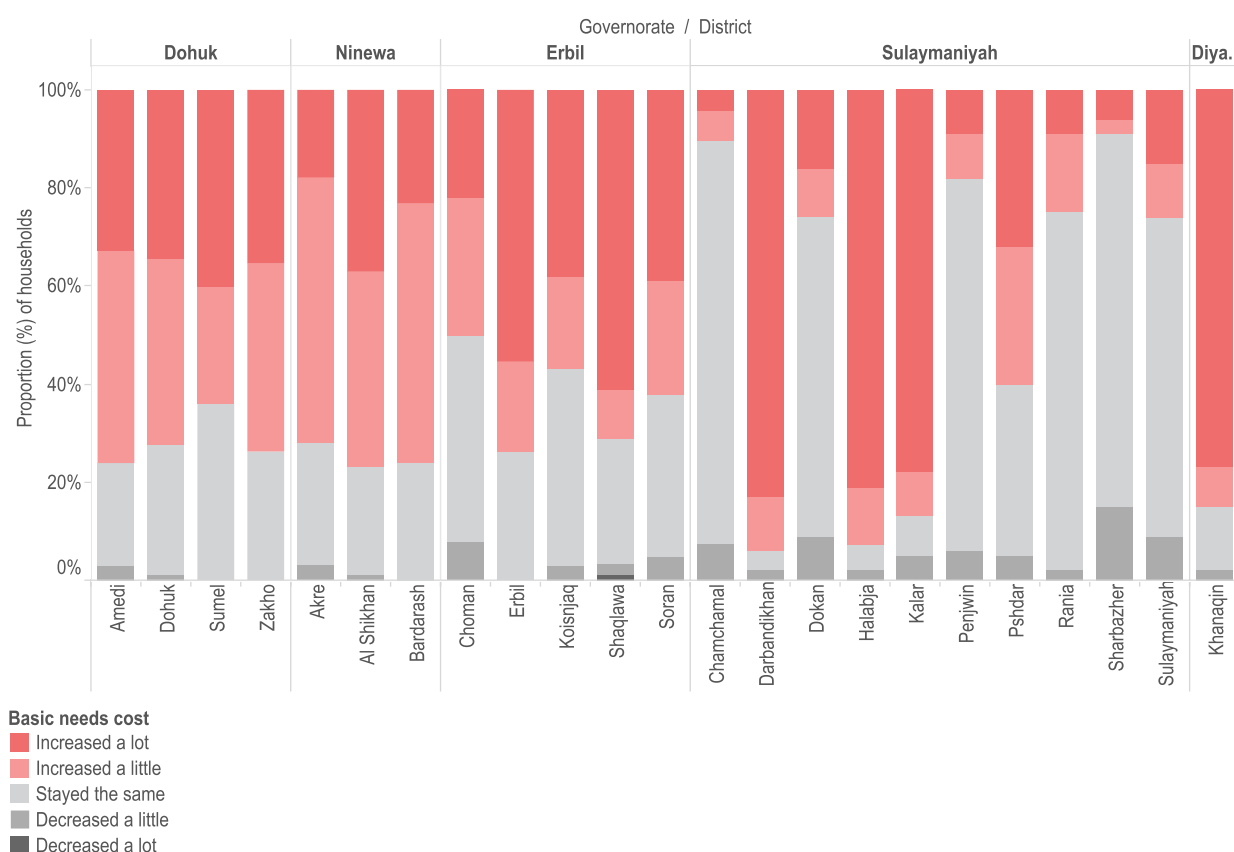
Although an estimated 10% reported that hospitality levels had decreased, differences in perceptions between governorates are striking. Across the KRI, approximately 62% reported that hospitality levels had remained neutral in the 3 months prior to the survey, whilst nearly a third (an estimated 29%) were of the view that hospitality levels had actually increased. Given that the territories of the KRI had absorbed an additional 15%-20% of the host population in the space of 3 short months, it is understandable that hosting community households feel that hospitality had increased. This does not mean, however, that these perceptions are fixed; on the contrary, they are finite and other proxies for inter-group cohesion (namely barriers to employment and perceived basic needs costs), highlight the fact that the risk of a breakdown or change in perceived hospitality levels exists. Indeed, 10% of households felt that their hospitality levels had decreased, indicating that nascent levels of inter-group tension do exist.

Generally, areas disproportionately affected by the refugee and internal displacement crises, namely Dahuk and KRG-administered Ninewa, which host far higher proportions of both sub-populations, also held the least negative views of any district or governorate in the KRI. Nearly 40% of households in Dahuk held that hospitality levels had increased, whilst 60% believed that they were largely neutral, suggesting that despite increased competition for scarce resources, services and employment, the general stance towards displaced groups remains stable or neutral.

That said, the prevalence of negative views was highest in Sulaymaniyah, where 14% of those assessed indicated hospitality levels had decreased,¹³ the governorate least-affected by both crises. Though a majority still holds favourable or neutral views, the proportion of households in Khanaqin, for example, which is relatively poor (according to findings presented here, at least) and hosts a large population of IDPs, reporting decreases in levels of hospitality was, at 22%, much higher than elsewhere. The same can be said for Pshdar (where 22% contended that hospitality levels had decreased a lot, the largest proportion of any district and also the district least affected by either crisis), Darbandikhan, Halabja, Kalar and Sharbazher. Against this backdrop, it is difficult to argue that the scale of an increase in competition is proportional to the severity of social tension, as the conventional argument goes; Dahuk being a clear example of this. Instead, it appears that other factors – including personal preferences, income levels and employment rates may be more powerful determinants of social cohesion than the scale of the displacement crisis and the saturation it generates. As these factors have not been directly measured in this assessment, further research into the drivers of social cohesion problems is needed.

¹³ Sulaymaniyah-level aggregated finding is indicative only

Figure 13: Proportion (%) of households by perceived variations in costs of basic needs (3 months)



Contrary to trends noted for hospitality levels, perceptions of cost potentially impacted by the presence of displaced populations largely conform to conventional expectations. Districts and regions disproportionately affected by the refugee and IDP crises register higher proportions of households who perceive that the cost of basic needs has increased. In Dahuk, which hosts approximately 40% of refugee and nearly 70% of IDP households, nearly 75% of respondents believed that the cost of basic needs has increased. The potential for inflating costs to act as a trigger for social tensions is thus highest here. In this instance, perceptions largely mirror expectations; an exponential increase in demand for shelter, food, clothing and other basic needs may not have been met by a proportional increase in supply, leading to inflationary pressure on prices. Although any such potential increase cannot be quantified at present and perceptions of rising costs do not correlate with perceptions of hospitality, this does not mean that they will not in the long-term if such perceptions – whether perceived or actual – are not arrested in the short-term.

Sulaymaniyah is the most significant outlier. Whilst nearly 50% contend that the cost of basic needs had remained the same in the 3 months prior to the survey, an estimated 45% believe that the prices of basic needs have risen in a governorate the least affected by either crisis. In Darbandikhan and Halabja districts, 78% and 81% believed that the cost of basic needs had increased by a lot; although not untenable, it is unlikely that any increases would have been caused by increase in demand emanating from IDP households. Whilst this may simply be subjective perception, it might also be that purchasing power had decreased or that other factors are at play. With this in mind, the potential for tension appears to be highest in Sulaymaniyah across all social cohesion indicators measured in this assessment.

CONCLUSION

The analysis presented in this report is intended to be viewed in comparison to reports on IDP and refugee needs. Among host community, refugee and IDP groups significant variation of welfare is found across geographic space. Average incomes were highest in Erbil and Dahuk, but were nearly twice as lower in Sulaymaniyah, indicating a trend of inequality which can be observed across all other assessed sectors. Although no firm causality can be established, this phenomenon has had tangible effects on other welfare indicators – crucially, food consumption and coping behaviours – where incomes are the key to self-sufficiency and resilience. Within Sulaymaniyah, Khanaqin, Kalar and Chamchamal emerge as the most income-scarce districts where debt-income ratios are also highest, suggesting a high propensity to resort to debt accumulation to service basic needs and sustain consumption on the whole.

The only aspect of livelihoods which appears to have come under strain as a direct result of the IDP and refugee crises appears to be access to gainful employment, with increases in competition – perceived or otherwise – were reported as the most prevalent access issue. Regions most-affected by the multiple displacement crises were, understandably, disproportionately more affected by this phenomenon which, if true, will likely exert a deflationary pressure on real incomes and contribute to labour market substitution, particularly for households engaged primarily in manual labour and other low-skill professions towards which displaced households naturally gravitate.

Although food insecurity was not found to be an issue at all, the high rate of dependency on government assistance via the Public Distribution (nearly 33% across the KRI) System indicates an acute risk for its development and spread should it be discontinued or curtailed. Dependence on this assistance scheme was, at 44%, highest in Sulaymaniyah – where incomes were lowest – which is suggestive of an acute supply-side food access issue in this governorate, particularly in Rania, Pshdar and Chamchamal districts. This dependence does seem to have an effect on food consumption, too; the average food consumption score is approximately 15 points lower in Sulaymaniyah governorate than elsewhere in the KRI, again underscoring the issue of food access problems. Although these findings cannot be directly attributed to the IDP or refugee crises, resource scarcity and public budgetary problems brought about by the conflict may result in the roll-back of the assistance scheme, with dire consequences for the most dependent households.

Access to basic services, including education and health, is generally high and consistent across the KRI, regardless of the number of displaced persons a given region or district hosts. Rates of attendance in primary and secondary education were extremely high, and although a low rate of child labour can be observed as a factor pulling children out of formal schooling, the effect was modest and confined to older males. Nevertheless, at nearly 60%, the proportion of school-aged children attending double-shifted schools indicates an acute supply-side constraint which may contribute to an increase in drop-out rates in the medium term if the supply of infrastructure is not increased.

Seeing as no comprehensive, comparable dataset exists, the findings presented in this report should not be interpreted as an impact evaluation of the displacement crises, but rather as a baseline in itself. Although there are indications that the absorption of a large number of IDP and refugee households is perceived to have had an effect on some welfare and social cohesion indicators, hosting community households actually fare much better than displaced households across all sectors of intervention.