



### OVERVIEW:

**Employment** rates for Syrian refugees in the KRI appear, on average, to be higher than for displaced Iraqis and impacted host communities. For example, in Erbil governorate **80% of male refugees aged between 15 and 64 are employed**. This compares with rates of 53% for male IDPs and 70% for men from the host community. In Dohuk governorate, the employment rate for male refugees is 75% compared with 63% for men from the host community and internally displaced men.

However, such figures should not be read to mean that refugees in general have more financial security than IDPs. Refugees do not have the benefit of access to elements of Iraqi state support that many IDPs do, such as grants made to displaced families, the Public Distribution System, and salaries for those with public sector jobs (which generally continue to be received, despite displacement). Reported figures for employment are based on samples and household surveys, and likely obscure under-employment.

**The livelihoods vulnerabilities** of Syrian refugees and impacted communities in Iraq in 2017 and beyond are multiple. If livelihoods opportunities do not improve, the debt vulnerability of refugees is likely to increase. The largest share of refugees' average personal debt was incurred for domestic consumption costs (the second most common coping strategy), rather than the purchase of long-term assets as was the case for impacted host communities. Other coping strategies include receiving aid (the highest number of Syrian refugees) and spending savings (the third highest number of refugees).

Refugees living in rural camps have extremely limited opportunities to find **employment**, and compared with impacted communities and IDPs, refugees are still particularly vulnerable to exploitative and abusive employment practices where work is available. The very low levels of enrolment for refugees in secondary education limit the employment prospects of these refugees to join the workforce.

For many refugees, **the types of employment** they find are low-paying and insecure, or informal. Half of employed refugees and IDPs in Dohuk governorate work in construction, and daily waged labor in agriculture is the second most common job for refugees and IDPs. Beyond the present, there are risks and challenges for the coming years, regarding jobs and livelihoods for refugees and impacted communities. There is the risk that refugees become locked into a cycle of inferior access to services and inferior work and life opportunities. At the same time, there is the risk that resentment towards refugees and IDPs alike will increase, encouraged by erroneous and unchallenged assumptions about the capacity of the labor market to absorb new workers and grow.

Data indicates that **the income levels for Syrian refugees** that live in urban areas is lower than that of IDPs and host communities. At the same time, a large portion of their income is used on rent for housing, which means less of their income is available for other essential needs.



Cash for work program supported by REACH, Iraq.

### NEEDS ANALYSIS:

The focus of livelihoods aid has previously been on emergency livelihoods support, for example through creating short-term work opportunities (often labelled cash-for-work) on small community projects, with efforts being made to shift to investing in sustained employment opportunities. The balance needs to shift and focus on generating sustained employment and livelihoods opportunities, and increase refugees and impacted communities' capacity to generate opportunities. Refugees living in rural areas, inside and outside of camps, find it difficult to secure employment due to distance and lack of affordable transportation. The livelihoods needs are high in these areas.

Livelihoods-linked social cohesion measures include integrating various groups along a single value-chain, promoting joint innovation or entrepreneurship, and fostering inter-community economic activity. Furthermore, direct interventions will be undertaken to strengthen community-based social mechanisms, facilitating dialogue and mediation in communities identified to be most vulnerable to conflicts, and promote inter-group interactions through community projects.

### IRAQ RESPONSE INDICATORS: OCTOBER 2017

