










The Vulnerability Assessment Framework:

The basics | December 2014

What the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) is:

-  The VAF is the next step forward in providing humanitarian assistance based on the widely practiced principle of helping the beneficiaries who most need services.
-  It improves upon that practice of prioritizing the most vulnerable beneficiaries by providing a comprehensive and collaborative data-driven system that features more in-depth collection of household information, and standardized definitions and benchmarks for determining vulnerability levels within different sectors.
-  The benefits to humanitarian assistance organizations include a deeper understanding of their beneficiary communities; a data-driven, statistically reliable analytical tool to help organizations determine how to assess vulnerability most effectively; greater collaboration among NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies within sectors; and common definitions NGOs can use to try to avoid duplicating assistance and assessments.
-  VAF has a number of different components:
 -  A vulnerability assessment questionnaire is conducted with refugees during household visits by agencies;
 -  A custom-made computer model and database that builds upon information in the Refugee Assistance Information System, better known as RAIS;
 -  Information from the questionnaires is entered into the database under different categories;
 -  More than 700 data points have been created from answers to the questionnaires (no, there are not 700 questions), including the estimated ability of a household to cover its monthly expenses, the number of dependents, the shelter conditions, access to healthcare, etc. The resulting database is as wide as it is deep – wide because it covers so many sectors and issues, and deep because it already has more than 15,000 refugee households in Jordanian urban communities information.
 -  An analysis of the data calculates a vulnerability “score” that UN agencies and INGOs can use to identify households needs and vulnerabilities. In other words, the VAF helps organizations make programming decisions on whom to assist by identifying the beneficiaries least able and best able to help themselves so assistance can be tailored to specific needs and locations.

- 📄 The VAF team and the World Bank have done statistical tests to check early findings of “the economic-based welfare model,” used in the VAF analysis and have found a strong degree of reliability in them.
- 📄 The VAF project’s development is being overseen by 12 steering committee members representing five UN agencies, five INGOs and two donors. Their logos are at the bottom. The project currently is housed in UNHCR, where it is being developed.

What the VAF is not:

- 📄 It is NOT meant to replace an organization’s own surveys and requirements for receiving their services or to control what their organization does.



- 📄 Think about delivering humanitarian aid as building a house. An assistance organization is the foundation. If its staff uses the refugee information that is collected and analyzed through the VAF as the first floor of their house, they can build on that until their structure is sturdy and complete.

📄 Organizations can focus analyses on individual agency needs by asking for the data most relevant to their work, for example, on widow-headed households in Hibras and Al-Taybeh villages in Irbid Governorate whose children are not in school.

- 📄 An organization retains its individuality while it uses the VAF to complement its own resources as staff make decisions that are in line with each agencies' mandate.

VAF’s other advantages:

- 📄 The use of one common household questionnaire should reduce the number of agency visits to refugee families (though it doesn’t prevent an agency from visiting households as appropriate).
- 📄 A widely used questionnaire will help promote consistent definitions as well as comprehensive data collection in Jordan across multiple sectors.
- 📄 It gives assistance organizations deeper context of beneficiaries’ situations to use in decision-making.
- 📄 Donors want to know their funds go to the most vulnerable people caught in a crisis.
- 📄 Referrals will become more efficient and transparent by using the VAF tool as a common base of information.

The VAF team is eager to listen to suggestions and answer questions. Contact Kate Washington at washingk@unhcr.org or Harry Brown at harry@brown-source.com