

Avec la participation de



Rapid Needs Assessment Report



Armenia – Syunik and Yerevan
Refugee crisis – September 2023



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Executive Summary

In response to the escalating refugee crisis in Armenia in 2023, Acted's MEAL team with Goris Press Club (GPC), promptly adapted and deployed a standardized rapid needs assessment (RNA) tool. The RNA provided a rapid comprehensive understanding of the immediate needs of the displaced people, incorporating local perspectives and market dynamics. The insights garnered are crucial for Acted to formulate targeted and effective aid distribution strategies aligned with the specific needs of the displaced families. By integrating local perspectives and market dynamics into their assessment, Acted ensures a detailed and contextually relevant approach to aid distribution.

Conducted from October 6 to November 8, 2023, the assessment covered displaced and host households situated in the Syunik region and capital Yerevan. Additionally, it involved key informant interviews (KII) with local authorities and representatives of markets across various communities throughout Armenia.

Key Components of the rapid assessment:

Household Surveys: The RNA utilized a purposive snowball sampling approach, engaging with 253 households. Notably, 158 interviews were conducted with displaced households (90 in Syunik, 68 in Yerevan), and 95 interviews with hosting households (69 in Syunik, 26 in Yerevan).

Key informant interviews (KIIs) with markets representatives: Valuable perspectives were gathered through key informant interviews with 15 market representatives from diverse communities across all regions of Armenia (excluding Yerevan). This approach aimed to comprehend market dynamics, ascertain supply, and demand trends, and assess collaboration with humanitarian organizations.

Key Informant Interviews with local authorities: A total of 20 KIIs were conducted with representatives from local authorities, providing nuanced insights into the refugee crisis. This process facilitated a deeper understanding and validation of findings from the household surveys. The KIIs involved representatives from social and development departments of LA offices in 20 distinct communities, covering 10 regions of Armenia (excluding Yerevan).

Ethical Considerations:

Training and informed consent: Enumerators underwent comprehensive training on ethical interviewing practices, emphasizing the "Do No Harm" approach. Prior to each survey, informed consents were obtained from respondents.

Limitations Acknowledged:

Sampling Method Limitation: The use of snowball sampling was acknowledged as a limitation, recognizing its potential impact on the representativeness of the data collected.

Challenges in Reaching Host Families: Difficulties in reaching and identifying representatives of host families in Yerevan posed challenges, primarily due to reluctance to participate in the survey by the

host families. Consequently, difficulties were encountered in reaching the initially targeted 68 households in Yerevan.

Key Findings on the displaced Households

The initial assessment of displaced households from Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023 provides a comprehensive understanding of the demographic, socio-economic, living conditions and displacement trends of the surveyed individuals. Here are the key executive findings:

Demographic Profile of the surveyed respondent: The average size of the surveyed displaced households is 4.6 persons, with an average respondent age of 42 years. An overwhelming 86% of surveyed individuals are women, and 48% hold the position of the head of household. Education levels vary, with 42% having higher education, and 35% of heads of households are currently unemployed.

Vulnerability: The assessment reveals a complex landscape of vulnerabilities among the displaced families from Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023. While 26% of households claim an absence of defined vulnerabilities, the remaining majority faces various challenges. 23% of households have members with chronic physical illnesses. While 22% report non-conflict-related disabilities, 17% of households are affected by conflict-related disabilities, and 9% include pregnant or nursing mothers.

Place of Origin and Internal Displacement prior to this crisis: Displaced families come from diverse regions within Nagorno-Karabakh, with Stepanakert being the largest group at 49%. Approximately 48% experienced internal displacement within Nagorno-Karabakh before settling in their present locations, mostly during the previous military conflicts.

Top Priority Needs: Housing, household items, and clothing are identified as the top priority needs for displaced families. 71% state their households can fulfill only a few of their basic needs, emphasizing the urgent need for comprehensive humanitarian support.

Living Arrangements: Displaced individuals vary in living arrangements, with 42% in rented apartments and 18% staying with friends or relatives. A notable proportion have experienced staying with host families (15-16%), while a smaller percentage is in shared accommodation (12%). Those who resided in Yerevan predominantly stay in rented apartments (77%). However, unlike Yerevan, a substantial 26% of those displaced to Syunik have found accommodation with host families. 46% are highly satisfied with the safety and dignity of their accommodation.

Movement Intentions: 61% express uncertainty about the intended duration of stay in temporary locations. The lack of adequate living space (35%), financial constraints (30%), and the need to organize livelihood (27%) are key factors influencing decisions to move. The majority of displaced respondents currently located in Yerevan showed uncertainty or no clear preference regarding future displacement. 6% of displaced people located in Yerevan had decided to move to the Kotayk region, and a smaller percentage (4%) chose Gegharkunik as their place of settlement. The decision to move from the capital to the regions may be influenced by high accommodation renting fees in Yerevan. However, it's noteworthy that the selected regions are close to Yerevan, suggesting that refugees may seek solutions to rent accommodations in regions while exploring employment opportunities in the capital, where job prospects are presumably more abundant. A substantial portion (27%) of the displaced people located in Syunik expressed a strong inclination to move to Kotayk. An equal percentage (27%) remained uncertain about their future destination.

Key findings on the Host Families

Dwelling conditions of the host families: The research findings indicate a notable contrast in housing ownership between Yerevan and Syunik hosts. While a majority (60%) of Yerevan hosting families reported that they own their residences, another significant proportion of them (40%) are renting their homes. What's striking is that a substantial portion of those host families renting in Yerevan are representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh, displaced after the 44-day war and have not returned. Many of these families are now hosting relatives and friends who arrived in 2023.

Host Family Financial Capabilities: A noteworthy disparity surfaced when comparing income sources between Yerevan and Syunik. In Yerevan, a significant 84% of respondents depend on salary, almost double than in Syunik (46%). This stark contrast indicates a robust presence of formal employment in the capital city, with a substantial portion of individuals securing income through regular employment. Furthermore, considering the average monthly household income, excluding pensions, benefits, and social assistance, stands at around 234,344 AMD (197,378 AMD for Syunik region and 238,500 AMD for Yerevan), it further accentuates the economic variations between the two regions. Approximately 49% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, stating that their current household income is insufficient to meet essential needs, including housing, food, education, and health. 49% of host families acknowledge the presence of debt, with an average reported debt amount of 3,949,521 AMD.

Host family's priority needs to continue supporting the displaced households. Host families exhibit generosity, with 67% willing to host displaced families for as long as needed. The survey highlights that the primary concerns for host families are centered around lack of financial resources (83%), food (58%) and household items (43%), underscoring the importance of addressing these key needs through facilitating continued support for displaced families.

Management of Household Expenditure: In 44% of households, both male and female members collaborate on financial matters, while 32% of households have women as the primary decision-makers.

Initial Findings of Key Informant Interviews with Local Authorities

Displacement Trends and Social Dynamics: The displacement trends outlined in the interviews underscore the complexity of the crisis, with reasons for relocation ranging from space constraints and economic opportunities to security concerns and a desire for familial reunification.

Most of KIs cited insufficient living space as a key factor prompting the departure of the displaced families. This suggests that overcrowding or limited residential capacity, suboptimal living conditions played a role in the decision to relocate. Some individuals departed due to a perceived lack of employment and economic opportunities within the community. According to LAs a noteworthy portion left the community due to concerns related to security and willingness to reunion with relatives and friends, possibly separated due to the crisis. Adverse weather conditions, particularly the harshness of winter climates in some communities, have influenced individuals to seek more favorable weather elsewhere.

Urgent Needs and Vulnerabilities: According to the KIs, among the immediate necessities of the displaced households are household items, bedding, and clothing. Key informants emphasize that a significant percentage of displaced individuals expressed an urgent need for accommodation.

Availability of identification documents: Key informants report that a significant portion of displaced individuals currently lack identification documents. A notable number of displaced individuals intentionally burned their identification documents, driven by a fear of being identified by Azerbaijani forces at the Lachin corridor checkpoint. This fear is particularly prevalent among those who served in the military forces in Nagorno-Karabakh. The intentional destruction of documents is perceived as a protective measure against potential risks associated with identification. Another contributing factor to the loss of identification documents is the explosion incident at a filling station in Berkadzor near Stepanakert, that happened on 25 September 2023. Some displaced individuals lost their documents during this accident, adding an unintended dimension to the challenges faced by the affected population.

Community Willingness and Integration Challenges: The willingness of communities to host displaced families is obvious, but financial constraints emerge as a significant challenge. The local authorities express the need for financial resources to address various aspects of integration, including accommodation, essential services, and community engagement.

Registration Processes and Coordination Efforts: The streamlined and predominantly digital registration process presents a promising start, yet reservations about its effectiveness underline the need for continuous improvement. Some key informants have expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the unified system of registration of the displaced people. They suggest a need for further improvement and better coordination among key stakeholders involved in addressing the refugee crisis.

Government Support and Infrastructure Gaps: Despite the efforts deployed by the Armenian government in providing financial assistance, the absence of a formalized state strategy document suggests a need for a more comprehensive approach. The availability of basic infrastructure in communities is positive, although the absence of central heating points could negatively affect the living conditions of the displaced people.

Livelihood Opportunities and Economic Integration: Agriculture, sale, mining, construction works, and external work emerge as key contributors to livelihoods. The lack of substantial productive assets among displaced individuals signals the importance of targeted economic support for successful integration.

Humanitarian Support and Collaborative Future Strategies: Key informants stress the importance of cash support, mental health services, legal aid, bedding, winterization, and household items. The consensus on the need for enhanced coordination, joint assessments, and a comprehensive strategy reflects a shared vision among local authorities for a more effective, cohesive, and sustainable approach to supporting displaced individuals.

Key findings of the market assessment

Supermarket Perspectives on MPV Programs: The significant awareness among local businesses regarding Multi-Purpose Voucher assistance demonstrates a positive trend in recognizing and supporting humanitarian initiatives. However, the presence of a small percentage unaware of MPV assistance signals the need for targeted communication strategies.

Humanitarian Organization Collaborations: The active engagement of supermarkets with organizations like Acted, Action Against Hunger and People in Need signifies a positive trend in

fostering collaborations. This growing partnership aims to facilitate the acceptance of vouchers, replacing traditional cash transactions and streamlining aid distribution processes.

Payment Systems Landscape: The comprehensive range of payment systems offered by supermarkets, including credit cards, cumulative cards, and discount cards, reflects a customer-centric approach. Supermarkets' commitment to providing diverse payment options aligns with modern customer preferences and opens avenues for attracting new customers with varied payment preferences. The conversion of one-time use into cumulative cards establishes a lasting customer relationship, emphasizing the potential long-term benefits.

Market Supply and Demand: Supermarkets in Armenia report an availability of array of diverse commodities, ensuring the availability of essential goods and winterization products for displaced populations. The acknowledgment of taxation-related challenges underscores supermarkets' commitment to legality and transparency in operations. The overall stability in prices, despite the flow of displaced people, showcases the resilience and adaptability of supermarkets in meeting market needs. Pricing fluctuations were linked to the exchange rate of the dollar mostly. Supermarkets' proactive strategies, such as managing panic-induced demand spikes, contribute to maintaining stable pricing dynamics.

Rapid needs assessment – situation overview

Following the onset of refugee crisis on September 2023, Acted's Emergency Response unit in Armenia deployed a data collection team to conduct a Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA). The RNA was designed to help Acted's teams understand the immediate impact of the crisis on affected populations and provide an initial snapshot of the priority needs on the ground of the displaced families. Based on these findings, Acted aims to identify the most relevant and effective assistance modalities for the first phase of the response.

On the 12th of December 2022, the Azerbaijani government initiated a blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh, an area disputed between Azerbaijan and Armenia. This was executed through the deployment of individuals posing as eco-activists to obstruct the Lachin corridor, a vital humanitarian route connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and the broader world. They also obstructed bypass routes and established military checkpoints. In addition to these actions, Azerbaijan targeted the crucial civilian infrastructure of Nagorno-Karabakh, causing severe disruptions in the supply of gas, electricity, and internet services. The consequences of this blockade have resulted in a humanitarian crisis for the population of Nagorno-Karabakh. Widespread shortages of essential resources, such as electricity, fuel, and healthcare services, have forced the rationing of emergency reserves. This crisis has also led to unemployment, the closure of schools, and the cessation of public transportation services¹.

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/02/azerbaijan-blockade-of-lachin-corridor-putting-thousands-of-lives-in-peril-must-be-immediately-lifted/>

In a subsequent development, between the 19th and 20th of September 2023, Azerbaijan launched a large-scale military offensive against Nagorno-Karabakh, which resulted in a massive influx of Armenians from the region into Armenia. As of 1 October, 100 514 refugees, including as estimated 30000 children had arrived in Armenia²

Methodology

The objective of the rapid need assessment

The objective of the RNA was to provide an initial snapshot of the most pressing needs of the displaced population, and to support Acted in designing the most relevant and feasible first and second-phase response plan. Using the adapted RNA tool, the project team carried out in person primary data collection via Household surveys among displaced and host families. Beyond that, recognizing the importance of local perspectives and market dynamics, Key Informant Interviews were incorporated with representatives from supermarkets and local authorities across all regions.

Data collection process

Household assessment was held with the representatives of host and displaced families of Syunik region and capital Yerevan. During the planning of this assessment, the data on displaced individuals and host families were not publicly available. Therefore, households were selected using a purposive snowball sampling approach. The sampling framework relied on population available in the targeted communities. The data collection sample and the resulting findings should therefore be considered as indicative, and not representative.

The assessment took place from October 6 to November 8, 2023, encompassing the Syunik region and capital Yerevan (refer to Table 1). A total of 253 interviews were conducted. Among these, 158 interviews were conducted with representatives of displaced households—90 in Syunik and 68 in Yerevan, respectively. The remaining 95 interviews were carried out with hosting households, including 69 in Syunik and 26 in Yerevan. The collected data was meticulously categorized and analyzed, with a focus on these two distinct population groups there it was appropriate. This assessment was conducted in collaboration with the Goris Press Club NGO.

² <https://www.unicef.org/media/145806/file/Armenia-Humanitarian-SitRep-No.1-02-October-2023.pdf>

Table 1 Distribution of surveyed population per communities

Community	Displaced	Host
Goris	23	29
Halidzor	16	6
Qarashen	8	2
Khndzoresk		1
Kornidzor	10	3
Shinuhayr	21	8
Tegh	8	6
Verishen		14
Yerevan	68	26

The key informants' interviews with local authorities aimed to glean deeper insights into various dimensions of the refugee crisis and assess the current state of conditions faced by the affected communities and triangulate the key findings of the household survey. **A total of 20 key informants' interviews**, were conducted with the representatives of the local authorities of different communities of 10 regions of Armenia (excluding Yerevan), covering two interviews per each community. The selection of the KIs representing LA were conducted based on their awareness of the issues of the displaced people, their availability and willingness to participate in the interview.

The market assessment component of our study was designed to indicate the distinctive characteristics of each region's markets. We sought to gain insights into the array of services and commodities available, market supply and demand dynamics, understand pricing trends, and evaluate the extent of collaboration with humanitarian organizations. This comprehensive approach aimed to inform the development of targeted aid distribution strategies aligned with the specific needs of each community. 15 supermarkets were chosen across ten regions in Armenia for the key informants' interviews. Regions, including Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Lori, and Kotayk, were represented by one interview, while two interviews were conducted in Syunik, Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor, and Shirak. The markets selection process was guided by an available list of markets and their willingness to engage in the survey.

Data collection tool

Our data collection process employed a semi-structured questionnaire encompassing both open-ended and multi-choice questions. For household survey, the primary data collection was conducted only by using the Kobo Toolbox. For KIIs blended approach was used by using Kobo toolbox to collect responses for multi-choice questions and initiating online face to face meetings for in-depth insights, ensuring a dynamic and interactive exploration of extended questions. This hybrid approach facilitated a nuanced understanding of the market dynamics and stakeholders' perspectives, enriching the overall data collection process.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to collecting data, enumerators were informed about the survey's objectives and received training on ethical interviewing practices, including the "Do No Harm" approach. Enumerators' training took place both online and offline. Before each survey, enumerators obtained informed consent from the respondents. It's important to note that no underage individuals were included in this assessment.

Limitations

The primary constraint of this assessment lies in the utilization of the snowball sampling method for the survey, which did not guarantee the representativeness of the data collected. Additionally, encountering difficulties in reaching and identifying representatives of host families in the Yerevan region posed a challenge in conducting the initially planned number of interviews. This was primarily attributed to their reluctance to participate in the survey.

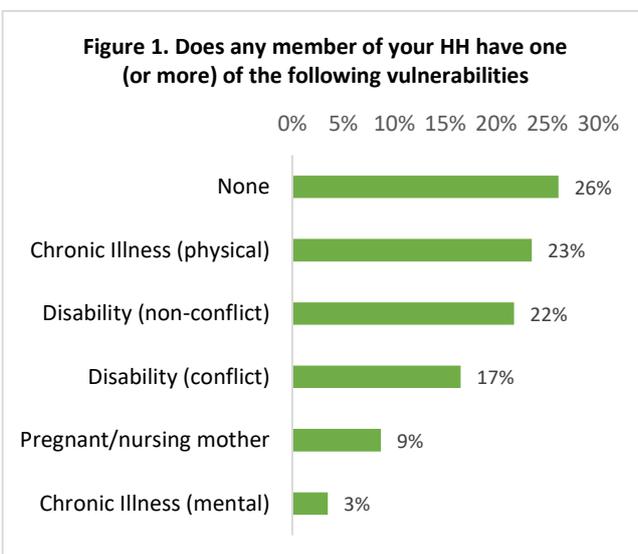
Findings about the displaced households

Demographic findings

Demographic profile of the surveyed respondents

Thus, overall, 158 of displaced households were reached out for the assessment. According to data, the average size of the surveyed displaced HH was 4.6 persons. The average age of the surveyed respondents was 42 years. Remarkably, 86% of the surveyed individuals were women. Furthermore, 48% of those surveyed held the position of head of household. Many heads of households (42%) have higher education. Another significant proportion of respondents (41%) have completed secondary education. A significant portion of respondents indicate that the Head of Household is currently unemployed (35%).

Vulnerability

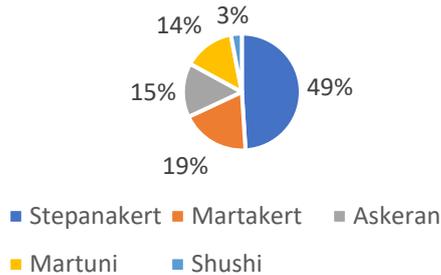


The assessment reveals a complex landscape of vulnerabilities among the displaced families from Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023. While 26% of households claim an absence of defined vulnerabilities, the remaining majority faces various challenges. Notably, 23% of households have members grappling with chronic physical illnesses, while 22% report the presence of non-conflict-related disabilities. Additionally, 17% of households have members affected by conflict-related disabilities, highlighting the multifaceted nature of the issues faced. Furthermore, 9%

of households include pregnant or nursing mothers, underscoring the diverse range of vulnerabilities within the displaced population.

The place of origin and internal displacement trends prior crisis

Figure 2. Please indicate the province of your origin

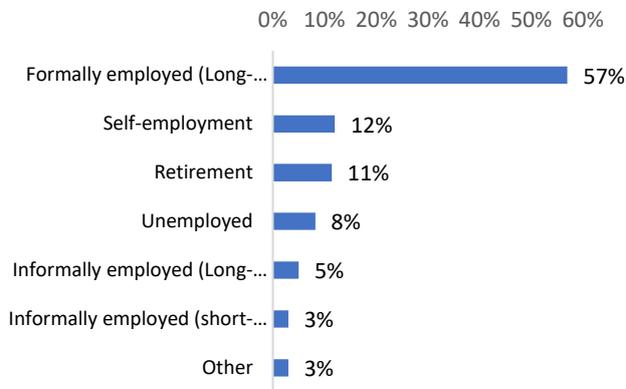


The displaced families in 2023 came from diverse regions within Nagorno-Karabakh, with Stepanakert representing the largest group at 49% in this sample. Other significant origins include Martakert (19%), Askeran (15%) and Martuni (14%). Approximately 48% of the surveyed households underwent displacement within Nagorno-Karabakh before establishing themselves in their present locations, underscoring a prominent trend of internal displacement stemming from past military conflicts over the 30-year history of the region. Conversely, just over half of the respondents

(52%) reported no prior displacement within Nagorno-Karabakh, indicating a varied migration history among the displaced population.

Employment and income in Nagorno-Karabakh

Figure 3. What were you doing in NK?



The data on employment and income opportunities before displacement in Nagorno-Karabakh highlights a diverse landscape. A substantial majority, at 57%, were formally employed for over three months, indicating a significant level of formal labor market engagement. Notably, 12% were self-employed, suggesting a level of entrepreneurial activity among the displaced population. Additionally, 11% reported retired while being in Nagorno-Karabakh, reflecting a segment of the population with fixed incomes. This nuanced employment landscape illustrates the varied economic backgrounds and experiences of the displaced

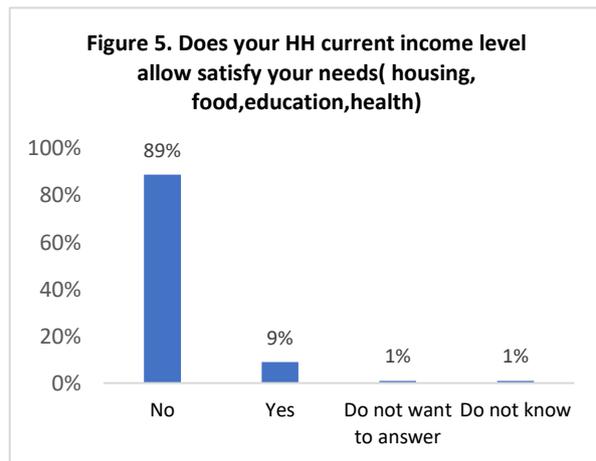
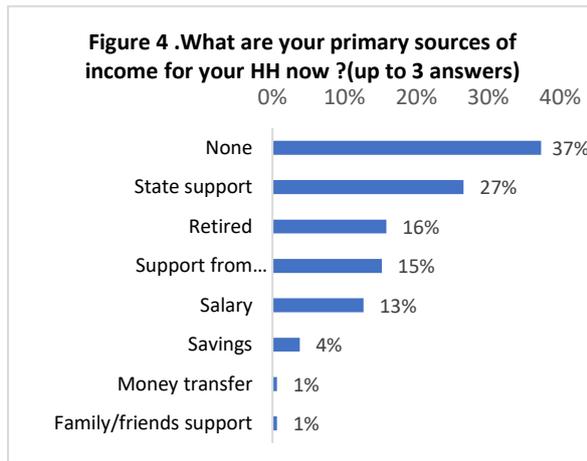
individuals before their relocation.

Main findings

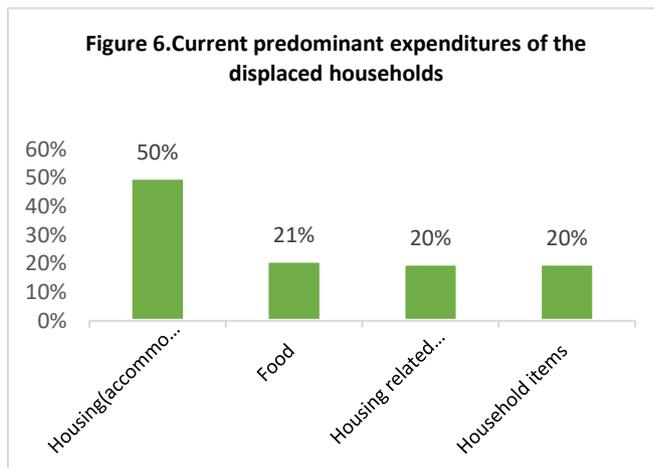
The post-displacement financial landscape

The post-displacement financial landscape for surveyed families from Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023 is characterized by intricacies and obstacles, necessitating a comprehensive examination of their economic circumstances. A substantial 37% of respondents report having no identifiable income source, emphasizing the economic vulnerability of a significant portion of the displaced population. Notably, 27% rely on state support as their primary income source, highlighting the crucial role of government assistance in sustaining households. Retirement funds also play a significant role, with 16% depending on pensions or retirement. Further exploration into the average income of

households unveils disparities, with those displaced located currently in Yerevan having nearly twice the average income compared to those who stayed in Syunik. However, irrespective of location, respondents express a burden of debt, with an average indebtedness of 876,923.1 AMD. Despite these income sources, only a small 9% of respondents believe their current income is adequate to meet essential needs like housing, food, education, and health. The findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive support and interventions to address the multifaceted financial struggles experienced by the displaced families.



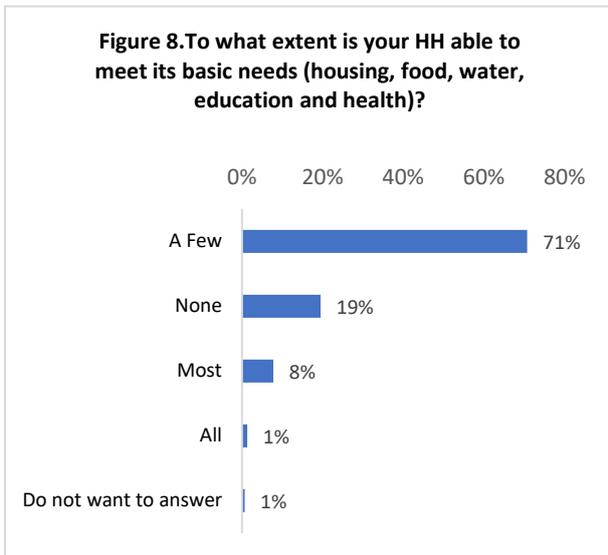
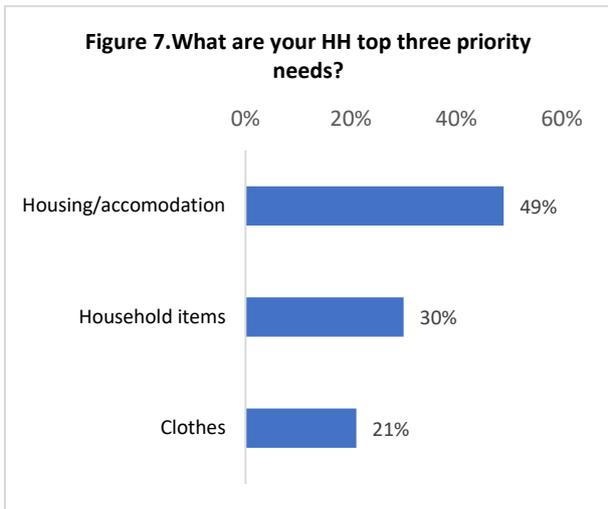
Current predominant expenditure



To get a full picture on the income, debts and expenses of the displaced households, the survey also indicated the types of the predominant expenditure the displaced people have after the displacement. This rating approach sheds light on the distinctive financial priorities of displaced individuals, emphasizing the critical nature of housing-related expenditures, followed by essential needs such as food, housing related utilities and household items. The data on household expenditure management among displaced families from Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023

reveals a noteworthy trend of collaborative decision-making. A substantial 45% of respondents indicate that household expenditures are jointly managed, with both men and women actively sharing responsibilities in financial decision-making. This cooperative model suggests a recognition of the diverse perspectives and contributions of both genders in the context of managing household finances. Additionally, the finding that an equal proportion of respondents (27%) report either men or women leading the expenditure management underscores a balanced representation in household financial decision-making.

Top priority needs

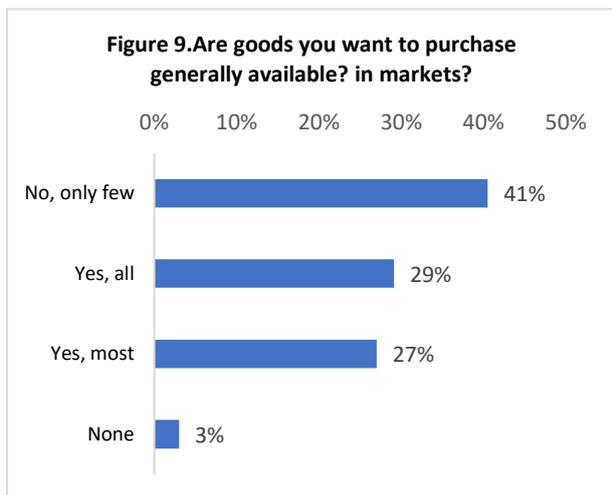


The top priority needs identified by displaced families from Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023 emphasize the urgency of addressing fundamental aspects for their well-being. Housing emerges as the most critical need, highlighting the significant demand for secure and stable living arrangements. This underscores the immediate requirement for suitable shelter, whether temporary or permanent, to facilitate the rebuilding of lives disrupted by displacement. The second priority need, household items, encompasses essential elements for daily living, including furniture and kitchenware. Addressing this need is crucial for establishing a functional and comfortable living environment, contributing to the overall resilience and recovery of displaced individuals and families. Clothing is identified as the third priority need. Recognizing and addressing these top priority needs—housing, household items, and clothing—is paramount for the well-being and recovery of the displaced population. The survey data further reveals a concerning picture of households struggling to meet basic needs, with a significant majority (71%) stating that their households can fulfill only a few of their basic needs. Notably, 19% of respondents report that their households are unable to meet any of their basic needs, highlighting the severe challenges faced by a substantial portion of the displaced population. Only a small percentage (8%) assert

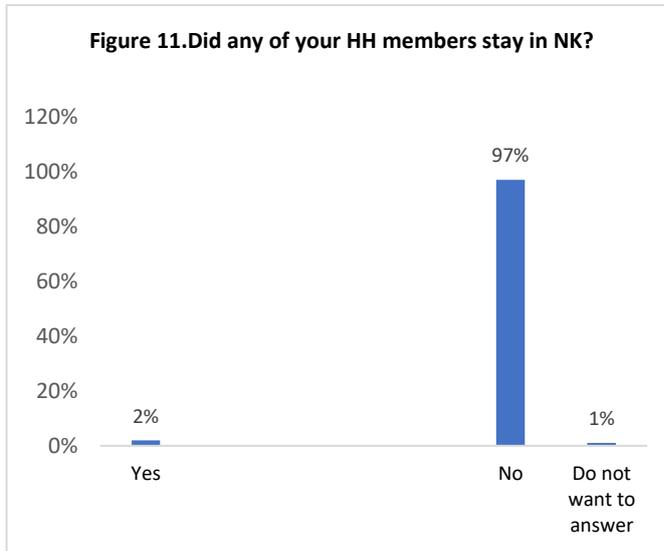
that their households can meet most of their basic needs, and a mere 1% indicate full satisfaction of all their basic needs. This information underscores the pressing need for comprehensive humanitarian support to address the multifaceted challenges and vulnerabilities experienced by displaced families in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Availability and affordability of goods to purchase

Further statistics depict the diverse experiences and challenges faced by displaced individuals in accessing essential goods in the market. According to the findings, when asked about the general availability of goods they intend to purchase, 41% of respondents reported that only a few of the desired items are available in the markets. A noteworthy 29% find all the goods they want to purchase readily available, indicating a relatively favorable situation. Additionally, 27% of respondents mention that most of the goods they want are generally available, albeit with some exceptions. On the contrary, 3% state that none of the goods they wish to purchase are available in the markets, suggesting that these items are relatively rare or entirely unavailable. Meanwhile, when asked if they can afford to purchase these goods A significant majority of respondents (70%) report that they can only afford a few of the goods they want, indicating limited affordability and (23%) state that they cannot afford any of the goods they desire, suggesting significant financial constraints., only a very small percentage of respondents (6%) indicate that they can afford to purchase most of the goods they desire and only (1%) can afford all the goods they want, suggesting relatively good affordability, but there may be some exceptions.



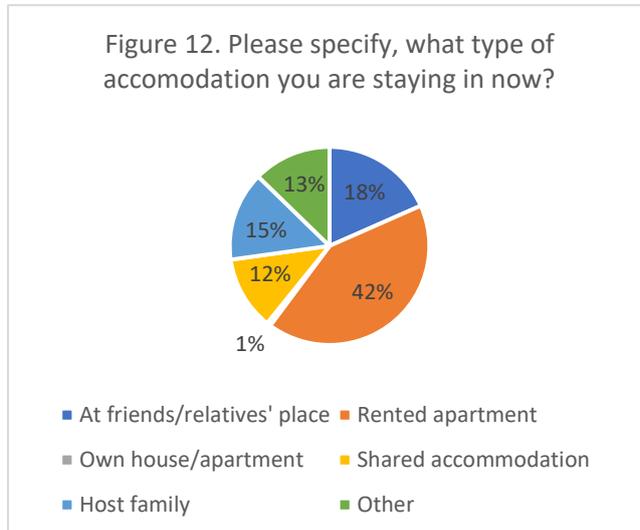
Displacement trends



The overwhelming majority of respondents, accounting for 97%, reported that none of their household members chose to stay in Nagorno-Karabakh. This indicates that the overwhelming majority have left the region. Only a very small minority of respondents (2%) indicated that some of their household members stayed in Nagorno-Karabakh. The data also indicates that a significant majority of the respondents, comprising approximately 78%, currently possess all their essential identification documents, including passports, ID cards, and birth certificates. However, there is a notable segment, around 22% of displaced individuals, who are without one or more of

these crucial documents. This discrepancy in possession of identification documents could potentially pose additional challenges for their adaptation to the new location. The absence of identification documents may contribute to a sense of vulnerability and exclusion, making it more difficult for these individuals to integrate into their new environment.

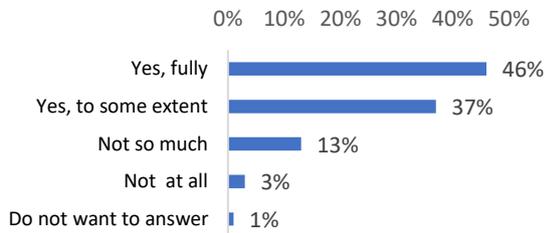
Living arrangements of the displaced households



The living arrangements of displaced individuals vary considerably, with a substantial portion residing in rented apartments (42%) and others staying at friends' or relatives' homes (18%). A notable proportion have experienced staying with host families (15-16%), while a smaller percentage is in shared accommodation (12%). Interestingly, a minimal 1% has their own apartment to stay in. An interesting trend was noted between the displaced from Yerevan and Syunik. Those who resided in Yerevan predominantly stay in rented apartments (77%), unlike Yerevan, a substantial 26% of those displaced to Syunik have found accommodation with host

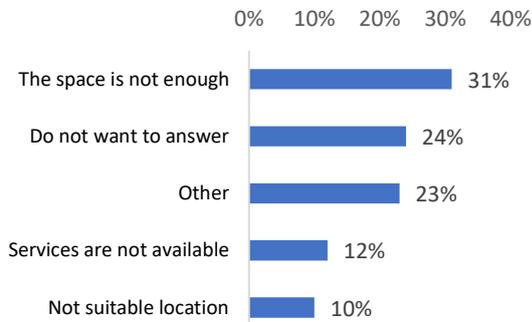
families. Almost the equal proportions of HH in Yerevan and Syunik opt to stay either with friends and relatives (17% and 20% respectively), only 4% of respondents in Yerevan stayed in shared accommodation, meanwhile in Syunik region, the proportion of respondents resided in the shared accommodation constituted almost one fifth of the respondents.

Figure 13. Based on your first impression, do you feel as though the accommodation at [location] is safe and dignified?



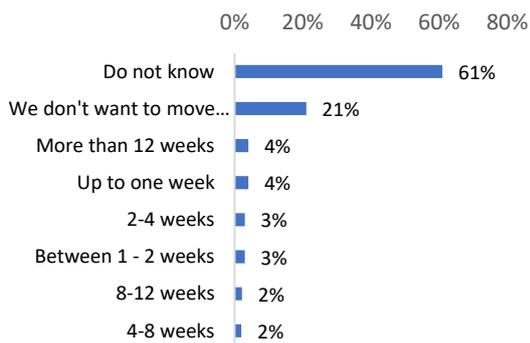
The findings also provide an understanding of the varying degrees of satisfaction among refugees regarding the conditions of their living arrangements. Most refugees, around 46%, are highly satisfied with the safety and dignity of their current accommodations. Another significant portion, 37%, acknowledges positive aspects of their accommodation, albeit not to the same extent as the first group. A smaller segment, 13.9%, holds a less favorable view, and approximately 3% are not satisfied with their accommodation at all. A very small percentage, 1%, chose not to disclose their opinion. Those who considered the space they are living in are not safe and dignified express dissatisfaction with the lack space in their current accommodations. Another concern voiced was pertaining to the lack of essential services such as electricity and water. A notable but smaller percentage find the location of their current residence is not suitable. This may indicate issues related to safety, accessibility, or other factors that render the current location less than ideal for the refugees.

Figure 14. If not, why?



Movement intentions

Figure 15. How long is your HH intending to stay at this location?



In terms of the intended duration of stay in the temporary location, most respondents (61%) expressed uncertainty about their intended duration of stay. This prevailing uncertainty suggests a fluid and uncertain environment, possibly influenced by external factors such as unresolved displacement issues, lack of clarity on future plans, or challenges in securing stable living arrangements. A substantial percentage (21%) expressed the desire to remain in their current location without intending to move further. This sentiment may be driven by factors such as finding a secure and supportive community, access to essential services, or other elements contributing to

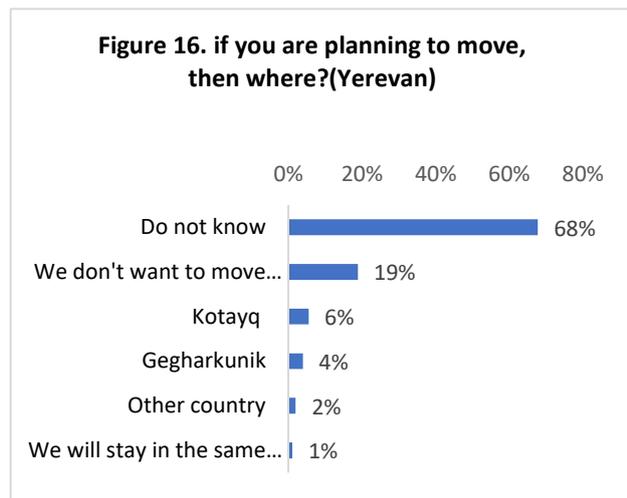
a sense of home and belonging.

Internal movements in the post-displacement period

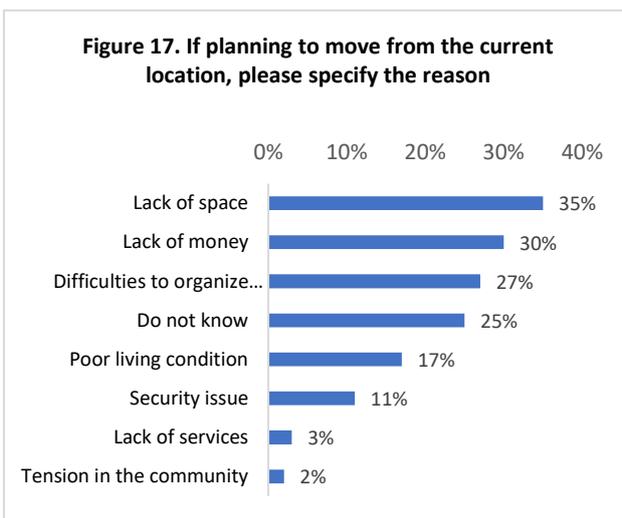
The data also provides valuable insights into the internal mobility preferences of displaced individuals, shedding light on their intended destinations and factors influencing their decisions. Notably, when respondents from Syunik were questioned about their intended destinations, a substantial portion (27%) expressed a strong inclination to move to Kotayk. This preference for Kotayk could be attributed to its proximity to the capital city while offering lower rental prices than Yerevan. Thus, offering

perceived higher economic opportunities, better infrastructure, and greater access to essential services at a more affordable price. An equal percentage (27%) remained uncertain about their future destination. Another significant proportion of the respondents planned to move to the capital city, or intended to stay in their current location, or considering relocation to another country, possibly driven by factors such as better economic opportunities, political stability, or reuniting with family members residing abroad.

Most displaced respondents currently located in Yerevan (68%), showed uncertainty or no clear preference regarding future displacement. Approximately 19% expressed a desire to stay in their current location, indicating potential satisfaction with factors such as community support, job prospects, or established personal connections. On the contrary, 6% had decided to move to the Kotayk region, and a smaller percentage (4%) chose Gegharkunik as their place of settlement. The decision to move from the capital to the regions may be influenced by high accommodation renting fees in Yerevan. However, it's noteworthy that the selected regions are close to Yerevan, suggesting that refugees may seek solutions to rent accommodations in regions while exploring employment opportunities in the capital, where job prospects are presumably more abundant.



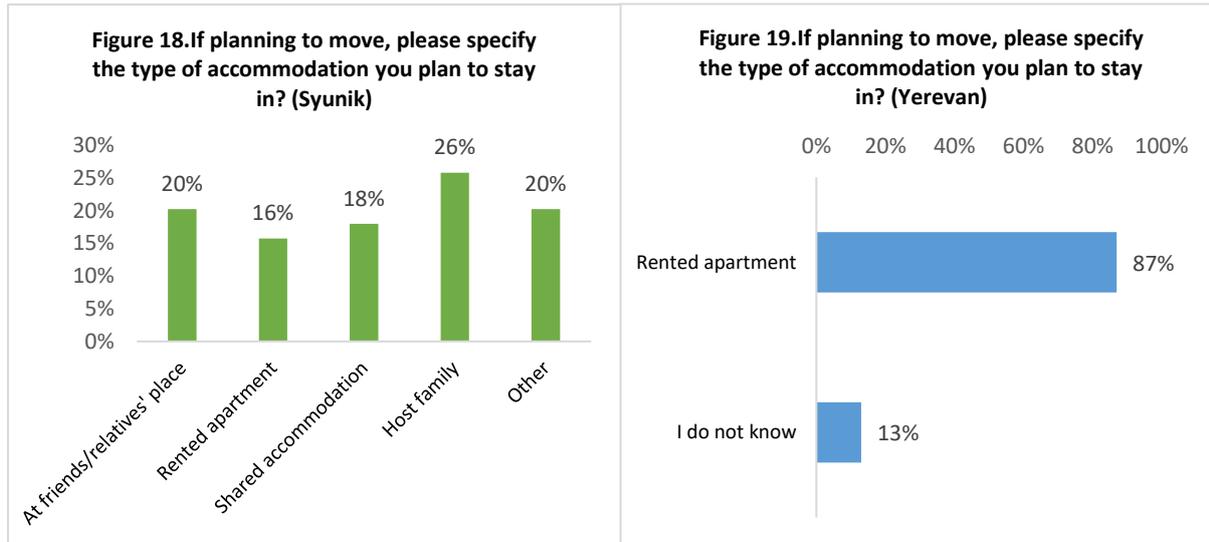
The relocation reasons



The data also reveals a range of complex and interconnected factors influencing the decision to move among displaced individuals, emphasizing the critical importance of addressing issues related to space, finances, livelihood, and overall living conditions to support the well-being and stability of these populations. The most prevalent reason cited for considering a move is the lack of adequate living space, with 35% of respondents expressing this as a primary concern. This underscores the critical need for suitable and sufficient housing to accommodate displaced individuals and families, highlighting the impact of spatial constraints on their well-being.

Financial constraints emerge as a significant driver for considering a move, with 30% of respondents citing a lack of funds. This indicates the direct correlation between financial stability and the ability to sustain a living situation, underscoring the challenges faced by displaced households in managing their economic resources. The need to organize our livelihood is a substantial factor influencing the decision to move, as reported by 27% of respondents. This suggests the importance of employment opportunities and income-generating activities in shaping the decision-making process for displaced individuals seeking more stable and sustainable living arrangements.

When asked about the respondents' intended accommodation choices when they are in the process of moving, respondents from Syunik exhibit a diverse range of accommodation preferences during the moving process. A notable portion is inclined towards staying with a host family or friends and family members, while others are considering rented apartments for shared living arrangements. A significant number expressed interest in shared accommodation, potentially to split costs. Meanwhile, respondents in Yerevan overwhelmingly favor staying in rented apartments during a move.

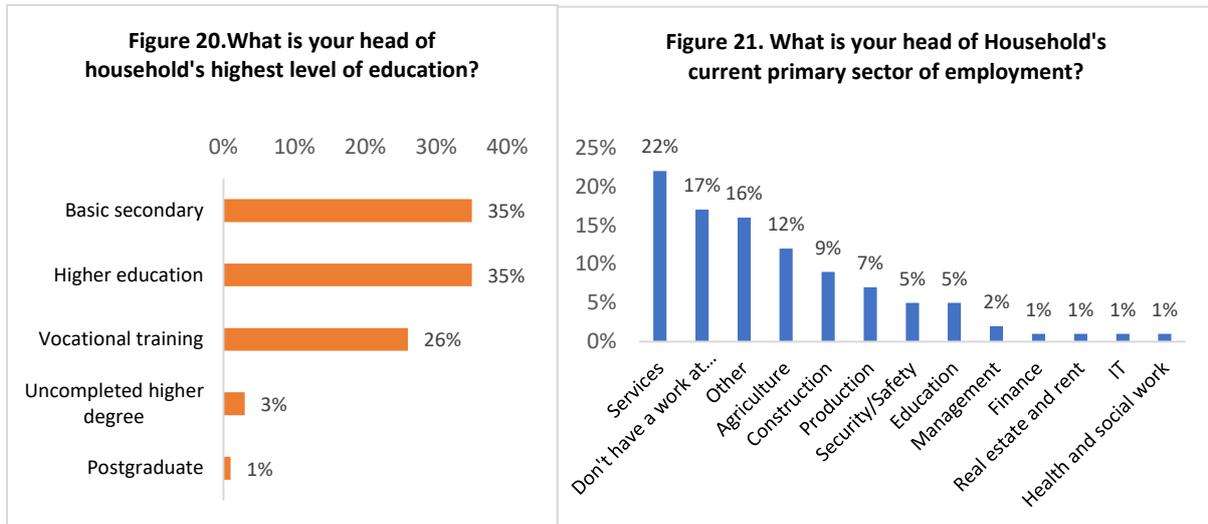


Findings of the assessment about the host families

Demographic findings

Demographic profile of the host family

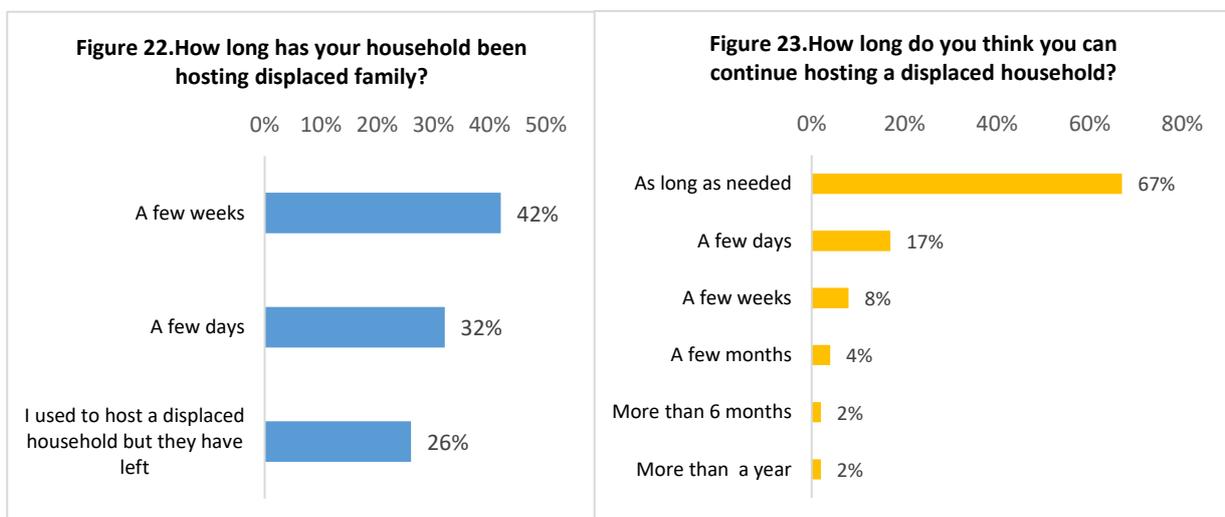
The average age of the surveyed host family representatives is approximately 48 years old. Around 58% of these host families are headed by the surveyed respondents and a majority of them (81%) are female. A substantial portion of the surveyed households (35%) are led by individuals who have attained a higher education level. Approximately one-fifth of the surveyed household heads are unemployed (17%). The remaining respondents are engaged in various employment sectors, including services (22%), agriculture (12%), and others.



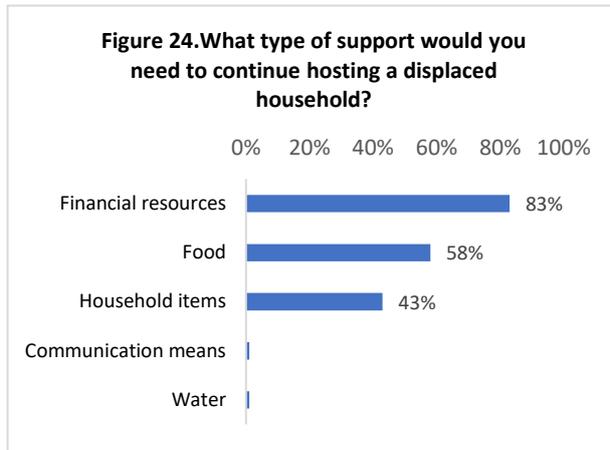
Main findings

Duration of hosting the displaced family

The data from the rapid assessment report focuses on the hosting duration for displaced families, revealing the generosity and willingness of respondents to offer support. Notably, 42% have extended their hospitality for a few weeks, while 32% have provided shelter for a few days. Additionally, 26% reported that previously hosted displaced households have now left. The remarkable finding is that 67% of respondents express a strong commitment to hosting displaced families for as long as needed, showcasing a significant readiness for long-term support. In contrast, approximately 17% are willing to host for a few days, 8% for a few weeks, and 6% are prepared to host from a few months to more than a year. Overall, the majority's readiness for sustained assistance highlights a commitment to aiding displaced households in their time of need.



Host family's priority needs to continue supporting the displaced households

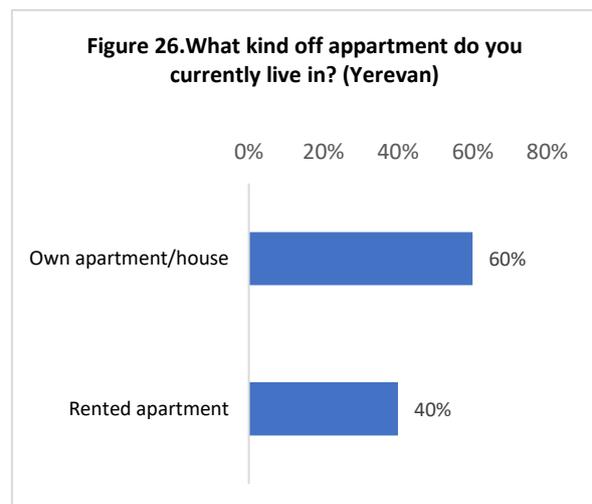
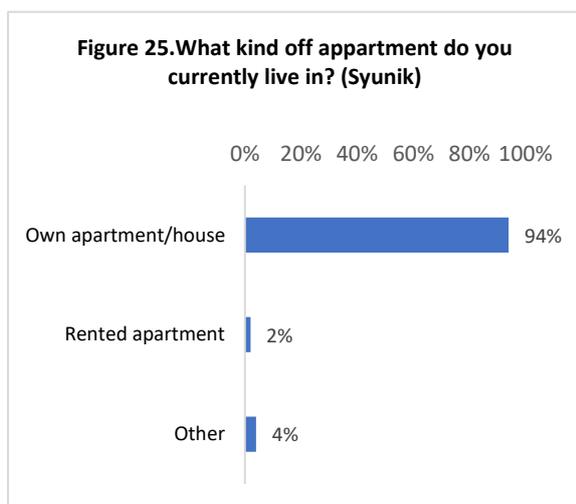


The survey also highlights that the primary concerns for host families are centered around lack of financial resources, food and household items, underscoring the importance of addressing these key needs through facilitating continued support for displaced families. Thus, an overwhelming majority, approximately 83% of representatives of the host families in Syunik and Yerevan, emphasized the crucial need for additional financial resources. More than half of the respondents (58%) expressed a requirement for food support, while a significant one-third (43%) indicated the

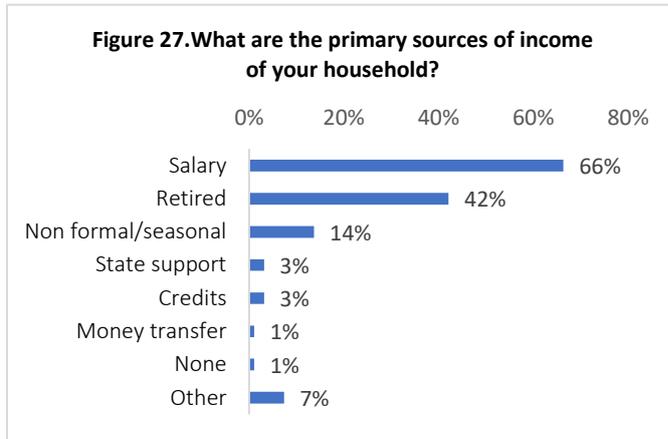
necessity of household items.

Dwelling conditions of the host families

Understanding the housing dynamics is crucial for policymakers and support organizations. The research findings indicate a notable contrast in housing ownership between Yerevan and Syunik hosts. While 60% of Yerevan hosting families reported that they own their residences, a significant proportion of hosts in Yerevan (40%) are renting their homes. What's striking is that a substantial portion of those host families renting in Yerevan are representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh, having been displaced after the 44-day war in 2020. Many of these families are now hosting relatives and friends who arrived in 2023. A much higher percentage, 94%, of Syunik host families host displaced families in their own apartments. The overwhelming majority, 54% indicated that their apartments offer necessary level of living conditions only partially. 40% of respondents expressed complete satisfaction, reporting that their apartments fully meet the necessary living conditions, It is worth noting that a smaller 5% of respondents reported that their apartments did not meet the necessary living conditions at all.

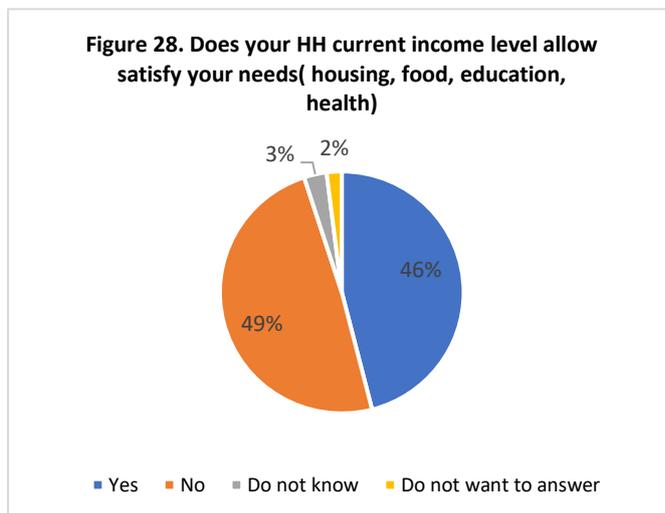


Host family's financial capabilities



The survey aimed to identify the primary sources of income for respondents, shedding light on the economic dynamics within host families. The findings revealed diverse income streams, showcasing the financial landscape in both Yerevan and the Syunik regions. Initially, 66% of respondents indicated salary as their primary income source, underscoring the significance of formal employment. Retirement emerged as a substantial income source, constituting 42% of respondents, highlighting the prevalence

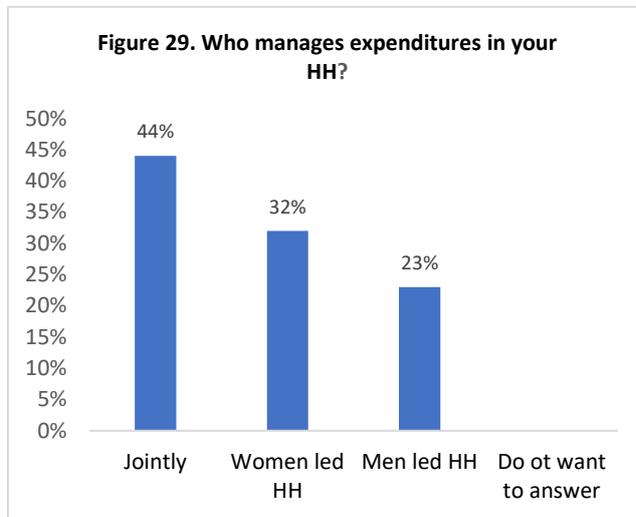
of retirees among the surveyed population. A noteworthy disparity surfaced when comparing income sources between Yerevan and Syunik. In Yerevan, a significant 84% of respondents depend on salary, almost double than in Syunik (46%). This stark contrast indicates a robust presence of formal employment in the capital city, with a substantial portion of individuals securing income through regular employment. Furthermore, considering the average monthly household income, excluding pensions, benefits, and social assistance, stands at around 234,344 AMD (197,378 AMD for Syunik region and 238,500 AMD for Yerevan), it further accentuates the economic variations between the two regions. The survey findings underscore a notable financial trend, revealing that almost half of the respondents (49%) acknowledged the presence of debt within their households. Delving deeper into this aspect, the average reported debt amount among those carrying financial obligations was identified as 3,949,521 AMD.



The respondents were asked about the adequacy of their household's income in meeting their essential needs, which encompass housing, food, education, and health. Approximately 49% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, stating that their current household income is insufficient to meet essential needs, including housing, food, education, and health. Meanwhile, 46% of respondents believe their income is adequate for these necessities. An additional 24% admitted uncertainty about whether their current income level allows them to fulfill these needs. Lastly, around 3% opted not to disclose their opinion or

chose not to answer the question. This reveals a varied spectrum of opinions among respondents regarding the sufficiency of their income to cover fundamental requirements.

Management of household expenditure

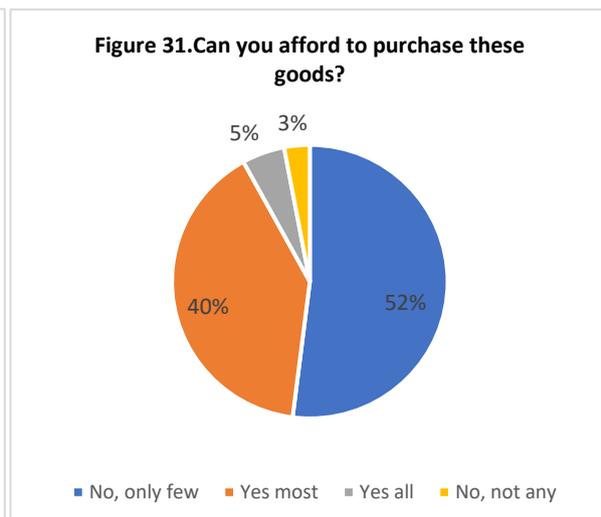
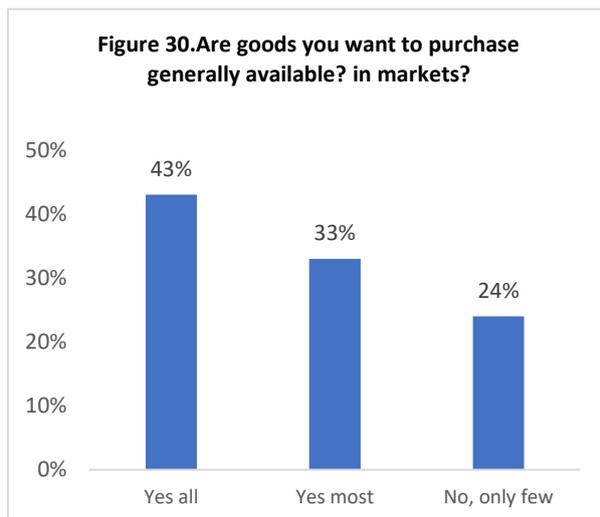


The data reveals diverse patterns in the management of household expenditures. Notably, in 44% of the households, both male and female members collaboratively oversee financial matters. In 32% of households, women take on the primary responsibility for managing household expenses, highlighting a substantial role for women in financial decision-making. These insights underscore the importance of recognizing and understanding the varied roles that different household members play in managing expenditures, providing valuable information for developing targeted strategies to support financial decision-making and collaboration

within households.

Availability and affordability of goods to purchase

When asked about availability of goods they want to purchase, (43%) of respondents reported that the goods they want to purchase are readily available in markets. The majority of respondents, 33%, mentioned that most of the goods they desire to purchase are available in markets. A notable 24% of respondents indicated that only a few of the goods they want to purchase are available in markets. A significant portion of respondents, accounting for 52%, expressed that they could afford only a few of the listed goods. The majority of participants, 40%, stated that they could afford most of the goods.



Findings of KIIs with local authorities

Displacement trends

Prevalent Social Groups Among Displaced Individuals according to the representatives of the local authorities: As per information gathered from key informants, the count of displaced individuals who either visited or stayed in communities since the commencement of the crisis in September 2023 ranges from 240 to 12,500 across different surveyed localities. The average number of displaced persons per community reported by key informants is approximately 2,312 individuals. Most displaced individuals represent a broad spectrum of social groups, indicating a diverse cross-section of the population affected by the crisis and impacting both genders almost equally, with both men and women represented in the displaced population. The presence of extended families, particularly those with more than three children, is notable among the displaced groups, underlining the family-centric nature of the affected population. Additional observations indicate a substantial percentage of displaced individuals includes children, emphasizing the vulnerability and unique needs of this demographic. The recognition of families with war victims emphasizes the importance of targeted support and interventions to address the specific circumstances and well-being of those directly affected by the conflict's violence and disruptions.

Internal displacement trends

The diverse array of reasons for leaving the community underscores the complexity of factors influencing displacement. Most of KIIs cited insufficient living space as a key factor prompting their departure of the displaced families. This suggests that overcrowding or limited residential capacity, suboptimal living conditions played a role in the decision to relocate.

“Displaced individuals were offered housing options in rural settlements, with both free and paid arrangements available, and no specified deadline for acceptance. However, a majority declined the offers primarily due to the substandard condition of the houses”.

LA representative of Tumanyan community, 03/11/2023

“The living conditions in the villages of the Vardenis area are notably substandard, contributing to people's reluctance to stay. A significant issue is the scarcity of houses equipped with built-in bathrooms, severely limiting residents' ability to maintain personal hygiene and attend to basic needs such as bathing. This challenging situation has led many to reject the prospect of residing in these villages”.

LA representative, Gegharkunik region, 31/10/2023

Some individuals departed due to a perceived lack of employment and economic opportunities within the community.

“Some are choosing to move even in more remote villages, often motivated by the presence of arable land that allows them to engage in agriculture. Seeking better employment opportunities, individuals are also drawn to areas with favorable agricultural conditions where work options abound, both in nearby villages and cities”.

LA representative, Gegharkunik region, 27/10/2023

“A key factor influencing the decision to relocate is the pursuit of employment opportunities. The Martuni community, unfortunately, lacks job prospects, prompting individuals to seek alternative locations where they can find work”.

LA representative, Gegharkunik region, 27/10/2023

A noteworthy portion left the community due to concerns related to security and willingness to reunion with relatives and friends, possibly separated due to the crisis. The influence of social connections, specifically friendships, motivated individuals to relocate near friends, indicating the importance of community and support networks, the presence of relatives in other cities serves as a compelling reason for individuals to leave the community, highlighting the importance of family support networks in migration decisions.

“Noyemberyan, being a border settlement with substantial proximity to Azerbaijan, experiences significant security concerns that contribute to the departure of displaced individuals.”.

LA representative, Tavush region, 01/11/2023

“One of the primary motivations behind this migration is the desire to reunite with their friends in a shared location”.

LA representative, Gegharkunik region, 27/10/23

Adverse weather conditions, particularly the harshness of winter climates in some communities, have influenced individuals to seek more favorable weather elsewhere.

“The climatic conditions in Artik, particularly the harsh winter weather, have prompted challenges for residents who struggle with accommodation-related issues. The adaptation to the severe climate poses difficulties, compounded by the overarching problem of unemployment in the area. Residents have faced challenges in securing employment opportunities, contributing to their decision to relocate from Artik in search of more favorable conditions elsewhere”.

LA representative, Shirak region, 08/11/2023

The observed relocation patterns among displaced individuals highlight the dynamic nature of their decisions. Based on insights from Key Informant Interviews, a substantial majority of displaced people exhibit a preference for diverse destinations within Armenia and, even, beyond its borders. The trend indicates a significant inclination toward relocating either to the capital city, Yerevan, or to proximate regions within the country. Additionally, a noteworthy percentage chooses to seek refuge in other countries. The findings illuminate a nuanced landscape: those opting to relocate to Yerevan are predominantly guided by a combination of all the following motivations – seeking enhanced living conditions, better employment prospects, and reuniting with family and friends. On the other hand, individuals moving to the closest regions prioritize the pursuit of improved living conditions. Notably, those contemplating relocation to other countries are primarily driven by the motivation to reunite with relatives or access enhanced employment opportunities. Notably, among the preferable countries for relocation, key informants frequently highlighted Russia and France as prominent choices.

“It should be noted that before Artsakh citizens left, even the locals left, and that is natural, because there are many opportunities in the capital. During conversations with the displaced people, it becomes clear that they aspire to the capital. Especially Yerevan, Ararat, Abovyan. But then there were families who returned, citing the similarity of the cities”.

LA representative, Vayots Dzor, 03/11/2023

Urgent Needs of Displaced Persons

Understanding the urgent needs of the displaced families provides a foundation for targeted interventions, ensuring that the displaced population receives immediate support in key areas crucial for their well-being and successful integration into their new communities. Based on comprehensive interviews with key informants, the pressing needs of displaced persons in the community have been identified, setting priorities for immediate support and intervention. According to the consensus among key informants, the paramount urgent need for the majority of displaced persons revolves around household items. Interestingly, this aligns with the findings obtained through household surveys.

This underscores the critical necessity for providing essential items to establish or enhance their living conditions swiftly. A substantial portion of displaced individuals also needs bedding as a critical and immediate requirement. This emphasizes the significance of swiftly addressing this need to ensure not only comfort but also the provision of basic amenities in their new living arrangements. The need for clothing is another vital requirement of the displaced people mentioned by KIs. Addressing this immediate necessity is crucial for meeting basic requirements and ensuring the personal well-being of the affected population. Key informants emphasize that a significant percentage of displaced individuals express an urgent need for accommodation.

“While the state has been able to provide some support in terms of food, and various organizations have assisted with hygiene products, there is now an urgent need for additional essential items. Displaced individuals require assistance with basic household necessities, including linen, bedding, beds, heaters, electric kettles, washing machines, refrigerators, and other kitchen-related items. Meeting these needs is crucial to improving the overall living conditions and well-being of those affected by displacement. Efforts to address these specific requirements will contribute significantly to their resettlement and recovery”.

LA representative, Ararat region, 04/11/2023

Availability of identification documents

Key informants report that a significant portion of displaced individuals currently lack identification documents. These findings underscore a critical challenge faced by a substantial portion of the displaced population, as the absence of proper identification can hinder their access to essential services and rights. Key informants also shed light on some reasons behind the loss of identification documents among displaced individuals. A notable number of displaced individuals intentionally burned their identification documents, driven by a profound fear of being identified by Azerbaijani forces at the Lachin corridor checkpoint. This fear is particularly prevalent among those who served in the military forces in Nagorno-Karabakh. The intentional destruction of documents is perceived as a protective measure against potential risks associated with identification. Another contributing factor to the loss of identification documents is the explosion incident at a filling station in Berkadzor near Stepanakert, that happened on 25 September 2023. Some displaced individuals lost their documents during this accident, adding an unintended dimension to the challenges faced by the affected population. In general, the consensus among key informants is that the loss of important documents

does not significantly impede the process of receiving government support. The referral system, coupled with availability of other relevant documentation, proves to be an effective mechanism for quickly retrieving lost documents and accurately identifying individuals in need.

Hosting and integration strategies

The inquiry into the willingness and ability of communities to host displaced families reveals positive findings, with the majority of the surveyed communities expressing readiness to host displaced families for as long as necessary.

However, despite this willingness, key informants representing local authorities highlight certain challenges that need to be addressed to sustain and enhance their ability to host these families. The primary challenge identified by local authorities is the need for financial resources. Financial support is deemed crucial for addressing the various needs associated with hosting displaced families, including accommodation, essential services, and community integration efforts.

“Financial resources will enable us to expand our reach, procure necessary items, and address the immediate concerns of the displaced population. Additionally, increasing the number of social workers and psychologists on our team will enhance our capacity to conduct comprehensive needs assessments and provide essential psychological support to those facing the challenges of displacement. By bolstering our resources, both financial and human, we aim to strengthen our ability to organize and carry out our mission with precision, empathy, and effectiveness”.

LA representative, Kotayk region, 30/10/2023

The registration of the displaced persons in our town/community (online, offline)

In our quest to understand the refugee registration process, key informants reveal a streamlined and predominantly digital approach. Notably, most communities have adopted online registration mechanisms to efficiently register and assist beneficiaries. The findings underscore a common practice among all local authorities, where displaced individuals are consistently directed to register on the unified national platform, the Rapid Needs Social services platform (<https://rapidneeds.socservice.am/hayti-dimum> webpage), which serves as a unified national platform for identifying and addressing the top priority needs of displaced people. This platform serves as a centralized and nationalized system for identifying and addressing the most pressing needs of displaced people.

It's important to note, however, that some key informants have expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the unified system. They highlight the need for further improvement and better coordination among key stakeholders involved in addressing the refugee crisis. According to these insights, it becomes evident that refining and enhancing the existing system, as well as fostering improved collaboration among relevant stakeholders, will contribute to a more effective and responsive registration process for displaced individuals in our community.

“Effective allocation becomes even more challenging due to discrepancies in the initial needs assessment platform. Many individuals did not provide comprehensive information, leading to a mismatch between expressed demands and actual requirements. To address this, home visits have become a necessary step to accurately gauge the genuine needs. While three social workers are currently engaged in this effort, there's a recognized need for additional professionals to conduct thorough need assessments.

The existing assessment platform, unfortunately, has not served its intended purpose and, in some cases, has hindered rather than facilitated the distribution process. To streamline the process, an alternative list has been compiled, considering family compositions, the number of members, and their respective ages. This approach seeks to ensure a more accurate and fair distribution of resources based on genuine needs within the community”.

LA representative, Ararat, 04/11/2023

Accommodations arrangements for the displaced people

Based on the responses from key informants, the predominant type of accommodation for displaced individuals is rented apartments. This high percentage suggests that a significant portion of displaced families opt for independent living arrangements through renting. A notable percentage of displaced individuals find accommodation within host families. Local authorities play a role in providing shelter for displaced individuals. The accommodations provided by local authorities vary and encompass a range of facilities, including kindergartens, daycare center territories, small wooden houses, hotels, and buildings owned by different public institutions such as NGOs. The findings suggest a lack of established conditions and criteria for the provision of shelters for the displaced population. Another common type of accommodation is staying with relatives or friends. This reflects the importance of social connections and support networks in times of displacement.

“The local authorities have primarily housed displaced individuals in a hotel and the Erkrpah’s camps, which, being separated from the village, posed challenges in organizing education for children. To address this, the municipality arranged transportation for the children. While the government covers the expenses for those staying in hotels, the duration of this financial support remains uncertain, making it challenging to provide a definitive answer on its continuation.”

LA representative, Gegharkunik, 27/10/2023

Accommodation conditions: It is noteworthy that not all types of shelters provided by local authorities fully meet the criteria of being suitable and dignified, especially for vulnerable groups such as infants, children, the elderly, and individuals with special needs. Key informants have highlighted the need for improvements in various aspects, indicating that some shelters require renovation, enhanced furnishings, improved heating systems, and better kitchen conditions. Key informants have pointed out the necessity for improvements in heating systems. This is particularly crucial, considering the well-being of vulnerable groups, including infants, the elderly, and those with special needs who may be more susceptible to temperature variations.

Coordination and partnership

Official plan/strategy for integration/supporting of displaced people: According to key informants, there is no official plan or strategy specifically addressing the integration and support of displaced people. This implies that the approach to supporting displaced individuals may be more reactive or may rely on existing general policies.

Some communities derive their activities from the five-year regional strategy and disaster risk reduction management plans they had to address certain aspects of emergency situations. Additionally, communities align their activities with government decisions and adhere to state procedures and operational mechanisms outlined by the government to tackle this emergency. Nonetheless, there is a prevailing anticipation at the local administrative level that, following the initial and secondary stages of the emergency, new considerations or long-term strategies may need to be devised for sustainable integration of displaced people.

Humanitarian support provided to the communities

Key informants have identified the involvement of several civic organizations and private initiatives that play a crucial role in providing diverse support to displaced families. Notable entities mentioned include Acted, AGBU, UNICEF, USAID, WFP, Red Cross, People in Need, and UNHCR, each contributing in various ways to address the immediate needs of displaced individuals, such as food, hygiene items, and bedding.

Support needed for displaced people

A consensus among key informants highlights the major types of support deemed suitable for refugees at the current stage. Key informants emphasize the importance of providing cash support to refugees. Cash and voucher assistance offers flexibility and allows individuals prioritize their specific needs, whether it be for food, housing items, or other essentials. Mental health support is recognized as a crucial component of assistance for refugees. Displacement often brings about significant emotional and psychological challenges. Offering mental support services can address trauma, stress, and emotional well-being, contributing to the overall resilience of displaced individuals. Legal aid is identified as a critical form of support for refugees. Navigating legal processes, understanding rights, and obtaining legal assistance are essential aspects of ensuring the protection and well-being of displaced individuals. Among others were mentioned bedding, winterization (mostly fuel and wood) and household items. The feedback from Key Informants (KIs) underscores a critical consensus on the need for enhanced coordination among all stakeholders, particularly with local authorities, to provide more targeted support to displaced people. The emphasized importance of joint assessments reflects a shared belief that organizations can gain a more nuanced understanding of the community's specific requirements through collaboration.

By actively engaging with local authorities, organizations can align their efforts with existing government initiatives. This coordinated approach not only avoids duplication of efforts but also ensures that support is tailored to the actual needs of the displaced population. The call for increased coordination resonates as a key strategy to optimize the impact of assistance and create a more cohesive and effective support system for those affected by displacement.

Government support

Key informants consistently highlight the role of the Armenian government in providing support to displaced families, primarily in the form of financial assistance. The government's financial support is instrumental in securing essential items such as food and household necessities for displaced individuals. Additionally, some key informants express expectations that the government's support will extend to addressing employment and housing issues for the displaced population.

Available infrastructure in the communities

Most communities have basic health, education, and sanitation facilities. However, the availability of central heating is notably absent. Police stations, post offices, and a combination of various social infrastructures are widespread across the communities. According to the KIs responses, there is no indication of specific items in short supply in the community or town. The absence of reported shortages suggests a relatively stable availability of essential items within the community, as reported by the key informants.

Livelihood opportunities

Understanding the primary sources of income is crucial for developing targeted strategies to support economic sustainability and resilience in these communities. Agriculture is identified as one of the main sources of income in the communities, indicating the significance of farming-related activities for the local economy. Sales, presumably encompassing various forms of trade and commerce, is mentioned as a key source of income. This may involve the selling of goods and services within the community. Mining, construction works, harvesting was highlighted as other sources of income for displaced people. External work is acknowledged as a source of income, indicating that individuals from the communities may seek employment opportunities outside the country. Most of the KIs reported that most of the displaced people did not manage to bring with them any productive assets. The only asset brought by them were means of transportation. The lack of substantial productive assets among displaced individuals suggests potential challenges in terms of immediate economic contributions. Identifying and promoting economic opportunities is crucial for the successful integration of displaced individuals into the local economy.

Findings on the Market assessment

Awareness about humanitarian organizations and Multi-Purpose Voucher (MPV) System

The data indicates that the majority of supermarkets are aware of the presence of humanitarian organizations in their areas. This suggests a baseline understanding and recognition of the need for humanitarian efforts. However, the recall of specific organization names is limited but noteworthy. This could signify that while supermarkets acknowledge the general presence of humanitarian organizations, they may not have a detailed understanding of the specific entities operating in the area. This lack of detailed recall could be due to various reasons such as information overload, turnover of staff, or a broad focus on multiple aspects of their operations. In our ongoing exploration of support mechanisms for displaced population, we also sought to gauge the awareness among local businesses regarding Multi-Purpose Voucher (MPV) assistance provided by humanitarian organizations. The responses provide valuable insights into the familiarity and potential receptiveness of businesses to this specific form of aid. A significant majority of businesses are aware of the MPV assistance offered by humanitarian organizations in the area. While the majority is well-informed, a small portion of businesses indicated that they are not aware of MPV assistance.

Local business engagement in humanitarian assistance

Continuing our examination of local business perspectives on humanitarian assistance, we further explored the direct involvement of local businesses in Multi-Purpose Voucher assistance. The responses shed light on the extent to which businesses have actively participated in this form of support, providing valuable insights into the practical engagement of the local business community in humanitarian efforts. An overwhelming majority of businesses have reported active involvement in MPV assistance. A small proportion of businesses indicated that they have not been directly involved in MPV assistance. The overwhelmingly high level of business involvement in MPV assistance underscores the positive impact that local businesses can have on humanitarian initiatives. Their

active participation contributes to the overall well-being of individuals in a refugee-like state, showcasing a community-driven approach to support. The small percentage of businesses not directly involved in MPV assistance prompts a closer examination of potential reasons for non-participation. Exploring these reasons could reveal insights into barriers that, when addressed, may further enhance overall community engagement in humanitarian efforts. In general, most supermarket representatives acknowledge the positive effects of the MVPs. However, nuanced perspectives emerge as some representatives emphasize the system's short-term benefits rather than its long-term implications. While recognizing the immediate positive impact, they express anticipation for even greater benefits with prolonged engagement in long-term MPV programs. A notable positive consequence highlighted by respondents is the acquisition of new clients. Engaging in MPV activities introduces displaced individuals to supermarkets, establishing a connection through the voucher system. What makes the MPV particularly effective is its transformative nature — a one-time use leads to a sustained customer relationship via conversion of the vouchers into cumulative cards for the beneficiaries who decide to stay in the community. Once beneficiaries experience the convenience of the MPV, they often choose the supermarket for their regular shopping needs.

However, it's crucial to acknowledge that not all perspectives are uniformly positive. One key informant highlighted a technical challenge associated with the MPV program, specifically pointing out issues with the digital system. The mention of occasional slow functionality underscores the importance of addressing technical aspects to ensure a seamless experience for both supermarkets and beneficiaries.

Responding to the query about contact from humanitarian organizations for contractual agreements, several supermarkets mentioned engagement with organizations such as Acted, Action Against Hunger and People in Need. These organizations are recognized for organizing similar types of activities, indicating a growing trend of collaboration between supermarkets and humanitarian entities to facilitate the acceptance of vouchers, replacing traditional cash transactions.

[Exploring supermarket willingness to participate in MPV assistance](#)

Building upon insights from supermarket representatives, the data further delves into their willingness to actively participate in MVP assistance. The responses provide valuable indications of supermarkets' openness to engage in such humanitarian initiatives and their potential role in shaping the effectiveness of MPV programs. A significant majority of supermarkets representatives express a willingness to actively take part in MPV assistance. This strong endorsement signals a positive inclination toward engaging in initiatives that contribute to the well-being of displaced individuals within their communities. A small proportion of supermarkets indicate a reluctance to participate in MPV assistance. While this number is relatively low, understanding the reasons behind this resistance could provide valuable insights into potential barriers or concerns that may need addressing.

[Payment systems landscape in supermarkets](#)

In examining the operational landscape of supermarkets, a crucial aspect is the diversity of payment systems they offer. Understanding the range of payment options available provides valuable insights into the accessibility and convenience supermarkets provide to their customers, including those engaged in MPV assistance. Most supermarkets have well-developed payment systems, showcasing a commitment to providing diverse options for their customers. The spectrum includes not only traditional cash transactions but also electronic methods, demonstrating a modern and customer-centric approach. Notably, all surveyed supermarkets offer the convenience of payment via credit cards. A significant portion percentage of surveyed supermarkets facilitate payments through

cumulative cards. This indicates a strategic approach to customer loyalty and engagement, as cumulative cards often represent a reward or loyalty program, encouraging repeat business and customer retention. While more than half of the surveyed supermarkets provide the option to make payments using discount cards, there is room for growth in the adoption of this payment method. The comprehensive range of payment systems reflects a customer-centric approach among supermarkets.

Diverse commodity offerings

Most supermarkets report the availability of various goods needed for displaced people, including essential food items and household necessities. Further investigation reveals that over half of the supermarkets also stock winterization products, encompassing winter boots, blankets, slippers, socks, and electric stoves. Further the supermarkets were asserted their capability to promptly fill shortages of products relevant to their market profile, such as food, household items, clothing, and winterization products. Most supermarkets highlight their extensive networks of suppliers and counterparts, ensuring easy procurement of specific products when needed.

Only one supermarket representative addressed potential taxation-related challenges associated with acquiring specific products, emphasizing the commitment to legality and transparency in their operations:

"While acquiring food products poses no foreseeable challenges, as the fruit and vegetable department operates through a leasing arrangement with a private company, obtaining winterization and household items presents a more nuanced situation. Our reluctance is not a reluctance to engage in more extensive efforts; rather, it stems from our steadfast commitment to operating within the bounds of the law and our adherence to VAT procedures. Engaging in sincere and legal business practices is our priority. However, the complexities arise when dealing with certain suppliers who might not operate under VAT or encounter difficulties in providing necessary documentation. This can pose challenges for us in procuring products from such suppliers. It is essential for any potential collaboration to align with legal frameworks, ensuring a smooth and compliant process in acquiring the required goods for our market".

Representative of supermarket, Aragatsotn, 07/11/2023

Assessing prices dynamics amidst changing circumstances

Upon further examination of how recent shifts in the situation, particularly the flow of displaced persons, have influenced ability to meet market needs, insights from supermarket representatives shed light on various aspects: The overarching sentiment among the majority of supermarket representatives is that there has been no significant increase in prices, even when compared to the previous year. According to respondents, the flow of displaced people has not had a substantial impact on pricing dynamics. Prices continue to fluctuate, primarily linked to the exchange rate of the dollar.

"While prices remain stable, there has been a noticeable decrease in people's satisfaction. Most of our clientele relies on income from Russia, and with the depreciation of the Russian exchange rate, individuals exchange money less frequently, affecting their purchasing power. During this period, the price of flour also decreased. Transportation issues are acknowledged, but they are attributed to foreign policy matters rather than the displaced population from Artsakh".

Representative of supermarket, Lori, 04/11/2024

Post-crisis, supermarkets exhibit resilience and adaptability in meeting the demands of their communities. While some report increased demand, particularly from displaced persons, supermarkets have navigated these challenges effectively. Strategies include providing aid, managing panic-induced demand spikes, and maintaining or increasing supply of essential products. The overall sentiment is one of stability and proactive response to evolving market dynamics, ensuring the continued availability of goods for the local population.

Conclusions and recommendations

Main conclusions

In conclusion, the findings from the comprehensive assessment shed light on the multifaceted challenges and dynamics surrounding the displacement crisis stemming from the conflict in September 2023. The scale and complexity of the situation demands a collaborative approach to address the immediate needs of displaced individuals while laying the groundwork for sustainable solutions.

Displacement Trends and Social Dynamics: The displacement trends reveal a diverse array of factors influencing individuals and families to leave their communities. Overcrowding limited residential capacity, suboptimal living conditions, and concerns related to security and family reunification emerge as prominent drivers. The observed diversity in social groups among displaced individuals underscores the far-reaching impact of the crisis, affecting various demographics, including families with war victims and those with many children.

Immediate needs and challenges: The critical requirements of displaced individuals encompass a diverse array of necessities, placing a specific emphasis on urgent needs such as accommodation, household items, bedding, and clothing. The winter climate and harsh living conditions in certain regions intensify the urgency to address these needs promptly. The survey findings also emphasize the paramount concerns of host families, notably the challenges stemming from insufficient financial resources, limited food support, and a deficiency in essential household items. The urgency of addressing these pivotal needs becomes evident, underscoring the necessity for sustained assistance to displaced families.

Recommendations

Mental health programs: Recognizing the profound impact of displacement on emotional and psychological well-being, mental health support emerges as a pivotal component of assistance for refugees. The experience of displacement often gives rise to substantial emotional and psychological challenges. Providing mental health services becomes imperative to address trauma, stress, and emotional well-being, thereby fostering the overall resilience of displaced individuals. Integrating mental health services into the broader support framework is essential for the holistic recovery of displaced individuals and families.

Legal aid: Furthermore, legal aid is identified as a crucial pillar of support for refugees. Navigating intricate legal processes, understanding rights, and obtaining legal assistance are integral aspects to ensure the protection and well-being of displaced individuals.

Education and employment opportunities: It is recommended to develop programs to support education and vocational training for displaced individuals, enhancing their skills and employability, as well as collaborate with local businesses and organizations to create employment opportunities for the displaced population.

Financial support and debt management: It is recommended to (i) introduce effective financial support mechanisms tailored to households lacking income sources, (ii) create and implement debt relief programs aimed at alleviating financial burdens, fostering greater economic stability within the displaced community, (iii) develop comprehensive debt relief initiatives for hosting families, designed to incentivize and encourage their continued support for displaced families.

Housing solutions: It is recommended to collaborate with local and international partners to develop affordable housing solutions, addressing the immediate need for housing stability and living arrangements.

Support for hosting communities: In response to the challenges associated with accommodation, essential services, and community integration for displaced families, it is recommended to allocate additional financial resources to the communities hosting them. This allocation aims to tackle the hurdles faced by these communities and strengthen their capacity to provide necessary support. Additionally, fostering public-private partnerships is encouraged to amplify the financial capabilities of local authorities, promoting collaborative approach to effectively address the multifaceted challenges faced by displaced populations.

Economic opportunities and livelihood: Understanding the economic landscape of the host communities is vital for devising sustainable solutions. Agriculture, sale, mining, construction, emerge as key sources of income, emphasizing the importance of identifying and promoting economic opportunities for displaced individuals. The lack of substantial productive assets among displaced individuals highlights the need for targeted interventions to enhance economic contributions.

Community integration initiatives: It is recommended to foster community engagement programs that promote interaction between displaced families and host communities, dispelling potential tensions and fostering mutual understanding. In addition, it is worth exploring cultural exchange programs and initiatives that celebrate the diversity brought by displaced individuals.

Coordination and support mechanisms: The role of coordination mechanisms, particularly the digital registration system, is crucial in addressing the displacement crisis. While the unified registration system has streamlined certain processes, feedback received highlights the need for ongoing improvements. Incorporating feedback from key informants on the unified system could also enhance the user-friendliness and efficiency of the registration platform. Collaboration among stakeholders, including local authorities, government agencies, and humanitarian organizations, is paramount for optimizing the impact of support efforts. Regularly assessment of coordination mechanisms and making frequent necessary adjustments based on evolving needs and challenges may improve integration processes significantly.

Economic disparities and regional variances: Economic variations between Yerevan and Syunik regions, both in terms of income sources and housing dynamics, highlight the need for region-specific

interventions. Tailoring economic support programs to the unique challenges faced by each region can contribute to more effective and sustainable solutions.

Government support and public-private partnerships: The role of the Armenian government in providing financial assistance is acknowledged, yet the absence of a formalized long-term state strategy calls for comprehensive planning. While immediate humanitarian aid is imperative, long-term planning and sustainable solutions are equally critical. Collaborative efforts between governments, non-governmental organizations, and international partners should focus on creating conditions for the self-reliance and empowerment of displaced households, enabling them to rebuild their lives with dignity and stability.

Taxation-related challenges: It is recommended to establish a collaborative platform involving supermarkets, governmental bodies, and relevant stakeholders to address taxation-related challenges, as well as foster open communication channels between supermarkets and tax authorities to ensure transparency and accountability.

Promoting collaboration: It is recommended to facilitate regular meetings between supermarkets and humanitarian organizations to strengthen collaborative efforts and address any emerging concerns. Develop joint training programs to enhance supermarkets' understanding of the broader humanitarian context and the impact of their contributions.

In summary, addressing the displacement crisis requires a concerted and adaptive effort. The collective commitment of all stakeholders—government agencies, local authorities, humanitarian organizations, and the communities themselves—is crucial for navigating the complexities of displacement, providing timely support, and working towards a future where displaced individuals can rebuild their lives with dignity and resilience.