

# AGE AND DISABILITY MONITOR

**In this issue:**  
**\*Inclusive registration**  
**\*The lack of data on Sex, Age and Disability for refugees from and IDPs inside Syria.**

The Age and Disability Monitor provides a bi-monthly overview of the most pressing issues and needs faced by persons with specific needs (PSN), including people with disabilities (PwD), people with injuries (Pwl), and older people (OP) among the refugees from and IDPs within Syria. It also highlights inclusive interventions by humanitarian actors, which successfully address special needs arising from these cross-cutting vulnerabilities.

## REGISTRATION GAP LIMITS VISIBILITY OF SPECIFIC NEEDS

Late 2013, UNCHR introduced biometric registration in the registration interview, document renewal process, and the RSD (refugee status determination) interviews in Lebanon and Jordan, which has significantly reduced the waiting time for registration, and is expected to be implemented in Iraq and Egypt in early 2014.

In this same process, mobile registration for people with **specific needs who are not able to physically reach registration centres** are provided on a case-by-case basis. However, the extent and coverage remains limited, which raises concerns about the inclusiveness of the registration process, and the identification of persons with specific needs.

Preliminary findings of the HelpAge International /Handicap International assessment in Jordan and Lebanon show that as of November 2013, over a fifth of Syrian refugees were found to have **at least one impairment** (26% in Jordan, and 20% in Lebanon), be it physical, visual, auditory, or intellectual. For 6% of refugees, it concerns a severe impairment. However, for example, only 1% of the UNHCR registered population in Lebanon are people with a **disability**<sup>i</sup>, which raises concern about their visibility in the humanitarian response, and their access to basic services. Of persons with an impairment, 76% are registered in Lebanon, and 95% in Jordan. In Lebanon, 14% of people with one or more impairments are not registered.



Mohelah. © S. Nogier / Handicap International

**"At least now I can take care of myself. At 55 years old I was very embarrassed at having to be helped like a child, especially for intimate things like washing for example. Now I keep my prosthetic limb on all day and only take it off in the evening."**

[Mohelah, staying in Zaatari camp, suffers from diabetes and underwent a leg amputation in Syria. HI fitted her with a prosthetic leg]

In Lebanon, 26% of **older people** are not registered as compared to 16% and 13% respectively for adults and children.

8% of the refugees in Jordan and 4.5% in Lebanon have an **injury**. Only 76% of refugees with injuries are **registered** in Lebanon and Jordan<sup>ii</sup>.

In Iraq, 79% of **PwD** in Domiz camp are registered with UNHCR, while 70% of urban refugees in Domiz are registered. Information about disability is not being systematically collected during refugee registration.<sup>iii</sup> Of the unregistered refugees with disabilities, 44% reported they had accessed healthcare services compared to 69% of registered refugees with disabilities.

Non-registration can have a serious impact on access to basic services, such as healthcare. Last year, a survey among non-registered returnees and Lebanese IDPs, showed that 63% of them did not receive any form of assistance from any NGO.<sup>iv</sup>

## Recommendations

\* Ensure inclusive registration which accommodates for challenges in mobility, caused by disability, injury or age so that Pwl, PwD and OP have equal access to registration and basic services, and a reduced exposure to risks of abuse and social and economic exploitation;

\* Ensure that PwD, Pwl, and OP have adequate access to information regarding the registration process and related access to services, so that they are not excluded from registration due to circumstances outside of their control and informed decision.

## LACK OF DATA HAMPERS VULNERABILITY TARGETING

According to UNHCR data, **older people** (over the age of 60) account for approximately 3% of the registered refugee population across Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey<sup>v</sup>. For Jordan and Lebanon it is around 2.5%.<sup>vi</sup> However, preliminary findings of HelpAge International /Handicap International research carried out in October 2013, reveal that the proportion of older people within the refugee population in Jordan and Lebanon is actually nearly 5% of people in refugee families.<sup>vii</sup>

There is a need for increased, regular and comprehensive collection of data on sex, age, and disability for **OP, PwD, Pwl**, and the needs related to their vulnerabilities. The lack of [available] detailed vulnerability data and related protection risks among refugees from Syria in host countries and IDPs inside Syria, increases the invisibility of vulnerable groups. It also hampers the design and implementation of inclusive and needs based programming by humanitarian actors, as many vulnerable groups and their specific needs remain invisible.



Due to **vulnerabilities** related to disability, injury and/or older age, PwD, PwI, and OP face higher protection risks as they have decreased visibility in the humanitarian response and less access to basic services.<sup>viii</sup> Therefore, besides sex and age disaggregated (SADD) and disability related data, more information and analysis is needed, regarding their specific:

- SGBV protection concerns;
- Living conditions (tented/ informal tented settlements ((I)TS), unfinished buildings and finished buildings/ apartments);
- Breakdown of unaccompanied/ separated status.

## Recommendations

\* Actively collect and disaggregate evidence according to age, gender, and disability in order to further improve the visibility of persons with specific needs, and the effective targeting of assistance;

\* With available data, analyse how vulnerabilities, such as older age, injuries and disabilities increase risk of HRVs, such as SGBV and abuse;

\* Ensure effective identification and recording of disability and injury data during the refugee registration process.

# GOOD NEWS:

## INCLUSIVE EMERGENCY LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTION

In June 2013, UNDP Syria launched inclusive emergency employment schemes to restore lost livelihoods and strengthen resilience in conflict-affected communities. They target both internally displaced people and host communities, with special attention to vulnerable groups such as women, youth and people with disabilities. In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), UNDP interventions are "tailored to the needs and physical challenges of people with disabilities and aim towards enabling them to become independent and productive members of the community", says Ms. Alissar Chaker, UNDP Deputy Country Director.

A sewing workshop in Qamishly, Northern Syria, has employed around 10 women with physical disabilities in sewing and knitting activities through a home-based cash for work initiative. The same project targeted 39 women who head households that have family members living with a mental or physical disability.



Credit: UNDP. Deir-ez-Zor (Nov 2013)

In Deir Ezzor, UNDP launched a cash for work project for solid waste collection and disposal, training 28 persons with disability on spraying the neighborhoods where the garbage collection was taking place. "Customised equipment are provided and particular medical attention is given to this group as to ensure their safety and adequate health conditions", says Ms. Chaker.

Ms. Manal Fouani, Early Recovery Specialist in UNDP Syria, further explains: "Acknowledging the fact that negative attitudes towards people with disabilities

are heightened during crises, and that they are often invisible and excluded in emergency responses and recovery processes, UNDP included in its response plan to the Syrian crisis tailored emergency and livelihoods interventions that capture their needs and engage them actively in the response. The objective is to ensure equal opportunities for access to quality services and socio-economic integration and recovery. Such support is based on a comprehensive rehabilitation cycle, which includes psycho-social support, physiotherapy, the provision of assistive devices, specialized vocational trainings, and integration in community based activities."

Both projects are being continued in 2014.

Materializing a global partnership between HelpAge International (HAI) and Handicap International (HI) both organizations decided to address inclusion issues in the Syria Crisis through a **Regional Inclusion Programme**, which aims at supporting the implementation of a principled, inclusive and accessible humanitarian response for the most vulnerable, especially older refugees and refugees with disabilities.

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<sup>i</sup> HelpAge International and Handicap International, forthcoming report on the situation of vulnerable refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. Hereafter: HelpAge International /Handicap International assessment.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> Handicap International (December 2013). Rapid Needs Assessment: Situation of children, youth and adults with disabilities, within and around Domiz, Northern Iraq.

<sup>iv</sup> MSF (February 2013). Misery beyond the war zone: Life for Syrian refugees and displaced populations in Lebanon.

<sup>v</sup> UNHCR portal Syria crisis.

<sup>vi</sup> Idem.

<sup>vii</sup> HelpAge International / Handicap International assessment

<sup>viii</sup> See also: Handicap International (December 2008). Toolkit for on protection of Persons with Disabilities. HelpAge International (2013). Protection interventions for older people in emergencies.