# Findings of Household Assessments of Syrian Refugees in Host Communities
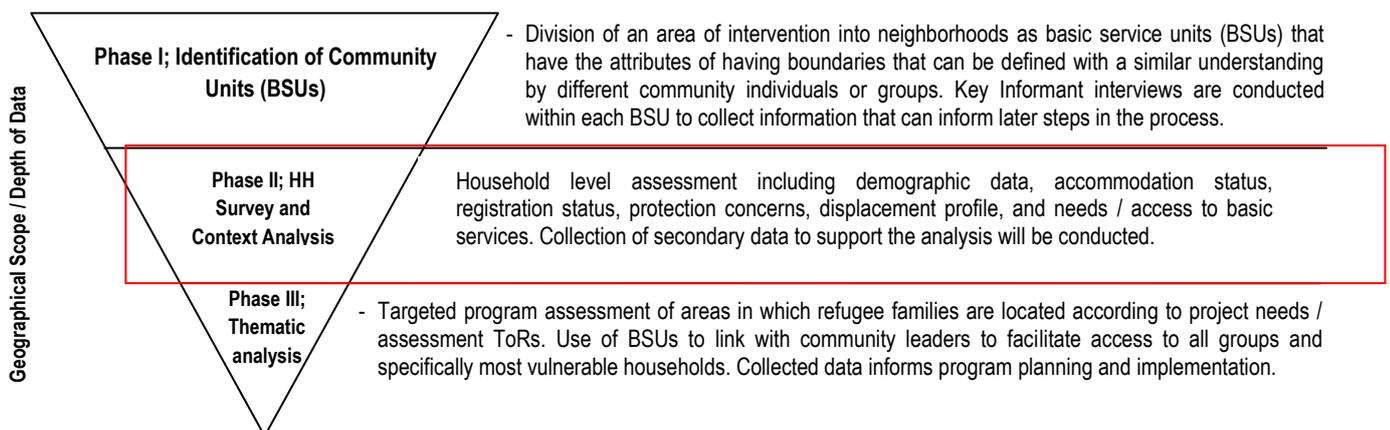
## Erbil Governorate

## 20July 2013

## BACKGROUND

Of the over 1,863,113 Syrian refugees estimated in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt as of the of July 2013, 160,335 have registered with UNHCR in Iraq.[1] In the Kurdistan region a number of factors including: (a) the onset of winter and summer conditions; (b) a continuing influx of new refugee arrivals from Syria causing an increased stress on host community infrastructure and services; and (c) weakened coping mechanisms within refugee communities living in hosted conditions given the prolonged period of displacement; are causing increased pressure on individual refugee families, forcing many to be drawn towards the choice to either relocate towards the main refugee camp in Domiz, Dohuk Governorate, or consider a return to Syria. With the capacity of Domiz camp limited, there is a need for the humanitarian community to focus on support to refugees hosted within communities across Kurdistan. The major challenge for actors on the ground however lies in identifying the refugee families hosted in communities across villages and cities of Iraq, and accessing baseline information that would allow for a quicker and more effective targeting of resources necessary to launch relevant and timely responses.

The data presented in this factsheet represents the findings of household level interviews that were conducted in the host communities of Erbil Governorate in May 2013. During this phase of the project, **6,062** displaced Syrian households, representing **17,918** individuals, were assessed. The household assessments focused on collecting five key sets of information from each household: 1. Household demographic data; 2. Registration card numbers; 3. Displacement profile; 4. Accommodation context; 5. Services and Needs. Additionally, assessment team leaders collected GPS data for each building housing Syrian refugee households in order to allow for the mapping of key data trends discovered through the analysis of collected data.

## ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

REACH's assessment methodology is based on a three step approach to data collection that gradually sharpens the understanding of the context both in terms of geographical focus as well as depth of data, as shown in the figure below. The objective of this process is to provide humanitarian actors with information that allows for more informed decision-making with regards to their targeting of specific geographic locations or beneficiary group based on their programme planning needs; thus enabling better planning, coordination and traceability of aid. As such the REACH methodology (outlined in the figure below) focuses primarily on the geographic identification of refugees living in host communities and collects a core baseline of household specific information that enables the preparation of situational analyses. It is important to note that this represents a snap shot of the situation and is based on the self-perception of the interviewees.
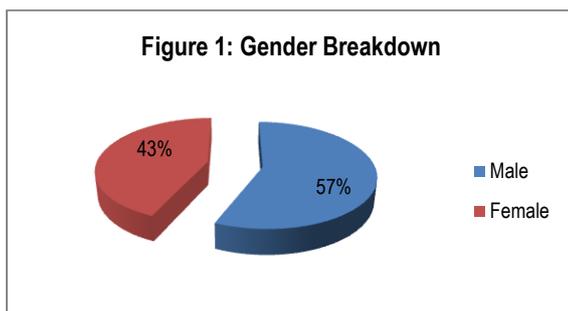


**Phase I; Identification of Community Units (BSUs)**
- Division of an area of intervention into neighborhoods as basic service units (BSUs) that have the attributes of having boundaries that can be defined with a similar understanding by different community individuals or groups. Key Informant interviews are conducted within each BSU to collect information that can inform later steps in the process.

**Phase II; HH Survey and Context Analysis**
Household level assessment including demographic data, accommodation status, registration status, protection concerns, displacement profile, and needs / access to basic services. Collection of secondary data to support the analysis will be conducted.

**Phase III; Thematic analysis**
- Targeted program assessment of areas in which refugee families are located according to project needs / assessment ToRs. Use of BSUs to link with community leaders to facilitate access to all groups and specifically most vulnerable households. Collected data informs program planning and implementation.

_Geographical Scope / Depth of Data_

---

[1] http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=103

UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

REACH Informing
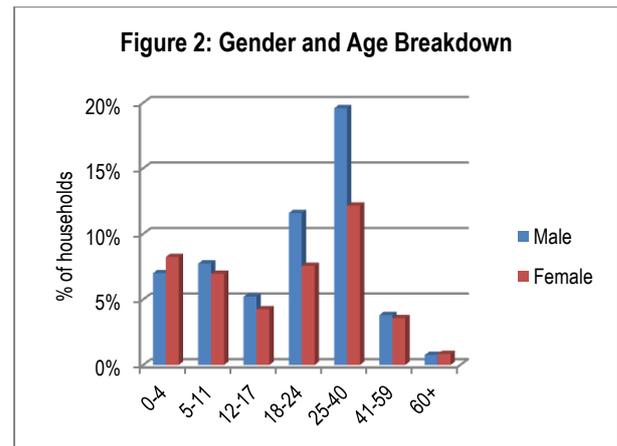more effective
humanitarian action

## KEY FINDINGS

The assessment focused on the major urban and rural areas of the Erbil Governorate in which high Syrian refugee population concentrations were identified. A total of **6,062** households were identified through the assessment, representing approximately **17,918** individuals. The assessment was conducted in **112** neighborhoods (*mahala*) which were delineated to **162** BSUs. The BSUs, also known as *mahala*, take the form of the smallest community level delimitated area, not always corresponding with geographical boundaries, which are identified and verified directly by the communities. Neighborhoods where assessment teams identified more than 500 individuals include: Daratu, Bahrka, Berkot Nwe, Shawes, Pirzeen, Kasnazan, Ainkawa, Havalan, Badawa 94, Bahari Nwe, Hasarok 5.

## HOUSEHOLD PROFILE

The respondents assessed demonstrated a slight male majority representing **57%** of the total population identified.
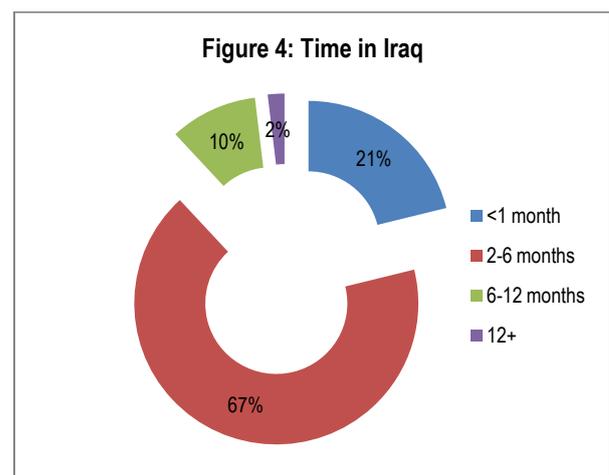
### Figure 1: Gender Breakdown

**7,141** or **39%** of individuals identified throughout the assessment were reported to be children and youth under the age of 18. **5,447** or **30%** were aged between 0-11 years. The majority of the Syrian refugee population, **51%**,were reported to be between 18 and 40 years old. Out of the total assessed population, between this age category, **31%** are male and **20%** female. **58%** of the households reported family members were aged between 18 and 59, indicating a moderate dependency ratio.

### Figure 2: Gender and Age Breakdown

## DISPLACEMENT PROFILE

The majority of households, **31%,** reported that they were originally displaced from the Syrian neighborhood of Quamishli, followed by **11%** identifying Afrin as their area of origin. Other Syrian neighborhoods from which a sizeable proportion of households now located in Erbil Governorate originate include Jebel Saman, **10%**, Al Malika, **9%** and Ain al Arab**, 7%**. The geographic spread of household origin covered nearly the whole of Syria.

Of the households identified through the assessment, **67%** were displaced from their area of origin fairly recently, and have been in Iraq between 2 to 6 months. **21%** of households reported having been in Iraq for less than one month, while **10%** of the respondents were in the country for 6 to 12 months. Only **2%** reported being in Iraq for 1 year or more.
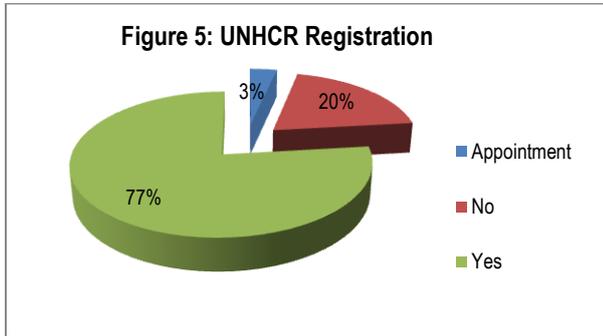
### Figure 4: Time in Iraq

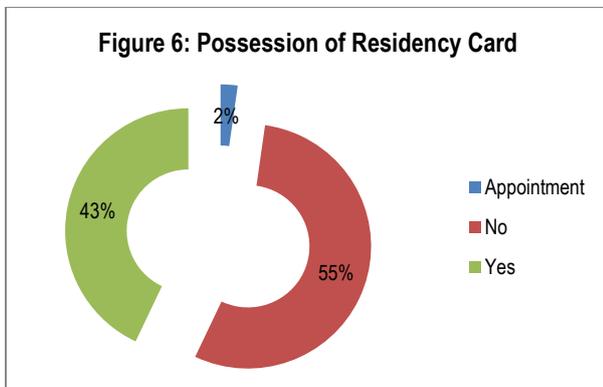## CONTEXT ANALYSIS WITHIN IRAQ

### REGISTRATION STATUS

Of the **6,063** households identified, **77%** (**4,654** households) reported being registered with UNHCR. Of the households
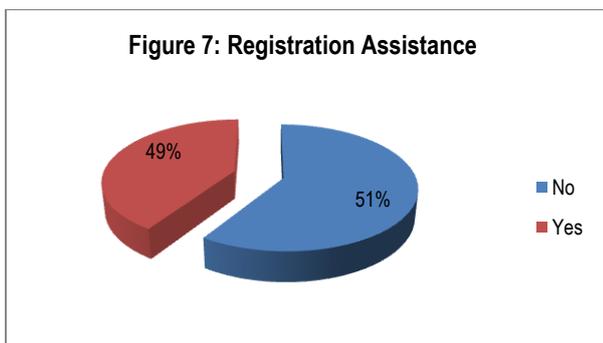
that reported not being registered, **3%** had a registration interview date scheduled with UNHCR at the time of assessment.

**Figure 5: UNHCR Registration**



- 3% Appointment
- 20% No
- 77% Yes

Interestingly, when asked if households possess a residency card, only **43%** responded positively, while **55%** reported not having one and only **2%** indicated having an appointment.
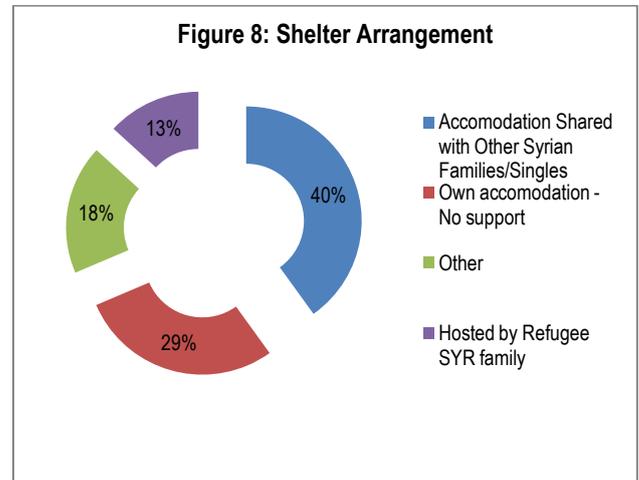
**Figure 6: Possession of Residency Card**



- 2% Appointment
- 55% No
- 43% Yes

This finding could be explained by the fact that a large percentage, **49%**, of the Syrian respondents reported needing assistance during the registration process which could apply to both UNHCR registration and obtaining a residency card from the government.

**Figure 7: Registration Assistance**
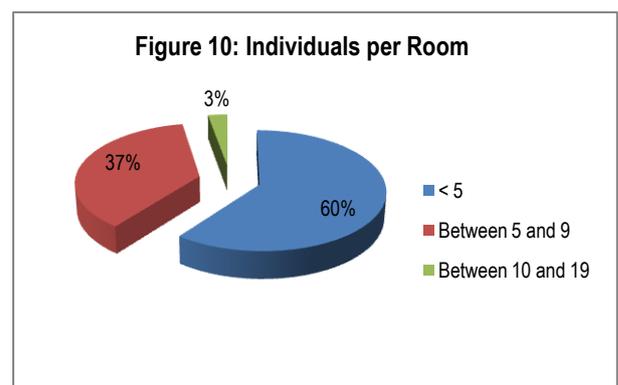


- 51% No
- 49% Yes

SHELTER SITUATION

A large proportion of households, **40%**, reported residing in a shared accommodation with other Syrian families/singles at the time of assessment. **28%** of households reported to be resident in a private accommodation as a single family unit without support, while **18%** of households indicated "other" as

their living arrangement, which in most instances referred to accommodation being provided at the place of work. **13%** of households indicated being hosted by other Syrian refugee families.

**Figure 8: Shelter Arrangement**



- 40% Accomodation Shared with Other Syrian Families/Singles
- 29% Own accomodation - No support
- 18% Other
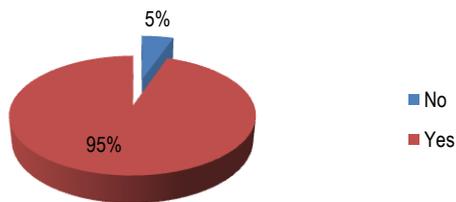- 13% Hosted by Refugee SYR family

The majority of households, **64%**, reported that they were paying rent for their accommodation, with an average monthly price of 142,237 IQD in Erbil Governorate. Within Erbil, the top five most expensive neighborhoods in terms of monthly rental costs are Qaselat Rustim (566,600 IQD), Surchya (425,000 IQD), Kwestan (401,136 IQD), Safen (400,000 IQD) and Shari Alan (340,000 IQD).

A large proportion of Syrian households, **60%**, reported to share a room with more than 5 other individuals, while **37%** indicated that the room they live in is shared with 5 to 9 persons. A small percentage, **3**%, of the Syrian households described their living situation as 10 to 19 people sharing one room.

**Figure 10: Individuals per Room**



- 60% < 5
- 37% Between 5 and 9
- 3% Between 10 and 19

An overwhelming majority, **95%** of the respondents described their shelter as able to protect them from the elements.
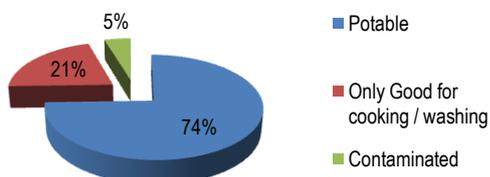
**Figure 11: Shelter Element Protection**



**89%**, of households indicated currently living in an apartment/house. However, a concerning number of **352** respondents indicated that they are living in an unfinished or empty building and **46** identified households reported to live in a tent or temporary structure. Additionally, a large number of households, **203,** indicated "other' as their living arrangement, which in the majority of instances meant living at their place of work (i.e., hotels, restaurants and construction sites).

WATER AND SANITATION

The vast majority of Syrian households, **75%**, considered the water being potable inside their home. However, **21**% of respondents reported to consider the water quality good enough only for cooking and washing purposes, while **5%** indicated that they perceive the water as being contaminated.
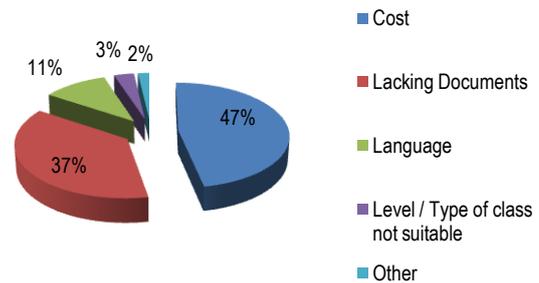
**Figure 12: Water Quality**



HOUSEHOLD VULNERABILITY

In terms of vulnerability, the assessment found that **188** of the identified Syrian households were female-headed and **80** households reported caring for chronically ill family members. Although this represents a small percentage of the assessed population, the real value is more important.

EDUCATION

At the time of the assessment, there were 3,129 children aged 6-17 that were not enrolled in school, representing **72%** of the children that were covered in the assessment from the ages 5-17. Of the respondents having children between 6 and 17 years, the main reported reason for not attending school was the cost, 47%, followed by lacking documents and language barriers, **37%** and **11%** respectively.
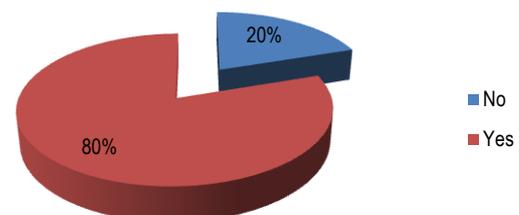
**Figure 13: Reasons for Not Attending School**



HEALTH

With the goal of identifying household members that suffered from specific health issues, the assessment identified **337** households with family members suffering from a chronic disease; **98** with physical handicaps; **20** suffering from psychological trauma; **19** with serious physical injuries/trauma; and **17** indicating a poor diet/malnutrition. This list only includes the highest response rates of the more serious issues.

When asked if the members of the household have access to health care, **80%** responded positively, primarily indicating they could physically access health care facilities and afford the services.
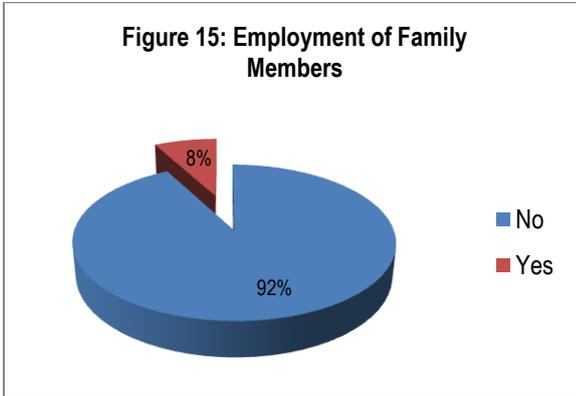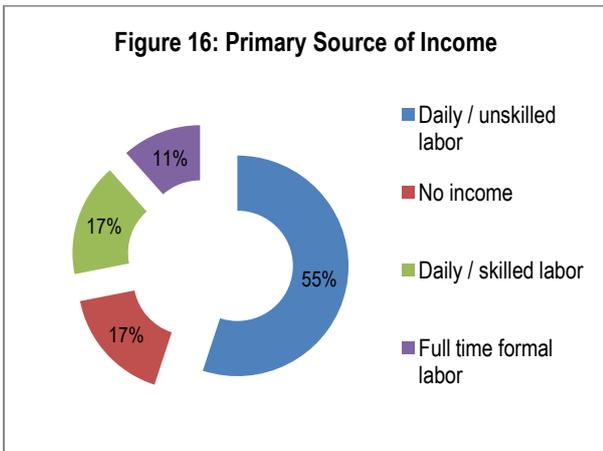
**Figure 14: Access to Health Care**



According to surveying field staff and key informants, many health services are provided for all the population by the government. However, further investigation is highly recommended as **20%** of households in the assessment indicated not having access to health services. Medical costs of chronic disease treatments are not completely covered by the government, which would offer an initial explanation of the finding, nevertheless, further research is required.
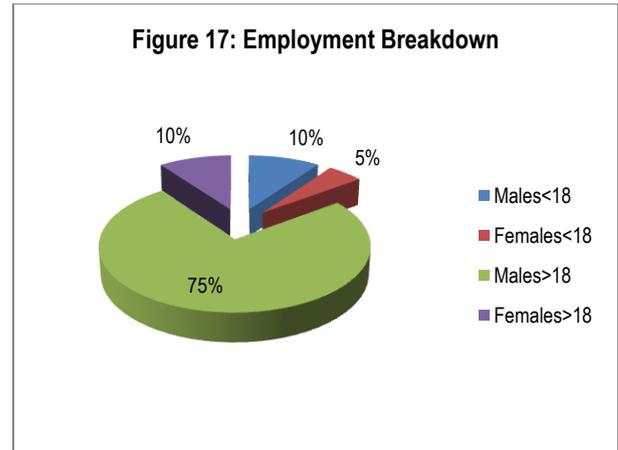
.

## LIVELIHOODS AND EMPLOYMENT

The staggering majority of households, **92%**, identified through the assessment reported that none of their family members were employed at the time of assessment.



Figure 15: Employment of Family Members

**55%** of households reported that their primary source of income was provided by daily/unskilled labor, followed by **17%** of households reporting that their family has no source of income. **16%** of the identified households indicated providing an income for their family through daily/skilled labor and only **11%** were full-time formally employed.



Figure 16: Primary Source of Income

Of the members of households currently employed, **75%** were males over the age of 18 followed by only **10%** of over 18 years old females employed. Additionally, a surprising **15%** of households reported having family members under the age of 18 in employment, of which **10%** were reported to be male and **5%** female.
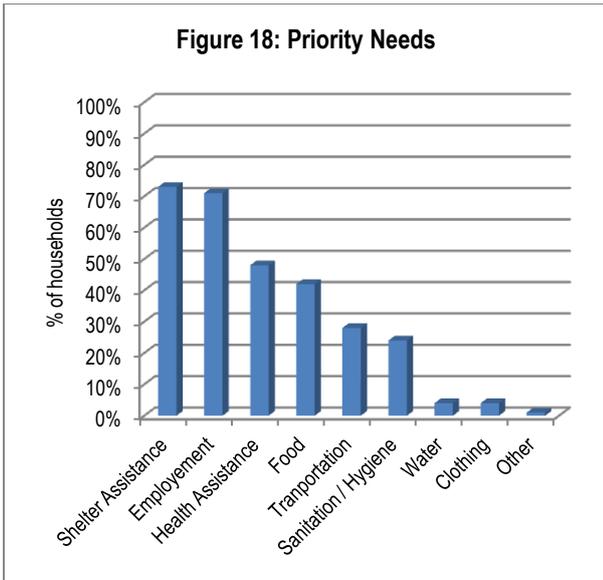


Figure 17: Employment Breakdown

When asked if any member of the family is currently looking for employment, **58%** of households responded positively while the remaining **42%** indicated not looking for work at the time of assessment.

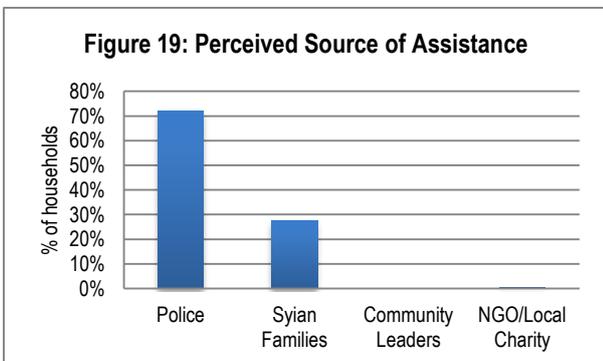## ASSISTANCE RECEIVED AND SELF-PERCEIVED NEEDS

Only **7%** of all households identified to be resident in Erbil Governorate reported that they had received some kind of assistance since arriving in Iraq.

Shelter assistance was selected by the vast majority of households identified through the assessment as the highest priority need, namely **73%**. In addition, employment and health assistance were selected by identified households as prominent secondary and tertiary needs, respectively **71%** and **48%**. **42%** of households reported food as their priority need. It is important to note that the respondents could choose 3 options in no order of importance. Interestingly, when assessing food security in the survey, **96%** of respondents indicated that a week prior to the assessment, they had sufficient money to buy food and that local markets were able to provide for their family's needs.

**Figure 18: Priority Needs**



INFORMATION AND SOURCE OF ASSISTANCE

The overwhelming majority of households, **96%**, indicated they rely on other Syrian families to find information about services available. **72%** of households reported they would go to the local police when facing problems or threats, whereas **28%** indicated they would seek assistance from other Syrian families. Only a small number of households, **21**, reported they would go to local community leaders, while no respondents reported they would seek assistance from NGOs or local charities.

**Figure 19: Perceived Source of Assistance**



**REACH**

REACH was formed in 2010 as a joint initiative of two INGOs (ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives) and a UN program (UNOSAT). The purpose of REACH is to promote and facilitate the development of information products that enhance the humanitarian community's capacity to make decisions and plan in emergency, reconstruction and development contexts.

At country level, REACH teams are deployed to countries experiencing emergencies or at-risk-of-crisis in order to facilitate interagency collection, organisation and dissemination of key humanitarian related information. Country-level deployments are conducted within the framework of partnerships with individual actors as well as aid coordination bodies, including UN agencies, clusters, inter-cluster initiatives, and other interagency initiatives.

**A partnership of:**   IMPACT *Initiatives*    ACTED    unitar UNOSAT