

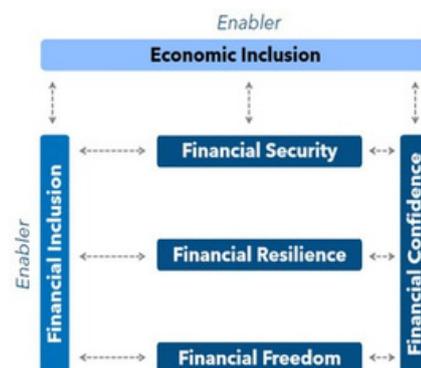


Objective

- UNHCR commissioned this baseline survey to capture a comprehensive snapshot of refugee **financial inclusion and financial health** in Jordan, complementing the Central Bank of Jordan's broader initiatives.
- While routine monitoring has provided insights into mobile wallet usage, this study delved deeper into refugees' overall financial health—assessing their capacity to plan for the future and manage unexpected shocks.
- **Data were collected** before 8 December, prior to the government change in Syria, providing a crucial pre-change benchmark for strategic decision-making.

Framework

- Financial inclusion is typically measured by standardized indicators of access and use, yet **financial health is more difficult to define**. To address this, the survey employed a context-specific framework developed from recent research.
- This framework breaks **financial health into four dimensions**—financial security (meeting basic needs and managing debt), financial resilience (recovering from setbacks), financial freedom (accessing resources for investments and extending planning horizons), and financial confidence (feeling in control of one's finances).
- In this model, both **economic inclusion** (the ability to generate income) and **financial inclusion** (access to formal financial services) are essential enablers of well-being.



685,000

UNHCR-registered refugees in Jordan



300,000

Benefiting from cash-based interventions via mobile wallets.

Scope & Context

- The survey was conducted **nationally** between **June and August 2024**
- Engaged a representative sample of **3,640** registered refugees aged 18–59 from both camps and host communities.
- Intentionally **oversampled non-Syrian refugees**—who make up 21% of respondents compared to roughly 11% of the overall refugee population

Groups

- **Eight disaggregation categories:** country of origin, location, sex, age (younger adults 18–34 versus older adults 35–59), education (none, basic, secondary, and higher), year of arrival (before 2012, 2012–2014, and after 2014), work status (working versus not working), and financial account ownership (with versus without).
- **Sharing groups**—households averaging seven members— are vital for understanding collective financial decision-making.

 **57%**

Are younger adults (18–34, with a mean age of 34)

 **84%**

of Syrians (79% of the total) arrived during 2012–2014

 **77%**

live in host communities and 23% in camps (all Syrian refugees)

 **63%**

have only basic schooling

50/50  gender distribution

Basic Access

To documentation and communication

- 84% of respondents hold a valid ID, 89% own a smartphone, and 87% are connected to the Internet.
- Nationality gap: 63% of non-Syrians have a valid ID—largely because Jordanian Ministry of Interior cards are not issued to non-Syrians.
- Gender gap: women have lower access to communication channels.
- Regional disparities: Mol card ownership higher in camps and refugees in Amman enjoy better connectivity.

Financial Inclusion

Vital to generate income and secure well-being, yet it remains an uphill battle.

- 33% have managed to work, and only 16% sustain regular employment, which is usually informal.
 - 54% of men, 9% of women find work. Men earn JOD 151, women JOD 78.
 - Non-Syrians refugees earn less than Syrians refugees.
 - Those with basic education are the most disadvantaged.
- ~ 50% rely on cash assistance—especially in camps or unemployed.

Economic Inclusion

3 aspects: account ownership, account usage, and access to financial services

- Ownership: 43% hold a mobile wallet account, yet only 1% maintain a bank account
- Usage: > 80% of users rely on mobile wallet account to receive or withdraw cash assistance and salaries.
- Access: Only 42% have made or received digital payments, Savings are minimal, while 74% have turned to informal borrowing to cover basic needs. Only 1% has some form of insurance.

ARE PRE-CONDITIONS AND ENABLE

FINANCIAL HEALTH

Financial Security

Meeting basic living expenses

Data indicate that in the past 30 days only 13% of respondents were able to fully cover their basic needs with the income they received, while for 43% that income lasted only a few days. As a result, 73% of respondents turned to informal borrowing from family, friends, or neighbors, and 17% reported being unable to take any effective action.



Debt Management

Approximately 75% of respondents answered that they have incurred a debt during reporting period, typically managing around three loans that amount to six to eight times their monthly income. Among those with debt, a staggering 97% of those in debt are behind on their repayments, with 31% borrowing even more to cope and 44% unable to take any remedial steps, leaving 34% of respondents feeling hopeless about escaping their mounting debt.

Financial resilience *recovering from setbacks*

Severely constrained. Data reveal that 72% of respondents experienced a significant financial setback in the past year, and 57% reported that a sudden loss of income would leave them with insufficient savings to last even one day. Faced with these challenges, 73% have resorted to borrowing from informal sources, while 20% were unable to take any effective action. Moreover, access to emergency funds is extremely limited: 96% of respondents indicated that absorbing a shock of JOD 1000 would be very difficult, and 88% expressed similar difficulties with a JOD 150 emergency. These vulnerabilities are particularly pronounced among non-Syrians refugees, the unemployed, those with limited education, and refugees living in Amman, who are even less equipped with savings and formal credit options to buffer against economic shocks.

Financial confidence *sense of control over one's finances*

Despite 70% of respondents engaging in joint decision-making over both small and large expenditures (with another 15–17% managing expenses on their own), only 13% keep written records to track income and expenses or to plan for the future. This low level of organization is compounded by generally poor financial literacy; just about one-third of respondents can correctly interpret a standard mobile wallet transaction cost or calculate an annual loan fee. Even among those who use digital payment tools, financial understanding remains limited, and these gaps are even more pronounced among non-Syrians, unemployed individuals, and women. Not surprisingly, a significant majority—75%—are very concerned about managing their financial situations, with an additional 15% expressing moderate concern, leaving nearly 90% of the respondents apprehensive about their capabilities.

Financial Freedom

Accessing resources

Only about 30% of refugees have set a financial goal. Among those who manage to raise funds, informal borrowing is the primary strategy—81% rely on family and social networks—yet almost half of those with financial goals feel they have no viable options to secure the necessary resources. Despite these challenges, there is a hint of optimism, with 39% stating they are on track to achieve their goals and 44% believing they can do so within three years, underscoring resilience.



Planning beyond basic needs

76% of respondents reported having no money left over for leisure or non-essential activities, indicating that nearly all their income is absorbed by basic living expenses. With 69% planning only on a day-to-day basis, the opportunity to save for the future or invest in long-term goals—such as retirement—is extremely limited. These conditions illustrate how the pressure to meet immediate needs severely restricts the ability of refugees to secure a stable financial future.

The financial health of forcibly displaced and stateless persons in Jordan is precarious, with limitations evident across all four dimensions—financial security, resilience, freedom, and confidence. Refugees struggle to meet basic needs and manage debt, have little capacity to recover from shocks due to minimal savings, and face severe constraints in pursuing long-term goals and planning beyond daily survival. Furthermore, low financial literacy and weak record-keeping undermine their financial confidence.

These challenges are compounded by restricted economic inclusion and limited access to formal financial services. Significant disparities persist among non-Syrian refugees, women, and older individuals living outside camps. Although a small portion of respondents express optimism about achieving financial goals, most remain caught in a cycle of daily survival with little opportunity for long-term planning or investment.