

# UNHCR Jordan

## Post Distribution Monitoring - Focus Group Discussions

### Focus Group Demographics

Focus Group Discussions (FDG) were held in Mafrq governorate in November 2017 with Syrian refugees as part of UNHCR's Post Distribution Monitoring efforts. Participants were separated into three different groups (Table 1). Fifty-five percent of the focus group participants were Syrian males and 45% were Syrian females.

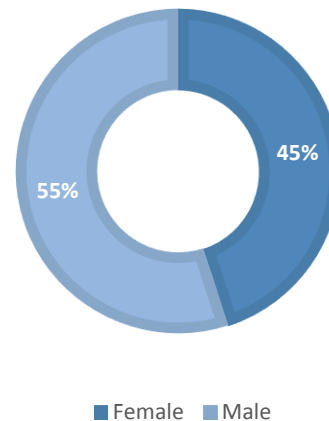


Figure 1: Focus Group Discussion Participants by Gender

Table 1: FGD Participants by Session

Group	Cash Status	Number of Participants
1	Receiving Cash	10
2	Waiting List	13
3	Cancelled	11

### Findings

Across the three FGDs, participants had one overarching concern – shelter. All participants, whether receiving cash assistance or recently cancelled from assistance, were worried about their ability to pay rent and their corresponding fear of eviction. Participants, especially those in the cash receiving group, believed that landlords had raised their rents due to the belief that UNHCR was paying their rent.

Participants from all the FGDs called for an increase in cash assistance, for winterization to be provided to all groups, including those in the waiting list, and to have UNHCR assist them in identifying job opportunities.

## Group 1

### *Cash Assistance Beneficiaries*

Shelter remains a primary concern for Syrian refugees receiving cash assistance. Participants reported that their main expense was rent followed by utilities and education. All of the participants stated that they fear their landlord will evict them if they don't receive monthly rent payments. There is a widely-held belief among the participants that landlords increased the rent fees for Syrian refugees because the landlords believe that UNHCR covers their expenses (rent, food, and health care).

When asked how helpful the cash assistance was to them, the majority of participants stated that the monthly cash assistance is barely enough to cover their rent. In order to pay for their other basic needs, participants borrow money, work irregular jobs, sell household items, cut down on other expenses (education and medical care expenses), and engage in child labour. In addition to rent and

*If cash assistance is cancelled, participants stated that they would have no choice but move to one of the camps in Jordan, move to a tent, find irregular work, and/or beg on the streets.*

utilities, participants discussed how hard it is for them to pay for medical care and transportation to schools. Transportation expenses were a concern because there is only one school for Syrians in their area and it is expensive to travel to it.

The focus group discussion was held at the beginning of the winter months and participants' discussed the difficulty in winter to cover heating expenses as well as other basic household needs.

Participants who withdraw the assistance with ATM cards were not satisfied due to the lack of ATM machines in their area. They complained about the crowds while waiting to withdraw their cash assistance and technical issues that made them unable to withdraw their assistance.

## Group 2

### *Cases on the Waiting list*

The participants on the waiting list shared a number of the same concerns as Group 1 participants (current cash beneficiaries). They are concerned about increasing rents and fear that landlords would evict them if they didn't receive the monthly rent.

*Participants on the waiting list are unable to cover all their basic needs including buying warm clothes and paying for basic medical expenses.*

Participants on the waiting list cover their basic needs by cutting down on medical expenses, living together with another family, dropping children from school, engaging in child labour, and finally, wages. Their main sources of monthly income appears to be borrowing money, wages from irregular work, and support from other NGOs.

### Group 3

#### *Cancelled cases from Cash Assistance*

The main concern for participants who have been cancelled from cash assistance is, not surprisingly, how to pay rent. As with Group 1 and Group 2, participants in Group 3 believe that if they do not have their ability to pay their rent on time they will be evicted.

*Participants who no longer receive cash assistance report their main sources of monthly income was wages, borrowing money, and selling WFP food vouchers.*

Beyond concerns about shelter, participants are concerned about their ability to pay for utilities, medical care expenses, education and school transportation, and food expenses. Participants' coping strategies consisted of selling World Food Programme (WFP) food vouchers, incurring debts, and postponing paying rent.

### Recommendations

Participants had the following recommendations for UNHCR to consider as it moves forward with the cash assistance strategy:

- Increase the amount of the assistance
- Provide job opportunities for refugees
- Support refugees' small projects
- Provide winterization support for all families
- Conduct spot check home visits for families on the cash list
- Rotate cash beneficiaries off the cash list after two years

**For more details on UNHCR's Cash-Based Interventions in Jordan, please contact: [JORAMDAT@unhcr.org](mailto:JORAMDAT@unhcr.org)**