



EDUCATION AND TENSIONS IN JORDANIAN COMMUNITIES HOSTING SYRIAN REFUGEES

THEMATIC ASSESSMENT REPORT

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REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

SUMMARY

With the protracted Syrian crisis extending into its fourth year, the conflict continues to force millions of Syrians to seek refuge in the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey. These host countries are bearing the brunt of the crisis, which represents the largest refugee exodus in recent history with a total of 2,863,595 registered refugees now living outside of Syria.¹ Since 2011, approximately 600,000 Syrians have crossed the border into Jordan, putting a significant strain on already scarce resources, and intensifying competition for basic services. The vast majority of these refugees do not reside in camps, but are hosted in Jordanian communities,² where limited opportunities, a lack of resources and inadequate living space present a challenge to social cohesion and community resilience.

In Jordan, few comprehensive studies have been conducted to provide an in-depth understanding of the key drivers of host community tensions. To address this information gap, this multi-sectoral REACH assessment aimed at identifying where tensions have emerged across northern Jordan as a result of the Syrian refugee crisis, and how they could be mitigated through social cohesion and resilience programming. In the shift from humanitarian relief to long-term development, the assessment aims to promote and inform the mainstreaming of a 'Do No Harm' approach in the response provided to conflict-affected populations residing in Jordanian host communities. Sectors assessed included: education, external support, healthcare, livelihoods, municipal services, shelter and water.

With support from the British Embassy in Amman, REACH carried out the assessment between August 2013 and March 2014 across the six northern governorates of Ajloun, Balqa, Irbid, Jarash, Al Mafraq and Zarqa. The main coordination mechanism for the assessment was a steering committee comprised of government officials and representatives from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), the Ministry of Interior (MoI), and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MoMA). In addition to these government ministries, key stakeholders included the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), UN agencies, and other humanitarian and development actors from the international community.

REACH found education to be a major source of tension in host communities that were estimated to be at relatively high risk of tension at the time of assessment. Key findings from the assessment include:

- A large majority (68%) of Syrians considered that there was adequate access to education in their community, while fewer (62%) of Jordanians reported this was the case.
- 55% of all respondents rated challenges to education in their community as 'very' or 'extremely' urgent, with more Jordanians (22%) than Syrians (17%) selecting the response 'extremely urgent'.
- Significantly more Jordanian (61%) than Syrian respondents (44%) reported that access to educational services caused tension in their community.
- When asked to identify reasons behind education related tension, uneven access to education was the most commonly cited response for both Jordanians (32%) and Syrians (41%).
- Other key drivers of tension surrounding education included mixed classes, poor management of educational services, overcrowded schools and disagreement over curricula.
- Anecdotal evidence highlighted incidences of school-based violence and discrimination between Jordanian and Syrian students in addition to indicating concerns regarding the spread of diseases.

Formal education has a vital role to play in building social cohesion and community resilience as it effectively mitigate tension by creating a sense of belonging and interpersonal trust based on shared values and common aspirations, thus enabling different communities to peacefully co-exist.³ To this end, enhancing the absorptive capacity of educational institutions in Jordanian host communities is crucial in order to strengthen inclusiveness, participation and opportunities for intra-communal dialogue in educational services provided to Syrian refugees and host communities in Jordan.

¹ UNHCR, <www.data.unhcr.org>, [last checked 10 July 2014].

² UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP, Joint Assessment Review of the Syrian Refugee Response in Jordan, (January 2014).

³ OECD, Improving Health and Education through Social Cohesion, (2010).

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
Abbreviations and acronyms	3
Geographical classifications	3
List of figures and maps	3
INTRODUCTION	4
METHODOLOGY	5
Focus group discussion methodology.....	5
Challenges and limitations.....	5
FINDINGS	6
Perceptions of access to education.....	6
Challenges to education.....	7
Tensions and education.....	8
Population increase and education.....	10
Security issues and education.....	11
Education and health.....	11
CONCLUSION	12
Annex I: Map of communities assessed and assessment timeframe.....	13
Annex II: Map of satisfaction with educational services in host communities	14
Annex III: Map of education as a challenge to social cohesion in host communities.....	16

About REACH

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH works to strengthen evidence-based decision making by aid actors through efficient data collection, management and analysis before, during and after an emergency. By doing so, REACH contributes to ensuring that communities affected by emergencies receive the support they need. All REACH activities are conducted in support to and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information about REACH and to access our information products, please visit: www.reach-initiative.org. You can also write to us at: jordan@reach-initiative.org and follow us @REACH_info.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
FCO	British Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoJ	Government of Jordan
HCSP	Host Community Support Platform
Mol	Ministry of Interior
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoMA	Ministry of Municipal Affairs
MoPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ODK	Open Data Kit
UN	United Nations

GEOGRAPHICAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Governorate	In Jordan this is the highest administrative boundary below the national level.
District	Governorates are divided into districts.
Municipality	Districts are divided into municipalities.
Sub-Municipality	Municipalities are divided into sub-municipalities.
Community	Sub-municipalities are divided into communities.

LIST OF FIGURES AND MAPS

Figure 1: There is adequate access to educational services in your community (by nationality)	6
Figure 2: There is adequate access to educational services in your community (by sex).....	7
Figure 3: Rate challenges to education in your community.....	7
Figure 4: Rate challenges to education in your community (by nationality).....	8
Figure 5: Educational services will improve in the future (by nationality)	8
Figure 6: Access to educational services causes tension in your community (by nationality).....	9
Figure 7: Why does access to educational services cause tension?	9
Figure 8: Reasons access to educational services causes tension (by nationality)	10
Map 1: Communities assessed and assessment timeframe.....	14
Map 2: Satisfaction with educational services in host communities.....	15
Map 3: Educational services as a challenge to social cohesion in host communities.....	16

INTRODUCTION

In 2014 Jordan's education sector faces a multitude of challenges. Subsequent to the large influx of Syrian refugees, educational institutions in Jordan have come under severe strain, with resources overstretched and infrastructure increasingly overburdened. The Government of Jordan (GoJ) has allowed Syrian students access to free primary and secondary education in public schools in an attempt to guarantee that refugee children access their right to basic education.⁴ This has presented an invaluable opportunity for Syrian youths to interact with their Jordanian peers. However, it has also led to perceptions of deteriorating educational standards within Jordanian host communities, with disagreement over curricula and overcrowded schools struggling to cater for up to 60 students per class.

Educational institutions in northern Jordan have been particularly hard hit. Between March and September 2013 the number of Syrian children registered in Jordan's host community public schools and camp schools more than doubled, increasing from 30,000 to over 83,000 children.⁵ Furthermore, the education sector has estimated that, of the 800,000 Syrian refugees expected to live in Jordan by the end of December 2014, some 36% of the population will be school-aged children (5–17 years) including 147,000 boys and 131,000 girls.⁶ An additional 60,000 children will require alternative education opportunities, with concerted efforts required to address gender-specific challenges, such as girls being kept at home due to parental concerns over discrimination and harassment in schools.⁷

Even prior to the Syrian crisis Jordan's schools suffered from overcrowding, and as thousands of young refugees continue to arrive, this issue has only been exacerbated.⁸ Schools provide an important space where Syrian and Jordanian students can interact, and where greater social cohesion can be fostered between the two communities. Conversely, if under-resourced, overburdened and poorly managed, there is a danger that schools in Jordanian host communities may play a catalytic role in fuelling social conflicts between Syrian and Jordanian populations.

REACH assessment findings highlight that perceptions of cultural and behavioural differences between refugee and host communities have led some families to fear the impact of new negative influences on their children. This has prompted parents to call for the segregation of Syrian and Jordanian students in schools across northern Jordan. Anecdotal evidence from this assessment suggests that such demands are fuelled by fears of violence, discrimination and the spread of communicable diseases. Reports of social exclusion, bullying and harassment in and around schools have substantiated these concerns. Therefore, in order to allay fears, the GoJ has introduced a split school-day schedule whereby Syrians and Jordanians are taught separately in either morning or afternoon shifts. However, according to focus group discussions (FGDS) this has not dissuaded some Syrian and Jordanian families from resorting to homeschooling or preventing their children from attending school altogether in an attempt to protect them from the aforementioned concerns or to send them out to work for a living.

This study builds on two prior assessments carried out by REACH which mapped and identified the sector-specific needs of self-settled Syrian refugees living in northern Jordan. The assessments, conducted from August 2013 to March 2014, concentrated on the dynamics of refugee-host community relations and explore the factors influencing tension and destabilization. This report focuses on tensions relating to education in the 160 host communities assessed across the governorates of Ajloun, Balqa, Irbid, Jarash, Al Mafraq and Zarqa in northern Jordan.

⁴ UN and Host Community Support Platform, National Resilience Plan 2014-2016, (January 2014).

⁵ UNHCR, 2014 Syria Regional Response Plan, (December 2013).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ HCSP, National Resilience Plan 2014-2016, (January 2014).

METHODOLOGY

REACH, with support from the British Embassy in Amman, undertook a large assessment in Jordanian host communities focusing on prioritization of needs, vulnerabilities and tensions that have emerged as a result of the Syrian refugee crisis. The assessment was undertaken over a six month time period between August and March 2014 and included a series of data collection and analysis exercises. First, a desk review was conducted to outline the broad challenges, needs and priorities in Jordan as a result of the Syrian refugee crisis. The findings from this desk review informed the methodology for a **key informant assessment** in 446 communities in the six northern governorates of Ajloun, Balqa, Irbid, Jarash, Al Mafraq and Zarqa.⁹

Findings from the key informant assessment were then used to select the 160 host communities most at risk of high tension and insecurity, which were identified based on having the lowest level of resilience.¹⁰ REACH then undertook a **community-level assessment** of Jordanians and Syrians living in these 160 communities from December 2013 until early March 2014. Administration of questionnaires and eight FGDs with on average 6 participants per group were undertaken in each of these communities. During the targeted assessment phase 7,158 individual questionnaires were completed and 1,280 FGDs with Jordanians and Syrians.

In addition, REACH hosted six **participatory workshops with local government representatives** from the six sampled governorates during January and February 2014. The aim of these workshops was to gain a better understanding of perceptions, challenges and needs of local government institutions in providing support to host communities and incoming refugees. In particular, these workshops sought to identify the priority sectors in each governorate to inform programming around social cohesion and resilience. They thereby complemented the community-level data collection to illustrate a comprehensive and nuanced perspective of vulnerabilities and challenges to resilience in Jordanian host communities.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION METHODOLOGY

In each of the 160 communities a FGD was held with each of the following demographic groups: Jordanian women, Jordanian men, young Jordanian women, young Jordanian men, Syrian women, Syrian men, young Syrian women, and young Syrian men. The upper-age threshold determining whether individuals were placed in the younger FGD was 30 years of age. The groups were divided in this manner to allow for different types of discussions to surface in the FGD setting. Previous assessments had already indicated the importance of separating Jordanian and Syrian FGDs¹¹ but it was also deemed necessary to separate according to sex and age groups to allow for a more nuanced discussion.

Prior to each FGD, participants were asked to fill out a survey questionnaire using Open Data Kit (ODK) which was uploaded onto smart phones. The questionnaires were filled out individually with the enumerators' guidance, and served the purpose of gauging the individual challenges, priorities, and perceptions held by participants in the FGDs. The ODK survey was completed before the FGDs so as not to have the group dynamics of the FGD influence the responses.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

A purposive sampling approach was adopted for the community-level assessment to clarify the specific challenges to social cohesion and resilience within different demographic groups in Jordanian host communities. Furthermore, the selection of respondents and participants in these communities was also purposive, and the sampling approach therefore is not intended to generate statistically significant findings, generalisable to the assessed communities or to northern Jordan. Instead, it allows for a more nuanced thematic understanding of the challenges to social cohesion and resilience facing people living in tension-prone Jordanian host communities.

⁹ REACH, 'Syrian Refugees in Host Communities – Key Informant Interviews/District Profiling', (January 2014).

¹⁰ REACH, Evaluating the Effect of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Stability and Resilience in Jordanian Host Communities: Preliminary Impact Assessment, (January 2014).

¹¹ Mercy Corps, Mapping of Host Community – Refugee Tensions in Al Al Mafraq and Ramtha, Jordan, (May 2013).

In some communities, there were occasions when both Jordanians and Syrians were reluctant to participate in the assessment. On the whole, this was not a major challenge, but it complicated operational planning as certain FGDs had to be rescheduled and moved around in order to achieve an acceptable level of participation in the assessment. Furthermore, in some communities it highlighted growing assessment fatigue; some Jordanians and Syrians felt that too many assessments are being conducted without being followed by action.

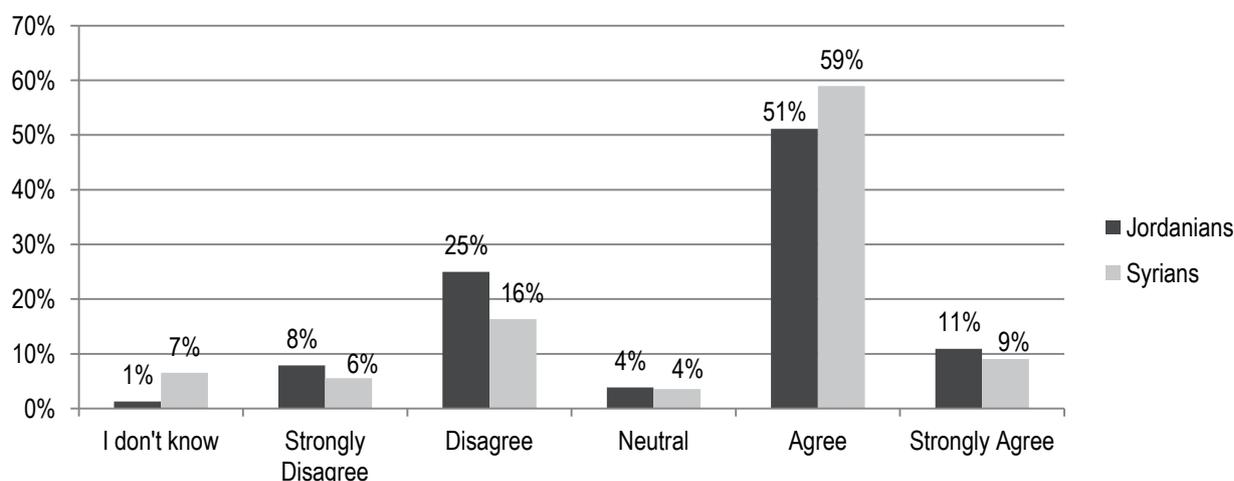
FINDINGS

This section of the report presents the main findings related to education based on the cross-sectoral assessment of Jordanian host communities. It outlines access to education, challenges and tensions surrounding education, the impact of population increase on education, and security and health issues relating to education as perceived by Jordanian and Syrian respondents.

PERCEPTIONS OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Education is a basic human right and a key instrument of social cohesion that ‘promotes individual freedom and empowerment and yields important development benefits.’¹² It combines processes of socialization that reproduce knowledge, norms, values, and beliefs, transferring them from one generation to another.¹³ Crucially, the schooling system institutes a direct relationship between individuals as citizens and the state at national level, as well as forging links between disparate social groups. Notably, the majority of Open Data Kit (ODK) respondents perceived there to be adequate access to educational services in their community, with some 65% of all respondents indicating this opinion. When disaggregated by nationality **more Jordanians than Syrians reported there to be inadequate access to education**, as Figure 1 illustrates, with 33% of Jordanians as compared to only 22% of Syrians sharing this opinion. This disparity in responses may be attributable to Jordanian perceptions voiced in FGDs that Syrian refugees are displacing Jordanian students in schools and causing overcrowding (see Annex 1 for geographical representation of satisfaction with education services).

Figure 1: There is adequate access to educational services in your community (by nationality)

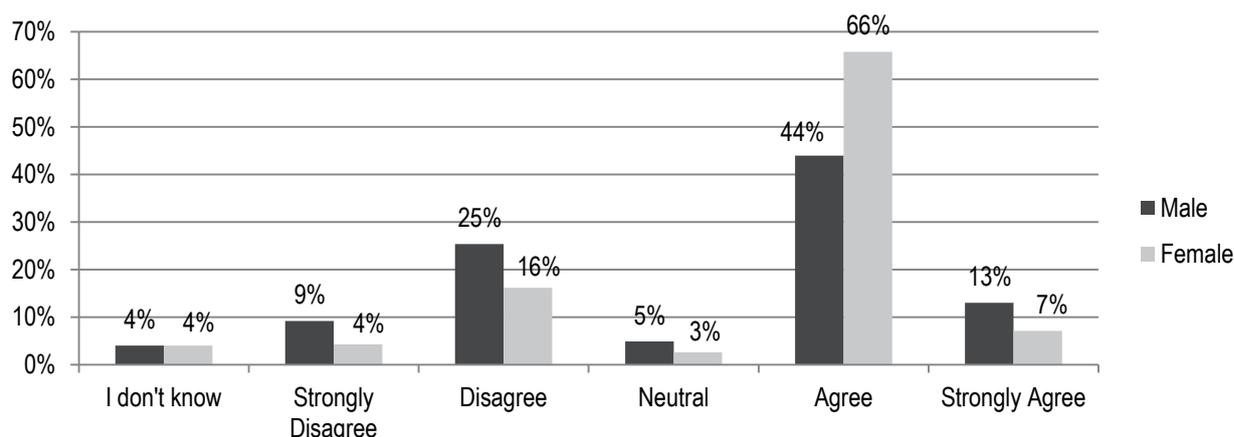


A breakdown by sex further shows that male respondents were significantly less satisfied with access to education than their female counterparts (see Figure 2). Some 73% of females reported that there was adequate access to education in their community, while only 57% of males shared this opinion, although slightly more men than women selected the response ‘Strongly Agree’. This trend indicates potential gender inequalities in access to educational services as perceived by respondents.

¹² UNESCO, The Right to Education, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/right-to-education/>, [Last checked 5 June 2014]

¹³ UNESCO, Social exclusion and violence: Education for social cohesion, (June 2001).

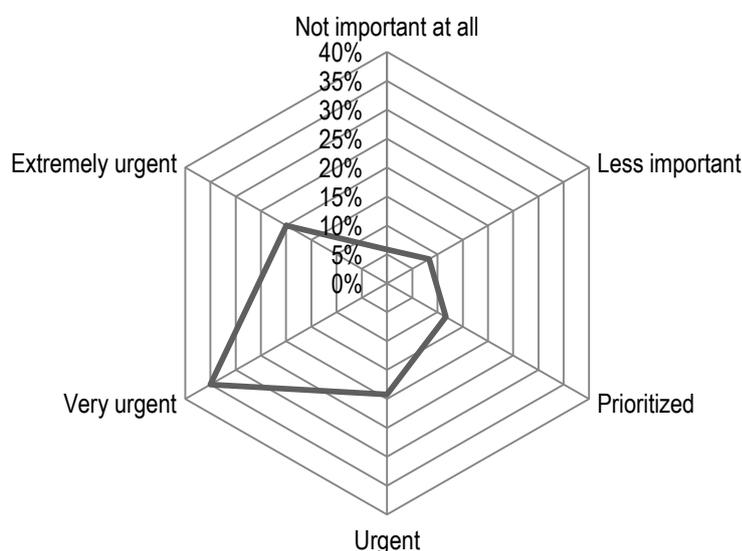
Figure 2: There is adequate access to educational services in your community (by sex)



CHALLENGES TO EDUCATION

A majority of Jordanians and Syrians perceived challenges to education in their community as an urgent matter (75%). With 20% selecting the response 'Urgent', 35% selecting 'Very Urgent', and a further 20% stated that challenges to education in their community were 'Extremely Urgent' (see Figure 3). These findings indicate that there may be serious shortcomings in educational services currently being provided to the most vulnerable Jordanian and Syrian residents in northern Jordan. These findings are reflective of the immense pressure that has been exerted on the education sector by the large influx of Syrian refugees, exhausting already limited infrastructure and resources. The findings also highlight that education is a service which both Jordanians and Syrians in the host communities feel strongly about, and rate highly as a challenge to be prioritised in the region. At 6%, only a small minority of respondents considered that challenges to education in their community were not important at all.

Figure 3: Rate challenges to education in your community

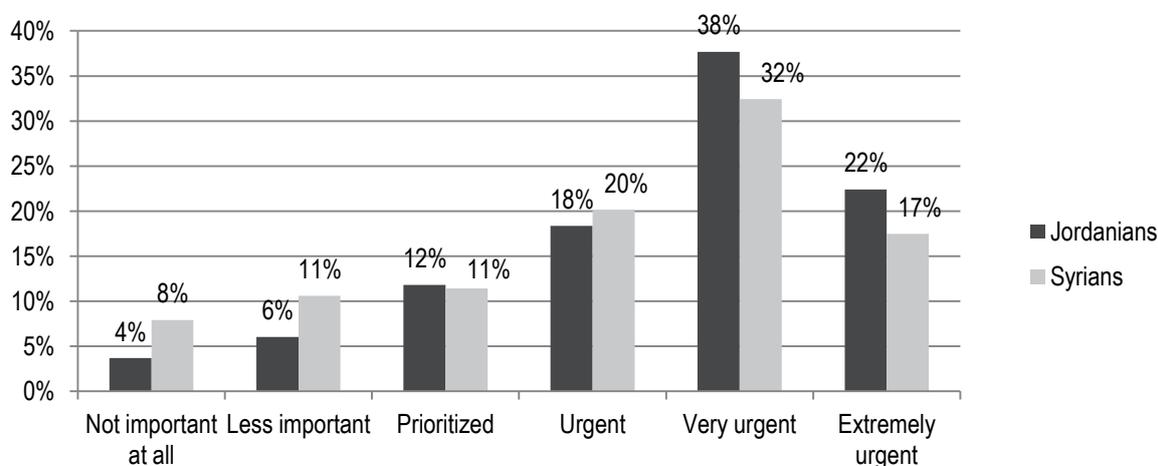


When disaggregated by nationality, most Syrians and Jordanians perceived challenges facing education in their community as 'Very Urgent' (see Figure 4). However, **Jordanians rated challenges to education as more urgent than their Syrian counterparts.** Some 22% of Jordanians rated challenges to education in their community as 'Extremely Urgent', compared to only 17% of Syrians.

This may be due to Jordanians residing in host community municipalities prior to the arrival of the Syrian refugees witnessing a steady decline in educational standards and services, compounded by a rapid and visible

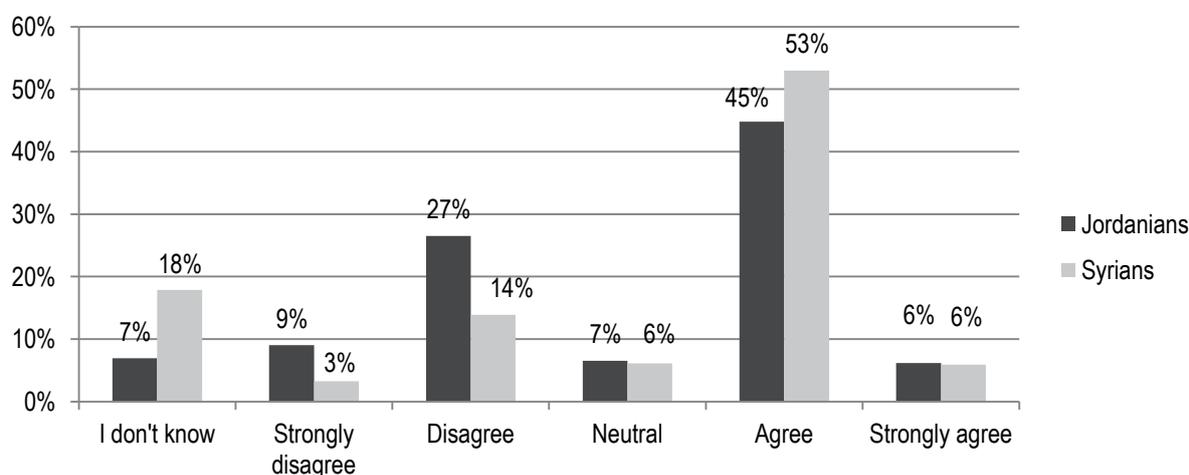
increase in population size. Only a small minority of Jordanians (4%) and Syrians (8%) considered that challenges facing education in their community were not at all urgent.

Figure 4: Rate challenges to education in your community (by nationality)



In spite of the perceived urgency of challenges facing the education sector in northern Jordan, **the majority of Syrians and Jordanians expressed an optimistic outlook for the future of educational services in their community.** Some 49% of all respondents stated that they expected educational services in their community to improve, while a further 6% strongly agreed that they would see future improvements. If these high expectations are not met, tensions may continue to rise. When disaggregated by nationality there was some disparity between findings, with significantly more Jordanians (36%) than Syrians (17%) expressing a negative outlook (see Figure 5). This may be attributable to Jordanians in the host communities perceiving a gradual deterioration of educational services subsequent to the onset of the Syrian refugee crisis.

Figure 5: Educational services will improve in the future (by nationality)



TENSIONS AND EDUCATION

Education was identified as a key driver of community tension by 53% of all respondents. This may be due to the fact that schools provide a platform where young Syrians and Jordanians converge, which can lead to conflicts emerging between the two communities. FGD findings indicated that, in schools hosting Jordanian and Syrian children increasing competition and contradiction between the values, attitudes and beliefs transmitted between Syrian and Jordanian peer groups were eroding existing norms and causing tensions to arise,

constituting a threat to social cohesion. Furthermore, these discussions suggested that Jordanian and Syrian youths participating in ‘physical and symbolic manifestations of school-based violence’¹⁴ such as bullying between youngsters, verbal harassment and gang intimidation, were having a negative impact on perceptions of safety and security in schools and on educational standards.

When disaggregated by nationality, there was some variability across responses with more Jordanians than Syrians indicating access to educational services as a reason behind community tension. Strikingly, a total of 61% of Jordanians perceived a link between access to education and community tension, compared to 44% of Syrians (see Figure 6). It is also of note that more Jordanian and Syrian respondents strongly agreed (29%) than strongly disagreed (15%) that access to educational services was a factor contributing to tension in the community. An equal proportion of Jordanian and Syrian respondents were neutral or specified that they would prefer not to answer the question.

Figure 6: Access to educational services causes tension in your community (by nationality)

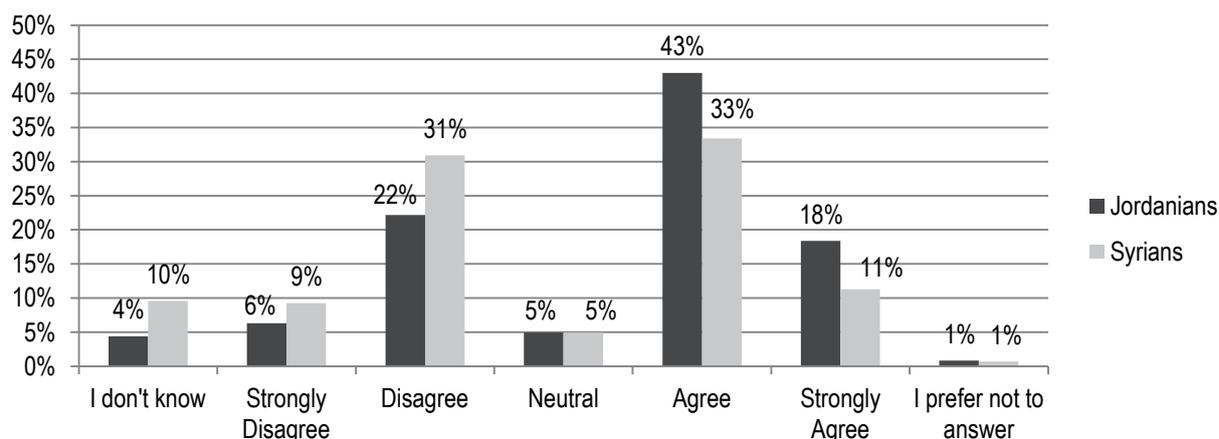
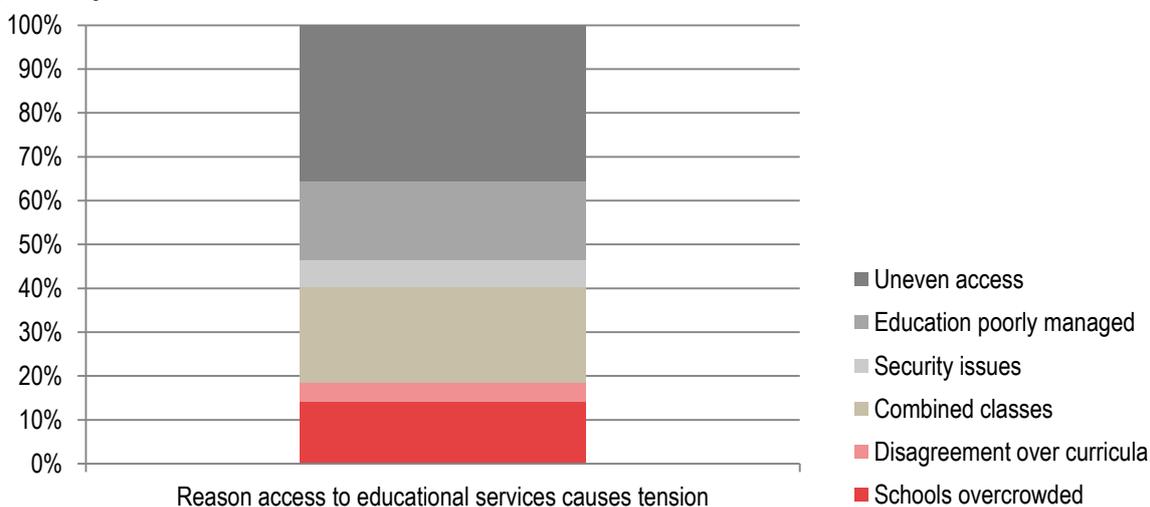


Figure 7: Why does access to educational services cause tension?



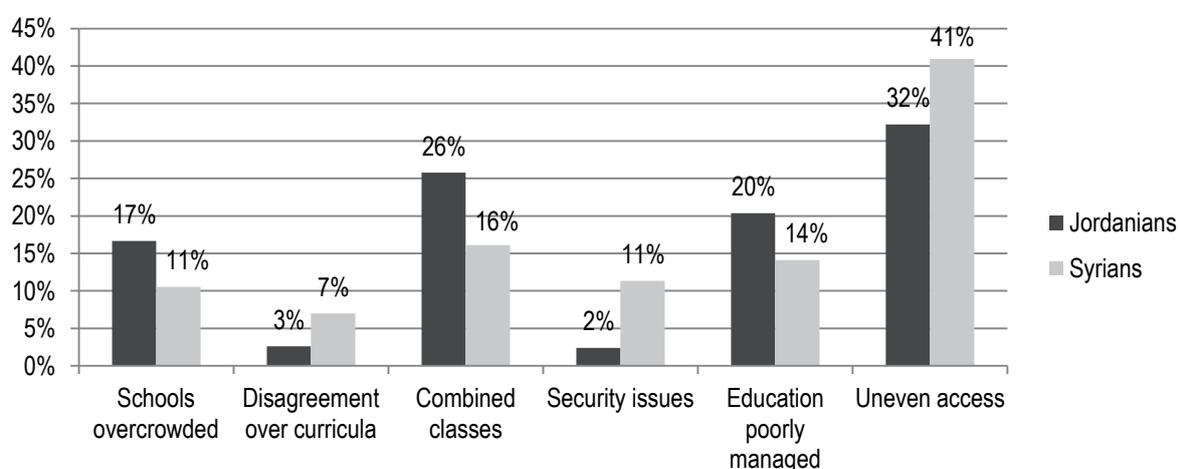
Perceived reasons for access to education causing tensions identified in ODK responses included the overcrowding of schools, disagreement over curricula, combined classes, security issues at educational institutions, poor management of educational services, and uneven access to services between Syrians and Jordanians (see Figure 7 & 8). **At 36%, the majority of respondents cited uneven access to educational services as a leading cause for tension.** This is perhaps surprising, considering that when asked about access to educational services the majority of Syrians and Jordanians responded that there was adequate access in their community.

¹⁴ UNESCO, Social exclusion and violence: Education for social cohesion, (June 2001).

However, **this trend may be attributable to gender disparities in access and to other pertinent issues such as reduced teaching hours and the adoption of the split school day schedule** in certain communities. A significant proportion of respondents (22%) linked combined classes to tension. This is indicative of friction between Jordanian and Syrian students, and may provide evidence for the effectiveness of the split school-day schedule in mitigating low-level conflicts between the two groups. At 18% a large proportion of respondents cited poor management of education as a driver of tension. [See Annex III for geographical representation of access to education causing tension].

These findings were corroborated by FGDs in which participants complained about a weak reciprocal relationship and a lack of direct accountability on the part of school administrations and governmental bodies concerned with education. Also reflected in FGDs were the 11% of Syrians and 2% of Jordanians who stated that security issues at educational institutions led to tensions, with some reports of gang culture, and both verbal and physical harassment in and around schools. A minority of respondents perceived a relationship between differences in curricula and tension, although predictably Syrians (7%) were more highly represented than Jordanians (3%) in this response. It was mentioned in FGDs that the curriculum was different in Syria.

Figure 8: Reasons access to educational services causes tension (by nationality)



When disaggregated by nationality, there were some disparities between the Syrian and Jordanian populations, however uneven access came out as the main cause for tension for both groups. Notably, more Jordanians than Syrians were concerned with combined classes, poor education management and overcrowded schools. Meanwhile, significantly more Syrians (11%) than Jordanians (2%) stated that security issues were a cause of tension. Notably, FGD participants also reported widespread concerns that cultural and behavioural differences between Syrian and Jordanian students had led to hostilities between the two groups. Parents from both communities were concerned that their children would lose interest in academic study and may pick up bad habits and negative behaviours from each other, such as truancy and vulgar language.

POPULATION INCREASE AND EDUCATION

The majority of respondents stated that they expected the population in their community to increase dramatically. In FGDs there were frequent reports of already overcrowded classrooms and limited school materials and resources. Overcrowding in schools was an issue that was mentioned in 21% of all FGDs carried out with Jordanians and Syrians, while poor standards of education were cited in 13% of these FGDs.

According to the Ministry of Education (MoE), in 2013 a total of 41% of schools were overcrowded across Jordan compared to only 36% in 2011.¹⁵ Furthermore, MoE data states that the northern governorates have been particularly affected with almost 50% of schools in Irbid suffering from overcrowding, in addition to 40% of schools in Zarqa, and 35% in Al Mafraq, with girls' schools reportedly under the most strain.¹⁶ **In Downtown,**

¹⁵ HCSP, National Resilience Plan 2014-2016, (January 2014).

¹⁶ Ibid.

Irbid some families reported paying for their children to be educated in other areas due to overcrowding, while in Al Elamt, Al Mafrqa, some children were forced to rely on private lessons to supplement sub-standard public education. In Jana'ah, Zarqa FGD participants also stated that an increase in population had led to overcrowding in schools and a subsequent decrease in the quality of education.

Some 17% of Jordanians and 11% of Syrians considered that school services in their community were overcrowded. There have also been complaints about poor-quality teaching and school buildings in need of repair. Additionally, some Syrian students have reportedly been attending classes that are of a different level to their previous educational standards. For instance, in Balaooneh, Balqa FGD participants noted that Syrian students were enrolled in primary education in spite of being older than the Jordanian students at this level, which they reported as having a detrimental effect on educational standards.

As a result of the increase in population, and in an attempt to control classroom dynamics and to mitigate the spread of communicable diseases, the GoJ imposed a split-school day in some educational institutions in northern Jordan.¹⁷ This comprises of a double-shift schedule allowing Syrian and Jordanian students to be taught separately in either morning or afternoon shifts, expanding teaching capacity. Double-shift schedules existed before the crisis, and between 2009 and 2013, the proportion of students in Jordan attending double-shift schools increased from 7.6% to 13.4%, undermining government plans to reduce the number of split school-day schedules as part of its educational reform programme.¹⁸ At 28%, a minority of respondents assessed reported that the school day was split between Jordanian and Syrian children in their community. It remains unclear whether the split school day drives or mitigates tensions within the community. It may transpire that the split school day mitigates tension in the short term by preventing Syrian and Jordanian students from interacting, but is detrimental to social cohesion in the longer term by entrenching social divides between the two communities.

SECURITY ISSUES AND EDUCATION

Some 11% of Syrians and 2% of Jordanians reported security issues as a reason for tension in access to educational services. REACH FGDs provided evidence to support the existence of school-based violence and other security issues in educational institutions across northern Jordan, and discrimination in schools was mentioned in 88 FGDs with Syrian men and women and Jordanian men and women. A number of participants raised concerns about security issues on the way to school as well as in and around schools themselves. For example, there were reports of gangs of Syrian and Jordanian youths standing outside schools and verbally harassing or physically attacking students. **Some gender-specific issues arose, with young girls reporting that they felt particularly vulnerable to threats presented by gangs outside schools and to widespread verbal harassment.** In a number of FGDs there were also mentions of youths loitering around the school gates and following girls on their way home from school.

Disconcertingly, according to anecdotal evidence, security issues like these have already caused some families to remove their children from schools altogether in order to keep them safe and avoid altercations. For example, in Orjan, Ajloun students reported leaving school to stay at home because of discrimination between Jordanian and Syrian students, and young women stated that male Jordanian students were physically attacking Syrian students because of their nationality. In Downtown, Balqa, for example, some Syrians participating in FGDs reported that they would prefer their children to be taught by Syrian teachers because they were at times discriminated against by their Jordanian teachers.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH

A major health concern expressed by Jordanians was the spread of communicable diseases. This issue was raised in 15% of all FGDs. These concerns are well-founded, as overall vaccination coverage in Syria dropped from 90% before the crisis to 52% in March 2014, meaning that many more Syrian children are now at risk from vaccine-preventable diseases.¹⁹ A low immunization rate among Syrian refugee children, particularly outside camps, compounded by large population movement has created a high-risk environment for disease

¹⁷ REACH, Facilitating the Prioritization of Host Community Programming in Jordan: Findings from Governorate Workshops in Northern Jordan, (March 2014).

¹⁸ HCSP, National Resilience Plan 2014-2016, (January 2014).

¹⁹ WHO, World Health Organization: Syrian Arab Republic Donor Update 2014 (Q1), (January 2014).

transmission, with more Syrians carrying tuberculosis, measles and polio than Jordanians.²⁰ Consequently several Jordanian parents are concerned for their children's health, in some cases prohibiting their children from attending school. Indeed in some FGDs fears about the spread of disease prompted calls for total segregation of Syrian and Jordanian students in schools. For instance, in Sakhray, Ajloun Jordanian parents asked for their children to be vaccinated and separated from Syrian children who they perceived to be responsible for the spread of diseases.

The extent of the psychological impact of the Syrian crisis on children and young people is hard to determine. It may be that in some cases the traumatic effects of the crisis have directly impacted students in the host communities in the context of educational institutions where Jordanians and Syrians interact. Integration and psychological issues were reported among Syrian and Jordanian children in an initial rapid assessment of south and central Jordan.²¹ However, further assessment would be needed to determine whether Syrian children suffering from psychological trauma are influencing the behaviour of Jordanian students in schools across host communities in the northern governorates.

CONCLUSION

This assessment has identified **key drivers of tension relating to educational services and institutions** in the host communities, including uneven access to education between Jordanians and Syrians, poor management of educational services, combined classes, overcrowding, security issues, disagreement over curricula, and concerns regarding the spread of communicable diseases in schools.

Anecdotal evidence from FGDs indicated that, disconcertingly, new cases of social isolation are emerging in the host communities as a proportion of sampled respondents reported resorting to homeschooling or removing their children from schools altogether due to fears over school-based discrimination and violence, preventing them from mixing with different demographic groups. From a social cohesion perspective, there is a danger that negative perceptions of cultural and behavioural differences between Jordanian and Syrian students will further entrench divides between the two population groups, contributing to rising tensions in the wider community. Innovative ways of encouraging socialization between Syrian and Jordanian students could therefore be explored - such as awareness campaigns to debunk myths and appease discrimination.

Assessment findings also suggested that there remain **serious and urgent challenges for Jordan's education sector from a community resilience perspective**. For schools to withstand the external shocks caused by the Syrian refugee crisis, investment is needed in educational infrastructure, school materials and teacher training of both Jordanian and Syrian teachers. Furthermore, according to the MoE there is likely to be an **increase in demand for Non-Formal Education (NFE) among Jordanians and Syrians** in the host community populations comprising of alternative educational programmes which are community related, learner-centred and resource saving, including 'catch up' courses for children who have skipped school, in addition to vocational training and other forms of basic education and literacy for out-of-school children.²²

It should be noted that Syrian refugee children are less likely to be well equipped to adjust to the normative and social demands of school culture than their Jordanian peers due to the different curricula in Syria and the possibility that they may have suffered traumatic experiences.²³ School-aged Syrian refugees will continue to arrive in Jordanian host communities meaning that strengthening the resilience of the education sector and enhancing its absorptive capacity should be a top priority in northern Jordan.

In terms of data collected on the education sector, **information gaps persist**. Further studies and assessments are required **to investigate the impact of the double-shift school schedule on social cohesion, drop-out rates and the prevalence of school-based violence**.

Public health fears regarding the spread of communicable diseases should be further explored. These reflect reality as in 2013 there were cases of measles, tuberculosis, leishmaniasis and hepatitis A in Jordanian areas

²⁰ HCSP, Ibid.

²¹ UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP, Joint Assessment Review of the Syrian Refugee Response in Jordan, (January 2014).

²² HCSP, National Resilience Plan 2014-2016, (January 2014).

²³ UNESCO, Social exclusion and violence: Education for social cohesion, (June 2001).

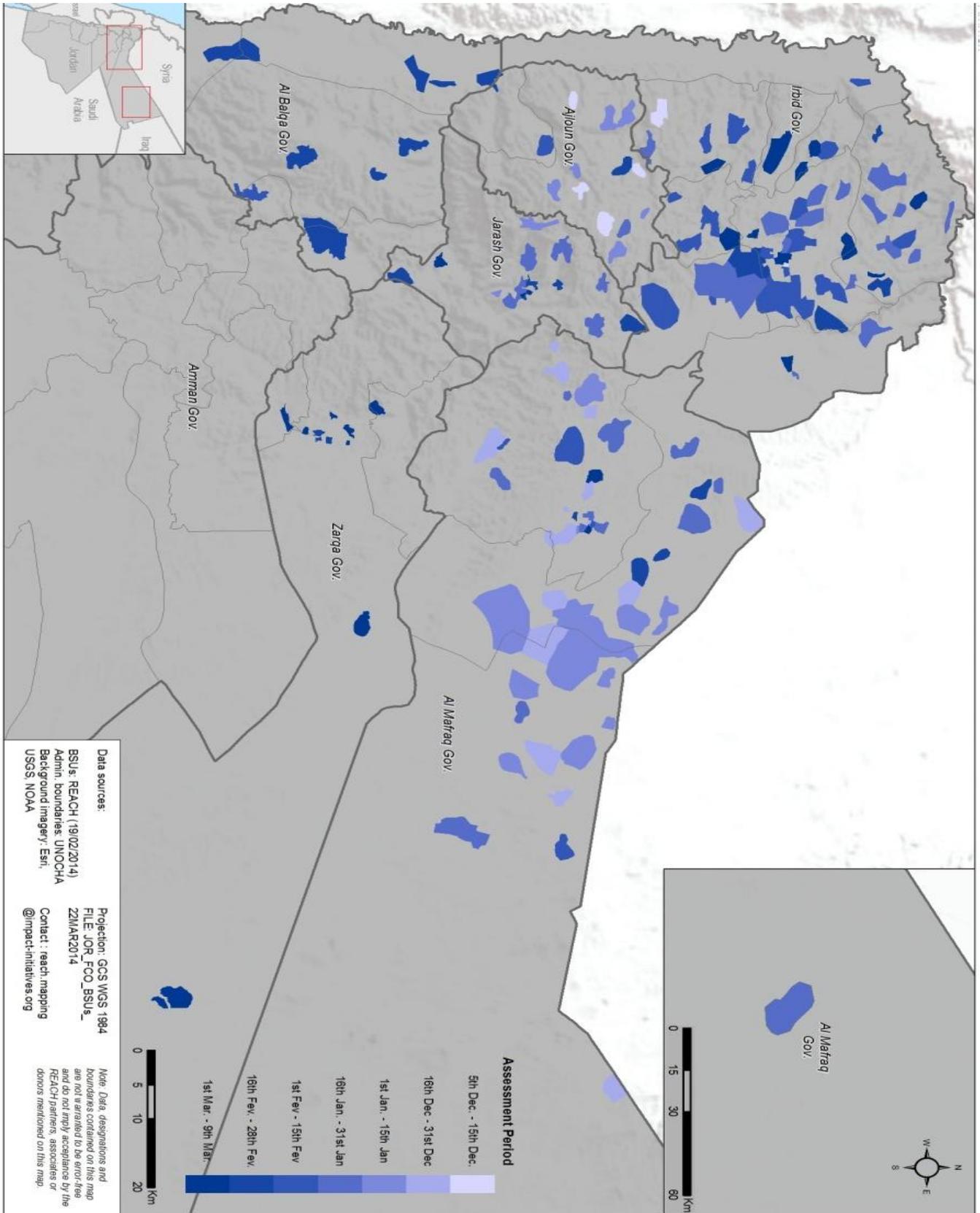
hosting significant numbers of Syrians.²⁴ While there have since been mass immunization and routine vaccination campaigns led by UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO²⁵, the situation should be closely monitored.

This assessment has provided a broad understanding of education and tensions in host communities across northern Jordan in order to help humanitarian and development actors inform, design and target strategic responses aimed at mitigating tensions surrounding these communities' most pressing educational needs.

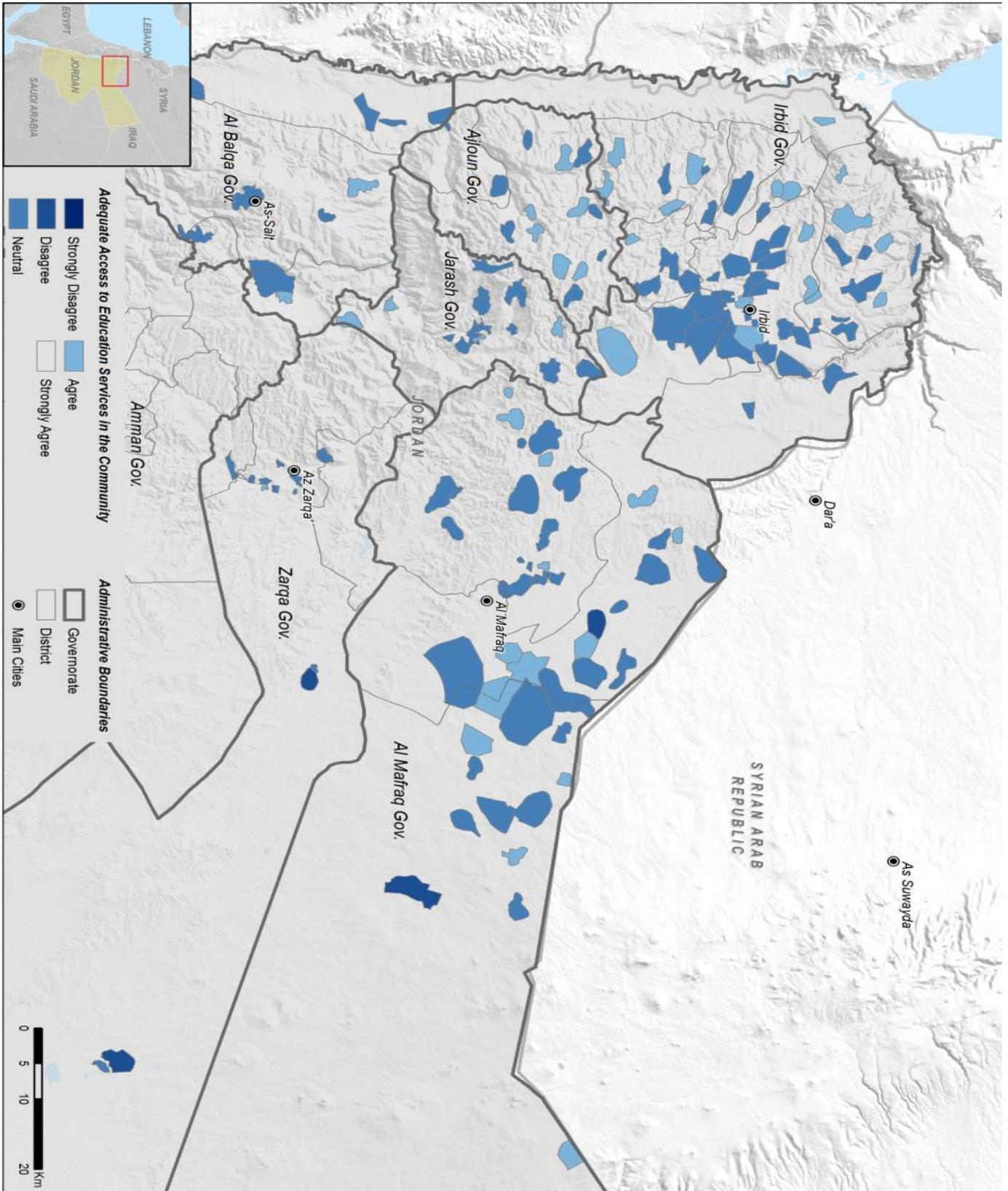
²⁴ UNHCR, 2014 Regional Response Plan: Health, January – December 2014, (January 2014).

²⁵ UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP, Joint Assessment Review, (January 2014).

ANNEX I: MAP OF COMMUNITIES ASSESSED AND ASSESSMENT TIMEFRAME



ANNEX II: MAP OF SATISFACTION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN HOST COMMUNITIES



ANNEX III: MAP OF EDUCATION AS A CHALLENGE TO SOCIAL COHESION IN HOST COMMUNITIES

