# REFUGEE FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND FINANCIAL HEALTH IN JORDAN 2024

## BASELINE SURVEY REPORT

### VOLUME I

December 2024

*Hilala Al-Soboh, a Syrian refugee in Mafraq, opened a mobile wallet to receive UNHCR cash assistance, which she now uses to pay for her most basic needs. It is the first time for her and many refugees in Jordan to have access to such financial services. ©UNHCR/Shawkat Al Harfoush*

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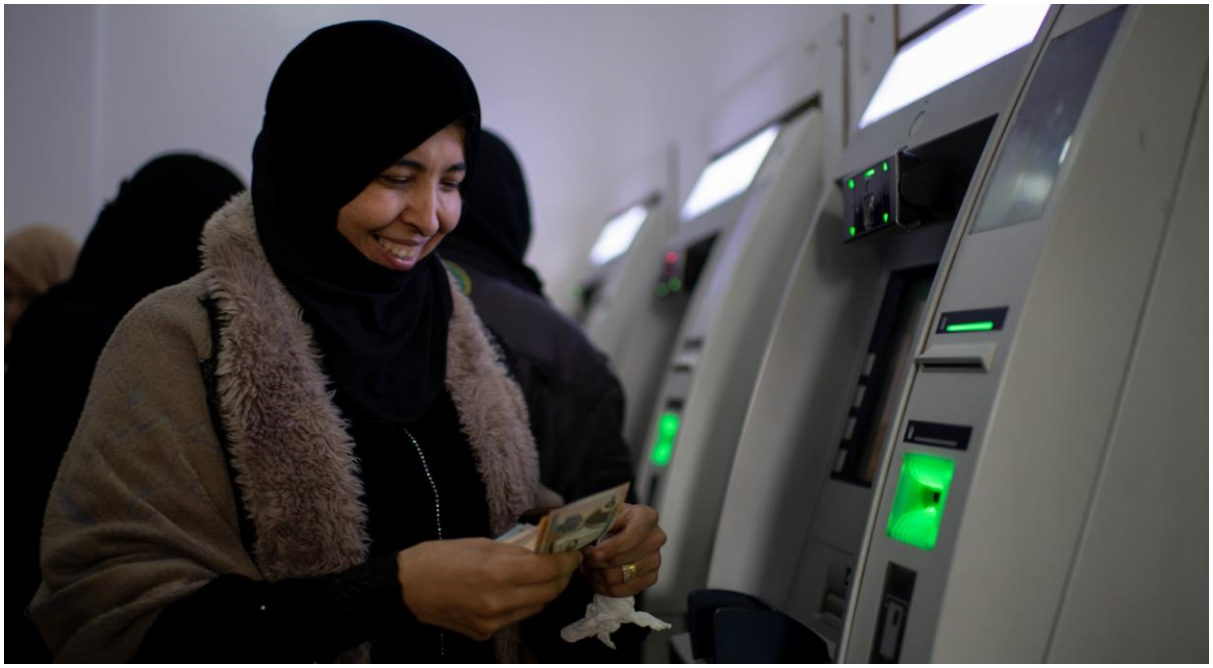
# Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| CBJ | Central Bank of Jordan |
| CFSI | Centre for Financial Services Innovation |
| FIND | Finance in Displacement |
| FHN | Financial Health Network |
| GCR | Global Compact on Refugees |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GoJ | Government of Jordan |
| JRP | Jordan Response Plan |
| MFI | Microfinance Institution |
| MFW | Microfund for Women |
| MoI | Ministry of Interior |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NAF | National Aid Fund |
| NFIS | National Financial Inclusion Strategy |
| SSC | Social Security Corporation |
| UNCDF | United Nations Capital Development Fund |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency |
| VAF | Socio-Economic Survey on Refugees in Jordan (VAF–Vulnerability Assessment Framework). |
| WFP | World Food Programme |



*Rajaa, a single mother of four and Syrian refugee relies on UNHCR's monthly cash assistance but even the 125 dinar she receives every month doesn't cover the cost of her rent. Especially in winter the cost of gas for heating puts an added strain on the family and despite trying to find informal work babysitting, cooking and selling food to her neighbors, After receiving the monthly SMS to go and withdraw her money that morning, Rajaa recalls the relief she felt when she saw her phone light up and at the bank, she kisses the money as it comes out the ATM. ©UNHCR/Mohammad Hawari*

# Executive Summary

This report evaluates the **financial inclusion and financial health of refugees in Jordan**, commissioned by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency[1]. Based on findings from a survey conducted **between June and August 2024**, the report aims to inform policies and activities that enhance refugees' financial inclusion and capacity for financial health. UNHCR intends to repeat this baseline survey periodically to capture progress against key refugee financial inclusion and financial health indicators over time. The survey covered all regions in Jordan and involved **3,640 respondents aged 18 to 59**.

Findings indicate that access to identity documents and communication tools is generally widespread, with **84 per cent of respondents holding a valid identification document (ID) and 89 per cent owning a smartphone**. Internet access is also high, with 87 per cent of respondents connected. However, **disparities exist across nationalities**, noting that only Syrian refugees have rights to Ministry of Interior ID cards. As such, non-Syrian refugees face greater challenges in obtaining valid IDs and mobile phones, limiting their ability to access financial services. Women consistently report lower access to communication channels. While more refugees in camps have service cards issued by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), refugees in Amman benefit from greater connectivity.

Economic opportunities remain limited, particularly for non-Syrian refugees and women. **Only 33 per cent of respondents have worked for pay**, with an average (mean) income of **JOD 138 in the 30 days prior to the survey.** Among them, just 49 per cent have maintained somewhat regular employment over the past 12 months. Most refugees work informally, earning irregular incomes that fall short of meeting basic needs, with non-Syrian refugees and women reporting the lowest earnings. Nearly half of the respondents, especially those in camps or

[1] *Please note : This survey did not include refugees of Palestinian origin living in Jordan.*

unemployed, **rely on income from other sources to meet their basic needs**, such as humanitarian cash assistance, which is typically lower than earnings from employment.

Financial inclusion is improving, with almost half of refugee households owning a mobile wallet. However, **only 1 per cent of refugee households surveyed have a bank account.** Mobile wallets are primarily used for cash-in/cash-out transactions, and 84 per cent of users find them 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy' to use. While digital payments are increasing, this trend is stronger in Amman. Savings rates remain low, with **just 2 per cent having saved money in the past 12 months**, while 74 per cent of those having taken on debt in the last 12 months, did so to cover their basic needs.[2] **Only 1 per cent have medical insurance.**

Financial security is a challenge for nearly all respondents. Many rely on informal borrowing, primarily from friends and family (73 per cent). For **87 per cent, income consistently falls short before the next payment cycle, exacerbating insecurity**. Three-quarters of respondents are in debt,[3] often balancing multiple active loans, with debt levels ranging from six to eight times the average monthly income from work. Moreover, 97 per cent of those in debt are behind on repayments. This struggle is more severe among non-Syrian refugees, the elderly, the less educated and unemployed. Coping mechanisms are limited – **44 per cent report being unable to take any action and 31 per cent are borrowing to repay.** Financial outlooks remain grim, with **34 per cent believing they will never escape debt.**

Financial resilience is limited, leaving refugees highly vulnerable to economic shocks. In case of a sudden loss of income, over half **(57 per cent) of the respondents would not survive on their savings even for one day**. The main coping strategy for most (72 per cent) has been borrowing more. Non-Syrians, the unemployed, those with less schooling and those in Amman are most at risk, with depleted savings and limited access to formal credit further heightening their exposure.

Few refugees can plan for the long term, invest in opportunities or spend on leisure, with **76 per cent never having any means** to afford activities they enjoy. Informal borrowing remains the primary means of raising funds, particularly from family and social networks (81 per cent). Of the **30 per cent that have a financial goal,** 44 per cent believe they will achieve their financial goals, though 42 per cent feel otherwise, and only 1 per cent are able to plan beyond the next month.

Refugee financial confidence is weak, characterized by low literacy and record-keeping. Only around **one-third of respondents could correctly read and interpret** the transaction cost in a standard mobile wallet message and calculate the amount of a loan fee. In line with this finding, 75 per cent are very concerned about managing their financial situation. Levels of refugee education and financial account ownership correlate with better financial control. Non-Syrian refugees, unemployed refugees and women report the lowest confidence in managing finances.

Overall, the findings highlight the precarious financial health of refugees in Jordan, with limited financial inclusion, reliance on irregular/informal incomes, and widespread indebtedness. Significant disparities persist between non-Syrians, women, and older individuals living outside camps in terms of their financial inclusion and financial health. Low savings, reliance on informal borrowing, and weak financial literacy compound vulnerability, with many unable to cover basic needs or withstand unexpected economic shocks. While a portion of respondents express optimism about achieving their financial goals, most struggle to plan beyond the short term, underscoring the need for targeted interventions.

[2] *For this survey, the question was formulated as "In the last 12 months, have you borrowed any money?" and "Why did you borrow money?". This phrasing contrasts with the Socioeconomic Survey (VAF), which asked a more general question about debt—"Are you in debt?". As such, the debt-related findings between the two surveys are different.*

[3] *Ibid*

# 1 Introduction

### Scope and Purpose

This report presents the framework and findings of a baseline survey conducted to assess the financial inclusion and financial health of refugees[4] in Jordan (hereinafter referred to as the 'survey'). The data collection for this survey took place between June and August 2024, hence prior to the fall of the Assad government in Syria in December 2024.

The survey was commissioned by UNHCR in Jordan. It seeks to inform UNHCR, the broader humanitarian and development community, and other relevant stakeholders on the state of refugees' financial inclusion and financial health in Jordan as of mid-2024. These results are expected to serve as a reference point for future assessments as well as guide the development of strategies and interventions to improve access to and use of financial services and the overall financial health of refugees in Jordan. This survey aligns with efforts by partners such as the World Food Programme (WFP), the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), financial and payment service providers, and other relevant stakeholders seeking to strengthen monitoring and evaluation frameworks and advance financial inclusion and financial health of refugees in Jordan.

### Structure

This Report (Volume I) is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides a brief overview of the country context.
- Section 3 describes the conceptual framework within which the survey was developed.
- Section 4 illustrates the methodological approach to the implementation of the survey.
- Section 5 presents an overview of the respondents to the survey (i.e. the survey sample).
- Section 6 outlines the key findings of the survey; and
- Section 7 summarizes some overarching conclusions drawn from the survey findings.

It is accompanied by five annexes (Volume II), namely:

- Annex A outlining the survey sampling approach.
- Annex B includes the complete set of questions and instructions of the questionnaire for the survey (in English and Arabic).
- Annex C comprises a methodological note on the analysis of replies to some questions of the survey.
- Annex D presents the general characteristics of the survey respondents; and
- Annex E summarizes the quantitative findings for selected indicators and categories of respondents.

### Authorship, Acknowledgement and Disclaimer

This report has been prepared for UNHCR by Lattanzio KIBS in collaboration with Syntesia and is based on data collected by Mindset. The survey team thank the refugees for their time and insights, as well as our donors for supporting the refugee response and this research. Citation: UNHCR Jordan 2025, Mindset, *Refugee Financial Inclusion and Financial Health in Jordan 2024.*

[4] *While recognizing the varying countries of origin of the asylum seekers registered with UNHCR in Jordan, the general term of "refugees" is used for the purposes of this report.*

# 2 Context

## Macroeconomic and Refugee Context

Jordan, a lower-middle-income country with a **population of 11.5 million**, faces economic challenges including sluggish GDP growth of around 2 per cent annually, high unemployment (23 per cent in 2022) and poverty (16 per cent in 2017).[5] These challenges have been compounded by limited fiscal space, high government debt and a segmented labour market, as well as by ongoing regional conflicts, the Covid-19 pandemic, resource scarcity and climate risks. Amid this backdrop, at the end of 2024, there were around **685,000 UNHCR-registered refugees in Jordan**,[6] primarily Syrians, along with smaller populations from Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia. Most refugees are in protracted displacement with limited access to formal employment and widespread poverty. Around 80 per cent live in communities across the country, with the remaining share – only Syrians – living in camps.[7]

## Policy and Regulatory Framework

Jordan's refugee response operates under a 1998 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of Jordan (GoJ) and UNHCR, as the country has not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention. The **Jordan Response Plan** (JRP), which aligns with the Global Compact on Refugees, outlines a strategy focusing on humanitarian and resilience assistance, with limited emphasis on financial inclusion or access to finance. While the JRP acknowledges economic empowerment, including support for entrepreneurship and market-driven businesses, its primary focus remains only on Syrians refugees. For Syrian refugees, the Jordan Compact of 2016 enabled access to work permits in specific sectors and permitted ownership of home-based businesses in certain activities such as food processing and tailoring. While Jordan permits refugees to register businesses, practical barriers such as documentation requirements, lack of capital, and guarantor stipulations limit access to self-employment opportunities. **Non-Syrian refugees in particular face more restrictive frameworks**, as they cannot both be registered with UNHCR and hold work permits, unlike Syrians. Non-Syrians also encounter greater exclusion from many formal employment opportunities and financial systems due to limited access to identity documentation—only Syrians with UNHCR protection status are issued Ministry of Interior ID service cards. In camps (Syrians), movement restrictions and the need for permits to leave further limit income generation for refugees.

The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) identified refugees as one of four key segments requiring targeted interventions in its 2018 - 2020 **National Financial Inclusion Strategy** (NFIS). The updated 2023-2028 NFIS continues to focus on refugees, emphasizing digital financial services as critical tools for enhancing financial access (especially mobile wallets). Recent CBJ initiatives aim at increasing refugee financial inclusion by promoting mobile wallets, enhancing digital payment infrastructure, and fostering partnerships with non-governmental organizations and community leaders. By 2028, CBJ seeks to raise account ownership to 18 per cent and digital payment use to 15 per cent. Specific measures include: (i) simplifying documentation requirements for refugees to open accounts;

[5] *Jordan Department of Statistics: https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo*

[6] *External Statistical Report on UNHCR Registered Refugees and Asylum-Seekers Jordan as of 6 November 2024: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112411. UNHCR-registered refugees do not include the around 2.4 million Palestinian refugees registered under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). If also Palestinian refugees are considered (most of whom--albeit not all--have gained full Jordanian citizenship), Jordan is one of the largest refugee hosting countries in both absolute and relative terms.*

[7] *Ibid. Notably Zaatari and Azraq. There are also two much smaller camps, i.e., Emirati Jordanian (Mraijeeb Al Fhood) and Garden (formerly King Abdallah Park).*

(ii) developing tailored financial products (e.g. basic accounts and mobile wallets); (iii) expanding digital payment infrastructure.

### Humanitarian Efforts

Supported by its 2023 - 2025 Multi-Year Strategy for Jordan - which specifically targets increased refugee access to financial services - UNHCR seeks to encourage financial inclusion among refugees through digital wallets. **UNHCR has played a central role in advancing the digital financial inclusion of refugees**. In 2024, UNHCR disbursed US$ 61.4 million in cash assistance to almost 70,000 refugee families, benefiting over 300,000 individual refugees - 93 per cent Syrian and 7 per cent non-Syrian. Almost 70 per cent of recipients and a whole 98 per cent in camps received UNHCR cash assistance through mobile wallets.[8] WFP also uses mobile wallets in the provision of food assistance to enable refugees to receive, save, and transfer funds.

*Jordan. Monthly Cash Assistance Distribution to Refugees in Amman. ©UNHCR/Lilly Carlisle*

[8] *2024 UNHCR data.*

# 3 Conceptual Framework

## Financial Inclusion

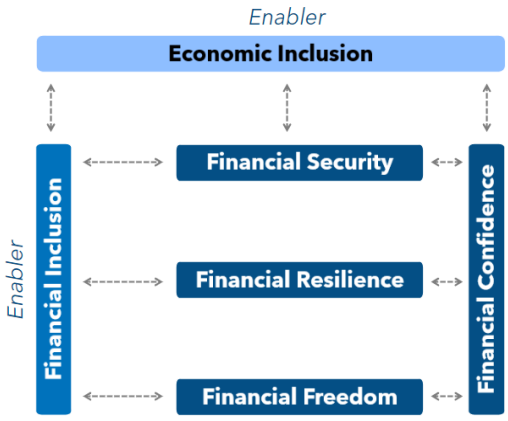
As per the World Bank definition, formal **financial inclusion entails that individuals and businesses have access to useful and affordable financial products and services that meet their needs delivered in a responsible and sustainable way.**[9] Financial inclusion involves access not only to transactional financial accounts - including mobile money accounts, or mobile wallets - as such and related cash-in and cash-out transactions, but to also payment services, savings, credit, and insurance. Being able to access, and use, a transactional account can provide a first step towards broader financial inclusion since it also allows people to send and receive payments as well as store money. A transactional account - allowing for the building of transaction, payment and saving histories - can hence serve as a gateway to other financial services such as credit/insurance.[10]

## Financial Health

There is yet no single, widely accepted method or set of indicators for defining or measuring financial health.[11] For the purpose of this survey, the definition of financial health is based on the framework of recent research on the financial and livelihoods transitions of refugees in Jordan (known as the 'Jordan FIND Study').[12] In particular, financial health can be categorized along the following four dimensions (and six outcomes):

- **Financial security** - (i) the ability to meet necessary living expenses (basic needs) and (ii) the capacity to manage debt.
- **Financial resilience** - (iii) the ability to recover from financial setbacks.
- **Financial freedom** - (iv) the capacity to access financial resources to invest in assets and opportunities and (v) the possibility to expand planning horizons; and
- **Financial confidence** - (vi) the sense of controlling one's finances.[13]

*Figure 3.1 Financial Health Framework*




[9] *https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/financialinclusion/overview. Financial inclusion is 'formal' in that it involves access to financial products and services through financial service providers (such as banks and MFIs) and/or payment service providers (including mobile network operators).*

[10] *For the purposes of the survey, a 'financial account' is considered any account with a formal financial or payment service provider. In the context of Jordan, financial accounts hence include: (i) transactional accounts – including mobile wallets – with banks or mobile payment service providers; (ii) checking, deposit and savings accounts with banks; and (iii) credit accounts with MFIs.*

[11] *The term 'financial health' was first popularized by the Centre for Financial Services Innovation (CFSI), now the Financial Health Network (FHN): https://finhealthnetwork.org*

[12] *Dhawan et al, From financial inclusion to financial health of refugees: Urging for a shift in perspective, 2023: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01436597.2023.2264780. This research was conducted within the framework of the Finance in Displacement (FIND) initiative promoted by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).*

[13] *This dimension plays a role in a person's financial security, resilience and freedom and can hence be considered as cross-cutting. Financial confidence is not part of the financial health framework of the Jordan FIND Study, but is for example included in the financial health definition of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF); see https://www.uncdf.org/gfh/global-financial-health*

**The concept of financial health is hence broader than mere financial inclusion** in that the latter includes the former and how it impacts a person's financial life beyond the sheer access to and use of financial products and services. As such, it is a more holistic and user-centric notion, which considers financial inclusion *as a means to an end* rather than as an end in itself. Standard measures of financial inclusion, such as financial account access or usage, fall short of capturing the essence of financial health. Access measures cannot describe whether financial services are contributing to personal or household financial well-being, nor do they shed light on people's ability to manage their financial obligations or have confidence in their financial future. In this sense, financial inclusion is considered an enabler of - or precondition for - financial health.

Similarly, **economic participation (i.e. participation in income-generating activities) can also be considered as an enabler** of both financial inclusion and financial health. Indeed, the Jordan FIND Study refers to the possibility to engage in employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, as defined by laws and regulations, as foundational (economic) inclusion. Having a job and an income as well as the level and volatility of work status and income affect not only a person's access and use of financial services (financial inclusion) but also her/his/their ability to address financial obligations, needs and plans (financial health).[14]

# 4 Methodological Approach

### Sampling Method

The overall sampling sought to cover at least 3,600 individual refugees **targeting adult individuals of working age (between 18 and 59 years old), with an equal distribution between females and males**. Based on October 2023 UNHCR data,[15] the sampling was representative of the main areas where refugees live in Jordan, which include communities and camps, and **stratified across three locations**: (i) Amman (targeting 1,600 individuals); (ii) All other governorates (excluding Amman) (targeting 1,200 individuals); and (iii) camps, i.e. Zaatari and Azraq (targeting 800 individuals). The sample was **further stratified into Syrians and non-Syrians**, with a target of at least 600 non-Syrians (mostly in Amman, but also in other governates). These criteria allowed for a minimum target size of 400 respondents per key disaggregation group permitting a margin of error that is equal or lower than 5 percentage points at the 95 per cent confidence level when analysing the findings.[16]

Furthermore, within the criteria defined above to ensure sufficient sample sizes for the various sub-groups, the survey sample was randomly **extracted among the respondents of the 2024 Socio-Economic Survey** (also known as, and henceforth referred to as the VAF (Vulnerability Assessment Framework). The VAF pool was used to build on already collected individual information and allow for comparisons over time. A complete account of the survey sampling approach is attached in Annex A (Volume II).

[14] *The understanding of a one's financial health is influenced by other contextual factors (e.g., expenses volatility, informal financial arrangements, and financial role within the household.*

[15] *UNHCR Statistical Report of Registered Refugees as of 31 October 2023.*

[16] *For example, if approximately 60% of people have an ID card with a margin of error of ±5% at a 95% confidence level, it means we are 95% confident that the actual share of people with an ID card lies between 55% and 65%. For quasi-continuous variables, the margin of error would vary individually. At the 95% confidence level, it can be expressed as margin of error = 1.96 x s / √n, where s is the standard deviation of the sample and on the base sample size of the variable. The 5% margin of error for 400 respondents is a lower bound, which assumes that they are independent from each other, i.e., that they have been randomly selected at the individual level. In practice, because some respondents belong to non-unique sharing groups (see Box 4.1 below), the margin of error would be slightly higher for each variable. In practical terms, the margin of error would need to be adjusted by the squared root of (1+(n-1)*p) where n is the average sharing group size (1.8 in our dataset) and p the intra-sharing group correlation of each variable. For example, for the income variable, p is equal to 0.45, so the actual margin of error (i.e., = 1.96 x s / √n) should be multiplied by a factor of √(1+0.8*45%) = 1.166.*

### Data Collection

The collection of data relied on an **interview-based questionnaire**. The questionnaire was **structured around the key dimensions of financial health and enabling access and inclusion** as presented above (see Annex B in Volume II). Given the relative complexity of the topics covered, the questionnaire included particularly detailed instructions for the enumerators and explanatory notes for the respondents. Furthermore, enumerators were trained not only on the questionnaire as such (i.e. its questions, instructions and explanatory notes, as well as skip logic, etc.), but also on the underlying conceptual framework. Interviews were carried out in Arabic by the trained Jordanian enumerators (supported by an interpreter when necessary for non-Syrian respondents). Data collection was completed between the end of June and the middle of August 2024.[17]

### Data Analysis

Replies were analysed with **weights proportional to the size of each group in the total population in terms or their location and country of origin**, i.e. (i) Amman, (ii) other governates, and (iii) camps, as well as (i) Syrian and (ii) non-Syrian. Since the targeted 50/50 distribution between female and male respondents is largely in line with the division between females and males within the total refugee population, weighting according to sex was not carried out.

The analysis includes the **determination of the statistical significance between variations in response across eight different categories and sub-groups**. Apart from the three sampling criteria of (i) country of origin, (ii) location and (iii) sex, the analysis also distinguishes between another three main categories – i.e. (iv) age, differentiating between younger (18 - 34 years) and older (35 - 59 years) adults; (v) education, namely no schooling, basic education, secondary education, and higher education; and (vi) year of arrival, i.e. before 2012, between 2012 and 2014, and after 2014 – as well as another two sub-groups as reported through the survey – namely: (vii) work status, i.e. those who are working and not working; and (viii) financial account ownership, i.e. those with and without a financial account.[18] The analysis involves a comparison of variables across these key subgroups to the rest of the sample to establish whether their levels significantly differ from each other in statistical terms;[19] for example, if people working have a significantly better access to mobile wallets than those not working. This analysis is made 'all other things being equal', which means that the fact that working people may for example have more years of schooling than non-working people, or are more often males than females, is not considered.[20] Finally, for some variables such as income,[21] the median[22] has been reported along with the mean.[23] As opposed to the mean, the median is not (or much less) sensitive to extreme values and to skewed distribution, and hence better represent the situation of the 'average' respondent for variables with extreme values.

[17] *Quality assurance procedures included: (i) the use of a callback form to compare the answers collected in the field with those obtained during callbacks (the match rate) to assess enumerators' behavior and ensure accurate survey understanding; (ii) the development of an SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) syntax to check for illogical answers, skip patterns and relevance or any missing answers; (iii) the review of responses to open-ended questions and coding for easier analysis.*

[18] *Furthermore, for variables that take continuous or quasi-continuous values (such as income), the median has been reported along with the mean to control for extreme values.*

[19] *Namely the p-value (of the linear regression, ordinary least squares, of the output variable on the dummies of the input variable) and the rank sum (i.e., the p-value of the Mann-Whitney test for ordinal variables, only for binary entry variables).*

[20] *I.e., analysis of statistical significance is bivariate. It does not include multivariate regressions to 'control' for specific factors by holding them equal. In other words, the analysis considers subgroups as they are instead of exploring factors that may explain observed differences between those subgroups.*

[21] *i.e. continuos or quasi-continuos values.*

[22] *The 'median' is the middle number in a set of values when those values are arranged from smallest to largest.*

[23] *The 'mean' is the number you get by dividing the sum of a set of values by the number of values in the set.*

**Box 4.1 Methodological Note**

The survey **primarily targeted respondents as individuals but also considered respondents as members of sharing groups**. A 'sharing group' is defined as a group of individuals who share meals and expenses. For a couple of dimensions of financial health – notably the ability to (i) meet basic needs and (ii) recover from financial setbacks – it is difficult to separate the respondent as an individual from the respondent as a member of a sharing group. The questions related to these two dimensions (as well as a few aspects in other areas)[24] hence focus on the respondent as part of a sharing group rather than on the respondent as an individual. The sampling strategy targeted – to the extent possible given the three stratification criteria related to (i) country of origin (including the over-sampling of non-Syrians), (ii) location and (iii) gender – not more than one respondent per sharing group. However, since the survey respondents were randomly selected respecting the three main stratification criteria among the more limited pool of VAF respondents aged 18 - 59 (and not among the larger pool of the total refugee population aged 18 - 59 in the country), some respondents come from the same sharing group. To not over-represent the same sharing group situation, the replies of respondents from the same sharing groups have been weighted (see further Annex C in Volume II).

*Iman Azooz, a 48-year-old Syrian refugee and widow, is pictured in front of the bank as she goes to pick up her monthly cash assistance. Iman fled to Jordan in 2013 after her husband died during the conflict in Syria and is the sole guardian for her five children. ©UNHCR/Sana Hamdan*

[24] *Namely access to mobile phone and Internet, work status and work income, financial account ownership, as well as level of debt.*

# 5 Overview of Respondents

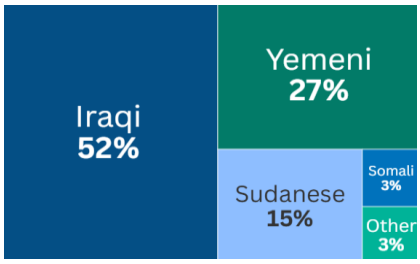
## Introduction

The survey **covered a total of 3,640 individual respondents** among UNHCR-registered refugees in Jordan. A general overview of some key demographic characteristics – as retrieved from the 2024 VAF data - of the respondents is presented in the paragraphs below, while Annex D (in Volume II) provides more details on the numbers across and between the six main categories of respondents.[25] This section only represents the characteristics of the respondents. The numbers here are unweighted hence do not represent the refugee population as whole. When presenting the survey findings in Section 6, numbers are weighted and therefore do represent the population of refugees.

## Country of Origin

Respondents are **predominantly Syrians but also include 21 per cent non-Syrian refugees**. Among the 752 non-Syrian respondents,[26] around half are originally from Iraq. The other half is mainly composed of Yemeni, Sudanese and Somali, with other countries of origin representing a small share of non-Syrians.[27]

*Figure 5.1: Country of origin of non-Syrians (% of respondents; n=752)*




## Location

Survey respondents **live in both communities and camps** across the country. Among the respondents living in communities (77 per cent of the total), most reside in the Central Region (primarily Amman, and especially non-Syrians), while the remaining share lives in other governates in both the North Region and South Region. The respondents also include Syrian refugees living in camps, namely Zaatari and Azraq. For the survey (as targeted by the sampling strategy), respondents are grouped into the following three main location categories: (i) Amman (42 per cent), (ii) Other governates (35 per cent) and (iii) camps (23 per cent).[28]

*Figure 5.2: Location (% of respondents; n=3,640)*

| Location | Number | % of total |
|---|---|---|
| **Communities** | **2,805** | **77%** |
| Central region - Amman | 1,549 | 42% |
| Central region - non-Amman | 358 | 10% |
| North region | 612 | 17% |
| South region | 286 | 8% |
| **Camps (only Syrians)** | **835** | **23%** |
| Azraq | 285 | 8% |
| Zaatari | 550 | 15% |
| **Total** | **3,640** | **100%** |

## Gender

As targeted by the sampling strategy, respondents are overall **divided equally between the two genders--** 49 per cent women and 51 per cent men. Among the non-Syrian respondents, there are slightly more men

[25] *I.e., all sub-groups presented in Section 4 above except the classifications according to work status and financial account ownership (information which was retrieved through the survey and respectively presented in Section 6.2 and Section 6.3 below).*
[26] *The sampling strategy targeted at least 600 non-Syrian respondents (all in Amman), with the possibility of additional non-Syrian respondents following the random sampling of refugees in Other governates. The non-Syrian respondent pool eventually included 519 respondents in Amman (69%) and 233 respondents in Other governates (31%).*
[27] *Other countries of origin include Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, Philippines, and Sri Lanka.*
[28] *The sampling strategy targeted 1,600 respondents in Amman, 1,200 respondents in Other governates and 800 respondents in Camps. The respondent pool eventually included slightly fewer respondents in Amman (1,549) and slightly more respondents in Other governates (1,256) and Camps (835).*

than women--47 per cent women versus 53 per cent men. There is also a marginally higher share of male than female respondents in Amman--48 per cent and 52 per cent respectively.

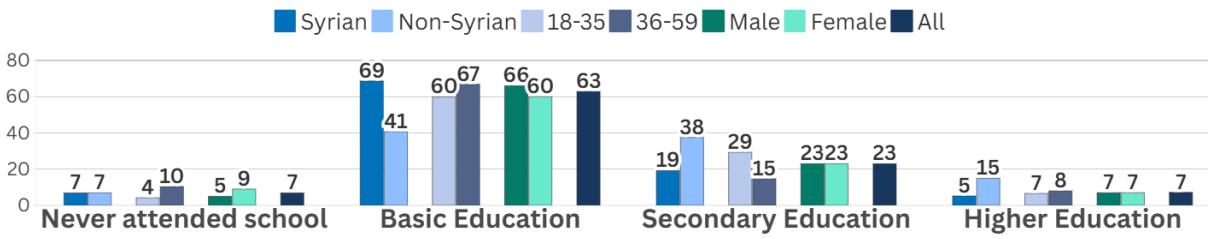
### Age

The survey **only targeted refugees between the ages of 18 and 59**. A somewhat greater share of all respondents (57 per cent) is in the 18 - 35 age range (hereinafter also 'younger adults') than in the 36 - 59 age range (hereinafter also 'older adults'). This is the case regardless of country of origin, location,[29] and gender. Both the mean and median ages are at the upper limit within the younger age range (34 and 33 years respectively).[30]

### Level of Education

**Most respondents have only basic school education**. The level of education varies primarily by country of origin and age, with non-Syrians and younger adults generally having more years of schooling than Syrians and older adults. The level of education is also slightly higher for respondents living in Amman than elsewhere, while respondents who arrived in the 2012-2014 period have generally attended school for fewer years than those who arrived either before or after. A somewhat greater share of women than men have never attended school, but the shares with secondary and higher education are the same for female and male respondents.

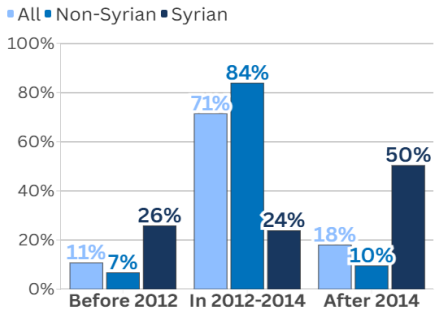
*Figure 5.3: Level of education (% of respondents; n=3,640)[31]*




### Year of Arrival

The **great majority of Syrian respondents arrived at the height of the conflict** in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2012 – 2014 (84 per cent). While half of the non-Syrians registered with UNHCR arrived after 2014, the other half arrived before 2014. It should be noted that this categorization partly overlaps with the age of the respondents, since those who arrived before 2012 tend to be older than those who arrived after 2014.

*Figure 5.4: Year of Arrival (% of respondents; n=3,640)*




*29 Even if slightly less so in Camps.*

*30 The 'mean' is the number you get by dividing the sum of a set of values by the number of values in the set. The 'median' is the middle number in a set of values when those values are arranged from smallest to largest. The median has been reported along with the mean to control for extreme values. The median is used in addition to mean because the median ignores outlier effects. As opposed to the mean, the median is not (or much less) sensitive to extreme values and to skewed distribution, and hence better represent the situation of the 'average' respondent for variables with extreme values.*

*31 Secondary education respondents include 17 respondents with vocational training.*

**Box 5.1 Sharing Groups**

As outlined in Section 4 above, the survey considers both the individual respondents and the respondents' sharing groups. **The respondents' sharing groups are quite large, with an average of seven members (including the individual respondents).** All respondents share their meals and expenses with at least one another person. Most respondents belong to sharing groups with a total of four to ten members (83 per cent), while the remaining 8 per cent and 9 per cent respectively belong to smaller groups (i.e. with only two or three members) and larger groups (i.e. with eleven or more members). Generally, Syrian sharing groups (especially for Syrian respondents living in camps) tend to be slightly larger than non-Syrian sharing groups, while respondents who have a higher education and who arrived before 2012 belong to somewhat smaller sharing groups.

# 6 Findings

This section presents the key findings of the survey. It commences with an overview of respondents' basic access in terms of documentation and communication necessary to access certain financial services in Jordan (Section 6.1). This is followed by the level of respondents' economic participation (Section 6.2) and financial inclusion (Section 6.3). It then outlines the findings for the four financial health dimensions and related outcomes; namely: financial security – (i) ability to meet basic needs and (ii) capacity to manage debt (Section 6.4); financial resilience – (iii) ability to recover from financial setbacks (Section 6.5); financial freedom – (iv) capacity to access financial resources to invest in assets and opportunities and (v) possibility to expand financial planning horizons (Section 6.6); and financial confidence – (vi) sense of controlling one's finances (Section 6.7).

Results are weighted and analysed for the pool of respondents, as well as for the six main categories of respondents as presented in Section 5 above, i.e. (i) country of origin, (ii) location, (iii) gender, (iv) age, (v) level of education, and (vi) year of arrival. Additional two sets of sub-groups have also been used; namely - starting from Section 6.3 Financial Inclusion - (vii) working status (i.e. whether the respondent is employed and/or self-employed or not), and - starting from Section 6.4 Financial Security - (viii) basic formal financial inclusion (i.e. whether the respondent has a financial account or not). **Unless otherwise indicated, variations in responses between the various sub-groups are only highlighted where there is statistical significance**.[32]

While the visual illustrations in this section only present the findings for the total pool of relevant respondents, tabulations of the quantitative findings disaggregated by different categories of respondents are attached in Annex E (in Volume II). Furthermore, the figures and footnotes refer to both the unweighted sample number (n) and the weighted sample number (wn).[33]

[32] *Namely when the p-value (of the linear regression, ordinary least squares, of the output variable on the dummies of the input variable) and the ranksum (i.e. the p-value of the Mann-Whitney test for ordinal variables, only for binary entry variables), or only the p-value, point to statistical significance.*

[33] *UNHCR Microdata Library contains the anonymized microdata, questionnaires and metadata from UNHCR surveys. https://microdata.unhcr.org/index.php/home*

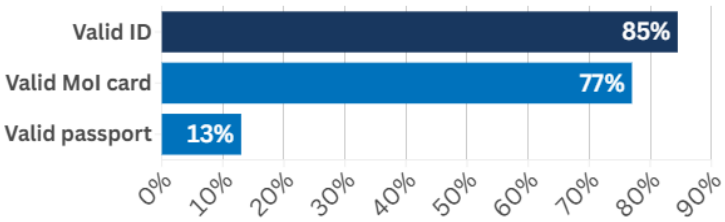
## 6.1 Basic Access to Documentation and Communications

**Findings overview*: Basic access to identity documents and communication means*** *is overall quite high. There are, however, differences across the various sub-groups. This is particularly the case for non-Syrians, among whom valid ID ownership is much lower than for Syrians - due to government restrictions. A greater share of non-Syrians also does not have a mobile phone, and women have lower access to communication channels. Access to communication channels is also lower for women. While valid MoI card ownership is higher in camps than elsewhere, a greater share of respondents in Amman has access to the Internet.*

### Identity Documents

**Most respondents have a valid ID,** either an MoI service card and/or passport, albeit there are differences between certain sub-groups (84 per cent). As expected, given current regulations (see Section 2 above), valid ID ownership is greater among Syrian than non-Syrian respondents (87 per cent and 63 per cent respectively). Even if a much larger share of non-Syrians than Syrians has a valid passport (62 per cent compared to 8 per cent), MoI service cards are not issued to non-Syrians. There is no difference in MoI service card ownership between female and male respondents, although a slightly greater share of male than female respondents have a valid passport. Furthermore, since only Syrian refugees are issued MoI service cards, more camp respondents have this form of documentation, as compared to refugees that reside in communities (especially Amman). Also, of note, those Syrians who arrived in 2012 - 2014 are more likely to have this MOI documentation. Conversely, since valid passport ownership is much higher among non-Syrians than Syrians, more refugees in Amman than elsewhere have valid passports and refugees who arrived in Jordan before 2012-2014 are more likely to have a valid passport.[34]

***Figure 6.1: Valid ID*** *(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,641)*




### Mobile Phone

**The great majority of respondents have their own mobile phone (91 per cent)**, usually a smartphone (89 per cent). Mobile phone ownership is somewhat lower among both non-Syrian and female respondents, as well as for those who never attended school and arrived before 2012. Among the few respondents who do not own a mobile phone,[35] most have access to a mobile phone within their sharing group (91 per cent).

### Internet

Similarly, **most respondents have access to the internet (87 per cent)**. Internet access is much lower for those who never attended school (68%), and females. On the other hand, it is higher for those living in Amman than elsewhere. Among the respondents who do not have Internet access,[36] just above half are part of a sharing group within which at least one other member has access to the internet (55 per cent).

[34] *18 respondents also report having other valid ID card (presumably from their countries of origin).*
[35] *n=322/wn=305*
[36] *n=420/wn=437*

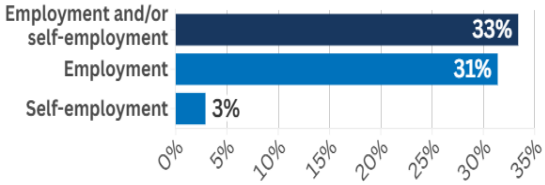
## 6.2 Economic Participation

**Findings overview: *The rate of economic participation is low, particularly for non-Syrians and female respondents*.** *Among those who work, most are employed and only a small share has their own business. The majority work informally, particularly non-Syrian refugees who do not have access to MoI service cards and therefore cannot work legally in the sectors open to Syrians. Only half of those who are employed and/or self-employed work on a regular basis. Consequently, the average monthly income from work is very low. It is even lower for non-Syrian and female respondents. Around half of the respondents receive income from sources other than work; notably cash assistance from UNHCR and other organizations. This is more common among those who live in camps and do not work. The average amount of income from non-work sources is lower than the average work income.*

### Work Status

**The level of economic participation is modest**. **Only 33 per cent of respondents report having worked for pay** (i.e. salary or income from own business) in the 30 days prior to being surveyed. Most of these are working for someone (i.e. employment), with only a very small share reporting to be engaged in their own businesses, including home-based businesses (i.e. self-employment).[37]

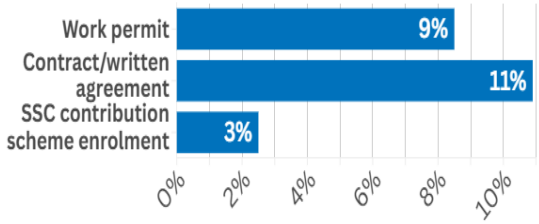
***Figure 6.2: Work Status***
*(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,641)*




### Current Employment

**The employment level among Syrians is much higher than that of non-Syrians**. A significantly larger proportion of male respondents also works compared to female respondents. The share of employed male respondents (54 per cent) is more than five times the share of employed female respondents (9 per cent). Employment levels are also somewhat higher for younger adults and those with basic education, as well as for those who arrived before 2014.

***Figure 6.3: Formality of Employment***
*(% of employed respondents; n=1,125/wn=1,142)*




Among those employed in the last 30 days, **very few work formally**. While 11 per cent have a contract or written agreement, only 9 per cent have a work permit. Even if mandatory with a work permit, fewer still report to be enrolled in the Social Security Corporation (SSC) contribution scheme.[38] As it can be expected given the current regulatory framework, the **level of informality is even higher among non-Syrians**. Although still low, a greater share of respondents who arrived in 2012 - 2014 (mostly Syrians) has a work permit than those who

[37] *This consideration of employment is similar to the definition of the International Labour Organization, which classifies employment as "all persons of working age [i.e. those above the legal working age, but commonly those aged 15 and older] who during a specified brief period, such as one week or one day, were in the following categories: a) paid employment (whether at work or with a job but not at work); or b) self-employment (whether at work or with an enterprise but not at work)". See further https://ilostat.ilo.org/methods/concepts-and-definitions/description-labour-force-statistics/f*

[38] *Since SSC enrollment is mandatory with a work permit, it is likely that respondents either were not aware of being enrolled or did not properly understand the question.*

arrived either before or after. While a smaller portion of female respondents has work permits, a much greater share has contracts or written agreements compared to male respondents. Having a contract/written agreement is also much more common among those living in camps and those with a higher education.

### Current Self-employment

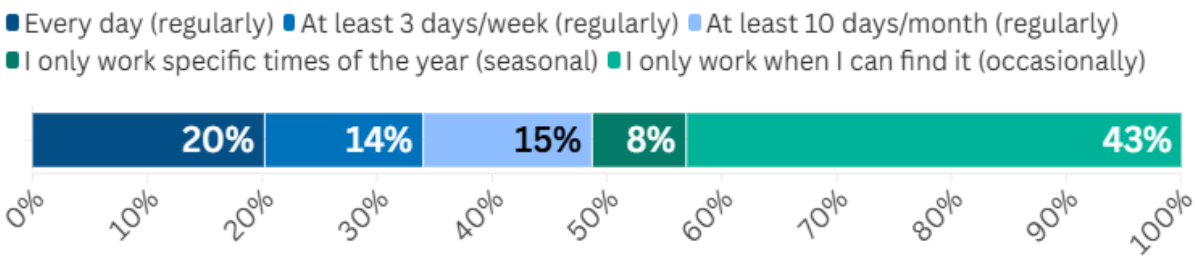
Among the few respondents who have their own business (95 persons, or 3 per cent of all respondents), **the level of self-employment is slightly higher among Syrian, female and older respondents**. On the other hand, it is somewhat lower for those living in camps and those who have never attended school.

Informality is also high among respondents with their own business. **None of the self-employed respondents have a business registration** (or license or permit) or are enrolled with the SSC contribution scheme, while only 4 per cent report having a work permit.

### Work Regularity

Among the respondents who currently work, **half worked on a more or less regular basis over the last 12 months (49 per cent)**, with 20 per cent working every day. However, **an almost equal share of respondents only works occasionally,** when they can find work. Work regularity is slightly more common for Syrian and male respondents, as well as for younger adults and for those who arrived in 2012 - 2014. A somewhat greater share of respondents with secondary and higher education, as well as those who arrived in 2012 - 2014, also works on a more regular basis.

***Figure 6.4 Work Frequency*** *(% of working respondents; n=1,195/wn=1,216)*




**Box 6.1 Work Status at Sharing Group Level[39]**

At the sharing group level, 39 per cent of respondents belong to a sharing group where other members worked in the last 30 days. The share is higher for non-working respondents (46 per cent) than for working respondents (25 per cent); i.e. non-working respondents are more likely to have – and rely on – sharing group members who work than working respondents. It is also more common for Syrian and female respondents as well as for younger adults to belong to sharing groups where other members work. Nevertheless, around half of the respondents belong to sharing groups where no one works (neither the respondents themselves nor other sharing group members).

[39] *Please note that this box refers to the sharing group and not the individual respondent to not over-represent the same sharing group 'situation' (n=3,527/wn=2,914).*

### Work Income[40]

Among the respondents who work for pay,[41] the **average (mean) income in the last 30 days is JOD 138**, while the median income is lower, at JOD 105.[42] This means that the income of most working respondents is below the mean amount (JOD 138). Syrians and younger adults have higher incomes overall, as compared to other demographic groups. Income is also significantly higher for men than women. The average (mean) income for male respondents (JOD 151) is almost double that of female respondents (JOD 78). Respondents in Amman also have a higher income than those living elsewhere. Income is also related to the level of education, with the income of working respondents with a higher education (JOD 195) double that of those who have never attended school (JOD 97). Finally, the income level is comparatively higher for those who arrived in 2012 - 2014 and lower for those who arrived after 2014 (with those who arrived before 2012 somewhere in the middle).

**Box 6.2 Work Income at Sharing Group Level[43]**

**The average income from work for respondents' sharing groups is also low**. In the last 30 days, the sharing groups of respondents received a total income from work (including the individual respondent's own work income, if any) in the order of JOD 202 (mean) / JOD 184 (median). At the sharing group level, the average income is higher for male respondents and younger adults, as well as for those with higher education and who live in Amman.

## 6.3 Financial Inclusion

**Findings overview:** ***Basic formal financial inclusion in terms of account ownership is nearing half of the refugee population. An important share of respondents has mobile wallets; while mobile wallet ownership is less common among non-Syrians, women, younger respondents, and those living in communities****. Bank account ownership is still very limited. The most common reason for using financial accounts is cash-in/cash-out transactions, while a smaller share of respondents also makes digital payments through their accounts. Money transfers are primarily made through mobile wallet accounts. The ability to save is very low and primarily done to meet short-term basic needs and possible emergencies or unexpected needs. On the other hand, borrowing is high (especially for men and older respondents, as well as among those who work and have a financial account) and primarily informally from family, etc., but also by buying on credit. Most borrow to pay for necessary living expenses, while some also do so because of an emergency/unexpected need. Insurance coverage is almost nil.*

[40] *43% of all respondents also received income from sources other than work in the last 30 days. The non-work income sources primarily involve cash assistance from UNHCR and other organizations, including WFP but also local/religious institutions and associations. A negligible number of respondents also receive remittances from family or relatives living outside of Jordan and within Jordan, or income from assets.*

[41] *n=1,190 (five working respondents did not report on income amount)/wn=1,212*

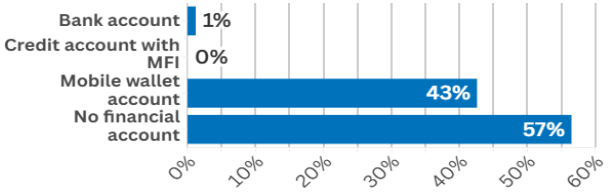
[42] *The 'mean' is the number you get by dividing the sum of a set of values by the number of values in the set. The 'median' is the middle number in a set of values when those values are arranged from smallest to largest. The median has been reported along with the mean to control for extreme values. The median is used in addition to mean because the median ignores outlier effects. As opposed to the mean, the median is not (or much less) sensitive to extreme values and to skewed distribution, and hence better represent the situation of the 'average' respondent for variables with extreme values.*

[43] *This box refers to the sharing group and not the individual respondent to - as in Box 4.1 above - not over-represent the same sharing group 'situation' (n=1,171/wn=1,092).*

## 6.3.1 Account Ownership

**Nearly 43 per cent of respondents have a financial account**. For almost all, account ownership involves a mobile wallet account with a payment service provider. Less than one per cent has a bank account, and two per cent of respondents have a credit account with a microfinance institution (MFI).[44]

*Figure 6.5 Account Ownership*
*(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,641)*




**Box 6.3 Payment Cards and SIM Cards**

Some 21 per cent of respondents with a financial account[45] also have a payment card connected to this account[46]. The share of respondents with a payment card is particularly high among non-Syrians (48 per cent) as well as those living in Amman (38 per cent). This is the case also for a slightly greater share of male respondents and those who work. Conversely, very few respondents with a financial account in camps (2 per cent) have a payment card.

**Among the respondents with a mobile wallet account[47], almost all (91 per cent) have it connected to a SIM card in their own name.** A slightly smaller share of female respondents has their mobile wallet connected to their own SIM cards, while it is somewhat more common among non-Syrians as well as for those who arrived after 2014, live in camps, and work.

### Mobile Wallet Account

**While 43 per cent of all respondents own mobile wallets, this indicator varies greatly across certain sub-groups**. As expected, given the current regulatory framework, account ownership is significantly lower among non-Syrians than Syrians. Furthermore, a much higher share of male than female respondents as well as older than younger adults have a mobile wallet. Mobile wallet ownership is also much higher among respondents living in camps than elsewhere (especially Amman). The same is true for respondents who arrived in 2012 - 2014 compared to those who arrived either before or after. Finally, a greater share of respondents who work than those who do not has a mobile wallet account.

[44] *These financial inclusion numbers represent an important increase compared to the 2022 CBJ data, which reported a financial account ownership of 12% (mobile wallet account 10% and bank account ownership 2%) among refugees. It should, however, be noted that the CBJ sample is limited (and not representative), with only 175 refugee respondents (i.e., 16.6% of 1,052 total respondents). See further: CBJ, Financial Inclusion Diagnostic Study in Jordan 2022, January 2023.*
[45] *n=1,454/wn=1,552.*
[46] *n=1,496/wn=1,583.*
[47] *This represents an increase compared to the 2022 CBJ diagnostics, in which only 6% of the refugee respondents (n=175) had a payment card. See further: CBJ, Financial Inclusion Diagnostic Study in Jordan 2022, January 2023.*

### Bank Account

**Only 54 respondents have an account with a commercial bank (1 per cent)**. Although the numbers are very small (and differences are hence not statistically significant), bank account ownership is slightly higher for non-Syrian and male respondents as well as for those with a higher education and who arrived before 2012. It is also marginally greater for those who works and lives in Amman.

**Box 6.4 Account Ownership at Sharing Group Level[48]**

Among the respondents who do not have a financial account, half belong to sharing groups in which at least one other member has a financial account. Again, account ownership is almost exclusively through mobile wallets (48 per cent), while very few (1 per cent) have a bank account. Mobile wallet ownership within the sharing group is also much lower for non-Syrian sharing groups (6 per cent), while it is much higher in camps (90 per cent).

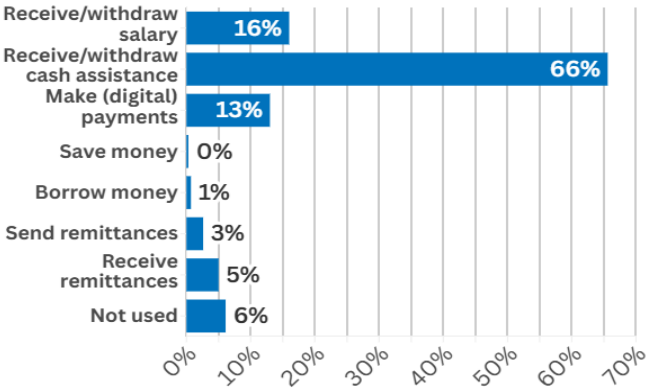
## 6.3.2 Account Usage

### Use of Mobile Wallet Account

Among the respondents with a mobile wallet account, **most use it for cash-in/cash-out transactions, and especially to receive/withdraw cash assistance** (66 per cent). Higher shares of Syrian, older and non-working respondents, as well as those with no/lower education, who live in camps and arrived in the 2012 - 2014 period use it for this purpose. Some 16 per cent of all respondents with a mobile wallet also use it to receive/withdraw work salary (also a cash-in/cash-out transaction). This is more common among female, younger and working respondents, as well as for those with higher levels of education and who arrived after 2014.

Furthermore, **13 per cent use their mobile wallets to make digital payments**. The use of mobile wallets for this purpose is higher among non-Syrian, male and younger respondents, as well as for those who arrived before 2012, who work and with higher education. Conversely, only a tiny share of camp resident uses their mobile wallets to make digital payments. Much smaller shares of respondents use their mobile wallet accounts to receive and send money (remittances), or to borrow money. And only one individual respondent uses their mobile wallet account to save money. Furthermore, 6 per cent of those with a mobile wallet report not using it for anything. Finally, among those who use their mobile wallets for more than one purpose,[49] cash-in/cash-out transaction (66 per cent) is the main use, followed by digital payments (21 per cent) and money transfers (12 per cent).

*Figure 6.6 Usage of Mobile Wallet Accounts*
*(% of respondents with mobile wallets, n=1,454/wn=1,552)*




[48] *Please note that this box refers to the sharing group and not the individual respondent to - as outlined in Box 4.1 above - not over-represent the same sharing group 'situation' (n=2,078/wn=1,693).*
[49] *n=122/wn=124*

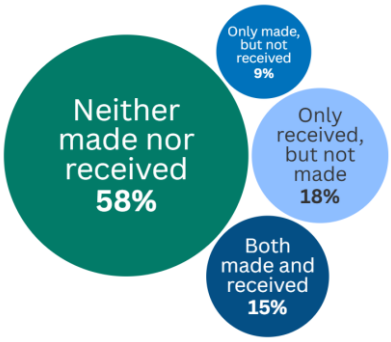
**Box 6.5 Ease of Use of Mobile Wallet Account**

**The great majority of respondents with a mobile wallet find it 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy' to use (84 per cent).** Among those that find it difficult to use mobile wallets, a somewhat greater share never attended school (28 per cent), arrived before 2012 (27 per cent) and are female respondents (23 per cent). Older adults, as well as those that do not work, also have slightly higher levels of difficulty using mobile wallets.

### Use of Bank Account

The few respondents with a bank account (i.e. 54, which only represents 1 per cent of all respondents)[50] also primarily use it for cash-in/cash-out transactions – namely receiving/withdrawing cash assistance (35 per cent) and work salary (34 per cent) – and making digital payments (28 per cent). Smaller shares of respondents also use it to receive (10 per cent) and send (6 per cent) money transfers, as well as to save money (4 per cent). None of the respondents use their bank account to access credit.[51]

***Figure 6.8 Making and Receiving Digital Payments***
*(% of respondents with a financial account that make/receive digital payments; n=1,496/wn=1,583)*




## 6.3.3 Access to Financial Services

### Digital Payments[52]

In the last 12 months, **42 per cent of respondents with a financial account have made and/or received digital payments** (with receiving more common than making).[53] The use of digital payments is somewhat higher among non-Syrians, those who arrived before 2012 and those who live in Amman. A slightly greater share of male respondents and those who work is also making and/or receiving digital payments.

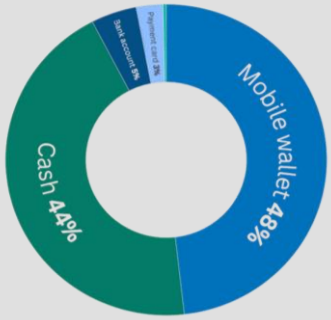
*Umniah Telecom Company, in partnership with UNHCR, has provided mobile wallets to Syrian refugees in Mafraq City. Nour Al-Rahhal, a Syrian refugee, has created a new e-wallet. ©UNHCR/Shawkat Al Harfoush*

[50] *It should be noted that this number is too small to draw statistically significant conclusions about differences.*
[51] *Three of the respondents with a bank account also report not using it for anything.*
[52] *This sub-section on digital payments refers to respondents with a financial account (n=1,496/wn=1,583).*
[53] *This figure also represents an important increase compared to the 2022 CBJ data, which put the use of digital payments among refugee respondents (n=175) at 10%. See further: CBJ, Financial Inclusion Diagnostic Study in Jordan 2022, January 2023.*

**Box 6.6 Preferred Payment Channel**

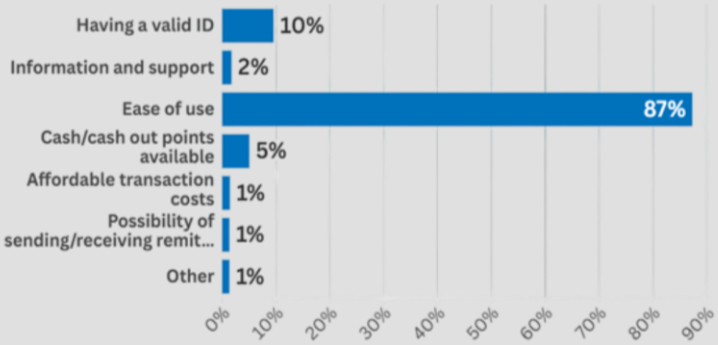
If they could choose freely (i.e. without considering current obstacles to access), **48 per cent of all respondents would prefer mobile wallets to make and receive general payments.** The preference for digital payments through mobile wallets is particularly high for those living in camps (68 per cent), while it is especially low among non-Syrians (18 per cent). However, **44 per cent still opt for cash in hand.** The choice of cash is somewhat higher for non-Syrians (61 per cent) and those living in Amman (57 per cent). Only a small share of respondents (albeit somewhat greater for non-Syrians) prefers bank account transfers and payment cards[54].

***Figure 6.9 Preferred Payment Channel***
*(% of respondents; =3,640/wn=3,641)*




When asked what would encourage them to access and use their preferred means of payment, the majority (87 per cent) lists the **ease of use to make financial transactions.** This is particularly the case for non-Syrians (95 per cent) and those living in Amman (96 per cent). Having a valid ID (more so for those in other governorates, and less so for non-Syrians) and availability of cash-in/cash-out points such as ATMs and agents (more so for those who work) are considered important only by smaller shares of respondents. The portions are even smaller for the availability of information and support on access and use, the affordability (i.e. cost) of transactions, and the possibility of sending and receiving remittances[55].

***Figure 6.10 Aspects Facilitating Access and Use of Preferred Payment Channel*** *(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,461)*




[54] *Probably because not properly understanding the question, six respondents report other methods (namely three exchange shop, two iris scan, and one bank account without transfer), while four report to not prefer any method.*
[55] *40 respondents (1%) also report other ways to encourage access and use (namely 39 safety of use and one proper technical functioning of application).*

## Money Transfers (Remittances)[56]

In the last 12 months, **19 per cent of respondents with financial accounts have sent and/or received money transfers**. As with digital payments, receiving is somewhat more common than sending. The share of non-Syrians who receive and/or send money transfer is almost double the share of Syrians (36 per cent and 19 per cent respectively). The receiving/sending of remittances is also comparatively more common among male respondents and younger adults, as well as for those who work, live in Amman and have a higher education. It also increases incrementally with the level of education.

***Figure 6.11 Sending and Receiving Money Transfers*** *(% of respondents with a financial account sending/receiving money transfers; n=1,496/wn=1,583)*

Among those who use remittances,[57] **most (72 per cent) receive/send through their mobile wallet account**. Much smaller shares rely on bank account or cash transfers (11 per cent and 13 per cent respectively). The use of mobile wallets is more common among male and working respondents, as well as for those who live in Amman.

## Savings

**The ability to save is very low**, **with only 57 of all respondents (2 per cent)[58] having saved any money in the last 12 months**.[59] In general, limited economic opportunities and years of displacement have depleted respondents' savings. Among the very few who saved, **most simply keep cash at home,** while some store their savings on their mobile wallet account. Savings with savings and loans groups (*Jamiyat*) is almost nil.

Among those who saved, the primary purposes are **to meet short-term basic needs and possible emergencies or unexpected needs** (41 per cent and 42 per cent respectively). Furthermore, 12 per cent saved to pay for education and 6 per cent for marriage of family member. Other longer-term savings purposes - such as purchasing assets - are rare. The few who save for old age (retirement) are all non-Syrians. None of the savings were used to pay debt.

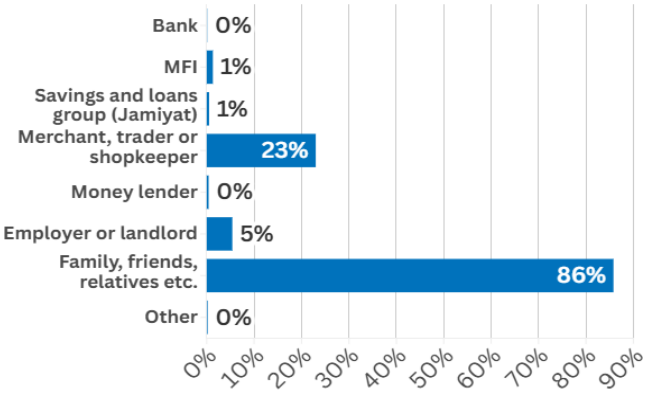
## Credit

**The rate of borrowing is high**. In the last 12 months, most **respondents have borrowed money (74 per cent)**.[60, 61] The borrowing rate is particularly high for male respondents and older adults, as well as among those who work, have a financial account and never attended school. It is also somewhat higher for Syrians, as well as for those living in camps.

[56] *This sub-section on money transfers (remittances) refers to respondents with a financial account (n=1,496/wn=1,583).*
[57] *n=290*
[58] *n=3.640/wn=3,641. It should be noted that the number of those who saved is too small to draw statistically significant conclusions about differences.*
[59] *This figure is similar to the 3% (n=175) reported by the 2022 CBJ data. Also, for CBJ refugee respondents, formal savings were basically nil (0%). See further: CBJ, Financial Inclusion Diagnostic Study in Jordan 2022, January 2023.*
[60] *n=3,640/wn=3,641*
[61] *This figure is slightly higher than the 68% (n=175) reported by the 2022 CBJ data. See further: CBJ, Financial Inclusion Diagnostic Study in Jordan 2022, January 2023. This contrasts with the findings from the Socioeconomic Survey – VAF – which reported 85% of refugees holding debt in host communities, due to the formulation of the questions used on debt.*

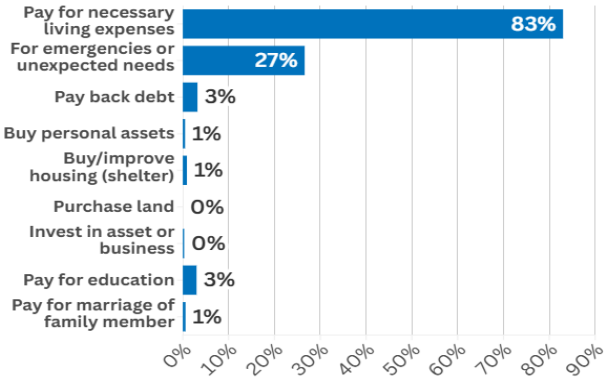
**The great majority of those who borrow money do it informally, and most notably from family, friends, relatives, and neighbours (86 per cent).** Almost a quarter of respondents also buy on credit or borrow money from a merchant, trader or shopkeeper (23 per cent, and more so among those living in camps and older adults). Respondents living in camps borrow comparatively less from family or friends and more from merchants. A small share of borrowing respondents relies on their employer or landlord (being more common among male, working and younger respondents, as well as for those living in Amman). Only 37 respondents, or just above 1 per cent borrow from formal sources--mostly from MFIs, but also a handful from banks.[62] The use of savings and loans groups (*Jamiyat*) as well as money lenders is also very low (only 10 respondents each).[63] Finally, among those who borrow from more than one source,[64] merchants is the main source (43 per cent), followed by family or friends (39 per cent), employer/landlord, MFIs (3 per cent), savings and loans groups (2 per cent), and money lenders (1 per cent).

*Figure 6.12 Sources of Credit*
*(% of respondents who borrow; n=2,618/wn=2,679)*




**Most borrowing respondents borrow to pay for necessary living expenses** (83 per cent, and slightly more so among male respondents. Around one-quarter also borrow because of an emergency or unexpected need (27 per cent, and somewhat higher in the case of female respondents and for those living in Amman. Only 3 per cent of those who borrow do so to pay back existing debt, with a slightly higher share for non-Syrians. A very limited number of respondents borrow money to invest in housing/land or other assets. No respondents borrowed money to save for retirement/old age or to relocate or return to country of origin.[65] Finally, among those who borrow for more than one reason,[66] paying for necessary living expenses is the main reason (57 per cent), followed by emergencies/unexpected needs (36 per cent), pay for education and debt (2 per cent), and pay for marriage of family member (1 per cent).

*Figure 6.13 Reasons for Borrowing*
*(% of respondents who borrow; n=2,618/wn=2,679)*




## Insurance

**Insurance coverage is extremely low**. Only **47 respondents (1 per cent) have medical insurance**,[67] while only one respondent has a pension (old age/retirement) insurance. None have life, unemployment, business/property, or other types of insurance.

[62] *Formal borrowing was reported as low also by the 2022 CBJ data, with 6% of refugee respondents (n=175) having borrowed from a financial institution (notably an MFI). See further: CBJ, Financial Inclusion Diagnostic Study in Jordan 2022, January 2023.*
[63] *Seven respondents also report 'borrowing' money from utility providers since they have not been able to pay the bills for some services.*
[64] *n=452/wn=425*
[65] *Please note that the data collection for this survey was completed before the end of the Al-Assad government in Syria.*
[66] *n=410/wn=452*
[67] *CBJ reports that 18% of surveyed refugees (n=175) had medical insurance in 2022. It is, however, likely that most CBJ refugee respondents referred to the medical assistance received through UNHCR facilitation and the public health system (which is not considered as medical insurance in this baseline survey). In fact, 84% of the CBJ refugee respondents with medical insurance reported not paying for it personally. See further: CBJ, Financial Inclusion Diagnostic Study in Jordan 2022, January 2023.*

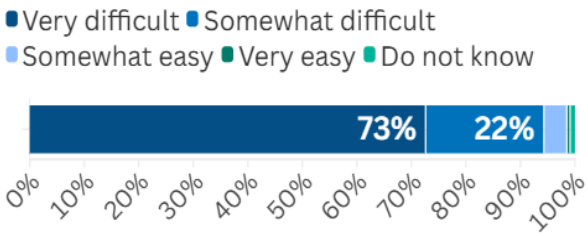
# 6.4 Financial Security

## 6.4.1 Meeting Basic Needs[68]

**Findings overview:** ***The ability to meet basic needs is very challenging, with almost all respondents facing difficulties.*** *This is particularly prominent for non-Syrian and older respondents, as well as for those living in Amman and with lower levels of education. The primary coping mechanism is informal borrowing, while some also work more or get an additional job. Reliance on savings and other means is limited. The level of income is clearly insufficient, not lasting until the next time they receive income for most respondents. Consequently, almost all respondents are very concerned about their ability to pay for their necessary living expenses.*

In the last 30 days, **almost all respondents had difficulties paying for necessary living expenses (95 per cent),** as defined and prioritized by themselves. For 73 per cent of respondents it was 'very difficult' to meet their basic needs. It was comparatively more difficult for older adults as well as for those living in Amman. The level of difficulty is also inversely related to the level of education, i.e. the lower the level of education, the more difficult it is to meet basic needs.

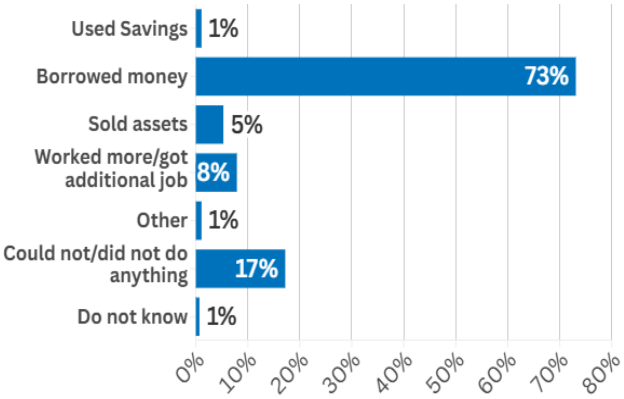
***Figure 6.14 Meeting Basic Needs***
*(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,002)*




### Coping Mechanisms - Meeting Basic Needs

In line with the reasons for borrowing (see Section 6.3 above), when faced with difficulties in paying for their necessary living expenses, **most respondents resorted to borrowing (73 per cent)**[69]. This is in line with the high share of respondents who report paying for necessary living expenses as the reason for having borrowed money in the last 12 months. Relying on borrowing is somewhat less common among non-Syrians and older adults, as well as for those who live in Amman and do not have a financial account.

***Figure 6.15 Coping Mechanisms - Meeting Basic Needs*** *(% with difficulties meeting basic needs n=3,435/wn=2,853)*



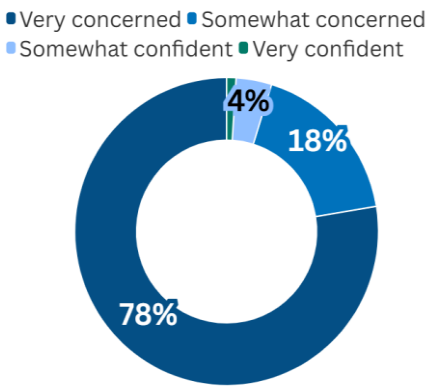

The second most common coping strategy for respondents facing difficulties involves **working more or getting an additional job** (slightly more so for Syrian, male and younger respondents). A smaller share had to sell assets. Assets sold primarily include household assets (82 per cent), but also personal assets (17 per cent) and – to a much smaller extent – productive assets (2 per cent).

[68] *Please note that this section (since it is difficult to separate meeting the basic needs for the respondent as an individual from the respondent as a member of a sharing group) refers to the sharing group and not to the individual respondent in order to - as outlined in Box 4.1 above - not over-represent the same sharing group 'situation'.*

[69] *Other reported coping mechanisms include (i) requesting assistance/grant from international or local/religious organizations as well as from family, relatives, friends, or neighbors, (ii) moving in with other family members, (iii) begging, (iv) taking children out of school, and (v) borrowing food.*

In line with the low savings ability (see Section 6.3 above), **very few respondents could rely on their savings** when faced with difficulties in meeting their basic needs (almost exclusively Syrians). Furthermore, a sizeable share report that they could not do anything at all about their situation and were hence not able to meet their basic needs - 17 per cent. This is particularly the case for non-Syrians, those who arrived before 2012 and who do not have a financial account, as well as for female respondents and those living in Amman. Finally, among those who relied on more than one coping mechanism,[70] borrowing is the main option (66 per cent), followed by working more/getting an additional job (17 per cent), selling assets (15 per cent), and using savings (2 per cent).

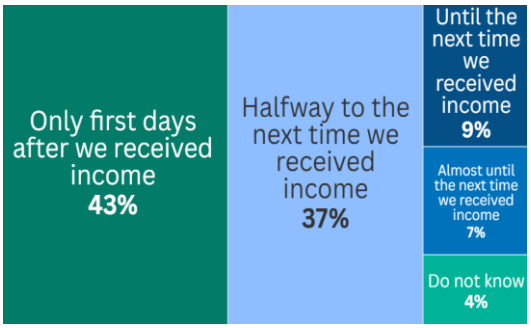
***Figure 6.17 Ability to Meet Basic Needs***
*(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,641)*




### Sufficiency of Income Duration

**Income - from work and other sources - of the great majority of respondents usually does not last long enough to pay for necessary living expenses (87 per cent).** In the last 12 months, the income was commonly sufficient to meet the basic needs only in the first few days after receiving it for 43 per cent of respondents. For another 37 per cent, the income only lasts halfway to the next time they receive income. Few have any income left by the time they receive new income.

***Figure 6.16 Sufficiency of Income Duration*** *(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,002)*




### Level of Concern/Confidence – Ability to Meet Basic Needs[71]

**Almost all respondents are concerned about their ability to pay for necessary living expenses (95 per cent),** with 78 per cent 'very concerned'. The level of concern is somewhat higher among non-Syrians and older adults, as well as for respondents living in Amman and not working. It is also inversely related to the level of education, i.e. those with no/lower education are generally more concerned than those with secondary and higher education.

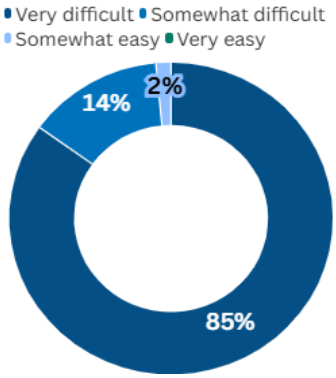
[70] *n=189/wn=197*
[71] *Since the level of confidence or concern is a personal/subjective judgement, all individual respondents are considered here.*

## 6.4.2 Managing Debt

**Findings overview:** ***The capacity to manage debt is low, with most respondents being in debt and facing difficulties with repayments****. This is particularly the case for those who never attended school, as well as for non-Syrian, older and non-working respondents. Indebted respondents have several loans, and many are not able to do anything to repay their debts, while others resort to additional borrowing. Most indebted respondents have borrowed informally primarily because it was the only option available to them. The level of debt is high compared to respondents' monthly income which is usually not even sufficient to cover their basic needs. With limited options and relatively high levels of debt, almost all respondents are very concerned about their ability to repay their debt, and a good share believe they never will.*

**Most respondents are currently in debt (75 per cent)**.[72] Higher shares of indebted respondents are found among Syrian, male and older respondents, as well as those who work and who have a financial account. Respondents who owe money are also more common among those with no or basic schooling, while they are less common in Amman.

***Figure 6.18 Covering Debt Repayments***
*(% of respondents with debt; n=2,700/wn=2,744)*




**Indebted respondents usually have several loans.**[73] The median number of loans is three, but a small share of respondents have a staggering number of loans (bringing the mean number of loans to 27).[74] The median number of loans is lower (i.e. two) among Syrian and female respondents, as well as for those living in other governates and not having a financial account.

Furthermore, **almost all respondents who owe money are behind on their debt repayments (97 per cent)**. In the last 12 months, almost all **indebted respondents faced difficulties paying back their debts with available income** from work and other sources (99 per cent). For 85 per cent of them it was indeed 'very difficult'. The level of difficulty is somewhat higher for those who never attended school, as well as for non-Syrian, older and non-working respondents. As for meeting basic needs, the difficulty in making debt repayments is on the other hand somewhat lower for respondents living in camps.

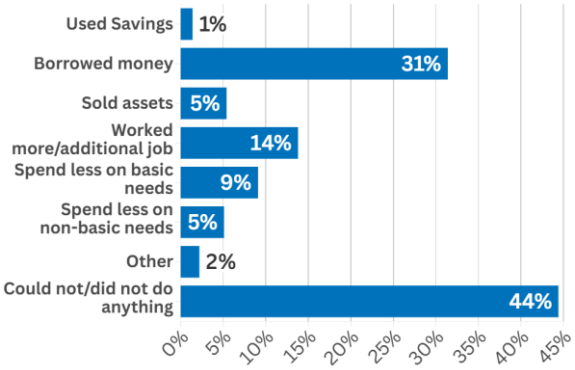
### Coping Mechanisms - Repaying Debt[75]

When faced with difficulties in repaying their debt with available income in the last 12 months, **44 per cent of respondents could not do anything,** and hence could not meet their debt repayments. This is particularly the case for non-Syrians and older adults, as well as for those who live in Amman, do not work, or do not have a financial account. A greater share of those who arrived before 2012 also report not having been able to do anything when faced with debt repayment difficulties.

[72] *n=3,640/wn=3,641*
[73] *n=2,700/wn=2,744*
[74] *The 'mean' is the number you get by dividing the sum of a set of values by the number of values in the set. The 'median' is the middle number in a set of values when those values are arranged from smallest to largest. The median has been reported along with the mean to control for extreme values. The median is used in addition to mean because the median ignores outlier effects. As opposed to the mean, the median is not (or much less) sensitive to extreme values and to skewed distribution, and hence better represent the situation of the 'average' respondent for variables with extreme values.*
[75] *Other reported coping mechanisms include (i) requesting assistance/grant from international or local/religious organizations as well as from family, relatives, friends, or neighbors, (ii) using gifts/Eid money, (iii) taking children out of school, (iv) sending children to work, (v) begging, and (vi) other unspecified coping mechanism.*

Furthermore, **31 per cent of indebted respondents who faced repayment difficulties resorted to additional borrowing**. The share is slightly higher for those living in other governates (36 per cent) and somewhat lower for those who live in camps (23 per cent). The number of indebted respondents who resort to further borrowing to meet their debt repayments greatly exceeds the number of respondents who report paying back debt as one of the reasons for having borrowed money in the last 12 months. This may be because taking on debt to repay debt may be considered one in the same for the respondents.

***Figure 6.19 Coping Mechanisms for Repaying Debt*** *(% of indebted respondents with difficulties repaying debt; n=2,506/wn=2,415)*




As for meeting basic needs, **14 per cent of respondents took on additional work,** especially Syrians, males and younger respondents. A smaller, albeit important, share had to reduce spending on necessary living expenses to meet their debt repayment, especially Syrians, as well as those who live in camps and do not work. Even fewer respondents reduced spending on less essential needs or sold whatever household assets they have remaining. Furthermore, very few relied on their savings to repay their debts.

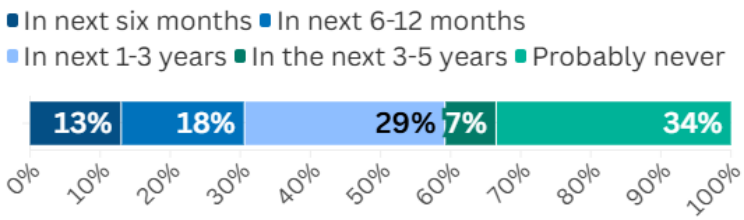
Finally, among those who relied on more than one option,[76] borrowing is the main choice (43 per cent), followed by reducing spending on necessary living expenses (19 per cent), selling assets (14 per cent), and working more (13 per cent).

### Level of Concern/Confidence – Ability to Repay Debt

**Almost all indebted respondents are concerned about their ability to repay their current debt (97 per cent)**, with 82 per cent being indeed 'very concerned'. The level of concern is somewhat higher among non-Syrians and older adults, as well as for those who never attended school, live in Amman, and do not work.

In line with the high level of concern, **34 per cent of indebted respondents believe that they will probably never be free of the debt they currently hold**. Again, the share is higher for non-Syrian, older and male respondents, as well as for respondents living in Amman and not working. On the other hand, a similar share estimates that they will be debt free within the next 12 months (31 per cent).

***Figure 6.20 Time to Repay Debt***
*(% of respondents with debt; n=2,700/wn=2,744)*




[76] *n=201/wn=233*

## Sources of Debt

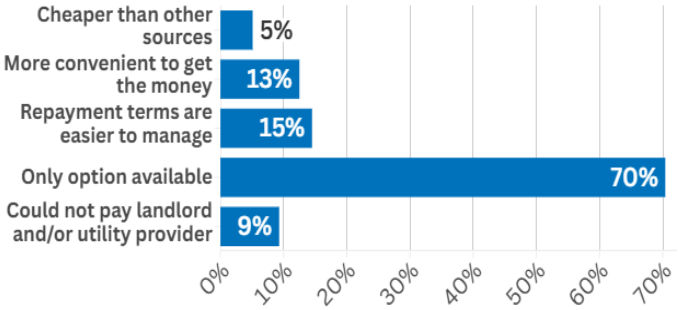
Regarding their largest loan, **most indebted respondents have borrowed informally from family, relatives, friends, neighbours, etc. (70 per cent)**. This source of credit is less common for those living in camps, but also for non-Syrian, male and older respondents. Lower shares among those who work and do not have a financial account also rely on friends, etc. For a sizeable share of respondents, the greatest debt is held by merchants, traders or shopkeepers, i.e. buying food and other items on credit. This is especially the case for those living in camps, as well as slightly more so for female and older respondents. Smaller shares of indebted respondents have borrowed from their landlord, i.e. owe back rent, or from their employer. The source of the largest loan is formal (i.e. from an MFI or a bank) for only a handful of respondents. These findings are in line with the borrowing sources reported in Section 6.3.

***Figure 6.21 Source of Largest Loan***
*(% of respondents with debt; n=2,700/wn=2,744)*

## Reasons for Debt Sources

**The ability to choose where to borrow from is limited**. Most respondents have borrowed money from their one main source because it was the only option available to them (70 per cent). This share is slightly higher among younger adults. Some owe most of their debt to landlords and/or utility providers simply because they could not pay for their rent and/or utilities, particularly non-Syrians, older respondents and those living in Amman. Some also report that their primary credit source is more easily manageable because of more flexible repayment terms, and more convenient due to less paperwork or other requirements, than other options. Finally, since many refugees have only one option--and unable to choose based on cost--the cost of debt is not the main concern when deciding which credit source to rely on.

***Figure 6.22 Reason for Borrowing Source***
*(% of respondents with debt; n=2,700/wn=2,744)*




## Level of Debt and Debt Repayment

**The average individual debt amount varies between JOD 600 (median) and JOD 1,085 (mean).**[77] **This represents between six (median) and eight (mean) times the average individual monthly income** from work reported by those who work (see Section 6.2 above). The total debt amount is somewhat higher among male, older and Syrian respondents, as well as for those with a higher education, who arrived before 2012, live in Amman. It is also higher for those who work and have a financial account. Considering the number of loans, the average loan amount is JOD 225 (median)/JOD 469 (mean).

[77] *n=2,688 (32 of the 2,700 indebted respondents do not know the amount of their debt)/wn=2,715. The 'median' is the middle number in a set of values when those values are arranged from smallest to largest. The 'mean' is the number you get by dividing the sum of a set of values by the number of values in the set.*

The average (mean) debt repayment of indebted respondents in the last 30 days amounts to JOD 42.[78] The average (mean) debt repayments are generally higher among male respondents, as well as for those who work and have a financial account. However, with the median amount being zero, **most respondents have not made any debt repayments in the last 30 days.**

Box 6.7 Debt and Debt Repayment Amount at Sharing Group Level[79]

43 per cent of respondents[80] report that other members within their sharing group are in debt. For these respondents,[81] the total debt of the sharing group (including their own individual debt, if any) amounts to **JOD 1,424 (mean) and JOD 800 (median)**. This represents between four (median) and seven (mean) times the average (monthly) income from work reported by the sharing groups where at least one member works. The total debt amount at the sharing group level is higher for respondents living in Amman compared to those living in camps, which is almost double when considering mean amounts. In terms of debt repayment, respondents' sharing groups repaid JOD 138 (mean) and JOD 25 (median) in the last 30 days. [82]

*Mona is a 40-year-old Syrian woman, who has been in Jordan since 2015. She and her daughter Tuqa, 14, who has serious medical needs, are receiving basic needs cash assistance since 2019. ©UNHCR/Sana Hamdan*

[78] *n=2,358 (342 of the 2,700 indebted respondents do not know the amount of their debt repayment)/wn=460*
[79] *This box refers to the sharing group and not the individual respondent to - as outlined in Box 4.1 above - not over-represent the same sharing group 'situation'.*
[80] *n=3,527/wn=2,914*
[81] *n=1,276/wn=1,083.*
[82] *n=497/wn=432 (many relevant respondents do not know the amount of debt repayment of the sharing group).*

## 6.5 Financial Resilience[83]

**Findings overview: *The ability to recover from financial setbacks is also very difficult*.** *Most respondents have recently experienced some type of financial shock and coping with this shock has been very difficult for almost all. Non-Syrians and refugees living in communities, older refugees, and those living in Amman, have experienced more financial shocks and report higher levels of difficulty in dealing with it. Most respondents would also face difficulties in case of an unexpected need requiring any amount of money. Again, most respondents have resorted—and would resort--to borrowing to manage financial shocks, albeit less so for potential smaller amounts. Furthermore, with saving pools generally exhausted, more than half of respondents would not be able to cover even one day of necessary living expenses with their (non-existent) savings. The level of concern regarding the ability to recover from financial setbacks is consequently also high.*

### Past Financial Shocks

In the last 12 months, **most respondents have experienced some type of financial shock (72 per cent),** such as job loss or source of income, an increase in the cost of living, an illness or accident and/or other type of emergency causing a decrease in income and/or increase in expenses.[84] The share is somewhat higher for non-Syrians, while it is lower for those who live in camps compared to other locations.

Among the respondents who experienced financial shock, **all but a handful found it either 'very difficult' or 'somewhat difficult' to cope with the consequences (87 per cent and 12 per cent respectively)**. The share of respondents who reported it being 'very difficult' is slightly higher for non-Syrians and older adults, as well as for those without schooling and who live in Amman.

***Figure 6.23 Coping Mechanisms for Recovering from Past Financial Shocks*** *(% of respondents with difficulties facing a financial shock; n=2,591/wn=2,218)*

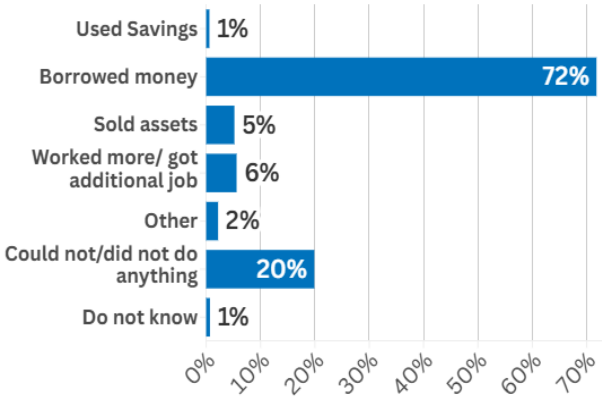
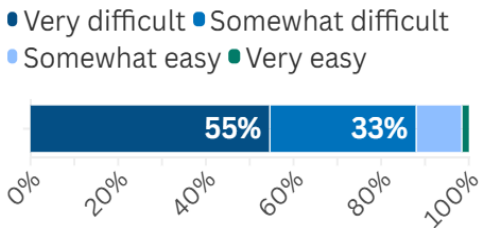



***Figure 6.24 Recovering from Potential JOD 150 Financial Shock***
*(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,002)*

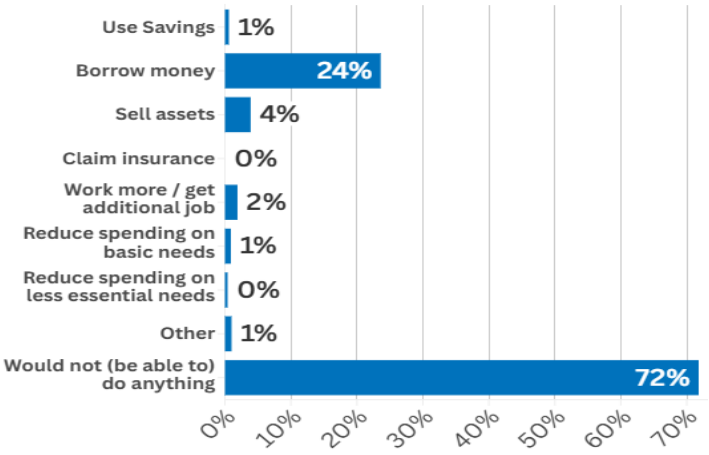



[83] *Please note that this section (since it is difficult to separate recovering from financial setbacks for the respondent as an individual from the respondent as a member of a sharing group) refers to the sharing group and not to the individual respondent in order to - as outlined in Box 4.1 above - not over-represent the same sharing group 'situation'.*
[84] *n=3,640/wn=3,002*

### Coping Mechanisms - Recovering from Past Financial Shocks[85]

**Most respondents who faced difficulties recovering from financial shocks borrowed money (72 per cent)**. Slightly fewer non-Syrians were able to borrow. An important share of respondents found themselves not able to do anything to address these unexpected events, especially non-Syrians and those who do not work. Very few sold assets, worked more, or relied on savings. Among those who relied on more than one option,[86] borrowing is the main mechanism (79 per cent), followed by selling assets (13 per cent).

*Figure 6.25a Coping Mechanisms for Recovering from Potential JOD 1,000 Financial Shock (% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,002)*




### Potential Financial Shocks

If faced with an emergency or unexpected need that requires JOD 1,000 within the next one week, **almost all respondents would find it 'very difficult' to come up with sufficient resources (96 per cent).** For the remaining respondents it would be 'somewhat difficult'.

It would be less challenging if the required resources amount to JOD 150,[87] but **most would still find it difficult (88 per cent).** In this regard, the level of difficulty is slightly higher among non-Syrians and older adults, as well as for those who do not work. The relative difficulty of facing a JOD 150 emergency is also inversely related to the level of education. In other words, the more years of schooling, the less difficult – ranging from 96 per cent for those who never attended school to 82 per cent for those with a higher education.

### Coping Mechanisms - Recovering from Potential Financial Shocks[88]

For the emergency requirement of JOD 1,000, **most respondents would not be able to do anything (72 per cent)**. The share is higher among non-Syrians (86 per cent) and older adults (77 per cent), as well as for those living in Amman (82 per cent) and without schooling (83 per cent). The other more common coping mechanisms for the higher unexpected amount include borrowing (24 per cent), with lower shares among non-Syrians and older adults, as well as for those who never attended school and live in Amman.

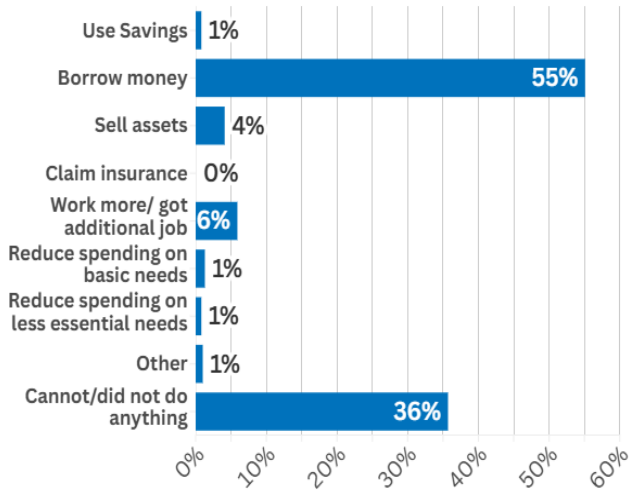
[85] *Other reported coping mechanisms include (i) requesting assistance/grant from international or local/religious organizations as well as from family, relatives, friends, or neighbors, (ii) reducing spending on essential living expenses, (iii) moving in with other family, (iv) begging, (v) taking children out of school, and (vi) other non-specified coping mechanisms.*

[86] *n=121/wn=140*

[87] *The quantification of this lumpsum amount is based on indications in a 2020 study on the financial health of refugees in Mexico and Uganda, i.e. at least 5% of the country's per capita GDP of the host country (which for Jordan would amount to around JOD 150 based on Jordan's 2022 per capita GDP of current USD 4,311). See further: The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Henry J. Leir Institute), Tufts University, Supporting the Financial Health of Refugees: The Finance in Displacement (FIND) Study in Uganda and Mexico, December 2020 - https://www.rescue.org/report/supporting-financial-health-refugees-finance-displacement-find-study-uganda-mexico*

[88] *Other reported coping mechanisms include (i) requesting assistance/grant from international or local/religious organizations as well as from family, relatives, friends, or neighbors), (ii) begging, (iv) stealing, (v) taking children out of school, and (vi) other non-specific coping mechanism.*

*Figure 6.25b Coping Mechanisms for Recovering from Potential JOD 150 Financial Shock*
*(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,002)*




Regarding the unexpected need for JOD 150, as for past financial shocks, **most respondents would rely on borrowing (55 per cent)**. This is especially the case for those with higher education (71 per cent) and who work (61 per cent), while it is comparatively less so for non-Syrians (37 per cent), older respondents (51 per cent), and those living in Amman (51 per cent). Also here, however, a substantial share would not be able to do anything (36 per cent). Again, inability to do anything is higher among non-Syrians (56 per cent) and older adults (40 per cent), as well as for Amman residents (40 per cent), those who do not work (39 per cent) and those who never attended school (46 per cent).

Furthermore, among those who would resort to more than one coping mechanism for a potential financial shock of JOD 1,000,[89] borrowing would be the main option (69 per cent), followed by selling assets (21 per cent), working more / getting an additional job (7 per cent), and reducing spending on necessary living expenses (2 per cent). For a potential financial shock of JOD 150,[90] borrowing would be the main way to cope (61 per cent), followed by working more / getting an additional job (21 per cent), selling assets, and reducing spending on necessary living expenses.[91]

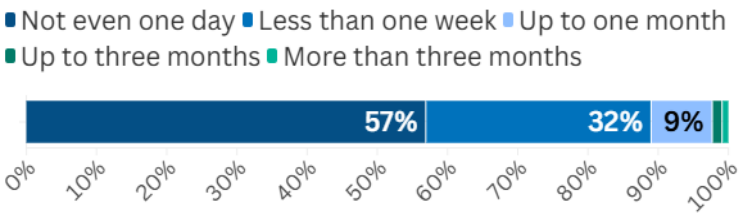
**The sources of borrowing to cope with financial shocks differ depending on the amount required**. For JOD 1,000, most respondents who would borrow (85 per cent) [92] would rely on family, relatives, friends, neighbours, etc., but 7 per cent would also borrow formally from an MFI or bank (mostly Syrians). Some 8 per cent, especially Syrians and younger adults as well as those who work, would turn to their employer or landlord for the necessary resources. In the case of JOD 150, respondents who would borrow[93] would only rely on informal sources; and, again, most notably family, relatives, friends, neighbours, etc. (91 per cent, and especially those who do not work). Also in this case, 8 per cent would borrow from their employer or landlord (notably Syrians and those who work). Reliance on money lenders, savings and loans groups, merchants etc. is limited regarding both JOD 1,000 and JOD 150 (i.e. 3 per cent or less).

**For both higher and lower emergency resources, a small share would also need to sell assets (4 per cent)**.[94] In both cases, this would primarily involve household assets (93 per cent for both JOD 1,000 and JOD 150) and the selling of more personal assets (9 per cent and 17 per cent respectively), but JOD 1,000 would also require the selling of housing (2 per cent).

[89] *n=112/wn=131*
[90] *n=157/wn=153*
[91] *Other reported coping mechanisms include (i) requesting assistance/grant from international or local/religious organizations as well as from family, relatives, friends, or neighbors, and (ii) other non-specific coping mechanism.*
[92] *n=733/wn=790*
[93] *n=1,982/wn=1,756*
[94] *n=130/wn=134 for JOD 1,000; n=140/wn=137 for JOD 150*

Furthermore, given the low savings capacity, relying on savings is almost nil for both higher and lower fund requirements. **In case of a sudden loss of income, over half of the respondents would not survive on their savings even for one day (57 per cent)**. The share is somewhat higher for those who never attended school and who live in other governates (65 and 62 per cent respectively). Only 2 per cent would be able to cover more than one month of necessary living expenses with their savings. Few job opportunities and years of protracted displacement have clearly depleted any potential savings refugees arrived with.

*Figure 6.26 Duration of Savings in Case of Income Loss*
*(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,002)*



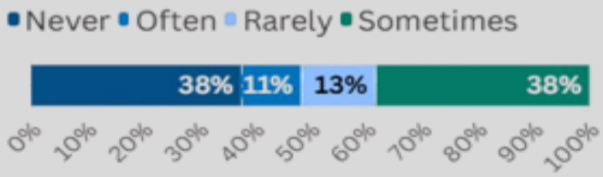

### Level of Concern/Confidence – Ability to Recover from Financial Shocks[95]

Consequent with the findings above, **the great majority of respondents are either 'very concerned' or 'somewhat concerned' about their ability to come up with sufficient funds** in case of emergency or unexpected need (87 per cent and 11 per cent respectively). The level of concern is higher for those without schooling, as well as for non-Syrians, older adults and Amman residents.

**Box 6.8 Special Occasions**

Albeit not a financial shock as such, **giving a gift for a wedding, newborn or other special occasion with available income can also be represent a challenge**. About 38 per cent of respondents report that, in the last 12 months, it was 'often' difficult for them to meet such expenses, albeit slightly less so for those in camps. On the other hand, more the same share reports that it was 'never' difficult to come up with resources for gifts.

*Figure 6.27 Ability to Give a Gift on Special Occasions*




[95] *Since the level of confidence or concern is a personal/subjective judgement, all individual respondents are considered here.*

# 6.6 Financial Freedom

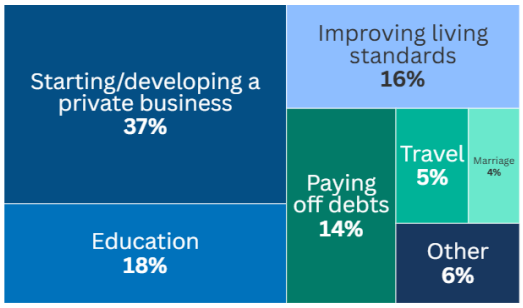
## 6.6.1 Accessing Financial Resources to Invest in Assets and Opportunities

***The pursuit of financial goals is constrained by lack of access to resources and opportunities**. Only some respondents even have a financial goal that they are working towards achieving. Even if a sizeable portion of respondents are on track to meet their financial goals--primarily by borrowing informally from family, etc. Almost half have no options to raise the necessary resources. The level of freedom related to pursuing new opportunities and doing things that they enjoy is also constrained.*

### Pursuing Financial Goals

**Only one-third of respondents have a financial goal,** i.e. the objective of investing in an asset or opportunity that they are working towards achieving, or at least hoping to achieve (30 per cent).[96] Wanting to reach a financial goal is slightly more common among male respondents and those who work, as well as for those living in Amman. It is also related to the level of education, i.e. the share of respondents with a financial goal increase with the years of schooling.

***Figure 6.28 Kinds of Financial Goals***
*(% of respondents with financial goal; n=1,101/wn=1,090)*




**Box 6.9 Types of Financial Goals**

Among those with a financial objective, **the most prominent goal is starting or developing a business activity**. This is especially the case for Syrian and working respondents, as well as for those living in camps and other governates. Working towards an education for themselves or a family member, and improving living conditions are relatively common goals, particularly for non-Syrian and non-working respondents, and among Amman residents and those with more years of schooling. It should be noted that a good number of respondents also report their **financial goal to be paying off their debt.** While debt repayment as such does not represent an investment in an asset or opportunity and is hence strictly speaking not a 'financial goal', it points to the importance for many respondents of one day becoming debt-free.

Among those with a financial goal,[97] **almost all find it difficult to pursue it (98 per cent)**, with 79 per cent reporting it to be 'very difficult' and 18 per cent 'somewhat difficult'. The level of difficulty is somewhat higher for those who never attended school (93 per cent 'very difficult').

[96] *n=3,640/wn=3,641*
[97] *n=1,101/wn=1,090*

### Mechanisms – Accessing Financial Resources to Invest in Financial Goals

Of the 30 per cent of respondents with financial goals, **almost half of those believe they do not have any options for getting the necessary resources to achieve it (46 per cent)**. The shares with no possibilities to raise money are higher among non-Syrian and non-working respondents, as well as for those without a financial account. Conversely, a smaller share of those living in camps believe they have no options. To pursue their financial goals, equal shares are saving or borrowing - or planning to save or borrow. The possibility of saving is higher for male respondents as well as for those who work and live in Amman, while the option of borrowing is less common for respondents living in camps. Some respondents are also asking – or planning to ask – associations/organizations for a grant, while very few are asking – or planning to ask – for money as a gift from family, relatives, friends, and/or neighbours. Among those who consider more than one option,[98] borrowing (40 per cent) is the main choice, followed by asking for a grant (28 per cent) and saving (21 per cent).[99]

***Figure 6.29 Mechanisms to Reach Financial Goal***
*(% of respondents with financial goal; n=1,101/wn=1,090)*

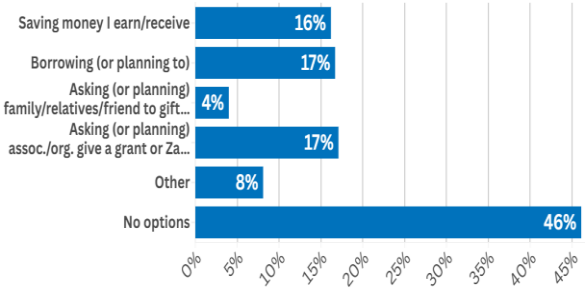
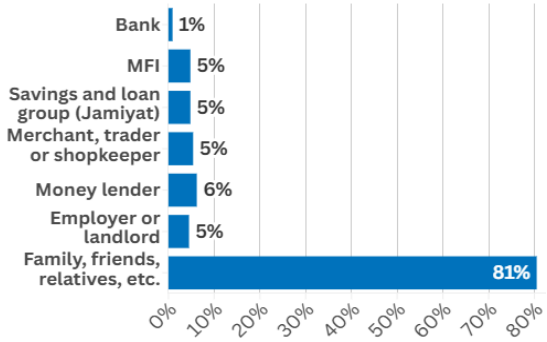



***Figure 6.30 Sources of Borrowing to Reach Financial Goal***
*(% of respondents with financial goal borrowing to meet financial goal; n=170/wn=183)*



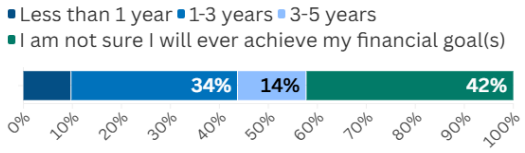

Just as for borrowing to meet other financial health needs presented above, **among those who are borrowing – or planning to borrow – money to reach their financial goals, the great majority are relying – or will rely – on family, relatives, friends, and/or neighbours (81 per cent)**. Again, accessing resources through formal channels is limited, with very few respondents turning to banks and MFIs (1 per cent and 5 percent respectively). The use of savings and loans groups (*Jamiyat*) is also low, especially in camps and among those who never attended school and who work. Turning to merchants/traders/shopkeepers, employer/landlords and money lenders is also low, especially for non-Syrians and those arriving before 2012 and after 2014. Among those reporting more than one option,[100] borrowing from employer/landlord (36 per cent) is the main choice, followed by borrowing from family, etc. (22 per cent) and MFIs (20 per cent).

**Despite facing difficulties in accessing necessary resources, a good share of the respondents with a financials goal say they are on track to meeting them (39 per cent)**.[101] This is, however, less the case for non-Syrians as well as for those not working and without a financial account. Conversely, the share of respondents being on track is higher among those living in camps.

[98] *n=87/wn=79*
[99] *Other reported strategies include (i) getting a job or doing additional work, (ii) looking for a business partner, and (iii) selling assets.*
[100] *n=10/wn=12*
[101] *n=1,101/wn=1,090*

In line with this **relative optimism** among some respondents**, just below half believe they will reach their financial goal within the next three years (44 per cent).** On the other hand, a similar share believe they will never achieve their objective (42 per cent). The level of pessimism is higher among non-Syrian and male respondents, as well as for those living in camps.

***Figure 6.31 Time to Reach Financial Goal***
*(% of respondents with financial goal; n=1,101/wn=1,090)*

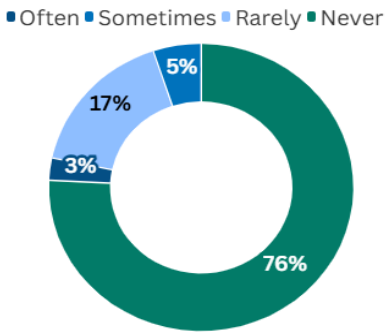



## Other Aspects of Financial Freedom

**Almost half of all respondents believe they are currently able to pursue new opportunities to improve their livelihoods (48 per cent)**.[102] The level of freedom in this regard is lower for non-Syrian, female and older respondents, as well as among those who live in Amman and who do not work.

Finally, in the last 12 months, **most respondents have never had any money left over to do the things they enjoy after paying for their necessary living expenses (76 per cent).** Only a small share has been able to do this either sometimes or often. Again, the level of freedom in this regard is lower among non-Syrian and older respondents, as well as for those living in Amman and not working. It is also more common among those without schooling to never have been able to do things they enjoy in the last 12 months.

***Figure 6.32 Ability to Do Things They Enjoy***
*(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,641)*



*Jordan. Refugees who are unable to collect their cash assistance through the IRIS scan (for different reasons), receive prepaid bankcards distributed by UNHCR which is one of the cash distribution mechanisms UNHCR utilizes for extremely vulnerable refugee families. ©UNHCR/Sana Hamdan*

[102] *n=3,640/wn=3,641*

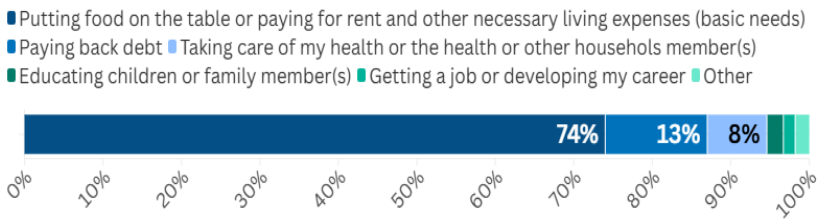
## 6.6.2 Expanding Financial Planning Horizons

***The expansion of financial planning horizons beyond meeting daily basic needs is also very limited**. Most respondents live on a day-to-day or week-by-week basis since they are facing major difficulties in just putting food on their tables, paying for housing/shelter and covering other necessary living expenses. Medium or longer-term financial priorities and planning horizons are simply not an option for most.*

### Current Financial Priorities[103]

Given their present financial situation, **the main financial priority for most respondents is covering their basic daily needs**, i.e. putting food on the table or paying rent and other necessary living expenses (74 per cent). This financial priority is slightly less common for those living in camps. The second most important financial priority is paying back debt, which again points to the importance of many respondents to one day becoming debt-free. Medium-term priorities – such as starting or expanding a business, educating children or family members – are rare, while long-term priorities – such as planning for old age (retirement) –are nil.

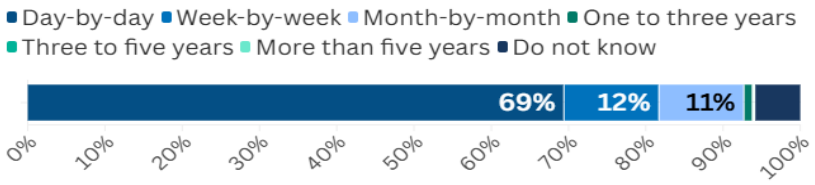
***Figure 6.33 Most Important Financial Priority***
*(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,641)*




### Current Planning Horizons

Similarly, **most respondents are only able to plan their financial needs and expenses on a day-to-day basis (69 per cent)**, while a mere **1 per cent of respondents can plan beyond the next month**. Shorter-term planning horizons are somewhat less common among non-Syrians and younger adults, as well as for those who live in Amman. Some respondents also do not know how far into the future they are able to plan, while this is more likely the case among non-Syrian respondents and those who live in Amman.

***Figure 6.34 Planning Horizons** (% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,641)*




**Box 6.10 Savings for Old Age**

**Only 17 respondents saved or set aside money to sustain themselves in old age (retirement).** These are mostly Syrian, male, younger, and working respondents living in other governates and having arrived in the 2012-2014 period. This is in line with the findings presented above, where very few respondents report the reason for saving, and borrowing, to be to set aside money for when they are old.

[103] *Other priorities include (i) travelling and (ii) saving in general terms.*

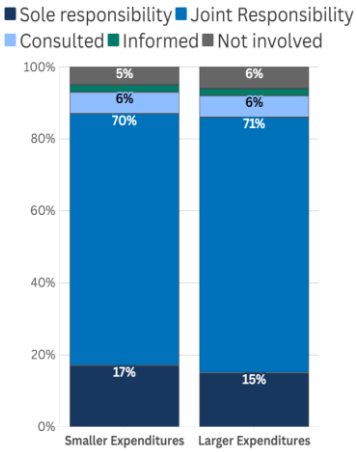
## 6.7 Financial Confidence

**Findings overview:** ***The sense of controlling one's finances is generally weak****. Most respondents have at least joint financial decision-making responsibilities, but record keeping, and financial literacy levels are low. The level of concern over being able to manage their financial situation is very high. The sense of general control is, however, less weak for some sub-groups. The years of schooling are clearly positively related to most aspects of controlling one's finances, i.e. the more years of education, the greater share of respondents keeping records and being financially literate, as well as being less concerned. Those with financial accounts are also usually more involved in financial decision-making and record keeping, as well as have higher levels of financial literacy. Conversely, female and non-working respondents have generally less control.*

### Financial Decision-Making

**Most respondents have joint financial decision-making responsibility for both smaller[104] (70 per cent) and larger[105] (71 per cent) expenditures**, i.e. they make decisions together with their spouse or other household/family member. Only smaller shares are either only informed about financial decisions or not at all involved in the financial decision-making process. These shares are somewhat higher for younger adults as well as for those who do not work and do not have a financial account. The level of involvement in financial decision-making is also slightly lower for female respondents when it comes to larger expenditures.

***Figure 6.35 Financial Decision-Making***
*(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,641)*

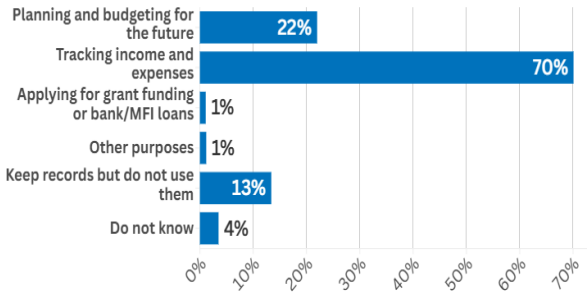



### Record-Keeping

**Few respondents keep regular or irregular written records (13 per cent)**. The majority do not keep any records, not even in their heads (75 per cent). Recording-keeping is related to the level of education, i.e. the share of those who keep records increases with the years of schooling. Conversely, it is somewhat less common among those who live in camps as well as for those who do not work and do not have a financial account. Among those who keep records, **most use them to keep track of their income and expenses (70 per cent),** especially in Amman. Some also use their records for planning and budgeting for the future, though more common among those who arrived after 2014. However, 13 per cent keep records but do not use them, while 3 per cent say they do not know how they use them. Furthermore, 11 per cent of respondents who keep records did not reply to the question on how they use them.[106]

***Figure 6.36 Record-Keeping***
*(% of respondents; n=3,640/wn=3,641)*

***Figure 6.37 Use of Records***
*(% of respondents keeping financial records; n=819/wn=793)*




[104] *Such as buying food or clothing.*
[105] *Such as purchasing a household asset or investing in an education.*
[106] *Other purposes include bill payments and debt recording.*

### Financial Literacy[107]

**The level of financial literacy is not high**. Only around **one-third of respondents could correctly read and interpret** the transaction cost in a standard mobile wallet message and calculate the amount of loan fee on an annual loan. As can be expected, the level of financial illiteracy is inversely related to the level of education, i.e. the fewer years of schooling, the greater the share of respondents who could not correctly read/interpret the transaction cost. The level of financial illiteracy in terms of the interpretation of the transaction cost is also slightly higher among Syrian, female and older respondents. Reversely, financial literacy is higher among those who live in Amman, who work and who have a financial account. Finally, although the difference is not statistically significant, a greater share of respondents with a mobile wallet could correctly read and interpret the message than those without a mobile wallet (42 per cent and 36 per cent respectively). Similarly, respondents who use digital payments and/or money transfers are also more likely to respond correctly than those who do not use these financial services (49 per cent versus 38 per cent). Regarding the calculation of the loan fee amount, incorrect answers are much more common for female respondents, as well as among those who do not work and do not have a financial account.[108] Those who do not have debt are also less likely to calculate the correct amount than those who are indebted (27 per cent and 35 per cent respectively).[109]

### Level of Concern/Confidence – Managing Financial Situation

**The great majority of respondents are either 'very' or 'somewhat' concerned about being able to manage their financial situation,** i.e. making financial decisions that influence their ability to meet their needs (75 and 15 per cent respectively). The level of concern is slightly higher among female and older respondents, as well as for those who live in other governates and who arrived before 2012. The level of education also matters, i.e. the level of concern is inversely related to the years of schooling.

*Fattouh Sarih, 36, a Yemeni refugee living in Amman, receives her monthly cash assistance from UNHCR via iris scan. ©UNHCR/Mohammad Hawari*

[107] *The survey involved a proxy assessment of respondents' financial literacy by asking them two questions: namely (i) how to interpret the transaction cost from a standard mobile wallet message and (ii) how to calculate the amount of interest to be paid on a given loan amount and with a given loan fee (i.e. interest rate). These two questions are like those asked in the FinAccess Household Surveys in Kenya (see further https://www.fsdkenya.org/blogs-publications/publications/finaccess-household-surveys/).*

[108] *Respondents were asked the following question: Suppose you take a one-year loan of JOD 1,000 with a loan fee equivalent of 12%. How much more money in addition to JOD 1,000 would you have to pay at the end of the year?*

[109] *Respondents were asked to read the following message and tell the enumerator how much the transaction cost is for sending/transferring JOD 35 from one mobile wallet account to another mobile wallet account? Initial balance JOD 50.5. JOD 35 paid to XYZ on 8/9/23 at 4.24 pm. Cost of transaction JOD 0.5. Remaining balance is JOD 15.*

# 7 Conclusions

## ENABLING ACCESS

### Basic Access

**IDs and access to mobile phones are generally quite high.** Given current regulations, ID and mobile phone access is lower among non-Syrians. Female respondents also have less (individual) access to a mobile phone as well as to the Internet. In the context of Jordan, limited access to important documentation and communication in turn poses constraints for both accessing economic opportunities and financial services.

### Access to Economic Opportunities

**Income-generating activities are low**. Again, this is particularly the case for non-Syrians and female respondents. The majority work informally, and most work irregularly. **Work income is the most important source of income for many but clearly insufficient to meet needs**. Low levels of economic participation and inadequate income affect not only respondents' ability to meet their basic needs and debt repayments, but also their possibility to accumulate savings for expected and unexpected future needs as well as to plan for and aspire towards medium- and longer-term objectives.

### Financial Inclusion

**Financial account ownership is almost half** - **primarily mobile wallets** - even if much lower for non-Syrians. Accounts are primarily used for cash-in/cash-out transactions, while a smaller share of respondents also make digital payments. Since economic participation is modest and work income is insufficient, the ability to save is very low. Informal borrowing is hence high, to raise the necessary resources to primarily pay for necessary living expenses and cover emergencies or unexpected needs. Limited access to savings and formal borrowing also affects respondents' ability to address their financial health needs.

## FINANCIAL HEALTH

### Financial Security

**Meeting daily basic needs is difficult and most resort to borrowing to do so.** This is the case for almost all respondents, especially non-Syrians. Most cope by borrowing informally, while some also work more. Very few can rely on savings and other means. The level of income is insufficient to pay for necessary living expenses and almost all respondents are very concerned about their ability to meet their basic needs.

**High debt and limited capacity to repay.** Most respondents are indebted, and their capacity to manage their debt is low. The majority face difficulties with repayments and many are not able to do anything to repay their debt. Informal borrowing - especially from family - is the only option available to most respondents. Their level of debt is high compared to monthly income levels, which are already insufficient to meet basic needs. Faced with limited options and relatively high levels of debt, some might never become free of their debt.

### Financial Resilience

**Financial shocks are almost impossible to absorb.** Coping with financial setbacks is particularly difficult for some sub-groups, including non-Syrians, and those without schooling or work. Accessing resources for both a smaller and a larger unexpected need would be problematic for the majority. Again, with depleted saving pools and respondents not able to cover even one day of necessary living expenses with their non-existent savings, most respondents resort to informal borrowing to cope with emergencies and unexpected needs.

### Financial Freedom

**Few have financial goals due to lack of resources and opportunities.** Only some respondents even have a financial goal, and almost half among those who do have no options to raise the necessary resources to achieve it. Others are, again, relying on informal borrowing. The level of freedom related to pursuing new opportunities and doing things that they enjoy is also constrained, especially for some sub-groups, including non-Syrians and those who do not work.

**Poverty restricts ability to plan financially.** Respondents have limited possibilities to expand their financial planning horizons beyond meeting their daily or weekly basic needs. Facing major difficulties in just paying for necessary living expenses only allows most respondents to live on a day-to-day or week-by-week basis. Medium- or longer-term financial priorities and planning, such as setting up a business or planning for old age, are simply not an option for most.

### Financial Confidence

**The control over finances is weak overall**. Most respondents take part in financial decision-making, but levels of record keeping, and financial literacy are low. The sense of general control is particularly weak for some sub-groups. These include those with no/fewer years of schooling and without a financial account, as well as female and non-working respondents. While those who are indebted and use digital financial services are generally more financially literate than those without debt and don't use digital financial services, though overall, levels are low.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

**Financial health of refugees is generally poor**. The great majority of respondents are very concerned about their ability to meet their daily needs and manage their debt (financial security) as well as recover from financial shocks (financial resilience). Faced with limited resources and opportunities because of no/little income (economic participation) and/or no access to formal financial services (financial inclusion), most either have no options (i.e. cannot do anything) or resort to informal borrowing to cope with meeting their expected and unexpected needs. Restricted means and prospects also affect their ability to pursue financial goals and extend their planning horizons (financial freedom) and generally manage their financial situation (financial confidence).

**Non-Syrian refugees are worse off and less financially healthy than Syrian refugees.** Regulations restricting non-Syrians' access to legal work (and hence to earn an income) and to have a valid ID (which limits their access to certain financial services) are assumed to play an important role in their even poorer financial health. Less likely to have a valid ID, be engaged in income-generating activities and have a financial account, non-Syrians face even more difficulties in making their insufficient income last to meet their basic needs, covering their debt repayments, absorbing financial shocks, and raising enough money for their financial goals. Their level of concern is hence usually also higher.

**Refugees who do not work, or are female, have poorer financial health.** Those who do not work (and hence do not have an income) are also less likely to have a financial account as well as more likely to be concerned and have fewer to no options to meet their expected and unexpected needs. Female respondents are less likely to work (and thus have even lower incomes) and to have a financial account, and more likely to be concerned and feel they have fewer to no options or opportunities. Conversely, working and male respondents are generally somewhat less financially unhealthy than other respondents.

**Location, age and education affect one's financial inclusion and financial health.** Although those living in Amman are less likely to have a mobile wallet, they are more likely to have a payment card, use digital payments and receive/send remittances. This is especially the case for those living in camps, where mobile wallet access is driven by the provision of cash assistance. They are also more likely to be financially literate. However, respondents in Amman face relatively more difficulties in meeting their basic needs, repaying their debt and recovering from financial shocks, as well as pursuing new opportunities and doing things they enjoy than in other locations. Furthermore, younger adults are more likely to be engaged in economic activities, but less likely to have a mobile wallet. Like those living in Amman, older respondents are less likely to work and therefore are also more likely to have difficulties with, and be more concerned over, the various dimensions of their financial health. Finally, those with higher levels of education are more financially confident, and financially literate, and generally face less challenges than those who have no/limited schooling.

*Jordan. A shop owner in Zaatari camp. Mohammad, a Syrian refugee from Dara'a, came to Jordan in 2011 with his family of 11 members. He has a houseware shop in the informal market in the camp. "In the past time people in the camp bought a lot, but nowadays it is a little; the refugees usually do shopping when they receive cash assistants, but even that assistance was reduced," Mohammad said. ©UNHCR/Shawkat Alharfoush*

# REFUGEE FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND FINANCIAL HEALTH IN JORDAN 2024

## BASELINE SURVEY REPORT VOLUME I

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