

Older persons in emergencies

Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations



Agenda

1. Introduction

- 'Old'
- Laws and standards

2. Challenges

- Staying behind
- Pre-existing conditions
- Equitable access

3. Recommendations – Syria crisis

4. Opportunities

HelpAge International



Handicap International



- Global partnership
- Inclusion Advisors – Syria crisis
- Regional Inclusion Programme

What is “old”?



UN: 60 years and above



Factors

- Poverty
- Prevalence disability, impairment, and chronic disease
- Social factors
- Cultural factors

Older persons in emergencies



Today 12.5% of world's population is over 60
22% is currently over 50

2050 Those above 60 will increase to 22%
More people over 60 than children

80+ Fastest growing age group

SYRIA CRISIS assessment: 4,97% of refugees in Jordan and Lebanon (registered and non-registered) are aged above 60.

Laws and standards



International human rights law



- State authorities
- Right to adequate standard of living
- Non-discrimination

Humanitarian standards

- Humanitarian aid providers
- Guidelines, codes, and handbooks
- "...no one should be discriminated against on any grounds of status, including age, gender..." (SPHERE)
- Humanitarian Charter – Protection Principles

Laws and standards



UN Principles for Older Persons

(UNGA Res 46/91)



- Ensuring independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment, and dignity of older people.
- Reinforcing specific protection needs for older people, such as security, access to social and legal services, and access to a fair system of justice
- Governments are encouraged to integrate those principles into national programmes whenever possible

CHALLENGES

- Staying behind
- Pre-existing conditions
- Equitable access



Impact of emergencies on older persons

- Issues and risks created by the emergency itself
- Pre-existing conditions and positions which are exacerbated by a crisis
 - Poverty
 - Specific health needs
 - Food and nutrition
 - Shelter

Staying behind

Reasons

- Lack of mobility
- Reluctance to leave

Impact

- Needs: health, food, shelter
- Risks: lack of assistance, no/few supplies, exposure to violence / natural disaster



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SYRIA CRISIS assessment:

4.97% of refugees are above 60

An estimated 6% of the Syrian

Population is above 60 years old.



Conditions exacerbated by crisis

POVERTY

- 80% of older persons in developing world have no regular income
- Factors
 - Reduced ability to work
 - Low-paying positions
 - Exclusion from livelihoods programming and credit assistance (age)
 - Growing number of older people caring for dependants (incl. grandchildren) due to the effects of HIV and AIDS, conflict or economic migration on the middle generation
 - Very small social pensions
 - Negative coping mechanisms

SYRIA CRISIS assessment: income/ livelihood prioritized as basic need.

Conditions exacerbated by crisis

HEALTH

- Specific needs
 - Limited regenerative abilities
 - NCDs: Arthritis, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory disorders
 - Minor health conditions
 - Untreated chronic diseases (complications: stroke, coma, blindness, diabetic foot with gangrene, and increased levels of mortality)
 - Communicable diseases

Conditions exacerbated by crisis

HEALTH

- Access to healthcare for older persons:
 - Physical accessibility
 - Financial accessibility
 - Availability of good quality essential drugs (chronic diseases – interruption)

SYRIA CRISIS assessment:

Among the older refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, 58% have at least one impairment (physical, visual, auditive, or intellectual)

For 23% of older persons this impairment is severe (approx. 3 x higher than refugees overall)

Among interviewed older persons, 58% present with difficulties in Daily Living Activities. For 39% these difficulties are severe.

Conditions exacerbated by crisis

FOOD, NUTRITION

- Assistance – double misconception
- Access to food
 - Physical accessibility / distribution
 - Location, distance
 - Purchasing
 - Utility, preparation (water, fuel)
 - Quality: protein, micronutrient (minerals, vitamins)
 - Consuming: dental problems, digestion.
 - Cultural norms

Conditions exacerbated by crisis

FOOD, NUTRITION

- Risk factors
 - Reduced appetite due to illness, psychosocial stress, age or disability
 - Sensory loss and other physical problems affect older people's ability to access adequate food and sunlight
 - Absence of assistance, social isolation
 - Homebound, bedridden, high levels of sensory impairment
 - More prone dehydration

SYRIA CRISIS assessment: food was listed among the priority needs.

Conditions exacerbated by crisis

SHELTER

- Psychosocial impact of losing home (80+)
- Adequate shelter – dignity
- Inappropriate shelter:
 - Confine to home
 - Restricting independence and ability to access services, and engage in livelihood activities
 - Limit ability to engage in social activities

Conditions exacerbated by crisis

SHELTER

- Consequences of inappropriate shelter:
 - Isolation
 - Stress
 - Health risks
 - Protection risks.

SYRIA CRISIS assessment: shelter was listed second among priority needs

Equitable access to services

- Assessment (latent discrimination, visibility)
- Registration – access to services
- Access to information
- Physical accessibility
- Outreach



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SYRIA CRISIS assessment:
around 4,97% of refugees in Jordan and Lebanon (registered and non-registered) are aged above 60. In Lebanon 66.67% of them are registered, compared to 100% in Jordan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Syria crisis

- Sex, age and disability disaggregated data
- Prioritising specific support and care
- Overall inclusiveness of programming and implementation
- Coordination for inclusive intervention on cross-cutting vulnerabilities



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OPPORTUNITIES

Age helps

*Seeing
opportunities*





“.....in IDP communities, older people play a pivotal role. They are often the primary care-givers of their grandchildren and of orphans whose parents have been killed or have migrated elsewhere. Yet, despite this, they often experience particular assistance and protection challenges, and are frequently the last to achieve durable solutions to their displacement, as wider efforts focus on younger generations.”

Dr. Chaloka Beyani - UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons

Opportunities

- Consult and communicate
- Engage and involved
- Capacities, skills, and roles of older persons
 - Lead roles in activities including the identification of vulnerable people
 - Support to distribution processes
 - Hosting separated children during family tracing
 - Care and upbringing of children
 - Acting as key interlocutors in family and community dispute resolution
 - Sharing skills knowledge and traditions with younger family members
 - Contribute to household income

Opportunities

- The degree to which these roles are recognised and supported during displacement has a significant impact on the challenges older people face and their ability to survive and recover.

SYRIA CRISIS assessment:

Older persons represent between 13,18% (Jordan) and 12,81% (Lebanon) of the heads of family in survey. When there is an older person present in the household, this person is a head of the household in 61% of the cases. (Jordan 59,7%, Lebanon 63,4%)



Thank you for your attention

Any questions?

More information:

www.helpage.org