

2019 UNHCR MULTI-SECTORAL JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORTING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - MARCH 2020

WHY DO WE REPORT?

As a signatory of the Grand Bargain, UNHCR has committed to increasing efforts towards comprehensive and cross-sector assessment outputs and is accountable to donors and other signatories for transparently reporting on implementation milestones.

WHAT DO WE CONSIDER A MULTI-SECTORAL JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

Multi-sectoral | Assessments are considered multi-sectoral when covering two or more sectors/clusters. UNHCR considers Protection and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) to be cross-cutting sectors/clusters by nature, and therefore, all protection and CCCM assessments are considered multi-sectoral.

Joint | For the purposes of this report, an assessment exercise is considered “joint” when it is conducted in collaboration with stakeholders within sectors/clusters, situations or thematic areas, leading to a jointly owned output. Assessment participants must include at least one actor beyond UNHCR and its implementing partners, such as other UN agencies, NGOs, government or development actors.

Needs assessments | A needs assessment is any type of data gathering, processing and analysis that allows for the needs, conditions and capacities of target populations to be identified and quantified/qualified. Needs may be identified through a number of assessment modalities, such as nutrition or intention surveys, profiling exercises or participatory assessments. Primary data on needs may be collected at different levels (e.g. site level, individual level, household level, etc.) and through different techniques (e.g. household surveys, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, etc.).

However, an assessment exercise does not necessarily include a primary data collection component. Exercises where an agreed-upon methodology is in place, and secondary data is sufficient to answer key questions and allow conclusions to be drawn through joint analysis are also considered needs assessments. Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs) and Refugee Response Plans (RRPs), for example, are prominent assessment exercises commonly informed by secondary data.

GATHERING DATA ON UNHCR'S MULTI-SECTORAL JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

- ▶ With inputs from country, regional and global UNHCR staff, a database of assessment exercises was compiled and validated against the inclusion criteria (i.e. “multi-sectoral”, “joint”, “needs assessments”).
- ▶ Only assessment exercises for which the output was finalized in 2019 were included in this report. Although there were a number of data collection exercises in 2019, they will not be reported on until the output has been validated and published, where applicable.

INTERPRETING THE DATA

- ▶ This report presents an indicative rather than exhaustive description of the current state of play for joint needs assessments at UNHCR.
- ▶ Where “needs assessments” was used as the unit of measurement, the analysis may show a reduced number of assessments conducted. This reduction can be the result of a multitude of factors, including positive ones such as better assessment coordination, in compliance with the [Grand Bargain Principles for Coordinated Assessment Ethos](#).

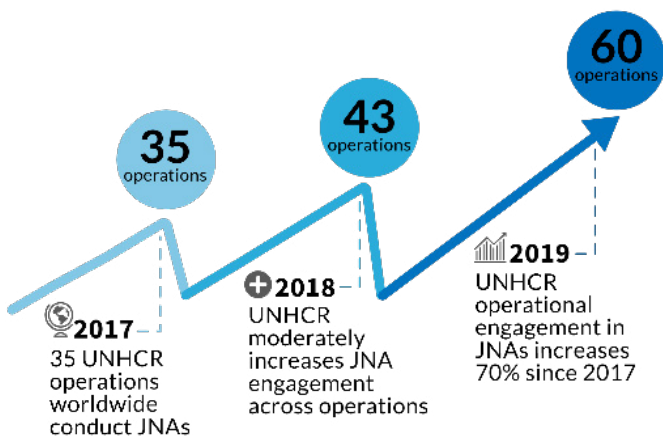
GLOBAL OVERVIEW

KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ UNHCR has (co)led more assessments in 2019 than in 2018, both in percentage and in absolute values.
- ▶ UNHCR joint needs assessments (JNA) engagement has increased 70% since 2017.
- ▶ In 2019, host communities appeared as the second-most assessed population group, covered in 49% of UNHCR JNAs, up 10% since 2018. In addition, 37% of assessments analysed the needs of both refugees and host communities, up from 27% in the previous year. Improved analysis of host community needs is a positive indicator towards the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees.

OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

Since tracking began after the introduction of the Grand Bargain in 2017, UNHCR’s overall engagement in multi-sectoral joint needs assessments across the organization has significantly improved. In its first reporting exercise in 2017, UNHCR had recorded operations in 35 different countries conducting joint assessment exercises. In 2018, this figure increased 23 per cent to 43 countries, and in 2019 another 40 per cent to 60 countries, showing a sustained upward trend.



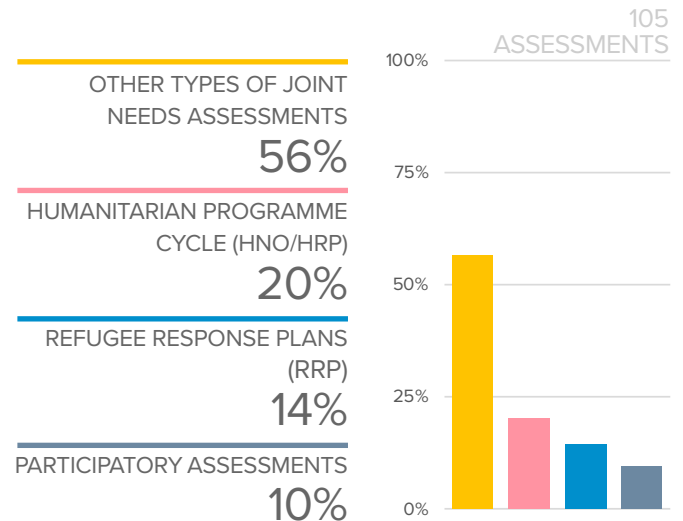
In 2019, UNHCR engaged in at least 105 multi-sectoral joint needs assessments. This figure is lower than in the previous year, when 128 joint exercises were recorded, representing a 17 per cent decrease. Despite the lower total number of assessments reported, UNHCR’s leadership role in multi-sectoral joint needs assessments was significantly strengthened.

In 2019, the agency led or co-led 62 assessments, corresponding to 59 per cent of the 105 exercises reported, up from 46 per cent of assessments in 2018.

TYPE OF ASSESSMENTS

Of the assessment exercises included in this report, 20 per cent were HNOs and HRPs. Another 10 per cent were assessments linked to RRP, 14 per cent were UNHCR-led Participatory Assessments and 56 per cent were other types of multi-sectoral joint exercises, such as vulnerability assessments, profiling exercises, rapid assessments, intention surveys and nutrition surveys.

UNHCR 2019 JNA engagement per assessment type (%), 2019



TRANSPARENCY AND DISSEMINATION

76%
JNA reports publicly available

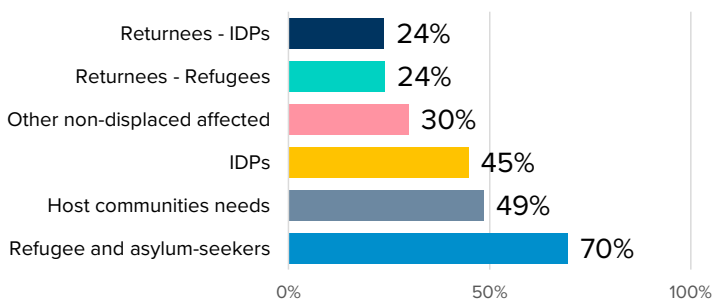
24%
JNA reports kept internal

Assessment reports were publicly available in 76 per cent of joint exercises, of which 65 per cent were published in different online platforms and 11 per cent were available upon request. The remainder 24 per cent of reports were kept internal to the participants of the assessment. This can be necessary in specific situations where the outcomes of an assessment exercise may have a negative impact on populations of concern or on the operational environment. In these cases, reports are shared with a limited number of trusted stakeholders.

AFFECTED POPULATION COVERAGE

The needs of refugees and asylum-seekers were analysed in 70 per cent of assessments UNHCR participated or (co)led in 2019. Needs analysis on internally displaced persons (IDPs) were included in 45 per cent of assessments, while other non-displaced affected populations were analysed in 30 per cent of assessments, and returnees - both refugee and IDP returnees - in 24 per cent of exercises each. Host communities were the second-most assessed population group, included in 49 per cent of the exercises. This indicates improved efforts to include host community needs compared to 2018, when 39 per cent of assessments covered host communities.

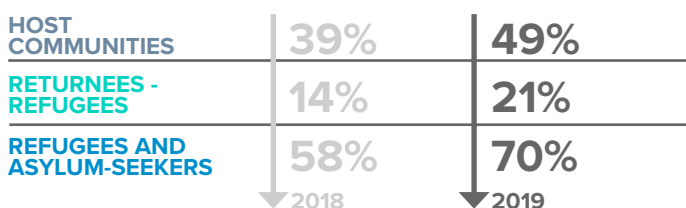
Coverage of population groups within UNHCR's JNAs (%), 2019



Since one assessment often covers more than one population group, the percentage representations per group, when put together, surpass 100 per cent. For example: 70 per cent of assessments pertained to the needs of refugees and 49 per cent assessed host communities.

Compared to the previous year, 2019 figures show a stronger UNHCR engagement where the agency has a leadership mandate, namely refugee situations. As reflected in the figures, the percentage of assessments covering the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, refugee returnees and refugee-hosting communities all increased, showing not only alignment with [Grand Bargain commitments](#) but also to the [Global Compact for Refugees](#).

Coverage of population groups relevant to refugee situation in UNHCR's JNAs (%), 2018-2019



Syria. UNHCR teams travel long distances to newly accessible areas to reach the most vulnerable in Aleppo. UNHCR/Antwan Chnkaji, August, 2019.

JOINT ASSESSMENTS AND THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES

"Reliable, comparable, and timely data is critical for evidence-based measures to: improve socio-economic conditions for refugees and host communities; assess and address the impact of large refugee populations on host countries in emergency and protracted situations; and identify and plan appropriate solutions".

[Global Compact on Refugees, p. 17]

In 2019, 37 per cent of joint needs assessments UNHCR (co)led or participated in analysed the needs of both host communities and refugees, compared to 27 per cent in 2018. In particular, there has been a 30 per cent decrease in the total number of assessments that looked only at displaced population groups without including the needs of host communities. The improvements reflected in these figures represent an important step towards the implementation of the [Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#), which, among other goals, aims to transform the response to refugee situations to ensure host communities also get the support they need.

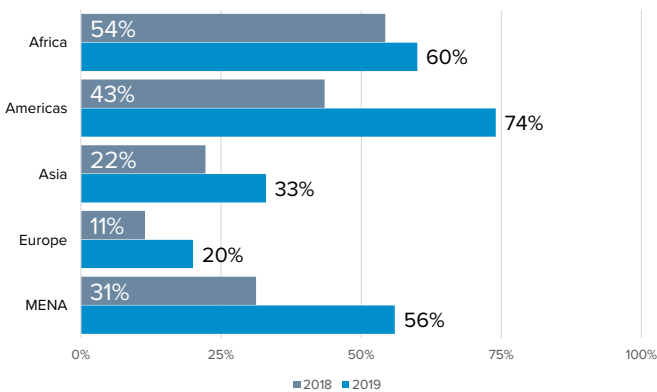
UNHCR's joint needs assessment engagement also contributes to the implementation of GCR commitments towards a multi-stakeholder approach, where humanitarian and development organisations work together with national actors to ensure complementarity between responses. In line with this principle, UNHCR has co-led assessments with development and government stakeholders throughout 2019, including in Ethiopia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Malawi, Nepal, the Philippines and Uganda.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

From 2018 to 2019, UNHCR was able to increase its operational engagement in joint needs assessments in all regions.

UNHCR overall operational engagement in JNAs per region (%), 2018-2019



Within each region, UNHCR’s engagement in JNAs is influenced by the need for such exercises, which, in turn may vary according to **response structures** in place and the **scope and scale** of crises.

► Response structures

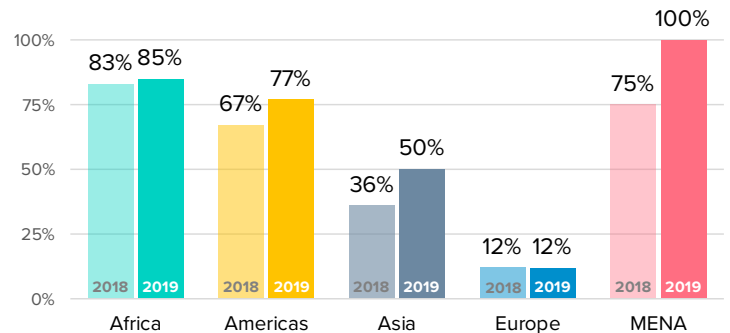
In countries where refugee response is entirely regulated and implemented by highly capacitated and fully financed government bodies, no operational engagement from UNHCR is generally needed, as government authorities take full responsibility for protecting and assisting persons of concern. In these cases, UNHCR focuses largely on advocacy work and the engagement in Grand Bargain-compliant joint needs assessment exercises is less applicable.

► Scope and scale

In small-scale operations, a multi-sector multi-stakeholder response that includes actors beyond UNHCR’s implementing partners may not be necessary, and a multi-sectoral joint assessment exercise may therefore not be required. Responses in large-scale operations, on the other hand, often entail the engagement of multiple stakeholders and a higher level of partner coordination - including to assess needs. Of the 127 UNHCR operations, 67 are located in countries hosting 100,000 or more persons of concern in 2019. Considering these as UNHCR’s “large-scale operations”, where the likelihood of a sizable cross-sector response is higher, 41 (or 67 per cent) of them engaged in multi-sectoral JNAs in 2019.

Compared to the previous year, JNA engagement of UNHCR’s large-scale operations per region in 2019 improved, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa region, where 100 per cent of large-scale operations engaged in at least one joint multi-sectoral exercise. In Asia and the Americas, JNA engagement also improved, while in Africa it remained similarly high. Finally, the engagement of Operations in Europe remained stable, which can be associated with the scale of UNHCR operations in some countries and with the response structures in some of the countries hosting large refugee populations (i.e. 100,000 persons of concern or more).

UNHCR large-scale operational engagement in JNAs per region (%), 2018-2019



REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

AFRICA

In **East Africa and the Great Lakes**, 8 out of 9 large-scale operations conducted JNAs, while in **West and Central Africa** 7 out of 8 and in **Southern Africa** 1 out of 3 engaged in such exercises.

THE AMERICAS

The **largest multi-sector multi-partner** exercise conducted in the Americas was in the context of the **2020 RMRP**, with **analysis workshops** carried out in 17 countries.

ASIA

The 2019 **Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis** analyses the needs of 1.2 million persons of concern. Through the JRP, UNHCR provides jointly with other humanitarian actors reliable and predictable evidence to inform responses in Bangladesh.

EUROPE

UNHCR offices in Europe are largely engaged in **advocacy work**. It is only in main entry points into the EU, that UNHCR provides services and therefore conducts needs assessments - where possible, jointly.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

UNHCR continued to build on **partnerships with other UN agencies and the World Bank** to engage in JNAs, despite politically sensitive and often dangerous operational environments in the region.