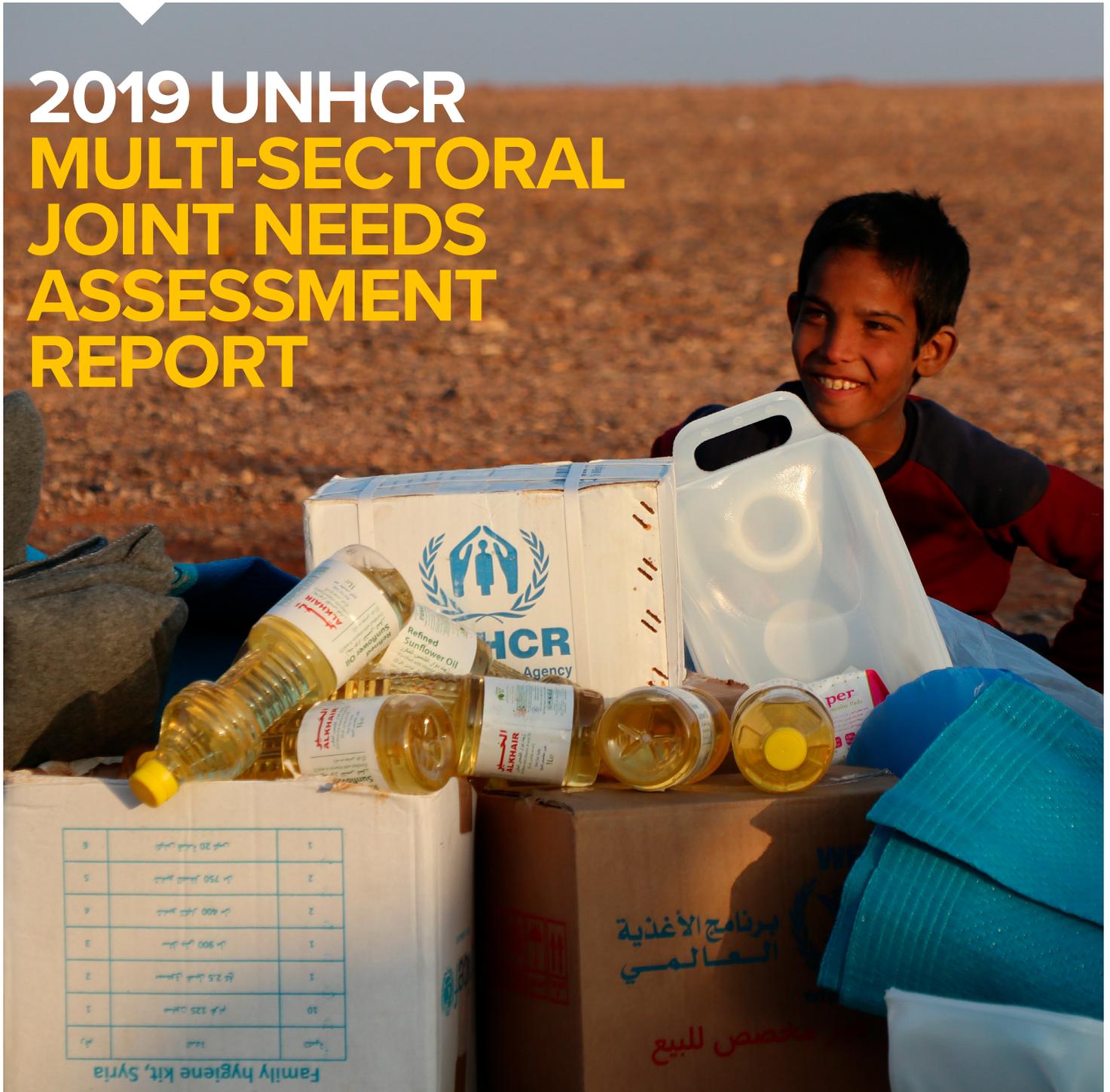


2019 UNHCR MULTI-SECTORAL JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT



March 2020

This report presents UNHCR's engagement in multi-sectoral joint needs assessments in 2019, in line with Grand Bargain commitments towards improved harmonization and coordination of assessment exercises as well as increased transparency.

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Acronyms

CCCM Camp Coordination and Camp Management
EVAR Egypt Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees
GCR Global Compact on Refugees
HNO Humanitarian Needs Overview
HPC Humanitarian Programme Cycle
HRP Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP Internally Displaced Person
JDC Joint Data Center
JNA Joint needs Assessment
JAM Joint Assessment Mission
MIRA Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment
OAS Organization of American States
RRP Refugee Response Plan
RMRP Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan
SDR Secondary Data Review
VAF Vulnerability Assessment Framework
VASyR Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees
VENA Vulnerability and Essential Needs Assessment
WFP World Food Programme

COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

Syria. A young child visits the aid distribution point in Rukban to receive humanitarian assistance. UNHCR/Mysa Khalaf/February 2019

BACKGROUND

What are multi-sectoral joint needs assessments?

Multi-sectoral | Assessments are considered multi-sectoral when covering two or more sectors/clusters. UNHCR considers Protection and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) to be cross-cutting sectors/clusters by nature, and therefore, all protection and CCCM assessments are considered multi-sectoral.

Joint | For the purposes of this report, a needs assessment exercise is considered "joint" when it is conducted [in collaboration with stakeholders within sectors/clusters, situations or thematic areas, leading to a jointly owned output](#).

Assessment participants must include at least one actor beyond UNHCR and its implementing partners, such as other UN agencies, NGOs, government or development actors.

Needs assessments | A needs assessment is any type of [data gathering, processing and analysis](#) that allows for the needs, conditions and capacities of target populations to be identified and quantified/qualified. Needs may be identified through a number of assessment types, such as nutrition or intention surveys, profiling exercises or participatory assessments. Data on needs may also be collected through different techniques, such as household surveys or focus group discussions. However, it is not mandatory for primary data collection to occur. Exercises where an [agreed-upon methodology](#) is in place and [secondary data](#)¹ is sufficient to answer key questions and allow conclusions to be drawn through [joint analysis](#) are also considered needs assessments. Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs) and Refugee Response Plans (RRPs), for example, are prominent assessment exercises commonly informed by secondary data.

Why do we report on multi-sectoral joint needs assessments?

As a signatory of the Grand Bargain, UNHCR has committed to increasing efforts towards [comprehensive and cross-sector assessment outputs](#) and is accountable to donors and other signatories for transparently reporting on implementation milestones.

¹ i.e. Data that was previously collected or collected outside that scope and purpose of the assessment at hand.

How did we collect the data on multi-sectoral joint needs assessments?

Data cut-off point | Only assessment exercises for which the output was finalized in 2019 were included in this report. Although there are a number of assessments for which the data collection occurred in 2019, they will not be reported until the output has been validated and published, where applicable. This cut-off point follows the rationale that an assessment process has not been completed until the output is released (i.e. [information is shared](#))³.

Data collection and analysis | With inputs from country, regional and global UNHCR staff, a database of assessment exercises was compiled and validated against the inclusion criteria ("multi-sectoral", "joint", "needs assessments") and data cut-off point. A descriptive analysis of the data was conducted, and where possible, findings were complemented by qualitative inputs from country operations and contextual information.

How do we interpret the data?

Unit of measurement | Using "needs assessments" as the unit of measurement may result in a reduced number of assessments conducted and create the appearance that countries and regions are not fully delivering on their commitments, when, in fact, the numbers may be a positive indicator of compliance with inter-agency efforts at the global level to establish minimum standards for coordinated assessments². Some of these standards include data minimization, improved data sharing and increased coordination among stakeholders, which, when upheld, are expected to avoid duplication or unnecessary data collection and encourage broader assessment participation. In some operations, better coordinated and more comprehensive exercises may decrease the number of assessments necessary to fill existing information gaps, thus resulting in lower numbers of assessments conducted.

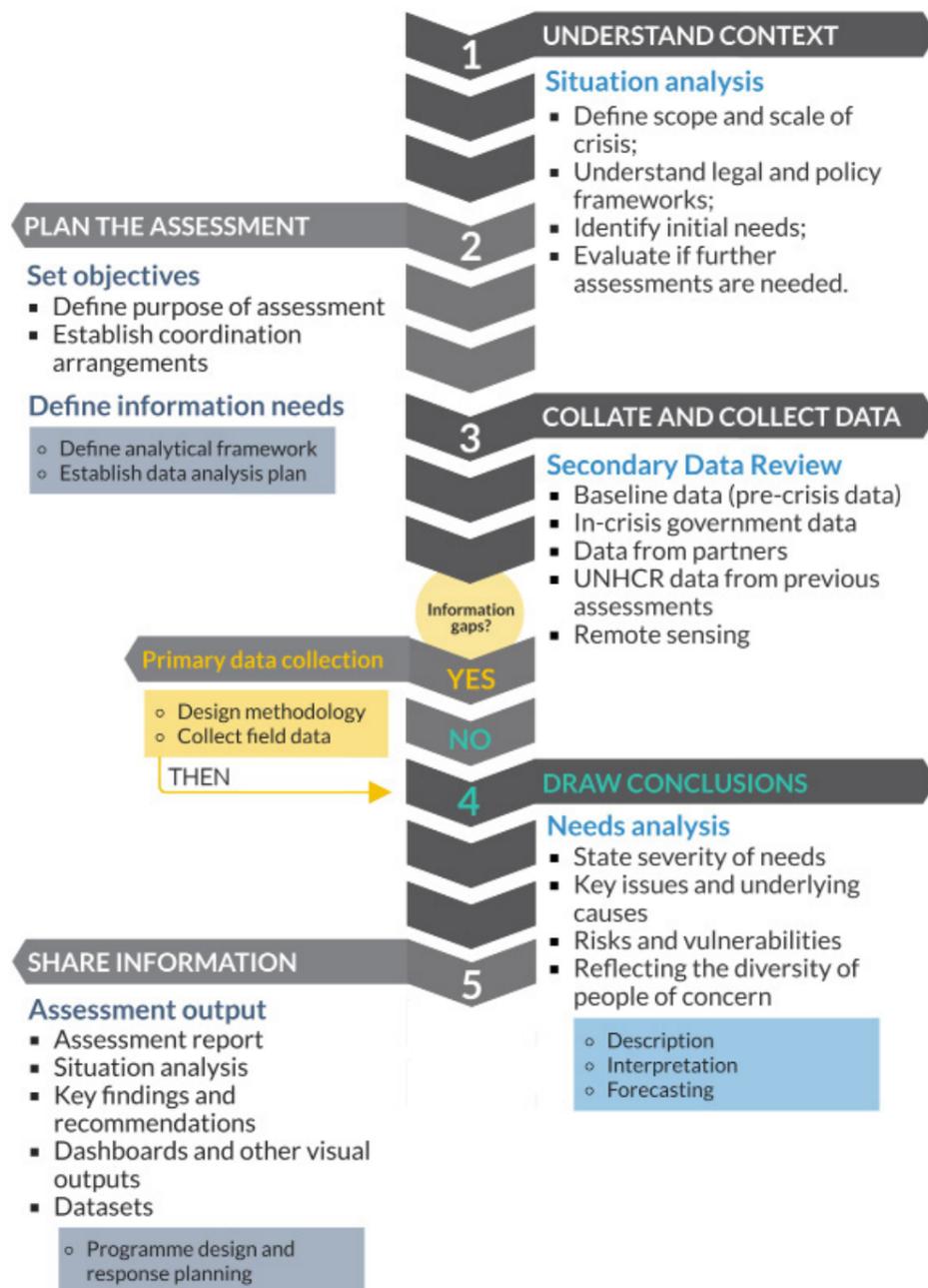
Comprehensiveness | This report presents an indicative rather than exhaustive description of the current state of play for joint needs assessments at UNHCR. As it is largely based on inputs from the field, the accuracy of regional performance is likely affected by the level of compliance with the reporting exercise.

² More information on the Grand Bargain commitments to Improve Joint and Impartial Needs Assessments at: https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/ws5_-_collaborative_needs_assessment_ethos.pdf.

³ For a brief overview of the assessment process mentioned, please refer to the next page of this report (page 5). Consult our [Needs Assessment Handbook](#) for detailed information on UNHCR's approach to needs assessment, available at: <http://needsassessment.unhcr.org/>

The assessment process

The graphic below presents an overview of the assessment process, including the decision point related to the need for primary data collection. More information on definitions and approaches to needs assessment are available in the [UNHCR Needs Assessment Handbook](#).

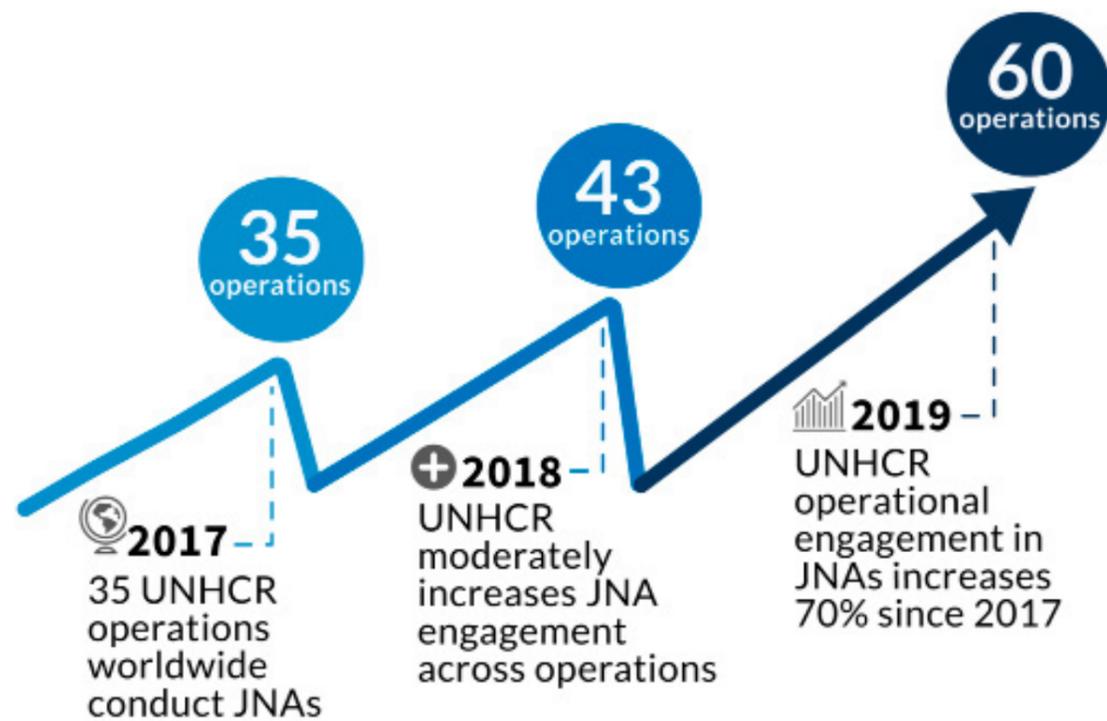


GLOBAL OVERVIEW

Overall engagement

Since 2017, UNHCR's overall engagement in multi-sectoral joint needs assessments across the organization has significantly improved. In its first reporting exercise, UNHCR had recorded operations in 35 different countries conducting joint assessment exercises. In 2018, this figure increased 23 per cent to 43 countries, and in 2019 another 40 per cent to 60 countries, showing a sustained upward trend.

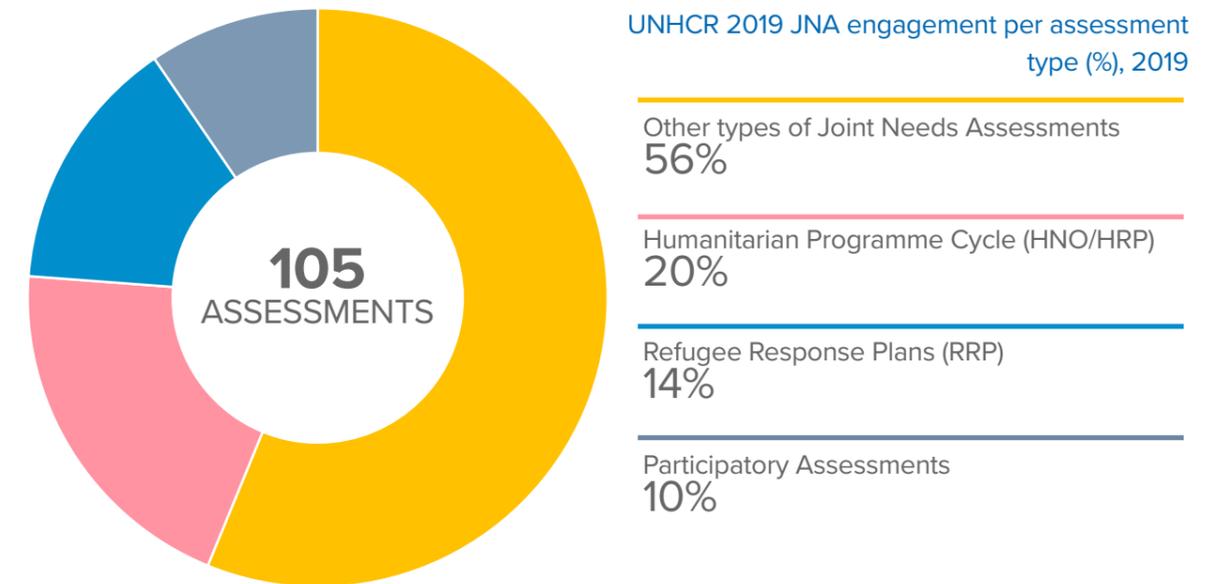
UNHCR overall JNA engagement (# of operations), 2017-2019



In 2019, UNHCR engaged in at least 105 multi-sectoral joint needs assessments across 60 countries. This figure is lower than in the previous year, when 128 joint exercises were recorded in 43 countries, representing a 17 per cent decrease in assessments. This reduction can be the result of a multitude of factors, including positive ones such as better assessment coordination, in compliance with the [Grand Bargain Principles for Coordinated Assessment Ethos](#).

Despite the lower total number of assessments reported, UNHCR’s leadership role in multi-sectoral joint needs assessments was significantly strengthened. In 2019, the agency led or co-led 62 assessments, corresponding to 59 per cent of the 105 exercises reported, up from 46 per cent of assessments reported in 2018.

UNHCR 2019 JNA engagement per assessment type (%), 2019



Types of assessments

Of the assessment exercises included in this report, 20 per cent were HNOs and HRPs. Another 10 per cent were assessments linked to RRP, 14 per cent were UNHCR-led Participatory Assessments and 56 per cent were other types of multi-sectoral joint exercises, such as vulnerability assessments, profiling exercises, rapid assessments, intention surveys and nutrition surveys.

Transparency and dissemination

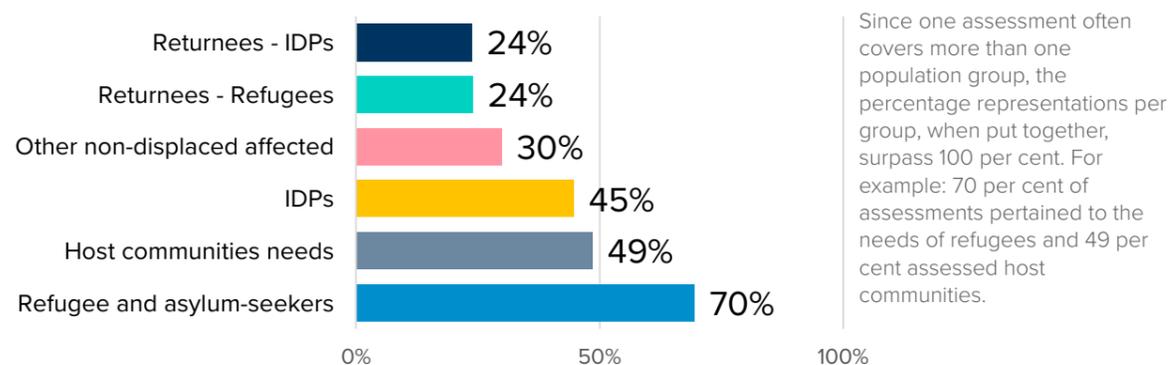


Assessment reports were publicly available in 76 per cent of joint exercises, of which 65 per cent were published in different online platforms and 11 per cent were available upon request. The remainder 24 per cent of reports were kept internal to the participants of the assessment. This can be necessary in specific situations where the outcomes of an assessment exercise may have a negative impact on populations of concern or on the operational environment. In these cases, reports are shared with a limited number of trusted stakeholders.

Coverage of affected population groups

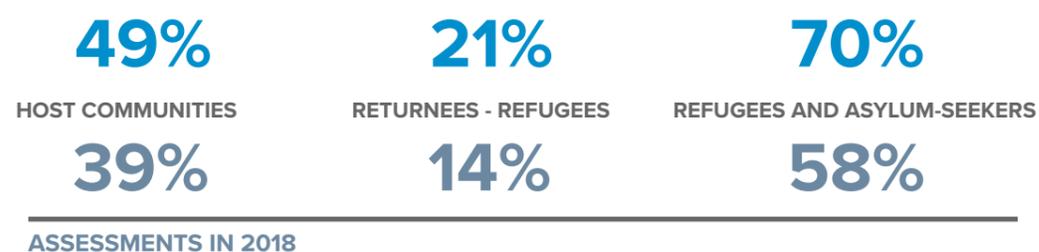
As reflected below, the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers were analysed in 70 per cent of assessments UNHCR participated or (co)led in 2019. Needs analysis on internally displaced persons (IDPs) were included in 45 per cent of assessments, while other non-displaced affected populations were analysed in 30 per cent of assessments, and returnees - both refugee and IDP returnees - in 24 per cent of exercises each. Host communities were the second-most assessed population group, included in 49 per cent of the exercises. This indicates improved efforts to include host community needs compared to 2018, when 39 per cent of assessments covered host communities.

Representation of population groups in UNHCR JNAs (%), 2019



Compared to the previous year, 2019 figures show a stronger UNHCR engagement where the agency has a leadership mandate, namely refugee situations. As seen below, the percentage of assessments covering the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, refugee returnees and refugee-hosting communities all increased, showing not only alignment with Grand Bargain commitments but also to the Global Compact for Refugees.

ASSESSMENTS IN 2019



Joint Needs Assessments and the Global Compact on Refugees

“

Reliable, comparable, and timely data is critical for evidence-based measures to: improve socio-economic conditions for refugees and host communities; assess and address the impact of large refugee populations on host countries in emergency and protracted situations; and identify and plan appropriate solutions”.

[Global Compact on Refugees, p. 17]⁴



Scan to read the full text of the Global Compact on Refugees.

In 2019, 37 per cent of joint needs assessments UNHCR (co)led or participated in analysed the needs of both host communities and refugees, compared to 27 per cent in 2018. In particular, there has been a 30 per cent decrease in the total number of assessments that looked only at displaced population groups without including the needs of host communities. The improvements reflected in these figures represent an important step towards the implementation of the [Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#)⁵, which, among other goals, aims to transform the response to refugee situations to ensure host communities also get the support they need.

UNHCR's joint needs assessment engagement also contributes to the implementation of GCR commitments towards a multi-stakeholder approach, where humanitarian and development organisations work together with national actors to ensure complementarity between responses. In line with this principle, UNHCR has co-led assessments with development and government stakeholders throughout 2019, including in Ethiopia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Malawi, Nepal, the Philippines and Uganda.

⁴ The full Global Compact on Refugees booklet is available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5c658aed4>

⁵ More information about the Global Compact on Refugees is available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>



Democratic Republic of the Congo. Fleeing inter-ethnic violence in Ituri province. UNHCR/John Wessels/September 2019

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

For the analysis of UNHCR's regional performance, 127 operations have been taken into consideration, that fulfil the following criteria: (1) UNHCR has a permanent physical presence in the country⁶; or (2) a temporary presence for a relevant multi-sectoral joint needs assessment exercise was identified⁷. According to this criteria, 60 per cent of UNHCR operations in Africa, 74 per cent of operations in the Americas, 33 per cent in Asia and the Pacific, 20 per cent in Europe and 56 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conducted multi-sectoral joint needs assessments in 2019.

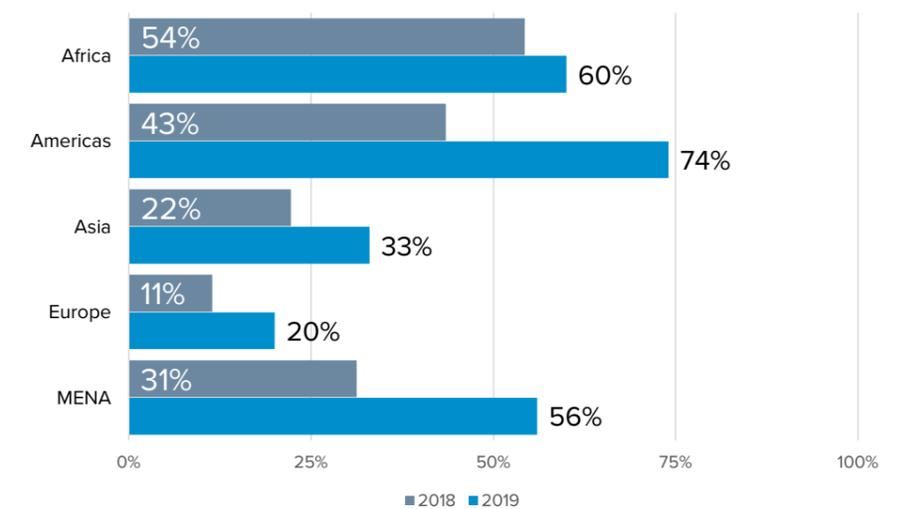
⁶ A physical UNHCR presence was identified in 125 countries. Note this excludes China despite the presence of a UNHCR office, as all refugees in the country are considered fully integrated and receiving protection assistance from national authorities.

⁷ Temporary presences were identified in Curaçao, a country covered by the United States Multi-Country Office and part of the regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) process, and Slovakia, a country covered by the Hungary Multi-Country Office.



UNHCR operational engagement in JNAs per region improved from 2018 to 2019, particularly in the Americas (+31%) and MENA (+25%) regions.

UNHCR operations overall engaging in JNAs per region (%), 2018-2019



Every year, political sensitivities and other restrictions in the operational environment in some regions limit the space for needs assessments in general to be conducted or made public. In parallel, the need for large multi-sectoral joint exercises in some operations may be lower depending on the **scope and scale** or the **response structures** in place. In spite of this, UNHCR was able to increase its operational engagement in joint needs assessment in all regions.

Response Structures

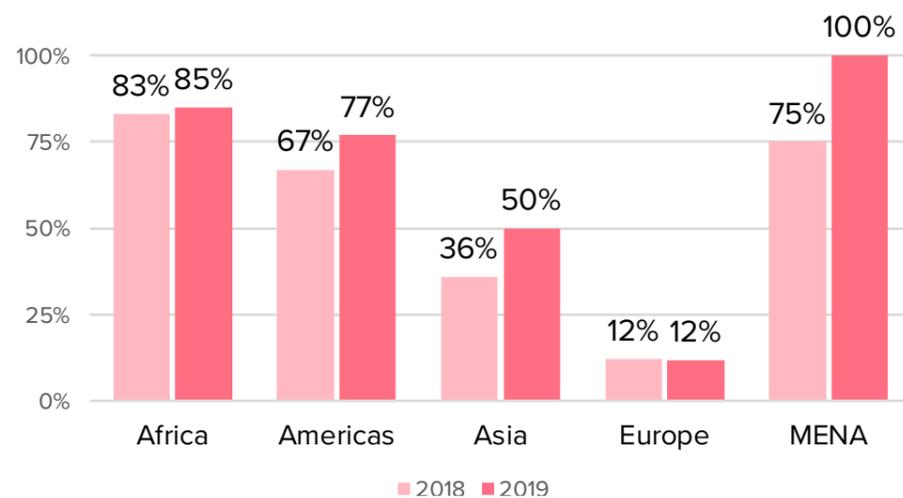
In countries where refugee response is entirely regulated and implemented by highly capacitated and fully financed government bodies, no operational engagement from UNHCR is generally needed, as government authorities take full responsibility for protecting and assisting persons of concern. In the Americas, for example, the United States is the second highest refugee-hosting country. In this case, as well as in many European countries, UNHCR focuses largely on advisory or advocacy work and the engagement in Grand Bargain-compliant joint needs assessment exercises is less applicable.

Scope and Scale

In small-scale operations, a multi-sector multi-stakeholder response that includes actors beyond UNHCR's implementing partners may not be necessary, and a multi-sectoral joint assessment exercise may therefore not be required. Responses in large-scale operations, on the other hand, often entail the engagement of multiple stakeholders and a higher level of partner coordination - including to assess needs. Of the 127 UNHCR operations, 67 are located in countries hosting 100,000 or more persons of concern in 2019. Considering these as UNHCR's "large-scale operations", where the likelihood of a sizable cross-sector response is higher, 41 (or 67 per cent) of them engaged in multi-sectoral JNAs in 2019.

Compared to the previous year, JNA engagement of UNHCR's large-scale operations per region in 2019 improved, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa region, where 100 per cent of large-scale operations engaged in at least one joint multi-sectoral exercise. In Asia and the Americas, JNA engagement also improved, while in Africa it remained similarly high. Finally, the engagement of Operations in Europe remained stable, which can be associated with the scale of UNHCR operations in some countries and with the response structures in some of the countries hosting large refugee populations (i.e. 100,000 persons of concern or more).

UNHCR large-scale operations engaging in JNAs per region (%), 2018-2019



Ethiopia. A boy stands along a canal in an irrigated farming land in Melkadida. UNHCR/ Eduardo Soteras Jalili/ September 2019

AFRICA

60%

of UNHCR operations located in Africa conducted multi-sectoral joint needs assessments in 2019.

85%

of operations located in African countries hosting 100,000 or more persons of concern led or participated in JNAs in 2019.

In East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes, 8 out of 9 large-scale operations conducted joint needs assessments in 2019, while 7 out of 8 in West and Central Africa and 1 out of 3 in Southern Africa engaged in such exercises.

Informing needs overviews and response plans in the East and Horn of Africa

In Sudan, UNHCR led country-wide participatory assessments in November and December 2018 and published the final product in 2019. This kind of assessment was innovative for Sudan, as it is the only country-wide participatory assessment of a beneficiary group represented in the HNO and HRP. The assessment provided first-hand feedback from refugees and asylum-seekers across Sudan on key issues as well as their preferred interventions from the international humanitarian community. This feedback was used to develop better informed planning documents, such as the Country Refugee Response Plan, ensuring their alignment with the priorities and needs of targeted communities.

In Uganda, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and UNHCR jointly launched the revision of the 2019-2020 Uganda Refugee Response Plan (RRP) in February 2019 to align RRP planning figures, targets and budgets with a reduced refugee population as of year-end 2018. While seeking to meet humanitarian needs, the 2019-2020 RRP also serves as a transition plan towards sustainable refugee response programming in Uganda. As such, the plan contributes to achieving the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in Uganda, alongside interventions carried out by government institutions in line with the Global Compact on Refugees and the Grand Bargain commitment on the humanitarian-development nexus.

Supporting market analysis and responsible cash programmes in Uganda

As part of the Vulnerability and Essential Needs Assessment (VENA), UNHCR, REACH and the World Food Programme (WFP) conducted a joint market assessment in Uganda between August and October 2019, in close collaboration with partner NGOs. The objective of the assessment was to scope market functionality in the vicinity of Uganda's refugee settlements and understand the potential for market-based assistance that allows for refugees to meet their essential needs in every sector.

The assessment identified markets with the required absorption capacity to avoid price changes due to increased demand, and is therefore expected to contribute to more responsible and effective scaling up of cash programmes.

Informing regional and country Refugee Response Plans in Southern Africa and East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes

While in Ethiopia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda joint needs assessments were conducted to inform the country refugee response plans, in Burundi, assessments contributed to UNHCR's plan for refugee return and reintegration for Burundians abroad.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), assessments were conducted to inform the country response to refugees from Burundi, Central African Republic, Rwanda and South Sudan, while the needs of refugees from the DRC were included in the Regional Refugee Response Plan 2019-2020 across seven countries in Southern Africa and East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes.



Chad. Violence in West Darfur forces thousands to flee across border. UNHCR/ Aristophane Ngargoune/ January 2020

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Multi-sectoral rapid assessments and joint missions as an important tool to inform response plans and trigger interventions in Cameroon

Under the leadership of OCHA, UNHCR supported in 2019 a Multi-sectoral Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) in the Adamaoua region of Cameroon. The MIRA assessed the living conditions of the displaced population, measured the impact on the local communities and identified priority needs. The region had been traditionally known for hosting refugees from the Central African Republic but through the MIRA, the needs of over 5,000 IDPs as well as 14,000 host community members were also identified. The findings contributed to the revision of the 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan by providing information on the availability and functionality of basic social infrastructures.

UNHCR also conducted several Joint Assessment Missions (JAM) in the East and North regions of Cameroon to identify the needs of displaced populations and host communities. The JAMs were carried out with the support of WFP as well as other UN agencies and NGOs.



Cameroon: Young children hold their school books and bags during morning registration at Brokop refugee site. UNHCR/ Xavier Bourgois/ June 2018

Assessment missions throughout West Africa

Further assessment missions under the leadership of UNHCR or OCHA were conducted in Burkina Faso, Chad, Liberia, Niger and Mali. In Burkina Faso, a joint mission including 9 UN agencies, 9 national and international NGOs and 2 government bodies assessed the needs of internally displaced persons and host communities in the center-north region. The resulting report triggered immediate humanitarian responses in shelter and non-food items (NFIs) as well as psychosocial support.



Guatemala.
Transgender couple
wants right to be "who
we are, free and safe."
UNHCR/Pablo
Villagran/April 2019

AMERICAS

74%

of UNHCR operations located in the Americas conducted multi-sectoral joint needs assessments in 2019.

77%

of operations located in countries in the Americas hosting 100,000 or more persons of concern led or participated in JNAs in 2019.

The largest multi-sectoral multi-partner exercise conducted in the Americas was in the context of the Refugee and Migrant Response Plans (RMRP), with analysis workshops carried out in 17 countries.

UNHCR and IOM join forces with UNICEF and OAS to profile Venezuelans in Panama

UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF and the Organization of American States (OAS) conducted a joint assessment in Panama to collect up-to-date information about the Venezuelan population in the country. This exercise involved primary data collection from more than 1,200 households, focus group discussions and interviews with key stakeholders, such as members of civil society organizations, local authorities and government institutions.

The assessment report *Situation of the Refugee and Migrant Population of Venezuela in Panama* (Situación de la Población Refugiada y Migrante de Venezuela en Panamá) provided detailed information on the socio-demographic profile of the target population as well as their legal and employment status, housing situation, social cohesion and education. This study was key to informing subsequent interventions and future response planning, as the data and conclusions from the report were used as evidence for the preparation of the Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) 2020 at the national level.

Using artificial intelligence to expand the data life cycle and support joint analysis

Joint analysis for the 2020 RMRP in Argentina, Aruba, Colombia, Chile, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago was supported by a secondary data review (SDR) process conducted on a rolling basis between August and December 2019. The review included the analysis of 838 documents and an assessment registry with 127 assessment reports.

The SDR was carried out using the Data Entry and Exploration Platform (DEEP), an inter-agency platform that maximizes the collaboration among stakeholders and the re-use of existing information by offering common analysis workflows and frameworks, as well as an assessment registry module and the possibility to categorize selected pieces of information within the data inputted with the assistance of artificial intelligence.



Scan to find out more about DEEP and its features.





Colombia. Venezuelan people are blocked on Simon Bolivar bridge, as they are trying to get back to Venezuela at the end of the day. UNHCR/Vincent Tremeau/April 2019

Leveraging the Humanitarian-Development Nexus to survey Venezuelans in Peru

In Peru, The National Survey on Venezuelan Populations (ENPOVE – Encuesta Nacional de Población Venezolana) was the first nationally representative survey on the trends, characteristics and profiles of Venezuelan populations in the country. The exercise was led by the National Statistics Institute of Peru, with the support of UNHCR, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank. As a joint effort between humanitarian and development actors, the ENPOVE gathered evidence to inform response and public policy design in support of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Peru.

The results of the ENPOVE have been widely used by the government and participating agencies as basis for further analyses, such as the World Bank report “An opportunity for all: Venezuelan refugees and migrants and the development of Peru”. Data from the ENPOVE has also been used for high-level advocacy purposes and for the multi-sectoral analysis that supported Peru’s country chapter in the 2020 RMRP.



Mexico. Central American women find safety and strength in mural painting. UNHCR/Marta Martínez/December, 2018

Profiling and informing IDP policy in Central America

Starting in 2017, the Inter-institutional Commission for the Protection of Persons Displaced by Violence (CIPPDV in Spanish) in Honduras led a profiling exercise of internally displaced populations in collaboration with a Technical Working Group composed of a number of government agencies, the Centre for the Investigation and Promotion of Human Rights (CIPRODEH) representing civil society and UNHCR. The profiling exercise was also made possible by the extensive technical support received from the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS).

The assessment report was finalized and published in 2019 and provided a nationwide evidence base for a better understanding of internal displacement in Honduras, including its scale and impact. The exercise also helped strengthen the institutional and legal frameworks to address internal displacement in the country and contributed to the design of related public policies.



Thailand: Women artisan refugees empowered by WEAVE UNHCR/ November, 2019

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

33%

of UNHCR operations located in Asia and the Pacific conducted multi-sectoral joint needs assessments in 2019.

50%

of operations in countries in Asia and the Pacific hosting 100,000 or more persons of concern led or participated in JNAs in 2019.

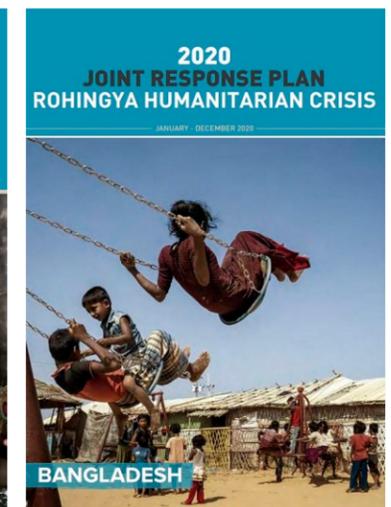
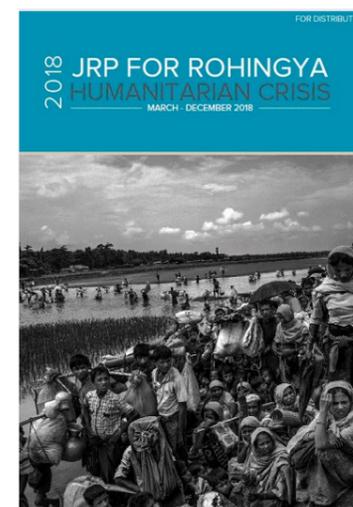
The 2019 Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis analysed the needs of 1.2 million persons of concern. Through the JRP, UNHCR provides jointly with other humanitarian actors reliable and predictable evidence to inform responses in Bangladesh.

Needs assessment engagement in Bangladesh

Joint Response Plan

Under the auspices of the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), UNHCR once again partnered with IOM and the UN Resident Coordinator to assess the needs of Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh. The 2019 Joint Response Plan (JRP) for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis identified the cross-sector needs of **1.2 million persons of concern** and outlined a response strategy centred around delivering protection, providing life-saving assistance and fostering social cohesion. The JRP also outlined coordination mechanisms to address needs, discussed linkages between humanitarian and development action and supported emergency preparedness for natural disasters.

Since 2017, UNHCR has contributed to government-led efforts in Bangladesh towards rapid life-saving humanitarian action and the protection of Rohingya refugees and affected host communities. Through the JRP, UNHCR has been working since 2018 with other humanitarian actors to provide comprehensive, reliable and predictable evidence-base to inform response programming.





Bangladesh. UNHCR helps thousands hit by monsoon storms. UNHCR/September 2019

UNHCR-REACH assessments

UNHCR partnered with REACH in 2019 for two exercises in Cox's Bazar targeting refugees and host communities: one rapid assessment and one in-depth assessment. The joint exercises include information on the profile of targeted populations as well as their priority needs, preferred aid modalities and community perceptions. Access to basic services and coping strategies were also analysed with the aim to inform the design and implementation of effective inter-sector programming, including the JRP.

UNHCR-WFP Joint Assessment Mission

In collaboration with WFP, UNHCR conducted a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) in Cox's Bazar. The objective of the JAM was to compile key findings on access to basic services and assistance, provide strategic directions for joint UNHCR-WFP programming and identify areas for greater coordination and collaboration, such as data sharing, system interoperability, targeting and cash-based interventions

Participatory assessments to inform refugee response in South and South-East Asia

In [Nepal](#), UNHCR led a series of participatory assessments in January 2019 with refugees in Beldangi and Sanischare camps, including children, elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Age, gender and disability sensitive approaches were emphasized to ensure the accurate inclusion of all participants' opinions on their challenges, opportunities and strengths. Local authorities and host community members also participated in the exercise.

In [the Philippines](#), UNHCR led a series of nationwide participatory assessments between January and February 2019 in collaboration with key government agencies as well as local and faith-based NGOs. These assessments aimed at measuring access to rights by refugees and asylum-seekers.

Measuring the impact of the Marawi conflict on internally displaced persons and host communities in the Philippines

In the Philippines, a large multi-sectoral multi-partner needs assessment exercise was conducted jointly by 21 UN agencies, including UNHCR, to analyse the needs of over 66,000 people living in a protracted internal displacement situation due to the Marawi conflict since May 2017. UNHCR and partners assessed IDPs in camps and transitory sites as well as host communities to inform assistance planning by the humanitarian community.



Spain. A shipwrecked boat used by migrants and refugees in the coast of Cadiz, near Punta Paloma. UNHCR/ Markel Redondo/January, 2019

EUROPE

20% of UNHCR operations located in Europe conducted multi-sectoral joint needs assessments in 2019.

12% of operations located in countries in Europe hosting 100,000 or more persons of concern led or participated in JNAs in 2019.

UNHCR offices in Europe are often engaged in advocacy work, as national authorities take full responsibility for assistance delivery for persons of concern. This is closely associated with the low number of JNAs in large-scale operations in the region.



Italy. Refugees enjoy the 'Refugee Protagonists' closing event. UNHCR/Alessio Mammo/October 2019

Safeguarding the protection space for refugees and asylum-seekers through advocacy and policy-focused work

Where governments take full responsibility for assessing, assisting and protecting refugees, UNHCR's work focuses largely on safeguarding the protection space through government advocacy, public awareness raising and contributions to policy-making. This is often the case for operations located in Europe, where countries hosting large refugee populations include Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom. It is only in main refugee entry points into the European Union (EU), such as Eastern and Southern Europe that UNHCR provides services and therefore conducts assessments - where possible, jointly.

Profiling unregistered populations in Greece

In 2019, the Municipality of Thessaloniki, international and national NGOs as well as volunteer groups and UN agencies, including UNHCR, collaborated in a comprehensive profiling exercise to scope the situation and future intentions of refugees, asylum-seekers and third country nationals not registered with the Asylum Service in Greece.

The profiling exercise produced a baseline and a set of indicators for measuring the degree of local integration as well as a set of recommendations to the different stakeholders. This exercise combined a household survey with qualitative data, and made use of community engagement mechanisms for ground-truthing assumptions and findings.

Supporting integration through UNHCR participatory assessments

In 2019, UNHCR led joint participatory assessments in Albania, Croatia, Czechia, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine. In general, participatory assessments present a unique opportunity to capture the perspectives of persons of concern and provide more targeted feedback to stakeholders on needs of affected populations. In 2019, participatory assessments in Europe often informed discussions around improving durable solution approaches, particularly pertaining to local integration.

- ▶ **In Croatia**, the findings from the UNHCR-led assessment contributed to advocacy activities on the integration of refugees, particularly on the topics of language classes and sustainable accommodation.
- ▶ **In Czechia**, government actors and the NGO sector were brought together for a constructive dialogue through the joint participatory assessment process. UNHCR also supported government authorities in the standardization of the integration services provided to refugees within the State Integration Programme.
- ▶ **In Slovakia**, UNHCR will seek an open dialogue with relevant asylum authorities in the country to discuss the results of the 2019 participatory assessment, which similarly to Croatia and Czechia, included recommendations regarding the integration of persons of concern.

Protection assessment of isolated Ukrainians

In 2019, UNHCR partnered with REACH, the Ukraine Protection Cluster and other NGOs to conduct a protection assessment of vulnerable populations in government-controlled hard-to-reach areas along the contact line. Among its key findings, the exercise highlighted acute security concerns due to landmine and UXO contamination, poor infrastructure and transportation links to urban centres and a high level of vulnerability, particularly among the elderly and persons with disabilities, due to difficulties in accessing information and assistance from both government and humanitarian actors.



Yemen, Displaced Yemenis near destruction in Aden. UNHCR/Sateh Bahmais/June 2019

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

56% of UNHCR operations located in the Middle East and North Africa conducted multi-sectoral joint needs assessments in 2019.

100% of operations located in countries in Middle East and North Africa hosting 100,000 or more persons of concern led or participated in JNAs in 2019.

UNHCR continued to leverage its valuable and long-standing partnerships with other UN agencies and the World Bank to engage in JNAs, often working in politically sensitive and dangerous operational environments.

The Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF): Assessing the vulnerability of Syrian refugees

The Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) project dates to 2013, when approaches to collecting and analysing data on the vulnerability of Syrian refugees varied significantly between partners. The use of different vulnerability criteria resulted in data not being fully comparable or able to contribute to a comprehensive picture of the crisis at hand. Since then, the development of standardized criteria and a replicable approach to vulnerability assessments has allowed for humanitarian actors work more closely together. When consistently applied, the VAF is a predictable and reliable source of data to map, track and respond to vulnerabilities.



Jordan. Elderly Syrians braving winter cold in Irbid. UNHCR/ Mohammad Hawari/ November 2019

VAF Population Survey in Jordan

The VAF in Jordan is a UNHCR-led collaborative approach among NGOs and UN agencies to foster a common understanding of the vulnerability of registered Syrian refugees in the country. Through a standard and shared vulnerability profile, the VAF allows for changes in vulnerabilities to be monitored over time.

The framework includes a bi-annual population survey, a set of common indicators and tools, and a common database used for targeting and assistance, the Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS). The VAF population survey explores different dimensions of vulnerability across multiple sectors from a representative sample of registered Syrian refugees in Jordan. In 2019, the livelihoods section of the survey was expanded in collaboration with ILO to include insights into child labour and additional information on work opportunities. The assessment results are used for targeting of cash assistance, healthcare and emergency assistance by multiple partners, as well as by the Government to plan and implement the Jordan Response Plan (JRP).

In 2019, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP signed the Joint Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment (JCVA) Agreement, which outlines a collaborative approach to replace individual assessments conducted by each Agency. The JCVA will serve to maintain up-to-date information on poverty and vulnerability levels within the Syrian refugee population in Jordan and will guide any future targeting and vulnerability-based assistance deliveries.

Vulnerability assessment for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

The Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees is a product of the collaboration between UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and the Inter-Agency Coordination Unit in Lebanon. The survey questionnaire and analysis plan are reviewed annually and have been refined in close collaboration with sector working groups. In 2019, a new element “Voices from the Field” was added to the survey report, with summaries of contextual discussions on VASyR data held at each field office.

The VASyR presents a multi-sectoral assessment framework that can be replicated by field actors and researchers around the world. Throughout the years, the VASyR has:

- ▶ Enabled partners to draw from the same sample-based survey to understand a large population and translate knowledge into actionable results;
- ▶ Enjoyed strong acceptance from governance structures in place;
- ▶ Allowed actors in country to base their protection interventions and assistance using a common evidence-based approach; and
- ▶ Represented a consistent and predictable source of joint targeting data.

A key commitment of the Lebanon VASyR is to serve as a resource base, offering training materials, coded questionnaires, data quality assurance documents as well as the code of the open-source website. The resources are available on the website of **The VASyR Hub**.



<http://ialebanon.unhcr.org/vasyr/#/>

Egypt Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees

The Egypt Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees (EVAR) report for 2017 was finalized and published in 2019 as a joint effort by UNHCR and WFP. Since its publication, the Egypt VASyR has informed targeting eligibility criteria for food assistance for Syrian refugees in Egypt and allowed UNHCR and WFP to jointly target for food vouchers.

In alignment with Grand Bargain principles for coordinated assessments, the EVAR has helped reduce duplicative data collection exercises, as data being collected by UNHCR is shared with WFP for the analysis. Due to the comprehensiveness of the exercise, the EVAR also contributes to reducing respondent fatigue, as it is able to meet the information needs of many sectors and therefore reduce the need for multiple sector-specific assessments.

Finally, the EVAR has provided the evidence-base for a common inter-agency analysis and understanding of the vulnerability of Syrian refugees in Egypt and has informed joint resource mobilization efforts under the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP).

Partnering with the World Bank for a cross-country socio-economic analysis of displaced Syrians

In 2019, UNHCR and the World Bank conducted a joint analysis of the mobility of Syrian Refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq thanks to financial contributions from the Governments of Canada and Germany as well as from the State and Peace-building Fund (The World Bank Group) and the MENA Multi-Donor Trust Fund.

The study analyzed issues across different sectors, such as employment, security and access to basic rights and services, and aimed to provide a conceptual framework to facilitate an impartial conversation about refugees in these countries and their return choices.



Nutrition as the starting point for multi-sectoral analysis and response in Algeria's Tindouf province

The 2019 nutrition survey in Algeria was conducted jointly by UNHCR, WFP and Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli, with active participation by the refugee community and support from the authorities. The survey targeted the multi-sectoral needs and conditions of children under 5 years old and women of reproductive age (15-49), including access to food and health services, malnutrition trends, available water infrastructure and hygiene practices. Trend analysis showed a worsening in nutrition indicators, especially pertaining to chronic malnutrition and anaemia, and prompted UNHCR and WFP to revise and adjust their immediate and mid-term responses accordingly.

SPOTLIGHT ON OPEN DATA

Making data accessible

What is "open data"?

Open data is commonly defined as "data that can be freely used, modified, and shared by anyone, for any purpose"⁸. Various frameworks have been developed to operationalize this definition of open data, including the establishment of clearly defined license types or terms of use, which specify the "level of openness" of the data, and how it can be used. Different approaches to sharing and use are applied to different types of data to ensure the protection and well-being of individuals. For example:

<p>Aggregate data Data that has been combined and does not contain information about specific individuals. A good example of aggregate data is population figures. Normally, there are no limitations to accessing, using or re-sharing this type of data.</p>	<p>DATA OPENNESS</p> 	<p>Anonymized microdata Data that is processed in a way that removes personally identifiable information to avoid the re-identification of the individuals to whom it relates. The access, use and re-sharing of this type of data is usually more limited.</p>
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In recent years, national statistical offices and other agencies have established policies on the documentation, anonymization and public release of microdata that inform UNHCR's work in this area. Governments have embraced open data for its benefits in encouraging innovation and improving efficiency and transparency.

Why do we support open data?

- ▶ It contributes to timely, evidence-based decision and policy-making as well as to better informed programming.
- ▶ It promotes ethical information management approaches.
- ▶ It enables the re-use of data for historical analysis and lessons learned.
- ▶ It aligns with advocacy by the donor and inter-agency communities for more data sharing, increased transparency, improved coordination and less duplication.

How do we support it?

UNHCR is committed to **openly, safely and responsibly sharing** data on forced displacement, and working towards improved data analysis for evidenced-informed decision-making. UNHCR's approach to open data includes **supporting the use of existing sharing and joint analysis platforms**, such as the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) and the Data Entry and Exploration Platform (DEEP) as well as **developing additional services to make data more widely available**.

⁸ From <http://opendefinition.org/>

UNHCR open data engagement

UNHCR has consistently and actively shared information on public platforms and cluster portals. In 2019, UNHCR shared **23% more outputs** on humanitarianresponse.info, having gone from 585 reports shared in 2018 to 721 in 2019.

UNHCR is a **top contributor** to HDX having uploaded or updated **1,944 datasets** in 2019 up from 1,553 in 2018 (+25%).

In 2019, UNHCR and the World Bank launched the **Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement** to strengthen **socio-economic analysis** on displacement data, including **open data** made available by UNHCR through its **Microdata Library**.

UNHCR has rolled out internal and external **data libraries** to improve safe data storage and sharing, while allowing for **collaboration between data owners and analysts**.

UNHCR has coordinated with OCHA and the World Bank on **metadata standards and system interoperability**.

In 2018, UNHCR and WFP signed a **Data Sharing Addendum to the Global Memorandum of Understanding** for increased data sharing between the two agencies. The provisions of the addendum were invoked in **at least 5 countries** in 2019, including Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Sudan and Tanzania.

Safe data storage and sharing

In 2019, UNHCR established a "Data Curation Team" composed of data experts and statisticians, who work together with data owners within UNHCR to **prepare datasets** for safe internal storage and, where applicable, sharing and publication. The Data Curation Team also ensures **data quality** and the use of **data protection safeguards** before data is shared, for example through the **Microdata Library (MDL)**.

- ▶ Preparing a dataset includes anonymizing its contents, by processing data in a way that removes personally identifiable information to avoid the re-identification of the individuals to whom it relates.
- ▶ In 2019, dataset contributions to the MDL came from UNHCR's country operations, regional bureaux and headquarters subject matter experts, including those in the Public Health Section and the Division of Resilience and Solutions.



Scan to find out more about data curation and the microdata library



Launched in 2019 and created with the support of the World Bank, the MDL is a platform for UNHCR to [safely make microdata externally available](#) to entities or individuals who demonstrate a legitimate need to access it. Microdata provides information about the characteristics of individuals or entities, such as households, businesses or geographical areas, such as villages or towns.

Data sharing highlights

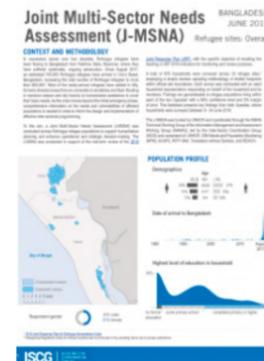
2016-2019 DATA ON VULNERABILITY TO BE MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE THROUGH THE MICRODATA LIBRARY

UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF have agreed to upload to the MDL the microdata from all Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) in Lebanon from 2016 to 2019.



20% INCREASE IN VISITORS ON UNHCR'S DATA PORTAL

In 2011, UNHCR launched its Operational Data Portal to make key figures and end-products, such as assessment or situation reports, maps, dashboards, fact sheets and strategy documents available for all, including the humanitarian and development communities, donors and persons of concern. In 2019, the portal had 725,000 visitors, a 20% increase from the 600,000 visitors registered in 2018.



DATASETS ANONYMIZED FOR SHARING

In 2019, the Data Curation Team processed 106 datasets from 26 countries. Approximately 50 per cent of the datasets were anonymized to facilitate onwards sharing. For example, the anonymized microdata from the 2019 Bangladesh MSNA was released publicly through the MDL.

2019 UNHCR MULTI-SECTORAL JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORTING

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