



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY AND POST-DISTRIBUTION MONITORING

UNHCR's Assistance Programmes for Returnees,
IDPs, and Persons with Specific Needs

*Photo: A young newlywed Afghan couple who were both born in the Islamic Republic of Iran pass through the Dogharoun Repatriation Centre on their way to start a new life back home in Afghanistan. UNHCR, IOM, and the Governments in the region support the voluntary return and reintegration of Afghans who decide to return home. ©UNHCR/S. Rich

Orange
Door
Research



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Executive Summary | 3 |
| Methodology | 5 |
| Population Movement Dynamics and Intentions | 7 |
| Food Security and Vulnerability | 9 |
| Livelihoods and Shelter | 11 |
| Access to Services and Civil Documentation | 13 |
| Community Relations | 17 |
| Post-Distribution Monitoring | 18 |
| Persons with Specific Needs | 20 |
| Next Steps | 21 |

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank first and foremost the thousands of returnees, internally displaced persons and host community respondents who agreed to take the survey and contributed invaluable information. We would also like to acknowledge the partnership and appreciate the generous contributions from the following donors that made this report possible: the European Union, the People of Japan and the Republic of Korea, as well as recognise global unearmarked funding to UNHCR from Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.



UNHCR Afghanistan
ICON Compound
Supreme Road, District # 9
Jalalabad Road, Kabul, Afghanistan
Telephone: 41 22 739 7500, Facsimile: 41 22 739 7501
Email: afgka@unhcr.org

**Orange
Door
Research**

Orange Door Research
2312 Shire Lane
Davis, CA 95616
USA
Email: inquiries@orangedoorresearch.com



Apartment 1, Building 2,
Silo Road, District 5,
Kabul, Afghanistan
Email shohrat.wardak@gmail.com

Executive Summary

Over the course of 2018 some 15,699 Afghan refugees returned under UNHCR’s facilitated voluntary repatriation program, with the majority returning from Pakistan (13,584) followed by smaller numbers from Iran (1,964) and other countries (151). At the same time, according to IOM, over 800,000 undocumented Afghans returned from Iran (over 773,000) and Pakistan (over 32,000)¹. These returns took place against a backdrop of increased internal displacement due to conflict and the nationwide drought in 2018, during which over 550,000 individuals were newly displaced, adding to the more than 500,000 who were displaced in 2017.

After return, many face a range of challenges including food insecurity and limited access to land, long-term sustainable shelter, and services including healthcare, education, legal assistance and civil documentation, while livelihoods opportunities that enable returnees to support themselves and their families are increasingly scarce.

In November 2018, UNHCR contracted Orange Door Research and VOTO Afghanistan to use mobile phone surveys to collect real-time data from the 2017 and 2018 returnee population, conflict-induced IDPs, host communities, and individuals assisted under UNHCR’s Persons with Specific Needs (PSN) Programme. Over the course of the project, Orange Door Research and VOTO Afghanistan conducted a total of 14,477 surveys, including 2,738 surveys with returnees who came back to Afghanistan through UNHCR assistance, 4,350 surveys with IDPs and 3,351 surveys with host communities, in addition to 2,738 returnee Post-Distribution Monitoring surveys and 1,300 PSN surveys.

The complexity and scope of this data gives UNHCR Afghanistan a detailed, granular view of the range of protection challenges across Afghanistan. UNHCR is also able to analyze this information at scale, to determine and track key trends amongst UNHCR-assisted returnees and IDPs.

SURVEYS OVER THE COURSE OF THE PROJECT

14,477

surveys conducted

34

Provinces

311

Districts

2,738

surveys with returnees,

2,738

returnee Post-Distribution Monitoring surveys

4,350

surveys with IDPs

1,300

PSN surveys

3,351

surveys with host communities

1. The figures for undocumented returns include an unknown number of Afghans who move back and forth between Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, particularly Iran, for employment, trade, or other temporary reasons. As such, it is unclear to what extent these figures represent sustainable returns or ongoing cross border movements.

Comparing the data from these surveys with a similar exercise conducted last year leads to the following key findings:

- **Population movement increased but may now be stagnating.** Returnees are less likely to be living in their province of origin than they were last year but the majority now say they don't plan to leave their current location. Perception of security has improved among returnees and IDPs which may influence reduced movement, but among IDPs there is an increased desire to leave their current displacement location compared with last year.
- **Food security has deteriorated** among returnees and IDPs over the past year. Food security among the host community, however, has improved.
- **Incomes have declined among some groups.** Some 56% of 2017 returnees report earning at least 5,000Afs (approximately USD 67) per month, which is similar to the 54% of 2017 returnees surveyed last year. However, this is in contrast to only 47% of 2018 returnees, highlighting that incomes are lower among more recent returnees. Income among IDPs declined compared with last year.
- **Access to education and other services, however, has improved and the use of child labor has declined.** Among 2018 returnees, 61% of boy children and 36% of girl children are currently in school, compared to last year's estimate of 55% of boy children and 30% of girl children. Only 5% of 2018 returnees rely on child labor as a coping mechanism, compared to last year's estimate of 16%. Access to healthcare has improved slightly: 27% of 2018 returnees were unable to access healthcare compared to 31% last year. Access to water and documentation such as the Tazkira has remained stable.
- **No significant improvement or deterioration in tensions with host communities.** While the percentage of host communities that view returnees as "good" for their community declined, so did strongly negative views towards returnees. The main trend has been an increase in neutral feelings towards returnees. Similar trends were observed for IDPs.
- **Satisfaction with UNHCR remains high.** The study finds that 96% of beneficiaries report satisfaction with the assistance they received from UNHCR.
- **Female-headed households and returnees in areas controlled by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) are the most vulnerable populations,** especially in terms of food security. Rural populations also tend to be more vulnerable than urban populations.

Methodology

This project supplements UNHCR Afghanistan’s on-going protection monitoring and real-time data collection efforts by using regular mobile phone surveys to expand UNHCR’s understanding of the challenges faced by returnees and IDPs through representative sampling and wider geographic coverage, allowing UNHCR to track key trends nationwide through a parallel host community survey. Using mobile phones for household surveys is feasible in Afghanistan because of the high rate of mobile phone ownership. The Asia Foundation’s 2018 Survey of the Afghan people found that 89.5% of Afghan households reported owning at least one phone.² Furthermore, phone surveys allow us to assess the situation of returnees and IDPs in insecure or remote areas where access remains a challenge.

Surveys were collected on an ongoing basis at the rate of 142 completed per day, conducted via Orange Door’s custom-designed call center in Kabul.³ The 64-question survey instrument was developed by UNHCR Afghanistan, VOTO Mobile and Orange Door Research through a consultative process. It covers a range of issues related to population movement dynamics including displacement, safety and security, access to basic services, livelihoods, housing, land and property rights, and access to documentation, which are in line with the IASC framework criteria for measuring to what extent a durable solution has been achieved. The survey can also be adapted in real-time to meet UNHCR Afghanistan’s changing information needs.

In addition, ODR conducted post-distribution monitoring (PDM) surveys among newly arrived returnees and persons with specific needs (PSN) who were provided with cash grants. This study aims to ensure accountability and to assess the impact, efficiency, and effectiveness of the cash grant. This survey employs a separate questionnaire consisting of 45 questions.

UNHCR provided ODR with the contact numbers of returnees, IDPs, and beneficiaries of the PSN programme. Based on these databases, ODR randomly selected respondents. The host community respondents were first identified using an automated interactive voice response (IVR) survey based on random-digit dialing. This method ensures that every active mobile SIM card in Afghanistan has an equal chance of being selected for the survey. The host community survey was

conducted with respondents who (a) completed the automated IVR survey; and (b) identified as neither a returnee nor a displaced person.

For returnees and IDPs, the answer rate (i.e., percentage of calls that were answered) was 47% and 40%, respectively. The response rate amongst returnees and IDPs who answered the phone (i.e. who then agreed to take the survey) was 85% and 88%, respectively. For host communities, the answer rate was 50%, and the response rate was 85%. For the PSN study, the answer rate was 44% and the response rate was 75%.

CONFIDENCE INTERVALS

| | |
|--|--------|
| Confidence Interval Returnee Surveys (all) | +/- 2% |
| Confidence Interval 2018 Returnee Surveys | +/- 4% |
| Confidence Interval 2017 Returnee Surveys | +/- 3% |
| Confidence Interval IDP Surveys | +/- 2% |
| Confidence Interval host community Surveys | +/- 2% |
| Confidence Interval PSN Surveys | +/- 3% |

These confidence intervals apply to the population of returnees and IDPs who provided their mobile phone numbers to UNHCR. This population may not be representative of the returnee and IDP populations as a whole. The sample possesses a mobile phone and working SIM card, which is not true of all returnees and IDPs, and the sample was able to access humanitarian aid. It is not possible to control for any biases in this sample because representative data on the general returnee and IDP populations is not available.

2. Akseer, Tabasum and John Rieger, Afghanistan in 2018: A Survey of the Afghan People, The Asia Foundation, 2018, p.6, available at https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2018_Afghan-Survey_fullReport-12.4.18.pdf

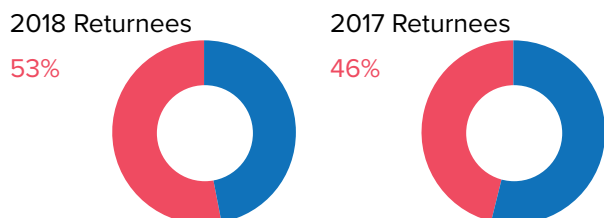
3. The call center consists of four male and three female full-time staff.

Population Movement Dynamics and Intentions

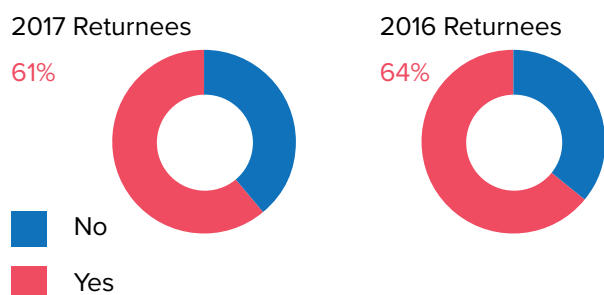
Population movements have increased since last year. Overall, 53% of 2018 returnees and 46% of 2017 returnees surveyed this year are currently living in their province of origin.⁵ This is lower than the findings from last year, in which 61% of 2017 returnees were living in their province of origin. Female-headed households are significantly more likely to live in their province of origin than male-headed households (77% versus 51% of 2018 returnees) as female-headed households prefer to live in proximity to extended families and relatives who normally provide necessary protection and support to them. Returnees in rural areas are nearly twice as likely to live in their province of origin than urban returnees (62% versus 35%). Living in provinces of origin allows returnees to avail themselves of the protection and assistance afforded by their families, relatives and their tribes within the community. In that sense it helps them cope with the situation and puts them in a better position to take advantage of job opportunities available in the community.

LIVING IN PROVINCE OF ORIGIN

2018 Survey



2017 Survey



Insecurity is the most common reason for not living in the province of origin cited by both 2018 returnees (40%) and 2017 returnees (56%) in this year's survey. 2018 saw a clear degradation of a situation already

DESIRE TO LEAVE CURRENT LOCATION

2018 Survey IDPs

IDPs

17%

2017 Survey IDPs

IDPs

9%

apparent in 2017, with open warfare between insurgents and Afghan security forces causing a high level of recorded civilian casualties. The second and third most-cited reasons for both groups are a lack of shelter and a lack of jobs and economic opportunities.⁶ These top three reasons are identical to the results obtained from last year's study. Indeed, 92% of returnees in NSAG-controlled districts are living in their province of origin, compared with only 42% of returnees in government-controlled areas. Returnees, apparently, are unlikely to venture into NSAG-controlled districts unless they were born there. In general, the current lack of absorption capacity in Afghanistan, in terms of access to income and social protection, remains a key obstacle to the enjoyment of social and economic rights and the attainment of durable solutions by returnees and IDPs. In this sense, the situation of returnees and IDPs during the past years has not been significantly different to that of host communities. Despite ongoing advocacy efforts by UNHCR and other partners, progress toward institution building has been slow, and the Afghan administrative structures, in particular at the provincial and district levels, still show important weaknesses in dealing with return and reintegration. However, it is important to note that returnee and IDP issues have during recent years achieved a higher place in the political agenda including establishment of the Displacement and Returnee Executive Committee and the finalization of a national action plan to support durable solutions and reintegration efforts.

Greater population movements are also observed among IDPs. Approximately 17% of IDPs surveyed this year state a desire to leave their current location, compared with only 9% of IDPs surveyed last year. The main reasons why IDPs plan to leave are a desire to return to their place of origin (94%), lack of land (86%), lack of services (85%), lack of shelter (84%), and lack of jobs (74%). These motivations are similar to the results from last year's study.

5. Last year's study also found that 64% of 2016 returnees were living in their province of origin

6. Among 2018 returnees, 31% cited a lack of shelter and 25% cited a lack of jobs and economic opportunities. Among 2017 returnees, 26% cited a lack of shelter and 16% cited a lack of jobs and economic opportunities.

Despite these findings, there is some evidence to indicate *less* movement among returnees in the future. Only 2% of 2018 returnees and 1% of 2017 returnees surveyed this year report that they plan to leave their current location. This compares with over 9% of returnees surveyed last year. Nearly all of the returnees who plan to leave their current location are doing so to find a job.

Returnees are also more likely to end up in their intended destinations. Some 82% of 2018 returnees and 69% of 2017 returnees surveyed this year are currently living in the province indicated on their UNHCR documents. Last year's study found that 67% of 2017 returnees and 77% of 2016 returnees were living in their intended destination.

Returnees also remain optimistic about the future. Approximately 83% of 2018 returnees and 80% of 2017 returnees surveyed this year believe that security has improved in the past year. This is slightly higher than the results from last year's survey, in which 79% of 2017 returnees and 66% of 2016 returnees believed the security situation had improved. IDPs are nearly as optimistic, with 73% of IDPs believing that the security situation has improved over the past year. These perceptions do not necessarily indicate that security has actually improved. But insecurity is the main driver of population movements, so a perception that security is improving provides another indicator that population movements may further decline in 2019.

Perceptions on security depend on the location of the returnees and IDPs. Approximately 87% of returnees in government-controlled districts believe the security has improved, compared with only 55% of returnees in NSAG-controlled areas and 64% in contested areas. IDPs in government-controlled districts are also the most optimistic, with 77% believing that security has improved. This is similar to the level of optimism among IDPs in NSAG-controlled areas, with 72% believing that security has improved. Only 67% of IDPs in contested districts feel this way.

The optimism among returnees and IDPs contrasts with views among the host community. Only 29% of the host community believes the security situation has improved over the past year; 35% of the host community believes security has remained the same, while 36% believes it has gotten worse.⁷ By contrast, only 5% of 2018 returnees believe security has deteriorated. To some extent, the data might indicate that people become more cynical over time. Approximately 9% of 2017 returnees believe the security situation has gotten worse. Although this is still much lower than the host community, it is nearly double the estimate for 2018 returnees.

7. Surprisingly, the host communities in contested districts are more optimistic (32%) than those in govt-controlled (29%) or NSAG-controlled (22%) districts.

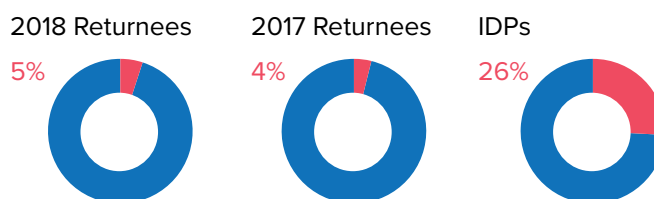
Food Security and Vulnerability

Food security among returnees and IDPs appears to be deteriorating, even as food security improves for the host community. Approximately 54% of 2018 returnees and 51% of 2017 returnees surveyed this year report skipping a meal or reducing their food intake in the past week. This is a dramatic rise from last year's study, which found that only 27% of 2017 returnees (and 39% of 2016 returnees) reported skipping a meal or reducing their food intake. Some of this deterioration in food security is driven by trends in NSAG-controlled areas: 80% of returnees in NSAG-controlled districts report skipping a meal, compared with 53% in government-controlled areas and 55% in contested areas. Female-headed households remain more vulnerable than

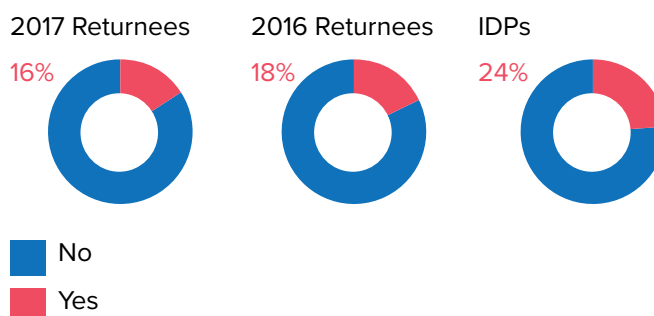
male-headed households, with 74% of female heads of household reporting that they skipped a meal in the past week, compared to 52% of male heads. Rural households are slightly more likely to skip a meal than urban households (55% versus 51%).

CHILDREN UNDER 14 WORKING IN TIME OF NEED

2018 Survey

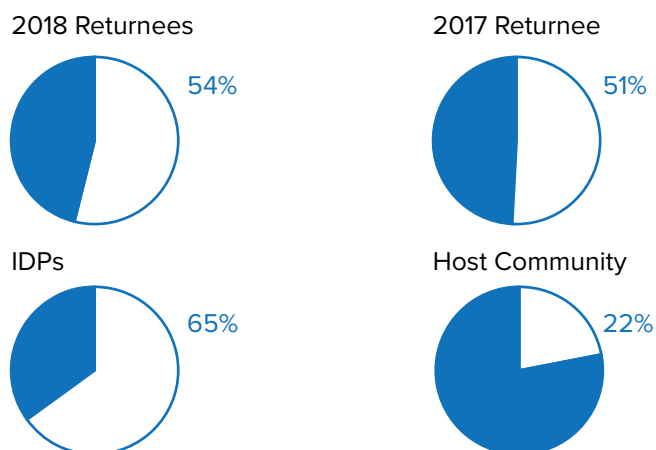


2017 Survey

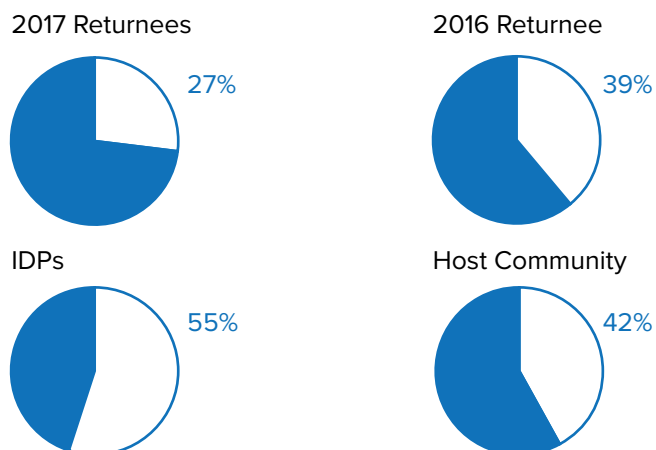


DID ANYONE SKIP A MEAL OR REDUCE FOOD INTAKE IN THE LAST WEEK?

2018 Survey



2017 Survey



Yes

These trends parallel a decline in food security among IDPs: 65% of people displaced during 2018 reported skipping a meal or reducing food intake, compared with 55% of 2017 IDPs surveyed last year. IDPs in government-controlled areas report slightly worse food security than those in NSAG-controlled areas (68% report skipping a meal in government-controlled areas versus 64% in NSAG-controlled areas), possibly because the most vulnerable IDPs have fled NSAG areas. Female-headed displaced households face greater food-related challenges than male-headed households (77% versus 64%), but there is no significant difference in food security between urban and rural IDPs. While there is need for further analysis to determine the reasons for this deterioration in food security, it is to be noted that last year Afghanistan faced a nationwide drought, the worst in a lifetime affecting more than 3 million Afghans and resulting in massive displacement in several parts of the country, in particular the western region.

Unlike the trends for returnees and IDPs, food security is improving among the host community. Only 22% of the host population reported skipping a meal or reducing food intake during this last round of surveys, compared to 42% the previous year. Food insecurity is highest in NSAG-controlled areas, where 34% of households report skipping a meal (compared to 22% in government-controlled areas). Female-headed households face greater challenges with regards to food security compared to male-headed households (36% versus 21% have skipped a meal), and rural households are worse off than urban households (26% versus 19% have skipped a meal).

Other measures of vulnerability, however, are improving for returnees, but not for IDPs or the host community. For example, only 5% of 2018 returnees and 7% of 2017 returnees surveyed this year report having a child under 14 years old working in times of need to support the family. These estimates are a marked improvement from last year's survey, in which 16% of 2017 returnees (and 18% of 2016 returnees) reported relying on child labor in times of need.⁸ IDPs face a more challenging situation. Approximately 26% of IDPs report having a child under 14 years old working in times of need to support the family. This estimate is nearly the same as last year's survey, which found that 24% of IDPs relied on child labor in times of need.⁹ For returnees and IDPs, there are no significant differences in the use of child labor between urban and rural areas, or among female-headed households; child labor is estimated to be lower in NSAG-controlled areas for these groups, but the findings are not statistically significant. An estimated 11% of host community households rely on child labor in times of need, which is higher than the rate among returnees (5%) but lower than the rate among IDPs (26%). Among the host community, child labor is higher in rural areas than the cities, and higher in NSAG-controlled areas than in government areas; there is no significant difference among female-headed households.

Vulnerability to crime has remained stable for returnees and has declined for IDPs and the host community. Overall 4% of returnees report being victim of a crime in the past year,¹⁰ although it should be noted that some respondents had spent as little as one month in Afghanistan and all returnees surveyed had arrived within the past twelve months. Returnees' vulnerability to crime is slightly lower than last year's estimate of 6%, but the difference is not statistically significant. IDPs are more vulnerable to crime than returnees, with 10% of IDPs surveyed this year claiming they were victims in the past year. This number, however, is a significant decline from last year's survey, in which 29% of IDPs reported being victims of a crime. There are no significant differences in the risk of crime for returnees and IDPs in rural versus urban areas, government-versus NSAG-controlled areas, or male- versus female-headed households. Approximately 14% of the host population report being the victim of a crime, which is a decline from last year's estimate of 24%. Although this vulnerability to crime is lower than the level experienced by IDPs, it is significantly higher than the level experienced by returnees. Part of this discrepancy could be explained by the recent return of many respondents. But this finding is puzzling and could warrant further investigation. Members of the host community are more likely to experience crime in NSAG-controlled areas (22% versus 13% in government areas) and in rural areas (17% versus 10% in urban areas). Female-headed households are more likely to be victims of crime (18%) than male-headed households (14%).

8. We did not collect data on the specific reasons why returnees and IDPs needed children under 14 to work, though this could be added in future surveys.

9. We did not collect data on the specific reasons why returnees and IDPs needed children under 14 to work, though this could be added in future surveys.

10. The percentage of 2018 returnees who report being a victim of a crime is the same as for 2017 returnees (4%).

Livelihoods and Shelter

Only 47% of 2018 returnees surveyed this year report incomes of at least 5,000Afs per month (approximately USD 67). Of the 2017 returnees surveyed this year, 56% report incomes of at least 5,000Afs per month. This latter estimate is similar to last year's study – 54% of 2017 returnees surveyed last year reported earnings of at least 5,000Afs. The consistent estimates add confidence to the results and indicate that incomes are lower among more recent returnees. Returnee incomes are highest in government-controlled areas, where 57% of households report earning over 5,000Afs per month, and lowest in NSAG-controlled areas (47% of households). Rural households are worse off than urban households (53% versus 61% earning 5,000Afs or more). But female-headed households face the most prevalent poverty: only 29% of female-headed households earn at least 5,000Afs per month.¹¹

IDPs fare even worse than the returnees. Only 33% of IDPs report incomes of at least 5,000Afs per month, a significant decline from the 44% of IDPs who reported this level of income last year. The highest IDP incomes are reported in contested areas, where 39% earn at least 5,000Afs, compared to 30% in government-controlled areas and 31% in NSAG-controlled areas. Urban IDPs are wealthier than rural IDPs: 36% of urban IDPs report incomes of at least 5,000Afs, compared to 31% in rural areas. Female-headed displaced households are significantly poorer than male-headed households: only 14% of female-headed households report earning at least 5,000Afs per month.

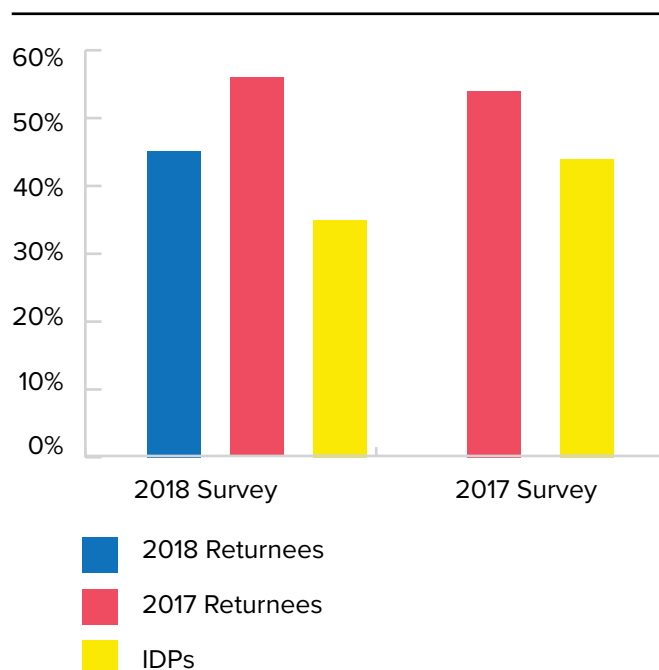
These negative trends are in stark contrast to the host community: 85% of host community respondents report incomes of at least 5,000Afs per month.¹² Households in government-controlled areas and urban areas have the most income.¹³ Female-headed households are worse-off than male-headed households, although the differences are not as dramatic: 74% of female-headed host community households report earning at least 5,000Afs per month, compared to 86% of male-headed households.

11. Although sample sizes are small, there is some evidence that female-headed households living in poverty are more likely to rely on child labor: 5% of female-headed households earning less than 5,000Afs rely on child labor, while none of the female-headed households in our sample earning more than 5,000Afs reported child labor. These rates, however, are lower than the male-headed households. While 7% of male-headed households earning less than 5,000Afs reported relying on child labor, 10% of households earning more than 5,000Afs reported child labor. More research would be required to make sense of these trends.

12. The 2017 survey did not include host community income, so we are not able to provide a year to year comparison.

13. 85% of households in government areas report earning at least 5,000Afs compared to 78% in NSAG-controlled areas and 83% in contested areas. 90% of urban households report incomes of at least 5,000Afs compared to 81% in rural areas.

INCOMES OF AT LEAST 5,000AFS PER MONTH



Access to shelter has remained stable for returnees. An estimated 16% of 2018 returnees surveyed this year own their homes, which is similar to the 18% recorded among 2017 returnees in the previous study.¹⁴ Home ownership is most common in rural areas (20% versus 8% in urban areas) and in NSAG-controlled areas (30% versus 14% in government-controlled areas). Home ownership is lowest among female-headed households (12%). An estimated 10% of IDPs own their home in the area of displacement, which is virtually identical to the 11% of IDPs who reported owning their home in last year's survey. Approximately 65% of the host community respondents own their own homes, approximately quadruple the rates of home ownership among returnees and nearly six-times the rate of ownership among IDPs.

Unskilled labor is the most common source of income for both 2018 returnees (33%) and 2017 returnees (33%), followed by skilled labor (13%) and savings (13%). Many returnees are not able to put their skills to use. For example, 61% of the 2018 returnees who currently rely on unskilled labor report possessing other marketable skills. The most common skills reported by returnees are shop-keeping (27%), driving (20%), farming (12%), and livestock (10%). Female-headed returnee households rely on similar sources of income: unskilled labor (24%), followed by skilled labor (22%) and savings (20%). IDPs are even more dependent on unskilled labor than

14. Approximately 19% of 2017 returnees are estimated to own their homes in the current study, but this modest increase from 18% the year before is not a statistically-significant difference.

returnees: 47% of IDPs depend on unskilled labor for their income, followed by savings (10%) and skilled labor (8%). Female-headed IDP households rely on similar sources of income: unskilled labor (43%), skilled labor (12%), and savings (9%). The host community depends on a wider range of income sources than returnees and IDPs. Only 11% of the host community depends primarily on unskilled labor; the most common source of income is from a small business or shop (18%). Unskilled labor is the second-most common activity, followed by skilled labor and agriculture (10% each). Female-headed households in the host community depend primarily on shop-keeping (17%), followed by unskilled labor (16%) and skilled labor (11%).

In general, the findings show that scarcity of income continues to be a cause of important protection risks and negative coping mechanisms, such as child labor, which constitutes the main source of income among returnees, IDPs and members of host communities.

Access to Services and Civil Documentation

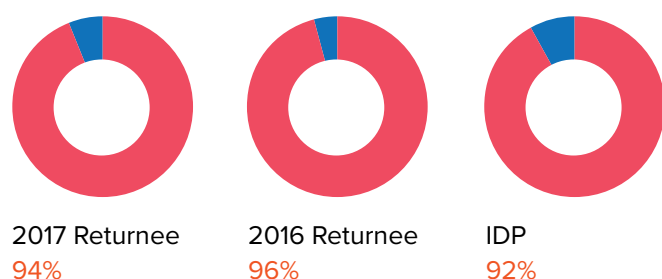
An estimated 95% of 2018 returnee heads of household and 98% of 2017 returnee heads of household surveyed this year has a Tazkira. These findings are similar to last year's survey, in which an estimated 94% of 2017 returnees and 96% of 2016 returnees possessed a Tazkira. Although the changes are too small to be statistically significant, the trends suggest that returnees who lack a Tazkira are likely to obtain one within a year of returning to Afghanistan. The most common reason for not possessing a Tazkira is the cost (46% of returnees without a Tazkira), followed by the belief that it is not useful for them (20% of those without the document).

HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD HAVE A TAZKIRA

2018 Survey



2017 Survey



Access to Tazkiras is lower among female spouses and children. Only 66% of returnee spouses have a Tazkira, and only 33% of returnee households have Tazkiras for all of their children. As before, these numbers increase over the first year of return. The percentage of spouses with a Tazkira increases from 62% among 2018 returnees to 70% among 2017 returnees. All children have a Tazkira in only 30% of households that returned in 2018, and 35% of households that returned in 2017.

Access to Tazkira also varies according to the household's situation. Approximately 86% of female-headed returnee households have a Tazkira.¹⁵ This percentage is lower than the rate among male-led households (98%), but much higher than the percentage of female spouses in male-headed households with a Tazkira (66%). Households in urban and rural areas have equal access to the Tazkira (98% in each case). Households in government-controlled areas have greater access to the Tazkira than households in areas controlled by non-state armed groups (97% versus 93%), but not significantly greater than households in contested districts (96%).

IDPs have similar access to civil documentation. Roughly 95% of IDP heads of households surveyed this year report having a Tazkira, which is slightly higher – but not significantly higher – than last year's survey, which found that 92% of IDPs had a Tazkira. The most common reason for not having a Tazkira is that it was left behind in their place of origin (42% of IDPs without a Tazkira), followed by losing the document during the displacement (38%).

Approximately 59% of IDP spouses have a Tazkira, and all children have Tazkiras in 22% of IDP households. Among female-headed households, 83% of IDPs have a Tazkira. Again, this is lower than the rate among male-led households but significantly higher than for spouses of male-led households. Urban IDPs are slightly less likely to have Tazkiras than rural IDPs (94% versus 96%), but this difference is not statistically significant. IDPs in government-controlled areas are slightly less likely to have a Tazkira than those in NSAG-controlled areas (94% versus 96%), but the difference is not statistically significant.

As with other indicators, the host community is in a better position: 98% of host community heads of households surveyed this year have a Tazkira. Approximately 71% of host spouses have Tazkiras, and all children hold Tazkiras in 55% of host households – more than double the rate of children in IDP households. Among female-headed households, 85% have access to a Tazkira, which is nearly identical to the access among female-headed returnee and IDP households. For the host community, access to Tazkiras is the same in urban and rural areas, and in government- and NSAG-controlled areas (98% in all cases).

Access to education and other services has improved for returnees. This year's survey found that, amongst 2018 returnees, 62% of their boy children and 35% of their girl children are enrolled in school. This enrollment

15. Approximately 79% of female-headed households that returned in 2018 and 89% of female-headed households that returned in 2017 have a Tazkira.

rate is an increase from last year’s study, which found that, among 2017 returnees, 55% of boy children and 30% of girl children were enrolled in school. School enrollment, however, is significantly lower in NSAG-controlled areas, where 59% of boy children and only 17% of girl children are attending school.

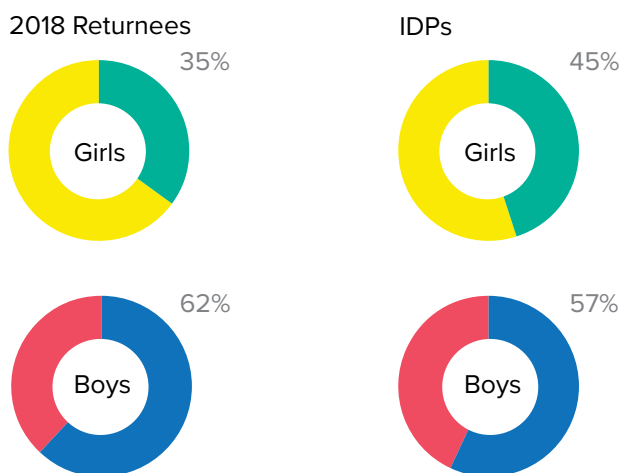
This general increase in access to education is paralleled by a sharp decline in child labor: only 5% of 2018 returnees surveyed this year reported that children under 14 were working in times of need. Last year’s survey, by contrast, found that 16% of 2017 returnees has a child under 14 working in times of need. The most common reasons why returnees surveyed this year report that their boy children are not in school are school fees (20%), distance (20%), and the need for children to contribute to household income (18%).¹⁷ The main reasons that returnee girls are not in school are distance to school (27%), school fees (21%), resistance from family and community (9%), and domestic duties (5%).¹⁶

Approximately 65% of returnee households live within walking distance of a school, and this percentage does not vary between urban / rural and government / NSAG-controlled areas. Male-headed households, however, are much more likely to live within walking distance of a school than female-headed households (67% versus 38%). Among returnees, 59% can walk to a primary school and 50% can walk to a secondary school; 19% can walk to an Islamic school, while 6% report being able to walk to a university.

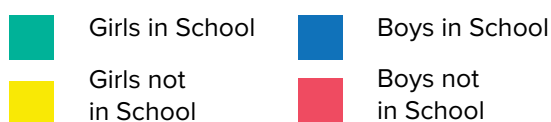
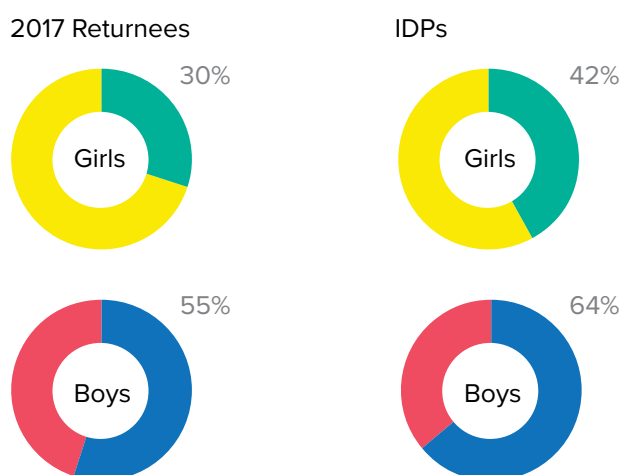
The education situation for IDPs is mixed. This year’s survey found that 57% of IDP boy children and 45% of girl children are in school, compared to 64% of boy children and 42% of girl children from the previous year. The rates of school attendance among boys seems to have dropped slightly, and boys’ enrollment does not vary much between government- and NSAG-controlled areas. Surprisingly, IDP girls are more likely to be enrolled in NSAG-controlled areas, according to the survey responses (50% versus 44%).

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

2018 Survey



2017 Survey



16. A lack of education documents was cited by 6% of households as a reason that boys were not in school.

17. A lack of education documents was cited by 4% of households as a reason that girls were not in school.

The three most common reasons why IDPs surveyed this year report that their boy children are not in school are school fees (22%), the need for children to contribute to household income (21%), and distance (20%). Girl attendance has improved, although again the difference is not statistically significant. The main barriers to education for IDP girls are distance (26%), school fees (21%), insecurity (11%), and resistance from family and community (9%).

Approximately 61% of IDP households live within walking distance of a school. Urban IDPs are more likely to live within walking distance than rural IDPs (64% versus 59%), but there is no significant difference between government- and NSAG-controlled areas. Male-headed households are more likely to live within walking distance of a school than female-headed households (65% versus 46%). Among IDPs, 61% can walk to a primary school and 56% can walk to a secondary school; 9% can walk to an Islamic school, while 6% report being able to walk to a university.

The host community has better access to education than do returnees or IDPs. Among the host community members surveyed this year, 82% of boy children and 64% of girl children are attending school. These rates are more than 40% higher than the school attendance among returnees and IDPs. School attendance is much higher in government- than NSAG-controlled areas: 84% of boys and 68% of girls attend school in government-controlled areas, compared to 68% of boys and 56% of girls in NSAG-controlled areas. School attendance in urban areas is slightly higher for boys compared to rural areas (84% versus 81%) and much higher for girls (67% versus 49%). The most common reasons why boys are not in school is that they are needed for labor and that the distance is too far; for girls, the most common reasons are community pressure and distance. Approximately 96% of the host community reports living within walking distance to a school, with slightly more access in government-controlled areas (96% versus 90%) and urban areas (97% versus 94%), and among male-headed households (96% versus 91%). Approximately 96% of host households can walk to a primary school, 92% can walk to a secondary school, and 28% can walk to a university; approximately 66% of host households can walk to an Islamic school.

Access to healthcare among returnees has improved, although only slightly. An estimated 27% of 2018 returnees were not able to access healthcare, compared to 31% of 2017 returnees surveyed last year. Returnees in NSAG-controlled areas have the least access to healthcare (30% have been unable to access healthcare).¹⁸ By far the most common reason for this

lack of healthcare is cost (77% of those unable to access healthcare), followed by the low quality of available health care (11%). Approximately 98% of returnee households report being within 1 hour of a health facility, although pharmacies are the most convenient sources of healthcare: approximately 88% live within an hour of a pharmacy. Approximately 33% of returnees live within 1 hour of a public clinic (31% within an hour of a private clinic) and 33% live within an hour of a public hospital.

Approximately 47% of IDPs surveyed this year report that they are not able to access healthcare, an increase from the 42% of IDPs who lacked access to healthcare last year. Again, the primary cause is cost (79% of IDPs who could not access health care), followed by concerns about quality (17%). IDPs in NSAG-controlled areas report slightly higher access to healthcare than those in government-controlled areas, with only 41% of IDPs in NSAG-controlled areas reporting that they were unable to access healthcare, compared to 49% in government-controlled areas. This difference could be explained if the most vulnerable IDPs fled NSAG-controlled areas for government-controlled districts. Female-headed IDP households face the most challenging situation, with 60% reporting that they have been unable to access healthcare. There is no significant difference in healthcare access between urban and rural IDPs.

Approximately 98% of IDP households report being within 1 hour of a health facility and, as with returnees, a pharmacies are the most convenient sources of healthcare: approximately 85% live within an hour of a pharmacy. But in contrast to returnees, IDPs live closer to other types of health facilities: 80% of IDPs say they live within 1 hour of a public clinic (56% within an hour of a private clinic) and 65% live within an hour of a public hospital.

Healthcare is a challenge for the host community: an estimated 26% of the host community members surveyed this year report that they are unable to access healthcare, equivalent to the access reported by returnees. Concerns about the quality of healthcare is the most common reason (38% of households who lack access to healthcare), followed by the cost (32%). Households in NSAG-controlled areas have the lowest access to healthcare (38% lack access compared to 25% in government areas). Rural households have less access than urban households (30% lack access

18. Female-headed households seem to have slightly more access to healthcare than male-headed households, with only 21% of female-headed households reporting that they were unable to access healthcare compared to 27% of male-headed households. Rural households have only slightly less access to healthcare than urban households, but the difference is not statistically significant.

UNABLE TO ACCESS HEALTH CARE

2018 Survey

Returnees 27%

IDPs 47%

2017 Survey

Returnees 31%

IDPs 42%

SAME ACCESS TO WATER AS THE HOST COMMUNITY

2018 Survey

2018 Returnees 69%

IDPs 38%

2017 Survey

2017 Returnees 65%

IDPs 56%

versus 21%), as do female-headed households (33% lack access compared to 25%). Approximately 96% of host households report being within an hour of a health facility but, as with returnees and IDPs, pharmacies are the most convenient source of care: 83% of households live within an hour of a pharmacy. Approximately 69% live within an hour of a public clinic, and 44% live within an hour of a hospital.

Access to water remains stable for returnees but is becoming a challenge for IDPs. Approximately 69% of 2018 returnees and 65% of 2017 returnees surveyed this year report that they have the same access to water as the host community. This estimate is identical to last year's study, which found that 65% of 2017 returnees had the same access to water as the host community. The most common sources of water are hand pumps (61% of households) and protected wells (17%); approximately 8% of returnees rely on unprotected wells or surface water. Urban returnees have more equal access to water than rural returnees: 76% of urban returnees report having the same access to water as the host community, compared to 61% of rural returnees. Access is also much better in government-controlled areas (67% report having the same access) compared to NSAG-controlled areas (only 37%). Female-headed households are more likely to enjoy equal access to water than male-headed households (79% versus 64%).¹⁹

Only 38% of IDPs surveyed this year report that they have the same access to water as the host community, a significant decline from last year's estimate of 56%. As with returnees, the most common sources of water for IDPs are hand pumps (35% of households) and protected wells (26%); approximately 10% of IDPs rely on unprotected wells or surface water. Urban IDPs have more equal access to water than rural IDPs (42% versus 35%), but IDPs in government-controlled areas struggle the most with water: only 35% of IDPs in government-controlled areas report having the same access to water as the host community, compared with 42% in NSAG-controlled areas and 43% in contested areas. Female IDPs have the same access to water as male-headed IDP households.

The host communities rely primarily on hand pumps for water (36%) followed by protected wells (24%). These estimates are nearly identical to the water sources used by IDPs. Unlike IDPs, however, only 6% of the host community relies on unprotected wells or surface water.

19. We did not collect data on the distance to the water point, though this could be added in future surveys.

Community Relations

Only 26% of the host community members surveyed this year report that they view returnees as “good” for their community, compared to 47% the previous year. Similarly, 80% of 2018 returnees surveyed this year report tension with the host community, compared to only 58% of returnee respondents surveyed last year. In nearly all cases, these tensions are related to a lack of jobs and economic opportunities, rather than discrimination or social issues.²⁰

Interestingly, strongly negative views towards returnees have also declined. Only 15% of the host community members surveyed this year believes returnees are “bad” for their community, compared with 36% the previous year. The main trend has been an increase in neutral feelings: 59% of host community respondents surveyed this year believe returnees are “neither good nor bad” for their community, up from only 18% the previous year.

The host community is slightly less welcoming towards IDPs. Approximately 19% of the host community members surveyed this year believes IDPs are “good” for their community (down from 31% last year) and 22% believes IDPs are “bad” (down from 49% last year). As with returnees, the main trend has been an increase in neutral feelings. Approximately 74% of IDPs surveyed this year report facing a problem with the host community, though again nearly all of these difficulties related to lack of jobs and economic hardship, rather than discrimination.

HOW HOST COMMUNITY VIEWS RETURNEES AND IDPS

2018 Survey

How do you perceive Returnees presence in your communities?

26%

GOOD

15%

BAD

59%

NEITHER

How do you perceive IDPs presence in your communities?

19%

GOOD

22%

BAD

59%

NEITHER

2017 Survey

How do you perceive Returnees presence in your communities?

47%

GOOD

36%

BAD

18%

NEITHER

How do you perceive IDPs presence in your communities?

31%

GOOD

49%

BAD

20%

NEITHER

20. Out of 1,560 reports of tensions with the host community, 1,557 (99.8%) related to a lack of jobs or financial means. One report of tension mentioned extortion by the host community and/or local authorities, and two reports mentioned a land dispute.

Post-Distribution Monitoring

The team conducted 2,738 post-distribution monitoring interviews with returnees, who are provided with a multi-purpose cash grant intended to address their transportation and other immediate needs during the initial phases of return and reintegration. Of these respondents, 42% received the grant at the Jalalabad encashment center, 39% in Kabul, 18% at Kandahar, and 2% in Herat. Approximately 95% of beneficiaries confirmed that UNCHR staff were present at the distribution, and an additional 2% said they were not sure whether UNHCR staff were present or not.

2018 SURVEY

99% Of respondents report no problem receiving cash grant

The distribution process was overwhelmingly smooth according to the respondents. Not a single respondent reported any security concerns during the distribution process, traveling to/from the encashment centers, or when spending the cash; only one respondent reported that the funds were stolen at some point after the distribution process. Approximately 99% of the beneficiaries reported no problems when receiving the cash. Only 1% of beneficiaries – a total of 28 respondents – reported a problem.²¹ Of these, 21 of the respondents (75%) complained about the long wait time and 5 respondents (28%) complained about improper or rude behavior by staff at the distribution site. Only a single respondent claimed they paid a bribe to security guards at the encashment center. This respondent returned in 2018 and received the cash assistance at the Kandahar center.²² Another respondent claimed they received the incorrect amount of cash, also at Kandahar during 2018.²³ Approximately 99% of beneficiaries reported no challenges when spending the money;

21. Contact details for these respondents have been shared with UNHCR for follow up.

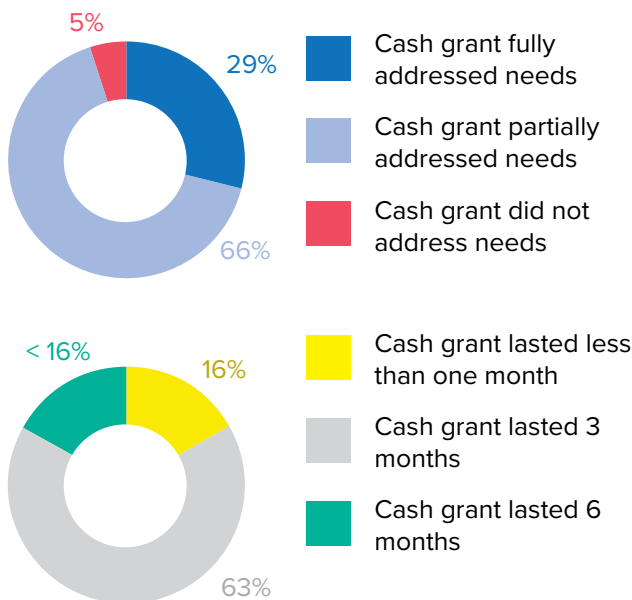
22. Contact details for this respondent has been shared with UNHCR for follow up.

23. Contact details for this respondent has been shared with UNHCR for follow up.

24. These questions were not included in last year's study, so no comparisons are possible.

25. Unfortunately the 2017 study used a two-month reference period, compared to the three months used in this study, resulting in a bit of an “apples to oranges” comparison. Nevertheless, the fact that only 37% of the returnees in this study reported spending the grant in three months, compared to the 93% who spent the grant within two months according to the previous study, implies that the cash grant lasted longer – even if an exact comparison cannot be made.

CASH GRANTS - 2018 SURVEY



while less than 1% reported that exchanging the money was a challenge.

UNHCR provided the only aid that most respondents were able to access. Approximately 87% of beneficiaries said they did not receive aid from any source other than UNHCR; 3% of beneficiaries said they received additional aid from the host community and less than 1% of beneficiaries said they received aid from the government. Approximately 9% of beneficiaries said they received additional aid from other sources, such as Etisalat (a telecommunications company based in the UAE), WFP, and various NGOs. Approximately 89% of beneficiaries said that the cash grant was the only assistance they received from UNHCR, while 2% of beneficiaries said they also received livelihoods support and 9% of beneficiaries said they received various other kinds of support.

The cash grant was a supplement to the family's income, rather than a replacement. Approximately 29% of beneficiaries reported that the cash grant fully addressed their needs, while 66% said the cash partially addressed their needs; 5% of respondents said the grant did not address their needs. An estimated 16% of beneficiaries said the cash grant lasted less than one month, while 63% of beneficiaries had spent the funds within three months. Less than 16% of respondents had any funds remaining after six months.²⁴ This implies the grant is lasting slightly longer than a 2017 UNHCR study, which finds that 93% of returnees spent their cash assistance within two months.²⁵

2018 SURVEY

95%

Of beneficiaries satisfied with UNHCR

Respondents had a positive view of the program and its effects. Approximately 95% of beneficiaries said they were satisfied with UNHCR, compared to 89% in the previous survey, and 99% of beneficiaries said the cash grant created no community tensions.²⁶ The perceived effects of the program go beyond satisfying the family's immediate needs: 87% of beneficiaries think families that received cash in the community are less likely to marry their daughters early, and 93% of beneficiaries think families that received cash in the community are less likely to send their children to work.

The ways in which respondents spent the cash grant differ from other studies. Among 2018 returnees surveyed this year, the three main uses of the repatriation cash grant were: food (52% spent more than half), rent and shelter (6% spent more than half), healthcare (6% spent more than half), debt (5% spent more than half), and transportation (5% spent more than half). Among 2017 returnees surveyed this year, the three main uses of the repatriation cash grant were: food (51% spent more than half), rent and shelter (9% spent more than half), healthcare (4% spent more than half), and debt (4% spent more than half).

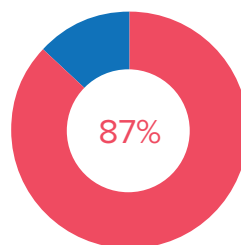
By contrast, last year's study found that 28% of 2017 returnees reported that transportation was the "main" use of the cash grant. In this year's study, approximately 95% of returnees report that they spent less than half of the funds on transportation; only 5% reported spending the majority of funds on transportation.

What explains this discrepancy? Much of the difference is probably explained by changes to the survey instrument, which can have a large effect on how respondents interpret the meaning of the questions. In the 2017 study, respondents were asked: "When you received the reintegration cash assistance from UNHCR, what is the main thing you spent the money on?" The enumerators then waited for the respondent to provide an answer, and then selected the most appropriate

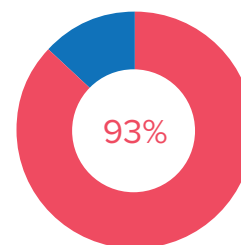
response from among the options presented on the tablet screen; the respondents were not aware of which options were available. In this present study, respondents were asked "How much of the cash assistance did you spend on:" and were then presented with a list of options, including "Food", "Transportation", "Kitchen Items", etc. For each option, respondents must decide among the responses "Almost nothing", "Less than half", "more than half", "Almost all".

Changing the questionnaire in this way means that the responses from last year are no longer comparable to the responses from this study. For example, the phrasing of last year's question might trigger the respondents to think of their immediate expenditures, rather than the relative amount that they spent on each item category. After receiving the cash grant, they immediately faced transportation costs. By contrast, the structure of the question in this year's study forces respondents to actually think about that item category and the amount of money spent on it. In our opinion, the current format produces more reliable – although still rough – estimates of spending patterns.

PERCEIVED RESULTS OF CASH IN THE COMMUNITY



Beneficiaries who think families that received cash in the community are less likely to marry their daughters early.



Beneficiaries who think families that received cash in the community are less likely to send their children to work.

26. Other indicators were not collected in the previous study and so cannot be compared.

Persons with Specific Needs

The team conducted 1,300 interviews with persons with specific needs (PSNs) who received cash and/or assistance from UNHCR. The monitoring team successfully interviewed respondents who received cash assistance in 31 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. The most common province for assistance is Kandahar (19% of respondents) followed by Kabul (12%). Approximately 29% of respondents received in-kind assistance. Food was the most common form of assistance received (70% of beneficiaries who received in-kind assistance), followed by clothing (17%).

As with the Post-Distribution Monitoring study relating to repatriation cash grants, the distribution process for assistance to PSNs went smoothly. Only 2% of respondents (29 beneficiaries) reported any issues with receiving assistance. These reported issues were mostly due to long wait times: 62% of the problems reported (18 beneficiaries) concerned having to wait for several hours to receive the cash assistance. Approximately 17% of the problems (5 beneficiaries) were due to the perception that distribution was made on the basis of relationships, and 2 beneficiaries complained about rude behavior by distribution staff.²⁷

Out of 1,300 interviews, only three beneficiaries claimed they were asked for a bribe during the distribution process.²⁸ Two of the beneficiaries reported that security personnel asked for a bribe, while one beneficiary claimed DoRR staff asked for a bribe. Less than 1% of respondents (10 beneficiaries) reported any security concerns during or after the distribution process. Nearly all of these security concerns were due to harassment and demands for bribes by armed groups (6 beneficiaries), militia (1 beneficiary), or police (1 beneficiary) after leaving the distribution site.²⁹ Two beneficiaries said that some or all of the cash assistance was stolen after the distribution process. Only 2% of beneficiaries reported feeling unsafe keeping the cash at home, and less than 1% said they felt unsafe while spending the cash.

According to respondents, the distribution process achieved its goals. Over 96% of respondents said they used the funds as intended. Approximately 20% of beneficiaries reported that the funds fully addressed their needs, while 74% said the funds partially addressed their needs; only 6% of respondents claimed the funds did not address their needs. Approximately 90% of respondents said that their needs, skills, capacity, and situation were thoroughly assessed as part of the distribution process; 88% of the beneficiaries agreed that the assistance reflected the information they provided during this process.

Cash assistance was preferred by 99% of beneficiaries. The vast majority (93%) said they prefer cash because it gives them the choice to buy based on their needs. Only 52% of beneficiaries said they were asked for their preference between cash and in-kind assistance. After spending the cash assistance, the dominant coping strategy was to find a job (32% of beneficiaries), followed by borrowing money from relatives (30%), and starting a business (23%). Approximately 8% of beneficiaries relied on child labor as a coping strategy and 2% relied on begging.

Approximately 9% of beneficiaries have access to a bank account or mobile money account, and 1% reported access to micro-credit. Women face some additional challenges: 37% of women beneficiaries reported difficulties participating in community decision making and economic activities. Some 4% of beneficiaries were referred to other service providers for additional assistance. These providers included Agha Khan, UNICEF, IRC, NRC, and WFP.

When asked for suggestions to improve UNHCR's interventions, nearly all of the respondents requested additional aid. The most common request was for winterization assistance. Other common requests concerned funds for healthcare services and job facilities.

27. Contact information for these beneficiaries has been provided to UNHCR for follow-up.

28. Contact information for these beneficiaries has been provided to UNHCR for follow-up.

29. The survey did not ask respondents to define their use of the term "militia" as distinct from armed groups.

Donor Acknowledgments

UNHCR thanks the following donors for their support:

Denmark | European Union | Germany | Japan | Republic of Korea | Netherlands
Norway | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States



From
the People of Japan

