



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

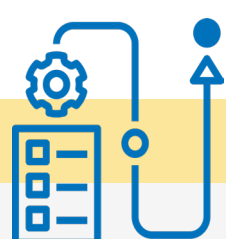
UNHCR AFGHANISTAN

2022 MULTI SECTORIAL RAPID ASSESSMENTS ANALYSIS



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METHODOLOGY

From 01 January to 31 December 2022, **UNHCR and partner's female and male staff conducted 190,499 household-level multi-sectorial rapid assessments in 349 districts in all 34 provinces** with the goal of identifying families in need of UNHCR assistance and feed into overall UNHCR programming. Due to the dynamic situation and lack of a complete sampling frame, convenience sampling was used. The selection of the areas to conduct assessments was based on the high number of People with and for whom UNHCR works which includes refugees, refugee returnees, Internally displaced persons (IDPs), IDP returnees and host communities as well as information coming from the Community-Based Protection Monitoring and UNHCR's key informants. Detailed analysis based on the findings extracted from these household-level multi-sectorial rapid assessment is summarized in each section of this report. Information is complemented with additional information and data obtained from Community-Based Protection Monitoring (consisting of Household level interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) and Key Informants Interview) in some sections when required, which provide more in-depth protection data and information on some key protection thematic areas, which directly feed into Protection Cluster's quarterly Protection Analysis Update (PAU) which is available on [Afghanistan | Global Protection Cluster](#).

While the findings presented in this report are to be considered as indicative because assessments were conducted based on sampling or random selection (in the case of border monitoring interviews), assessments covering 1.49 million individuals/190,499 households across Afghanistan present valuable information regarding the protection and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and the needs of People with and for whom UNHCR works.



KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION



PROTECTION RISKS

- One of the **key protection risks** is linked to the crippling economic decline that is fueling massive humanitarian needs, **impacting all communities in Afghanistan including women, men, girls and boys and all status groups including IDPs, IDP returnees, refugees, refugee returnees and host communities.** On the other hand, the level of vulnerability increases for **people with specific needs and protection risks, rendering them less resilient.** This is exacerbated by a number of factors, including restrictions introduced by the De facto Authorities (DfA). Women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities are exposed to higher protection risks as their specific needs are often not met, resulting in increased vulnerabilities and needs of humanitarian assistance and protection support.
- To lessen the adverse effects of the current situation in overcoming these challenges, **harmful and short-term coping mechanisms are also being sought, resulting in serious harm and increased protection risks, particularly to the most vulnerable, such as women and children.**



FUTURE INTENTIONS

- Findings on future intentions suggest that **the majority of IDPs (76%) prefer to remain in their current locations** while 24 per cent of IDPs opt for return to their places of origin. IDPs who intend to stay in the current location have moderately decreased from 88 per cent and **IDPs who opt for return have increased from 12 per cent in 2021.**
- There is a rather **significant regional variance on the future intention.**
- **Lack of job opportunity is the major barrier** for IDPs to locally integrate. Economic hardship is one of the contributing factors driving the intentions.



ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATION

- **The lack of awareness of Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFM) remains high.** Only 40% of the respondents cited being aware of complaint and feedback mechanisms related to humanitarian assistance, which is equivalent to last year's figures, despite continuous efforts to enhance CFM channels and outreach
- Additionally, even those who indicated that they had knowledge of the availability of these channels were **unable to access them.** Some of the reasons provided by the respondents include **lack of internet connection** to email or access information available online and for women and girls the issue of **lack of telecommunication means.**
- **The most preferred mean of communication was in-person feedback** at distribution point (help desk) both for women and men.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Upscale livelihoods support** since lack of livelihoods/job opportunities is one of the key barriers for durable solutions for IDPs. It will also lead to mitigation of protection risks, addressing harmful coping mechanism and enhancing resilience of persons with specific needs if it is carefully tailored.
- **Support for IDP durable solutions,** either return to their former homes or habitual places of residence, local integration in areas where they are displaced, or settlement and integration elsewhere, **need to be locally tailored based on the intention of IDPs with the area-based approach** and gradually shift the focus from household level humanitarian assistance, addressing the factors indicated as barriers and opportunities for solutions.
- **Enhance Communication with Communities(CwC)** and **better reach out to women and girls.** Since women and girls, including female-headed households, are disproportionately affected due to gender-specific restrictions including freedom of movement, it requires tailored CwC at their disposal and enhanced community engagement through the community-based structures and enhanced outreach activities.

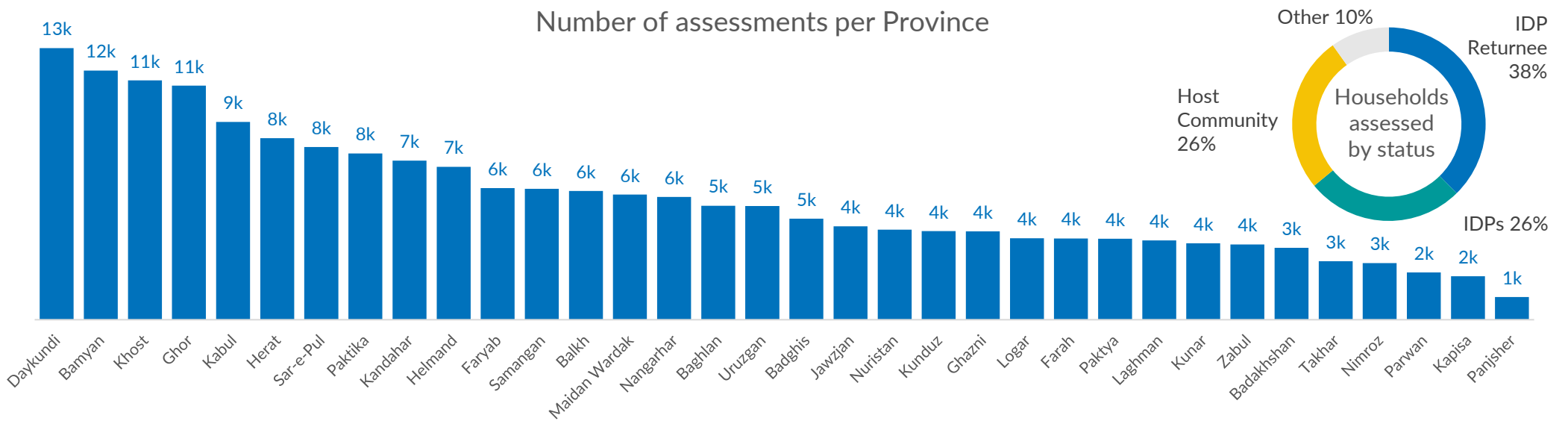
EXTENT OF THE ASSESSMENTS



190,499
Total Assessments

34 out of 34
Provinces reached

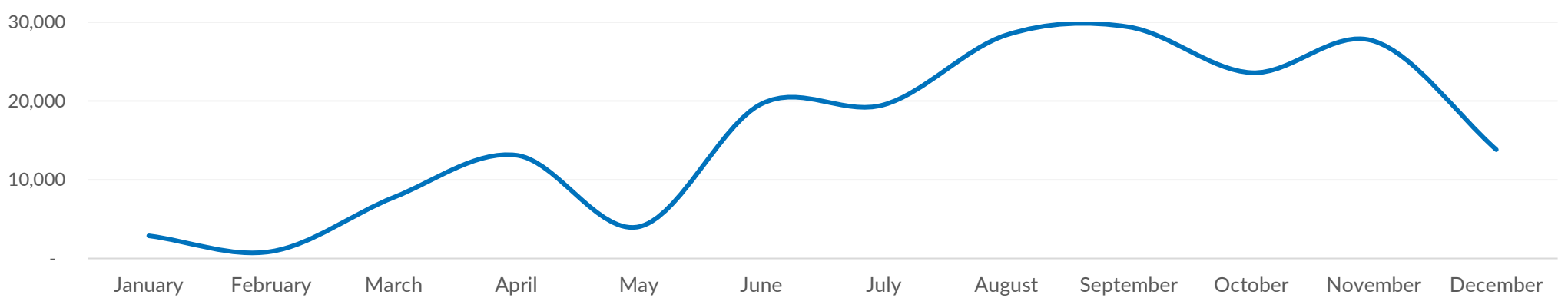
349 out of 401
Districts covered



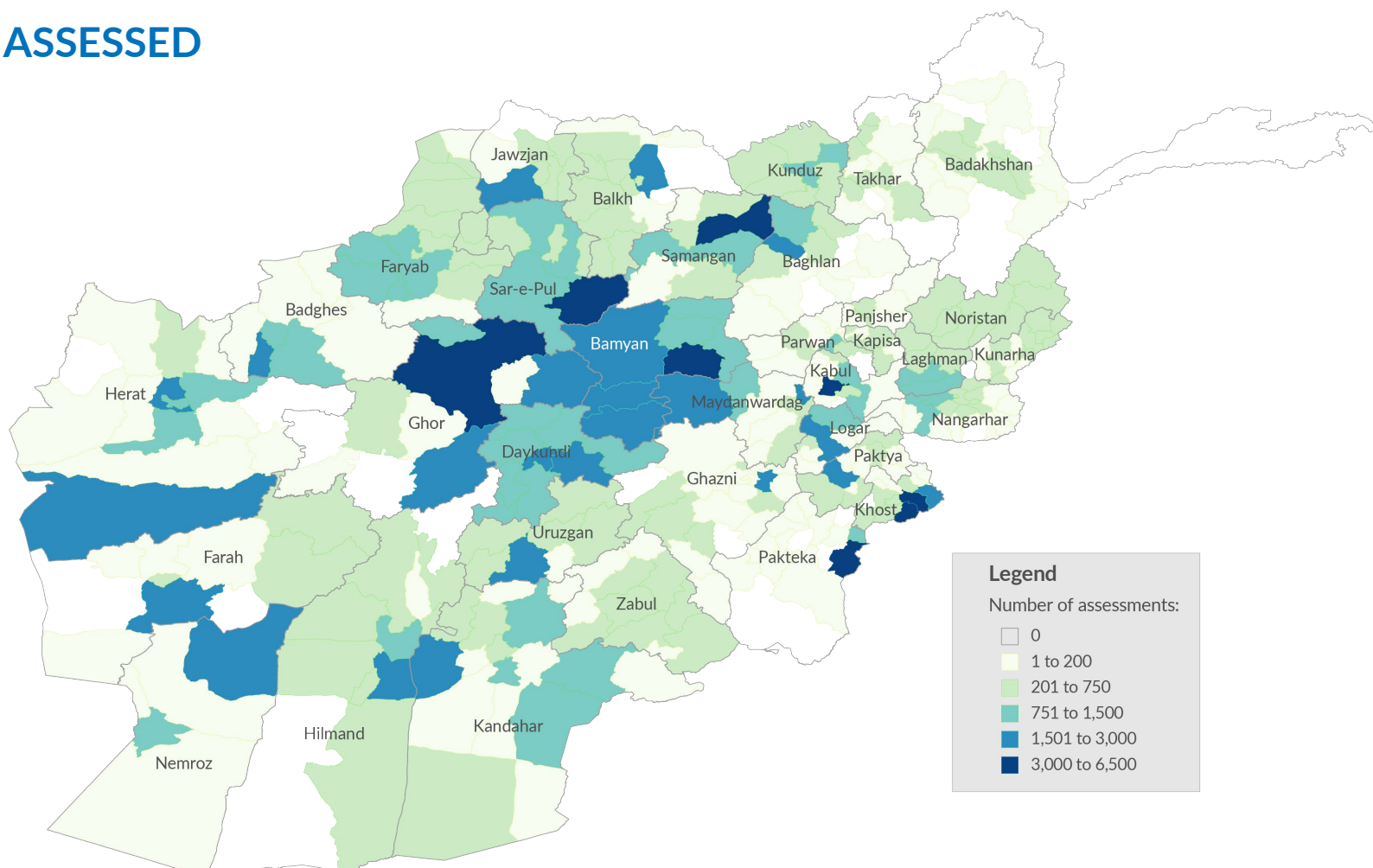
Between 1 January - 31 December 2022, UNHCR conducted 190,499 household assessments (approx. 1,486,000 individuals) using its Rapid Household Assessment Form (RHAF) covering all 34 provinces and 349 districts (out of the then 401 total number of districts in Afghanistan). From 01 May 2022, UNHCR introduced an updated version of the RHAF to make it more efficient for the goal of identifying families in need of UNHCR assistance in a timely and effective manner. The data presented in this report is based on the findings from the assessments from January to December 2022.

These assessments covered around 1,486,000 individuals with the data showing that 82% of persons in households are women and children with older persons (both female and male) making up 4% of total family members.

ASSESSMENT TRENDS JAN-DEC 2022



DISTRICTS ASSESSED



BACKGROUND

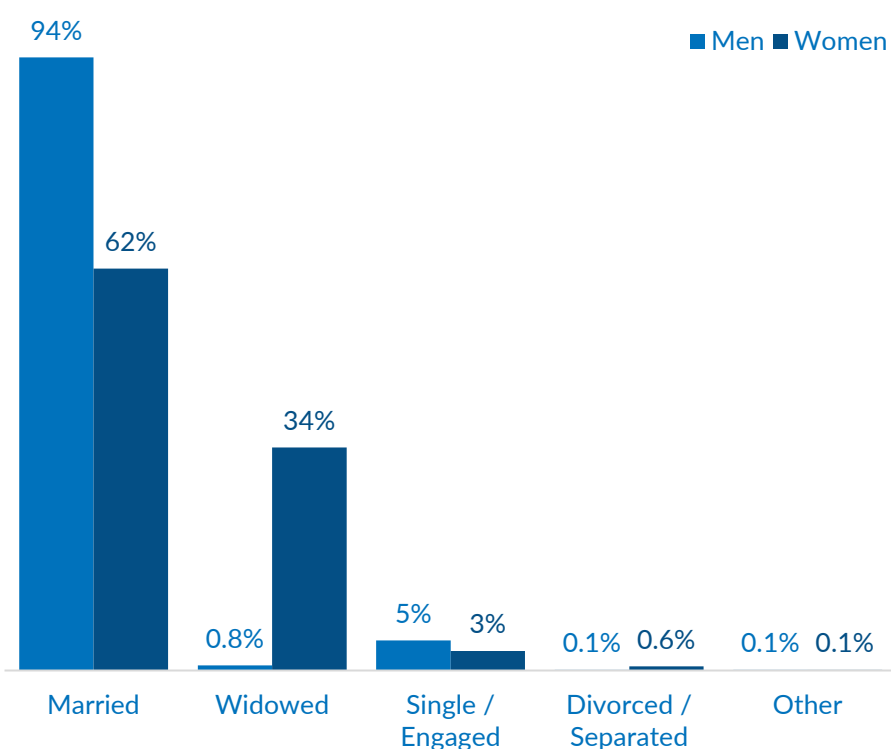
Since 15 August 2021, the human rights situation of women and girls in Afghanistan has significantly deteriorated as a result of a series of systematic restrictions on the fundamental rights and freedoms of women and girls. These restrictions have created significant barriers to accessing education and livelihoods, curtailed freedom of movement and deprived many women of income earning opportunities. The impact of these restrictions, along with increasing humanitarian and protection needs, will continue to be monitored through UNHCR protection monitoring including RHAF to inform UNHCR programming and targeting assistance toward the most vulnerable.

The 2022 RHAF assessments were conducted **with people with and for whom UNHCR works with primary focus on IDPs, IDP returnees, refugee returnees and refugees as well as non-displaced host community members**. This is to ensure a whole-of-community approach that addresses their protection, assistance and solutions-related needs.

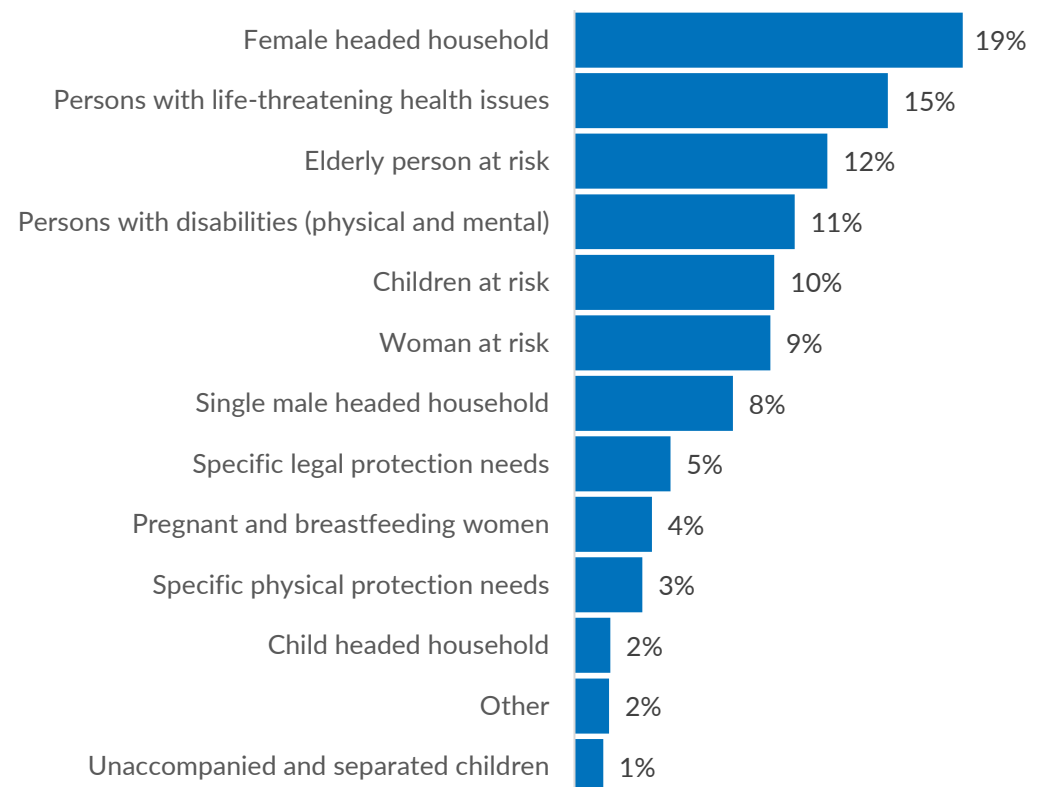


KEY DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Marital Status by Gender



47% have at least one vulnerability*



Key findings on Vulnerabilities and Protection Concerns

The households (HHs) assessed in the RHAF were predominantly headed by males, while 17% were headed by females between the ages of 18 and 59 years. Additionally, 12% of HHs were headed by older persons (10% by males and 2% by females aged 60 and above) and 2.4% of HHs were found to be headed by children below 18 years.

Amongst the male Heads of Households (MHoHs) assessed, 94% of MHoHs were married, while amongst Female Heads of Households (FHoHs) the marital status varied: 62% were married, 34% were found to be widowed, and 3% single or engaged. Overall, 31% of HHs assessed were said to be headed by women, older persons and children, who may be exposed to significantly higher protection risks and economic insecurity given the challenges related to socio-economic inclusion often faced by these groups. Particularly with the various restrictions that have been placed on women including freedom of movement, access to livelihoods and education, which impact on their ability to move freely and work and bring in income, this is a critical aspect leading to protection risks for these families considering that these females are the primary or sole breadwinners among FHoHs. It is, therefore, likely that **these families are far more susceptible to resorting to harmful coping mechanisms, including child labour**.

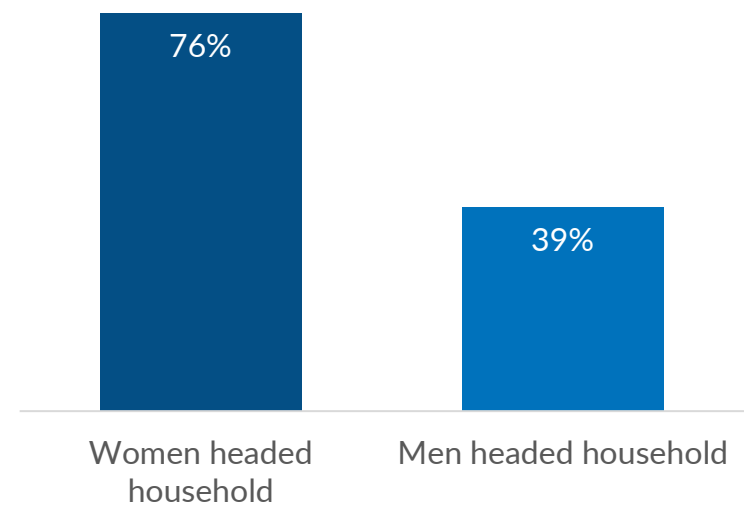
*Data refers to the assessments from May onwards.

Key findings on Vulnerabilities and Protection Concerns

Additionally, significant percentage of the families interviewed indicated one or more vulnerability factors of Heads of Households (HoHs) or family members. Analyzing by gender, **Female HoHs (FHoHs) show higher vulnerability, with 76% indicating one or more vulnerability factors, as opposed to 39% for Male Heads of Household.**

Types of vulnerabilities among family members is presented in the previous page. It shows that **families headed by female have the highest vulnerability factor, followed by family member(s) with life-threatening health issues and elderly at risk.** Conversely, unaccompanied children requiring family tracing and dedicated child protection support, legal and persons physical protection needs were identified with less significant numbers.

Household with Vulnerabilities by head of household gender



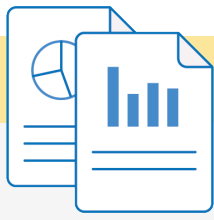
Marginal differences were observed among different status groups although the values were highest amongst IDPs. A range of factors were listed as causes for vulnerability including **psychological distress**, which encompasses feelings of sadness, frustration and anxiety and were reported by a large number of respondents. Lack of employment was listed as the primary reason affecting mainly HoH's psychosocial well-being, who are responsible for their families in the current critical economic environment. This shows **the need for dedicated community-based psychosocial support(PSS) and other community-based protection activities** in addition to the centre-based PSS and protection activities.

Physical harassment or assault, forced eviction and eviction threat have also been reported, although to a much lower degree. In addition, where discrimination has been reported to have occurred, women and IDP returnees are more affected.

Overall, **vulnerabilities have not decreased in comparison to 2021.** As a consequence, **households have had to resort to various coping mechanisms leading to further protection risks**, including among children (please refer to "Coping Strategies" section below).



An elderly woman receiving support under the Cash for Shelter Project © UNHCR/Afghanistan



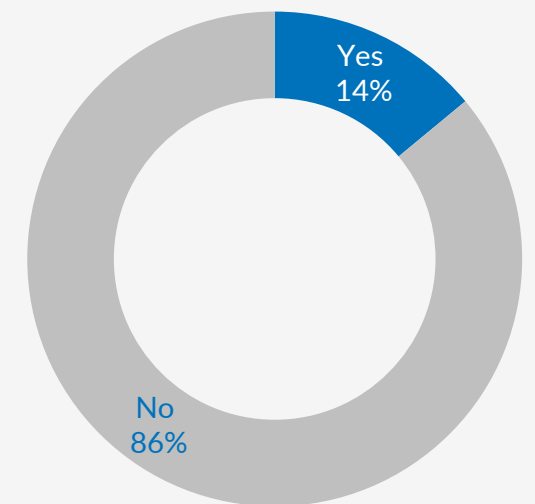
OVERALL HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Unsurprisingly, **food tops the list of needs** for IDPs and IDP returnees, however, there is also an **evident need for healthcare** (as second priority), followed by non-food items such as clothes (as third priority), while last year (2021) fuel was the third priority. Across the priority needs, **women presented greater needs than men**. In particular, they surpassed men by 7% in rental assistance needs and by 3% in clothing/Non-food items(NFIs) among IDP and IDP returnees.

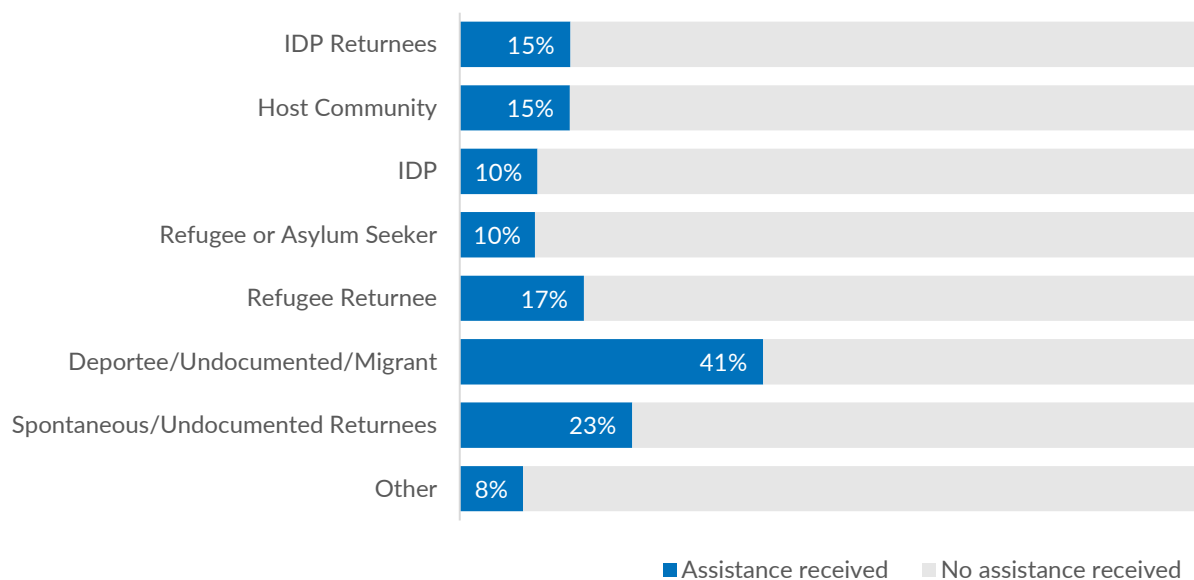
At the time of the survey, **the vast majority of the households assessed indicated they had not received humanitarian assistance (86%)**. Overall, slightly less female households received assistance (12%) than male households (15%) as depicted in the graph below. Of those that had received assistance, 41% indicated receiving assistance in the previous week/month, primarily in the form of food.

Nevertheless, while there are evidently significant humanitarian needs amongst IDPs, they have been targeted less often with humanitarian assistance, as only 10% indicated having received aid, compared to 15% for the host community and IDP returnees while last year IDP returnees were less targeted than other population groups.

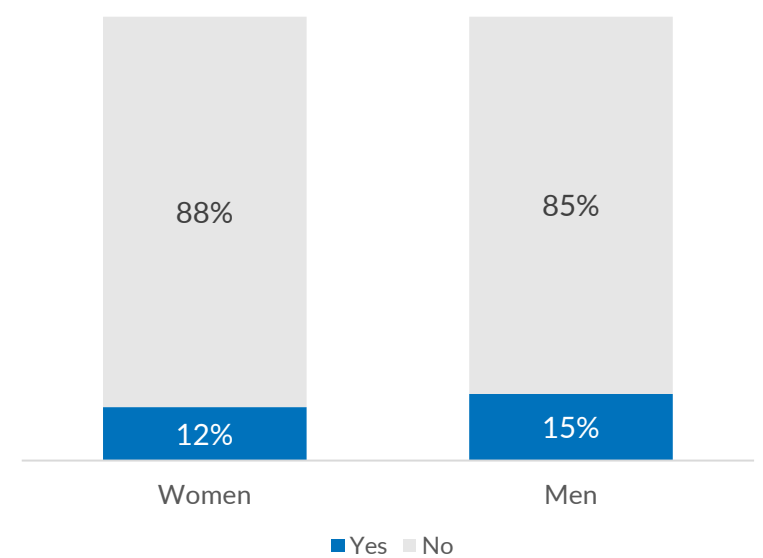
Assistance previously received



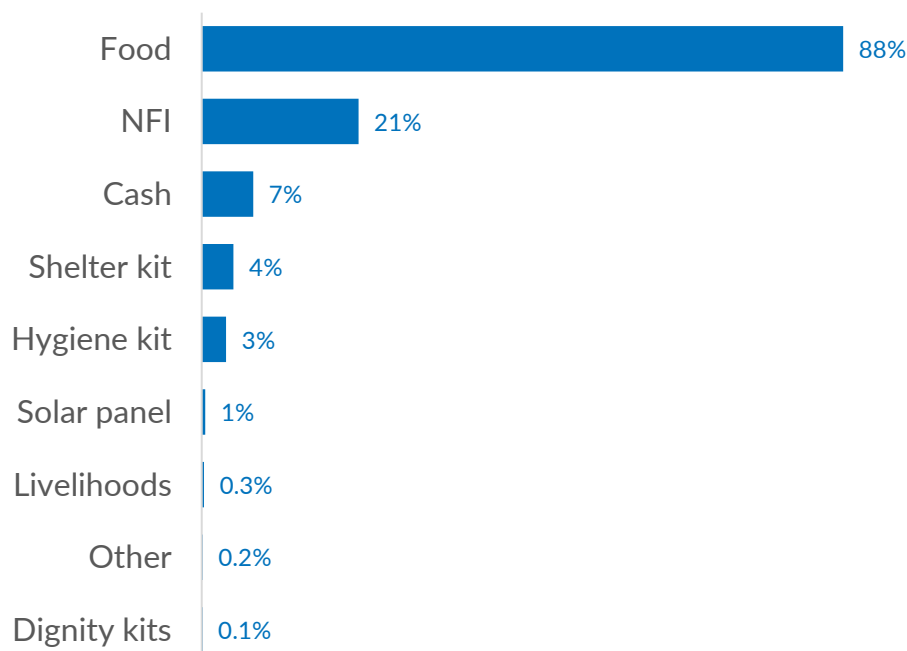
Assistance received in the current location by assessed household statuses



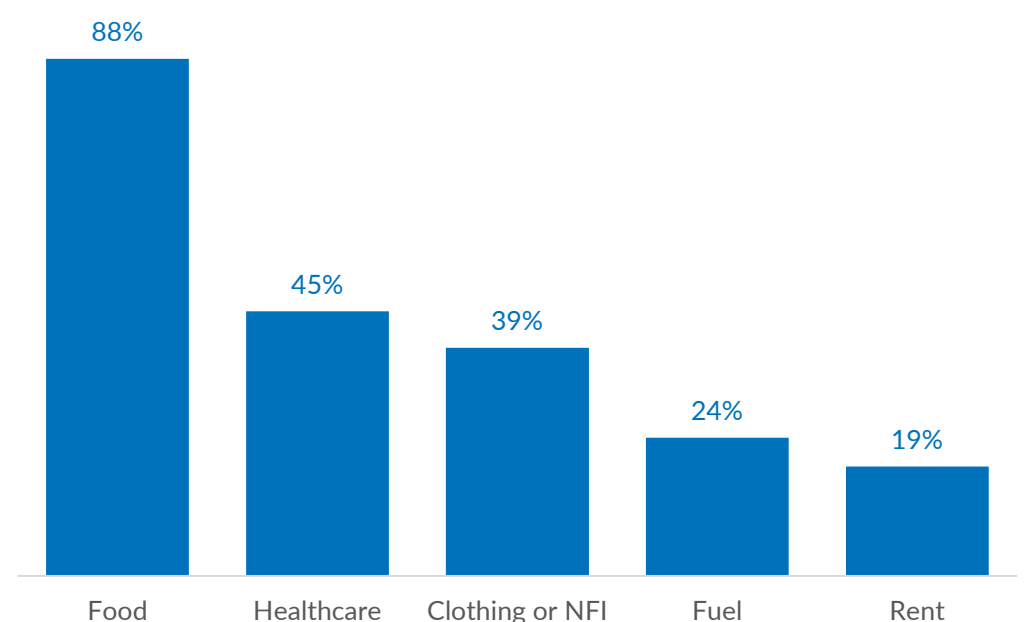
Assistance received by gender (head of household)



Types of assistance received



Top 5 Priority Needs for IDPs and IDP Returnees



Multiple choice questions may add up to over 100%.



HUMANITARIAN NEEDS: SHELTER, NON-FOOD ITEMS AND HEALTH

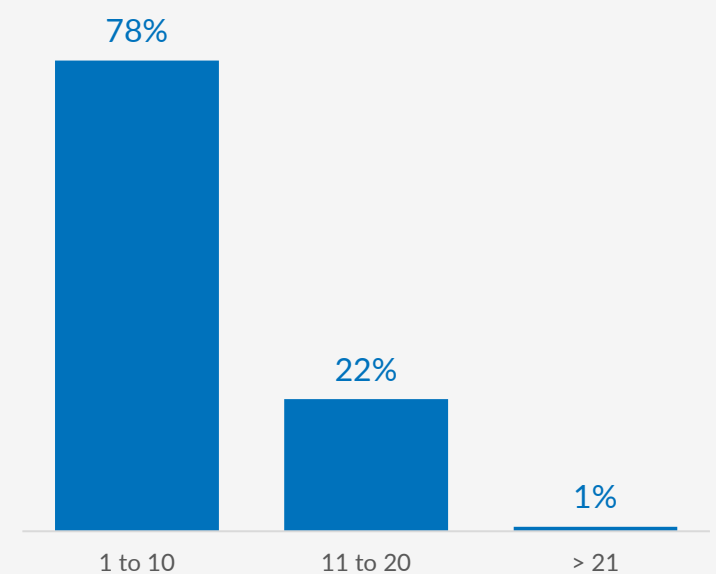
Key protection considerations relating to shelter and Non-Food Items

Almost 51 per cent of IDPs indicated that they are renting shelters. IDP returnees (6 percent) are also renting accommodation in their place of origin upon return. Evidently, given that shelters may have been damaged by conflict, IDP returnees have needs pertaining to shelter rental. Qualitative findings from UNHCR’s community-based protection monitoring (CBPM) have found that the presence of IDPs who rent homes drives-up rental prices and contributes to community tensions. This indicates the issue of access to land across population groups. However, ratio of those renting houses has decreased in comparison to 2021 RHAF findings which showed that 84 percent of IDPs and 24 percent of IDP returnees were renting shelters.

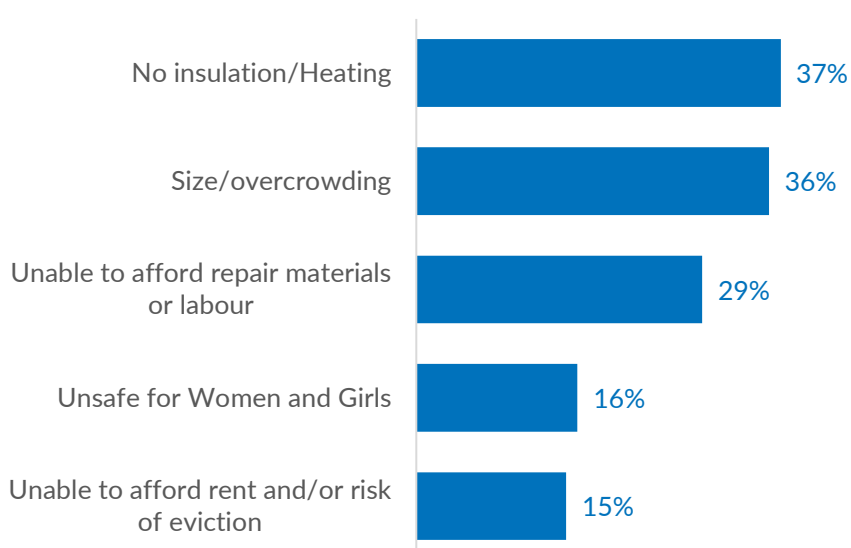
Amongst the top five overall shelter concerns, **lack of insulation/heating and overcrowding** are at the top of the list, indicating challenges related to space capacity and thermal comfort.

In addition to those relating to the condition of shelters, **two issues that also give rise to protection concerns relate to the threat of eviction owing to non-ability to pay rent and overcrowding**. The threat of eviction is the first priority concern raised by IDP households (both male and female). In general, overcrowding is also an issue, particularly in relation to privacy, especially for women and girls. 78 percent of households indicated having 1–10 persons in the household, with 22 percent indicating between 11–20 members and 1 percent indicating 21 or more members. Another factor relates to the location of shelters. Although overall 27% per cent reported being in shelters in remote locations with no access to basic services, amongst IDPs the figure is lower (22 per cent), however amongst IDP returnees the rate is higher (28 per cent). In this regard, overall, 57 per cent of IDPs and IDP returnees indicated not having a water source less than 500 meters distance.

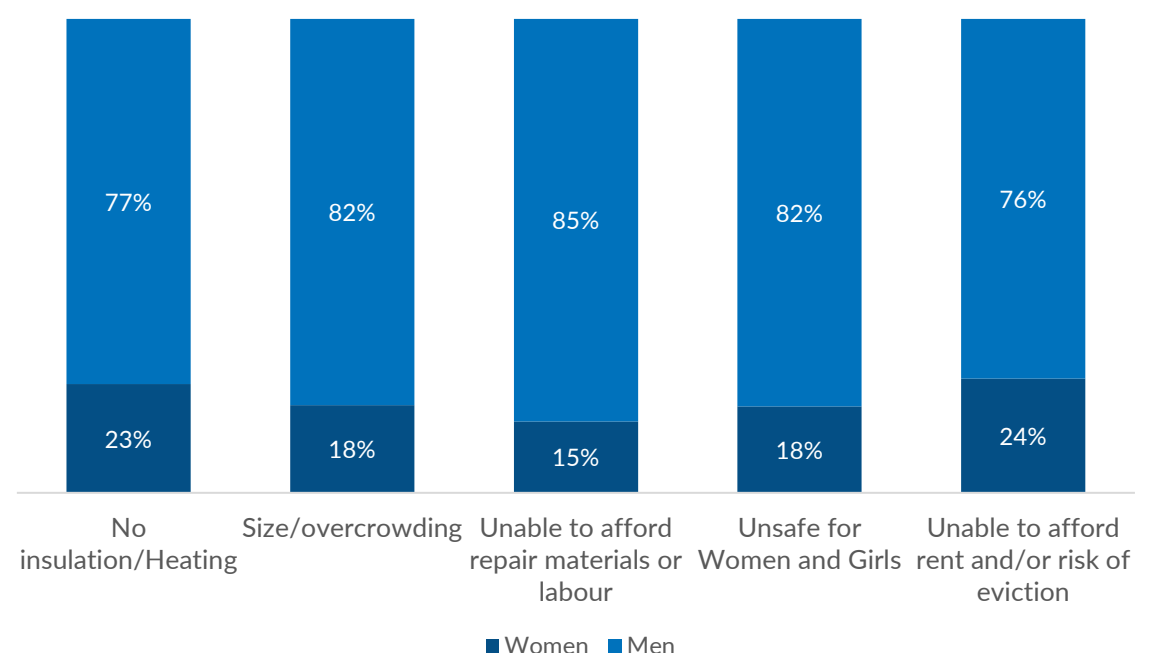
Number of individuals sharing the same Shelter



Top 5 Shelter related concerns

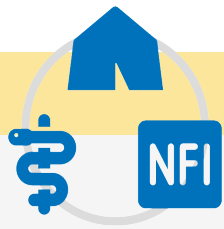


Top 5 Shelter concerns by head of household Gender



In relation to non-food items there is a **clear need for basic household items**. Of note also is the need for sanitary items for women and girls, which was raised by both male and female headed households amongst needed items.

An additional consideration, which also links to the durability of shelters, is that 92 percent indicated that their dwellings are mud-houses, which are likely to be highly susceptible to natural disasters and deterioration due to precipitation.

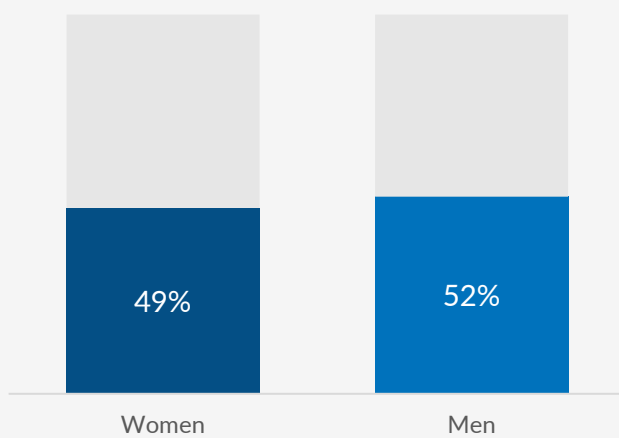


HUMANITARIAN NEEDS: SHELTER, NON-FOOD ITEMS AND HEALTH

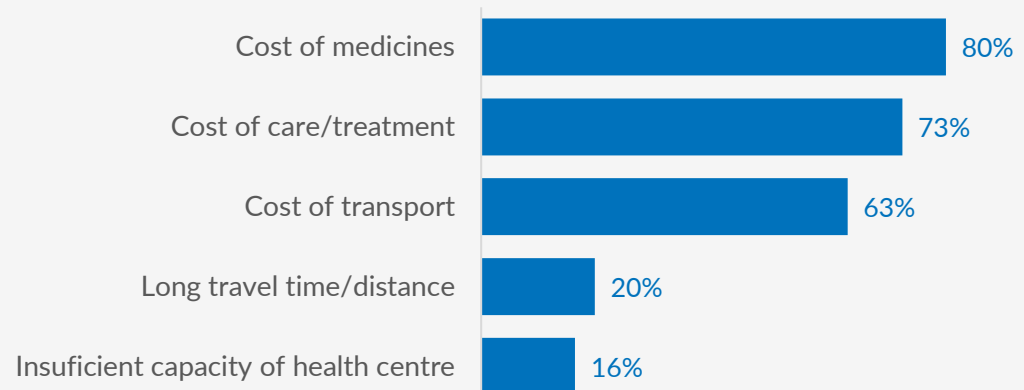
Access to healthcare and WASH

Access to healthcare remains a concern for a half of HHs, both females and males, responding negatively to the question of whether they are able to access health services, with a higher percentage of FHoHs reporting these challenges (51%) than MHoHs (48%). Additionally, 53% of IDP returnees also indicated they are not able to access health services.

Health Care access by Gender
(head of household)



Top 5 barriers to Health Care



Costs associated with health services, including price of medicine, cost of treatment and transportation to and from health facilities were reported as the main barriers to healthcare. This is in line with the current challenges facing the health sector in Afghanistan.

While interviewed heads of households did not express significant problems in relation to access to water for daily needs or access to handwashing facilities, **only 45% of HHs reported the nearest water source was less than 500 meters away from the dwelling.** This has been raised as a protection concern, especially when the collection of water is a duty falling on women and children. The challenge is also most acute for IDPs, 61% of whom indicated the nearest water source was more than 500 meters away.

The majority of HHs reported using traditional covered latrines, however, 23 per cent indicated using open pits (including 19% of FHoHs) and 10 per cent using open spaces (including 6% of FHoHs). **The risks related to accessing latrine facilities, particularly for women and girls become more apparent in conjunction with the level of access to electricity.** 48 percent of HHs indicated having no source of lighting. Nevertheless, 90 per cent of HHs indicated that they have space in their dwellings for installation of solar panels. Therefore, **enhancing access to solar panel is being considered a viable option to ensure greater access to energy and minimize associated protection risks.**

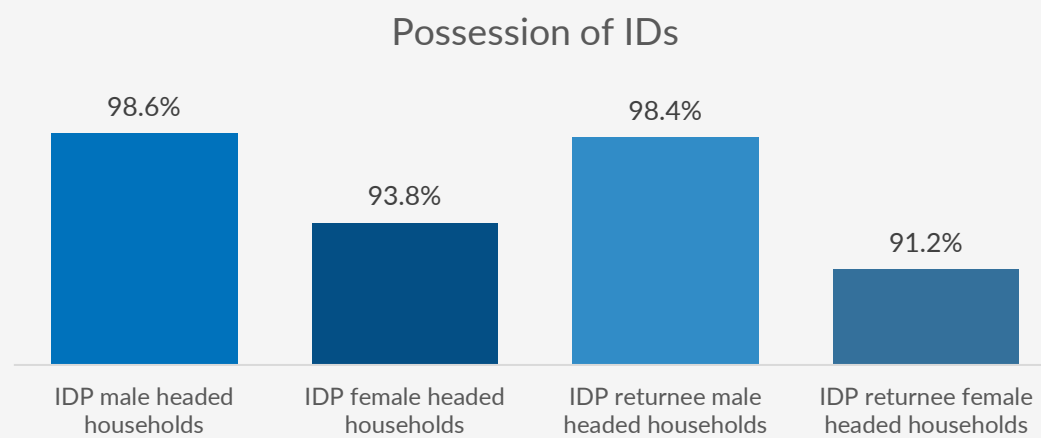


Young students in Wakil Abad village, Badakhshan province, are excited to be going back to class for the new school year. They are staying under UNHCR-provided refugee housing units. UNHCR/Afghanistan



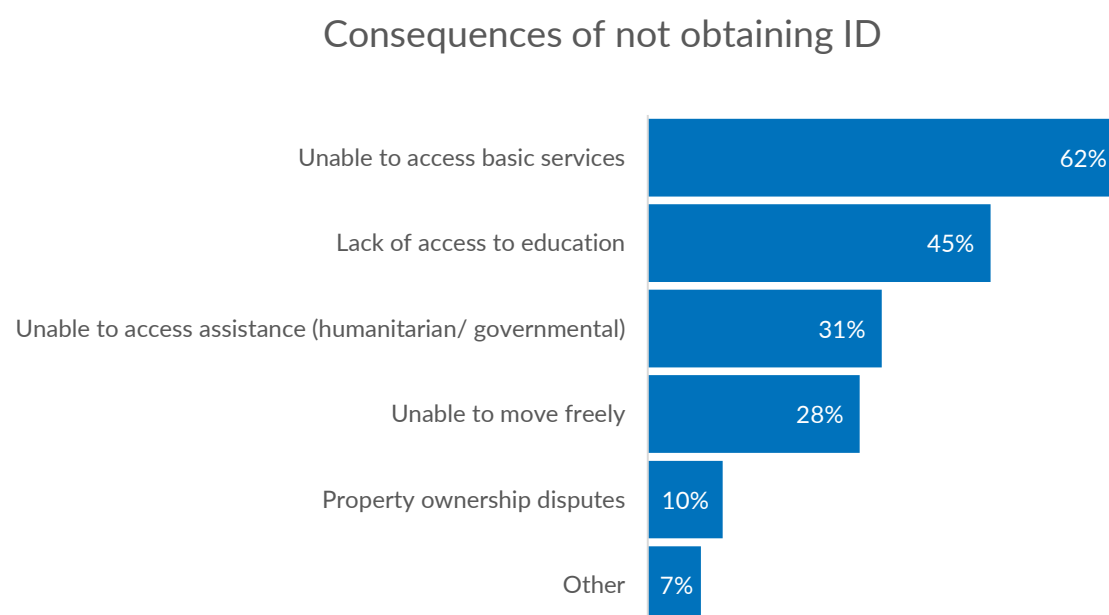
DOCUMENTATION

Most heads of households respondents possess civil documentation, with 98.6% of male and 93.8% of female IDPs, and 98.4% male and 91.2% female IDP returnees reporting having documents. Overall, 91% of respondents confirmed possession of a national identification document (Tazkira), although only 4% hold the e-Tazkira.



Amongst FHoHs, a fairly high percentage indicated having a national identification document, mainly the paper Tazkira (88%). However, these findings do not provide a full representation of the overall situation regarding access to civil documentation in Afghanistan. Figures provided by UNHCR's CBPM in 2022 indicated lower levels of access to civil documentation among the same groups. Overall, according to CBPM, 39 % of the HHs reported a lack of documents, indicating that at least one member of their family was not in possession of any civil documentation. Within the household, the majority of those citing lack of documents were adult women (58%) and girls (50%), while only 6% of men and 23% of boys were said to be lacking any civil documentation.

Among the different documents that were missing are passports, which may have ramifications for persons wishing to leave Afghanistan through legal means and partly explains the high movement flows taking place through unofficial border crossing points.



Regarding reasons for not obtaining civil documentation, the most common reason was mainly due to a lack of awareness and understanding of the importance of civil registration. This is despite the consequences of not holding documents, which include barriers to access basic services, education assistance and limited freedom of movement. **Other reasons include denial by family members, loss of documents, concerns of personal safety and lack of financial means to pay the associated fees.** Given the ongoing economic crisis documentation may not, therefore, be prioritized by households.

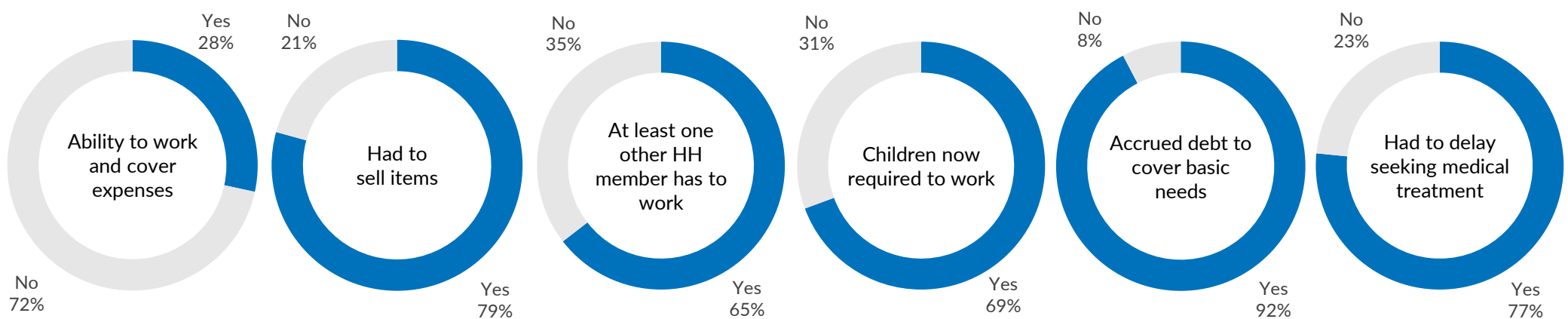
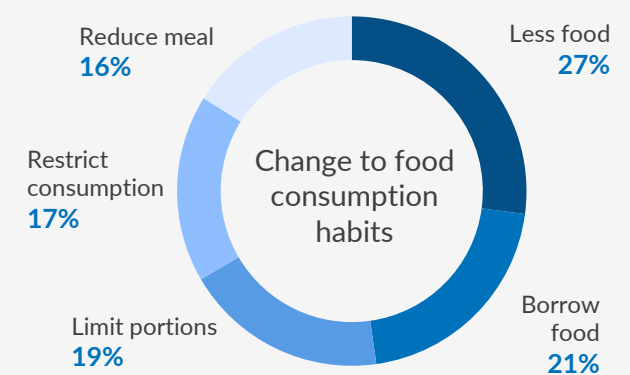


COPING STRATEGIES

Key protection considerations

The socioeconomic situation in Afghanistan remains fragile, with large numbers of families still in need of assistance and humanitarian aid as the Humanitarian Response Plan Afghanistan for 2023 reports 'The number of People in Need (PiN) has progressively increased from 9.4 million people in January 2020 to 14 million people in June 2020, 18.4 million people in January 2021, 24.4 million people in 2022, and now to 28.3 million people'. In 2022, 72% of the respondents assessed through RHAF indicated an inability to find work to cover basic expenses.

The cumulative impacts of repeated and protracted displacement, challenges in finding solutions and loss of economic opportunities continue to erode people's resilience and capacity to cope with recurrent shocks. Vulnerable communities often feel they have no choice but to resort to harmful coping strategies to address these challenges, mainly relying on mechanisms that only provide short-term and temporary relief. Accordingly, 92% of the respondents claimed to have accrued debt to cover household needs by borrowing money from friends, relatives or neighbors. Dependence on debt may lead to temporary self-sufficiency, but can also create additional challenges, as families may be unable to pay off their dues, thus accumulating larger amounts of debt.



Similarly, 79% also resorted to selling assets to raise additional income, including livestock, furniture and jewelry. More severe coping mechanisms have also been reported, including withdrawing children from school and engaging them in income generating activities or household work, as mentioned by 69% of the respondents. This situation exposes children not only to disrupted education, but also exploitation and abuse, impacting their overall well-being and health on the short and long-term.

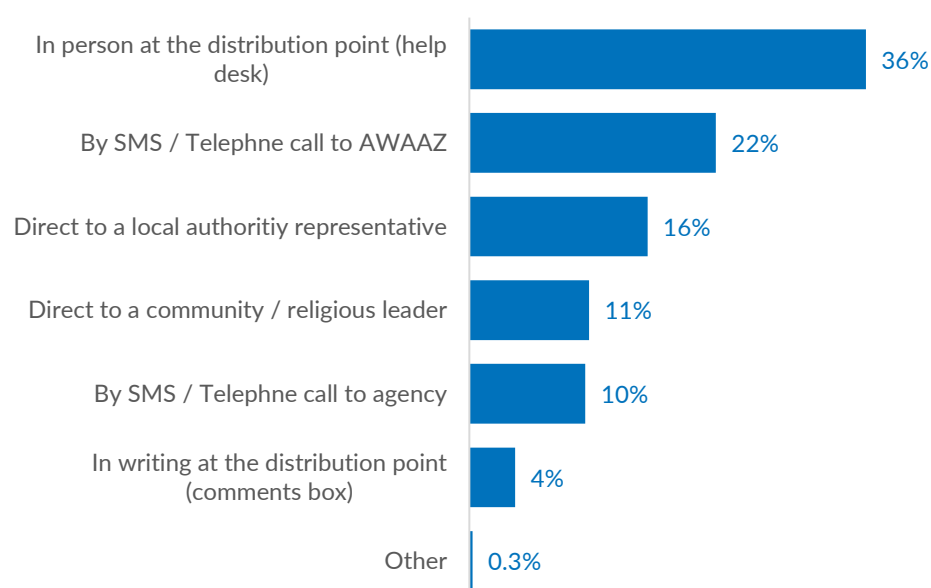
Food consumption has also been affected, with respondents reporting on different changes to food intake habits, including reduced meals (16%), reduced food portions (27%), consumption restrictions (17%), limits to portion size (19%) and reliance on borrowed food (21%). Long term effects of food insecurity are complex and can be particularly detrimental to young children with deteriorating nutrition status.



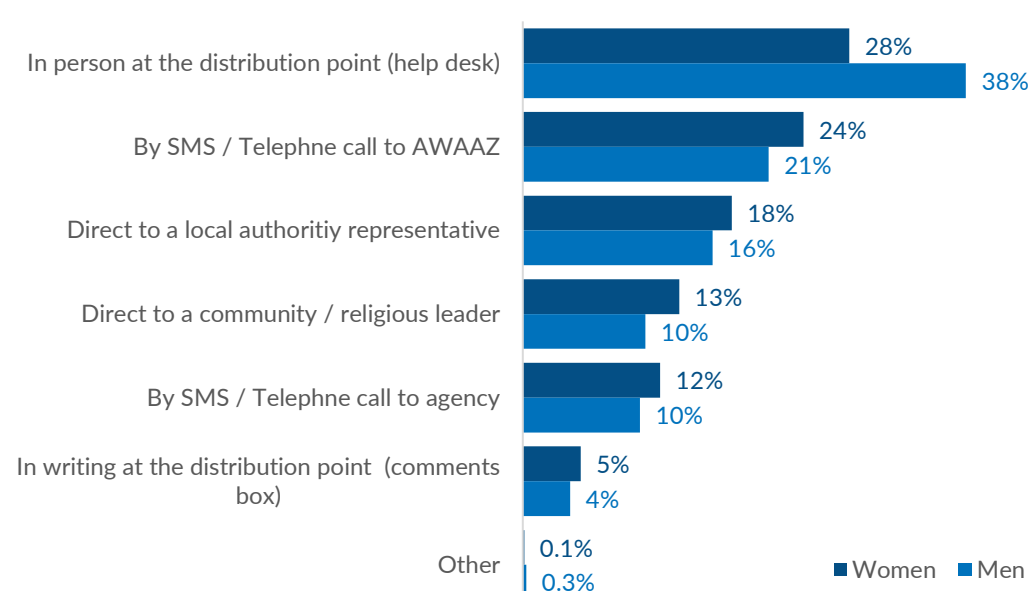
FEEDBACK CHANNELS

Assessment results indicated a need to increase awareness on complaint and feedback mechanism as only 40% of the respondents cited being aware of complaint and feedback mechanisms related to humanitarian assistance. The percentages among males (40%) and females (38%) headed households were almost at par. In terms of population groups, Refugee Returnees (21%) had the lowest percentage of awareness followed by IDP Returnees (31%). Similar to 2021, **in-person feedback at distribution point (help desk) was the most preferred means to provide complaint and feedback (36%)** followed by Awaaz hotline (22%), and Direct to Local Authority Representative (16%). In-person at distribution point was most frequently preferred by both males (38%) and females (28%). Regarding topics that **households would like to learn more about, the highest percentage of respondents cited where to access humanitarian assistance (59%)**, followed by availability of cash assistance and eligibility for humanitarian assistance (49% respectively). This result indicates the high information needs on humanitarian assistance among respondents.

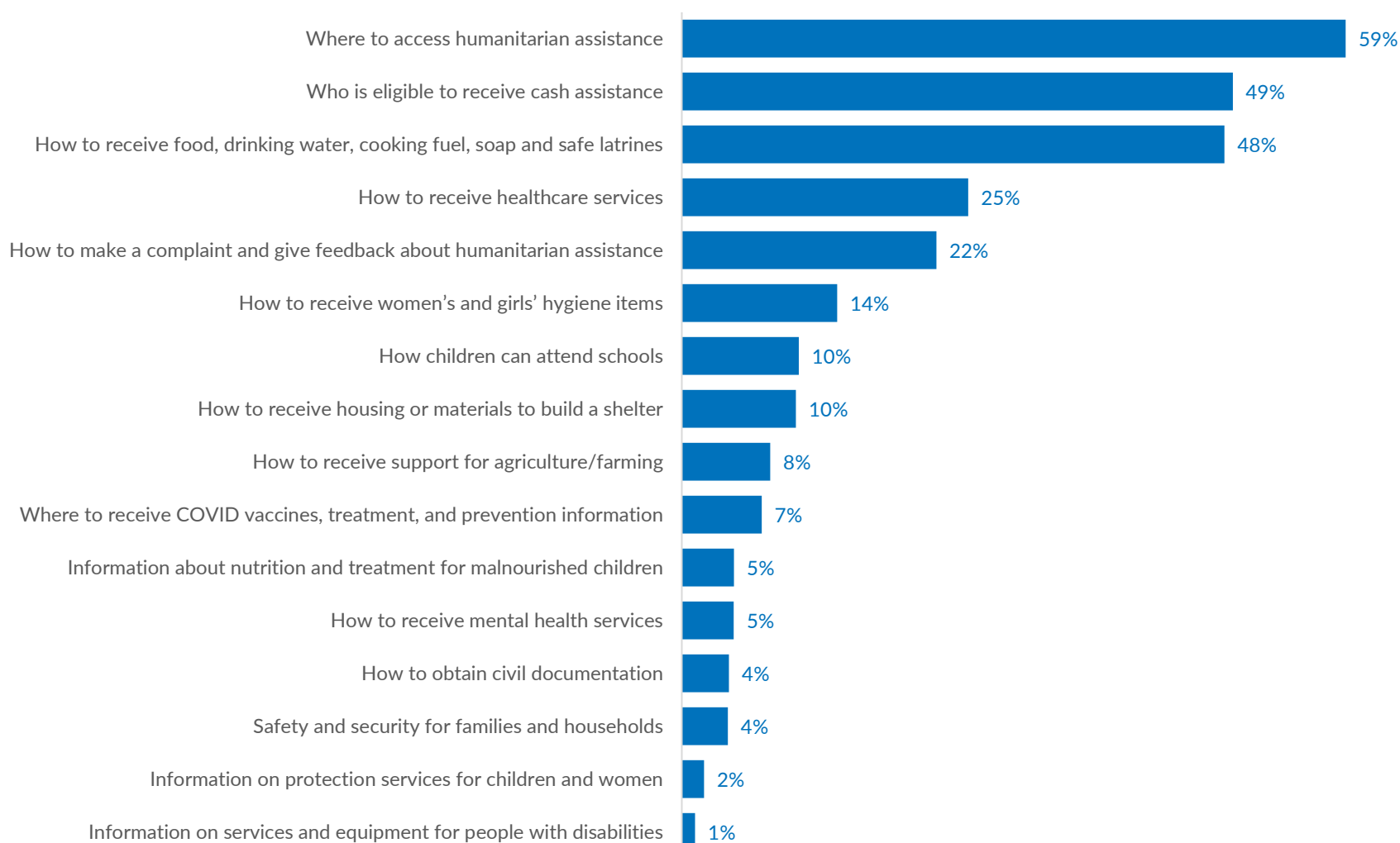
Overall feedback channel preferences



Feedback channel preferences (by head of household gender)



Main topics respondents would like to learn more about



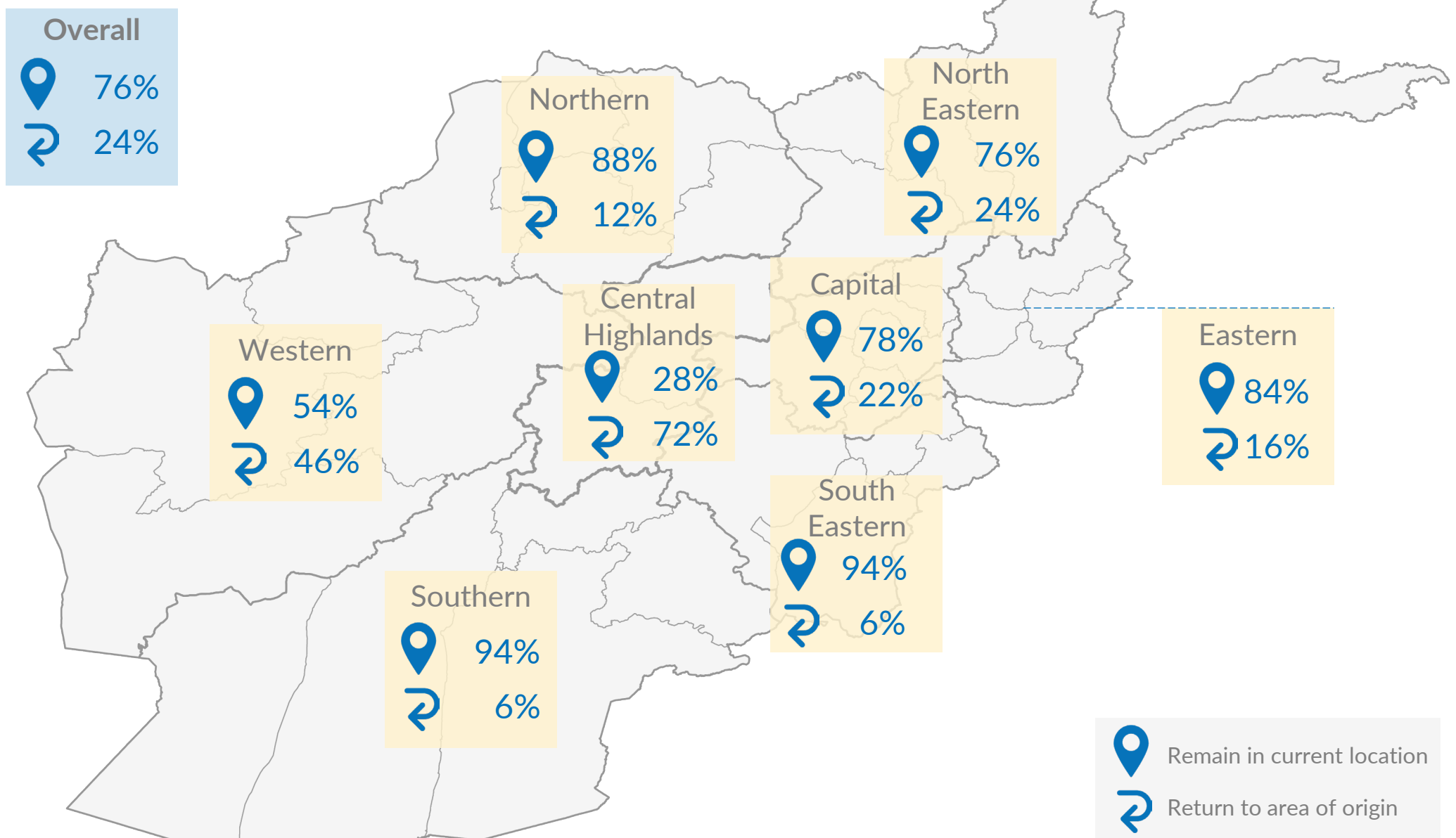


INTENTIONS AND TRENDS

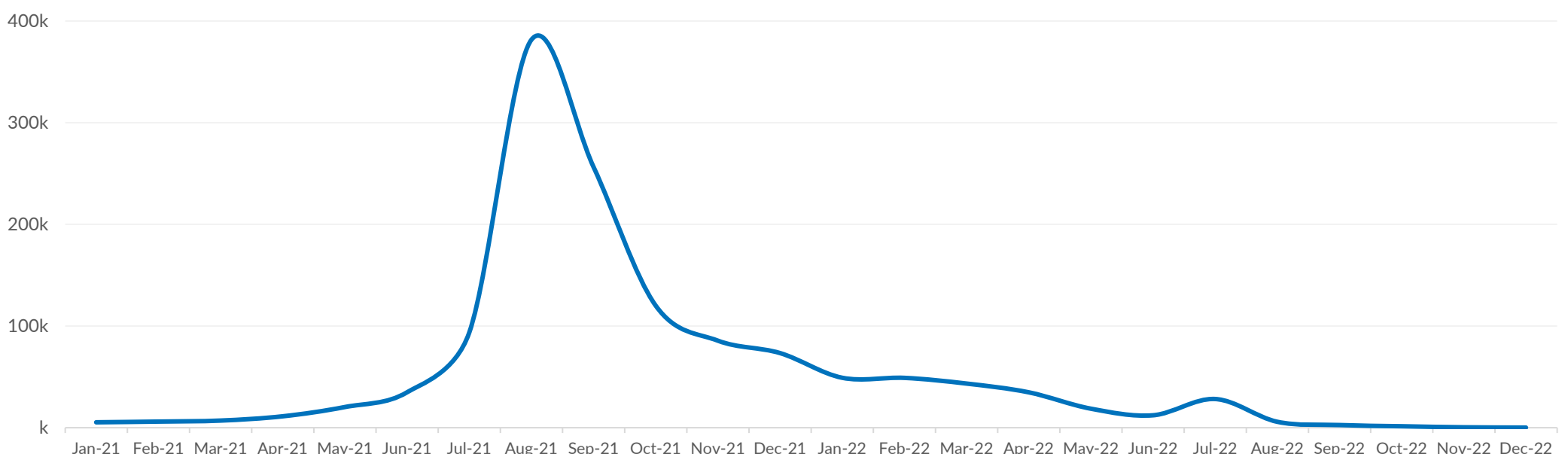
Key trends

Overall, 76 per cent of IDPs assessed indicated an intention to remain in their location. However, it is evident that there is significant variance amongst the different provinces, meaning that whether or not IDPs intend to return is location-specific. Owing to the nature of the rapid assessment, reasons as to why IDPs intended to remain in displacement, or what they would require in order to consider returning from displacement, were not captured. It would therefore be essential to conduct dedicated intention surveys as part of processes to explore durable solutions for IDPs.

IDP intentions by Region



Assessed IDP returns per month of return





INTENTIONS AND TRENDS

Key Trends

Overall, 76% of IDPs assessed indicated an intention to remain in their location of displacement. This represented a moderate decrease from 2021 where the figure reached 88%. In view of the increase in return intentions, UNHCR assisted IDPs who expressed their wish to return as well as IDP returnees who had already returned to their places of return/origin by their own means but requiring an additional integration support. Similar to 2021, variance was found among different provinces, indicating that IDP return intentions, which include local integration, return and settlement elsewhere.




For instance, while some 94% of respondents cited their intention to remain in their current location in the South and Southeastern Region, nearly half of the respondents in the Western Region cited an intention to return. In addition, variations were observed even within the same region, demonstrating how the context may vary from one province to another. It is important that IDPs are able to make a voluntary and well-informed decision and that durable solutions are locally tailored based on their intentions. In addition, reintegration support for those who have already returned to their places of origin/return need to be accelerated in order to ensure their sustainable integration and mitigate unnecessary secondary movement.

The priority needs indicated in the place of return or relocation cited by respondents were identical to their current priority needs. Over 88 per cent of respondents claimed that food was their main priority, followed by healthcare (45%), clothing/NFIs (41%), fuel (25%) and rent (17%). Access to services is one of the main factors influencing IDPs as well as IDP returnees to influence their intention whether to remain in their current place of displacement or return. Therefore, there is a need to support IDPs who intend to return in accessing basic services in their places of origin to enable their return. The high need for food, NFIs and clothing demonstrates that IDPs and IDP returnees require access to decent work and livelihoods to increase their purchasing capacity rather than being assisted with short-term humanitarian assistance and to enhance sustainable solutions.




Findings from protection monitoring through Focus Group Discussions in 2022, also show that IDPs see drought, damage to their shelters and lack of jobs/economic problems as barriers to their local integration, while no/lower rent, community support and better prospects as opportunities for local integration, whereas IDP returnees see recent droughts, less job opportunities and access to services/rights including education as the barriers for their local integration, while owning land, property or shelter, livelihood prospects and low/no rent as opportunities for local integration.

Top Barriers & Opportunities for local integration of IDPs & IDP Returnees




Top Barriers - IDP returnees

-  Access to services/rights including Education
-  Lack of job opportunities
-  Drought

Top Opportunities - IDP Returnees

-  Own land/property/shelter
-  Livelihoods opportunities
-  Low/No rent

Top Barriers - IDPs

-  Lack of job opportunities
-  Damaged Shelter
-  Drought

Top Opportunities - IDPs

-  Community Support
-  Low/No rent
-  Better prospects

