



Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) | Syria

# RETURNEE REPORT SERIES 2020

*Disability Prevalence and Impact*



**SYRIAN**

**ARAB REPUBLIC**

## METHODOLOGY

In December 2020, HNAP conducted a nationwide socio-economic household survey across all 14 governorates in Syria, surveying returnee households. Fieldwork was carried out by experienced HNAP field teams who were trained on coded surveys by data collection experts. The survey collected data which is representative at the country, governorate and sub-district level, as well as according to the regional division- i.e. central and south Syria (CSS), north Syria (NS), north-west Syria (NWS) and north-east Syria (NES).<sup>1</sup>

The sample frame was sourced from the list of (p-code) locations, updated by OCHA in August 2020.<sup>2</sup> Population figures were obtained from HNAP's Monthly Needs Monitoring population baseline, updated in November 2020- that is, 347,032 returnees (or 69,411 households), living in 139 sub-districts. A stratified sample of 5,643 households was selected to be interviewed, with a 95% confidence interval and a 10% margin of error. The sample was then allocated proportionally among the sub-district locations, with a minimum of two households per location. Locations with minimal returnee households were excluded from the sampling.

Weights were calculated with reference to the population

estimates at sub-district level and were computed as the inverse of the probability of inclusion of each household. These weights were then adjusted in order to reproduce the exact population of returnee households living in each sub-district. Weights were computed considering an average household size of 5 members.

Data in the report are weighted population estimates, i.e. they represent the reference population, not the sample population. Figures on absent members rely on the recall of the interviewed households, and as such may not include entire population who left Syria.

*To better inform humanitarian partners based on regions of operation, HNAP refers to the following regions of Syria: central and south Syria (CSS); north Syria (NS); north-west Syria (NWS); north-east Syria (NES). The boundaries, areas, and names shown and the designations used in this report do not imply official endorsement or acceptance. Reference is made to these designations as HNAP revised regional boundaries to better account for the comparative similarity of conditions and access to services within each designated area, as well as the sampling methodology employed during data collection. A complete methodology is available upon request.*

**A returnee household is a household who has returned to their place of origin for at least one month in 2020, after having previously fled for at least one month.<sup>3</sup>**

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

Nearly half of Syria's pre-conflict population remains in displacement. 5.6 million are displaced abroad, the majority of whom are in neighboring Turkey, while a substantial 6.5 million are displaced across Syria.<sup>4</sup> About a quarter of returnees aged 12+ have a disability (23 percent). This report investigates the prevalence and impact of disabilities for returned persons across the country. It achieves this through an investigation into socio-economic, demographic and priority needs indicators, as well as assessing the past and future intentions of returnees with disabilities.

Since 2018 the Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) has employed the Washington Group Questions (short-set tool), the most widely used and tested tool in humanitarian environments, to assess the prevalence of individuals with disabilities.<sup>5</sup> Pivoting from traditional investigations on physical ailments,

the assessment now expands to define disability as an increased risk of exclusion based on reduced functioning in one or more core human functions. The functions are listed in the table below.

Despite the increase in data related to disability, all figures related to household assessments are subject to a standard margin of error. This is influenced in part by the inherent sampling, and interviewing, of distinct households within a given region as well as the multifaceted complexities related to the Syrian context. HNAP continuously seeks to improve and adapt to the situation on the ground, as well as the needs of our partners, to whom it provides current and relevant findings. In recognition of the implication of disability findings for humanitarian partners, HNAP remains available to support stakeholders in achieving appropriate and inclusive programming for all populations across Syria.



<sup>1</sup> The geographical boundaries used do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by HNAP.

<sup>2</sup> List of locations were provided primarily by OCHA and supplemented with the CCCM and SSWG list of camps across the NWS and NES.

<sup>3</sup> HNAP only considers those who returned to their community of origin as returnees; therefore, figures do not include those who returned from abroad to other places in Syria. For more information regarding registered returns, please refer to [UNHCR](#).

<sup>4</sup> Figures based on [UNHCR](#); and HNAP's Monthly Mobility Needs Monitoring, December 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Disability is defined through a spectrum of functional difficulties, according to [The Washington Group on Disability Statistics](#) and endorsed by [Humanity & Inclusion](#).

## HNAP

The Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) for Syria is a joint UN assessment initiative which tracks displacement and return movements, conducts multi-sectoral assessments, and monitors humanitarian needs inside Syria. HNAP is implemented through local Syrian NGOs, with technical support from UN Agencies.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In order to support the humanitarian community in responding to the needs of the mobile Syrian population, HNAP produces regular updates and thematic reports. None of this would be possible without the hard work of our implementing partners, who collect data - often in very difficult circumstances. Their efforts are deeply appreciated. HNAP would also like to thank Humanity & Inclusion for continued technical support and guidance.

## RATE OF DISABILITIES AND TYPES OF DIFFICULTIES

# 23%

of returnees above the age of 12 have disabilities

In Syria, just under a quarter of returnees (age 12+) have disabilities (23 percent). Findings are consistent with national trends and are notably lower than internally displaced persons (IDPs), about a third of whom have disabilities.<sup>6</sup> The rate of returnees with disabilities is highest in NES (32 percent), followed by 23 percent with disabilities in CSS and 22 percent in both NWS and NS. While 11 percent of returnees nationally face difficulties performing basic mobility and vision functions. The prevalence of these difficulties significantly increases in NES, where 19 percent of returnees face difficulties in mobilizing and 16 percent face difficulties in seeing.

Central & south



# 23%

of returnees (12+) have disabilities

North



# 22%

of returnees (12+) have disabilities

North-west



# 22%

of returnees (12+) have disabilities

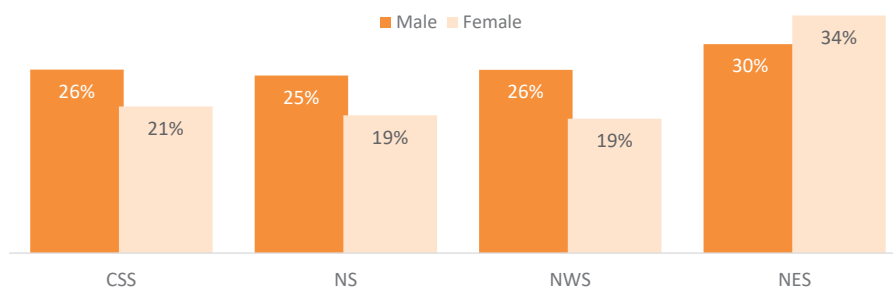
North-east



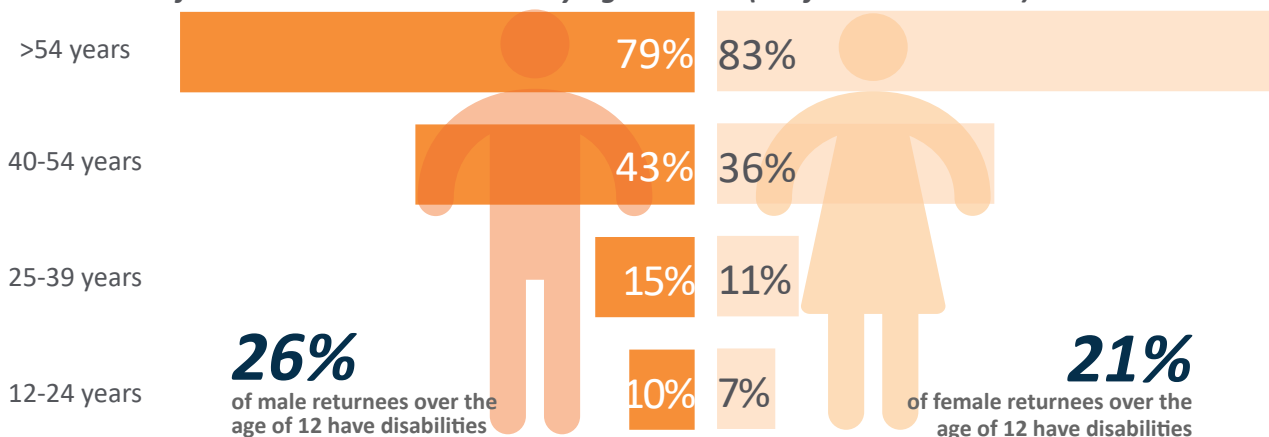
# 32%

of returnees (12+) have disabilities

### Prevalence of returnees with disabilities, by sex and region (% of individuals)



### Prevalence of returnees with disabilities by age and sex (% of individuals 12+)<sup>7</sup>



### Type of reported difficulty (% of individuals 12+)

	Mobility	Vision	Self-Care	Hearing	Cognition	Communication
Females	10%	10%	5%	5%	3%	1%
Males	12%	13%	6%	4%	3%	2%
Total	11%	11%	5%	5%	3%	2%

<sup>6</sup> Figures based on HNAP's IDP 2020 Disability Overview <http://hnap.info/fssportal/seeddms51x/seeddms-5.1.8/out/out.ViewDocument.php?documentid=477&-showtree=1>

<sup>7</sup> Figures on returnee demographics available in HNAP's 2020 Returnee Report Series: Demographics <http://hnap.info/fssportal/seeddms51x/seeddms-5.1.8/out/out.ViewDocument.php?documentid=532&showtree=1>

## HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS

**30%** 


of HHs have a head of household with disabilities

**32%** 

of HHs have a member with disabilities

**19%** 

of HHs have >1 members with disabilities

**49%** 

of HHs do not have a member with disabilities

### Regional prevalence of disabilities (% of returnee HHs)

- HH with 1 member with disabilities
- HH with >1 members with disabilities
- HH without member with disabilities

#### Central & south

**49%**  
of returnee HHs have at least 1 member with disabilities



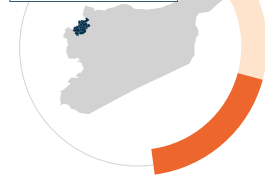
#### North

**52%**  
of returnee HHs have at least 1 member with disabilities



#### North-west

**48%**  
of returnee HHs have at least 1 member with disabilities



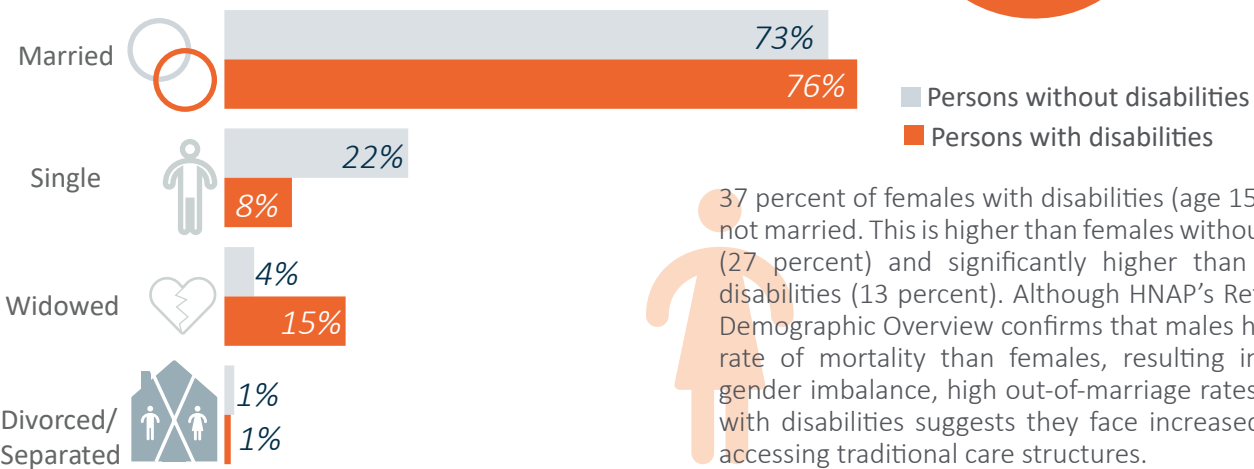
#### North-east

**68%**  
of returnee HHs have at least 1 member with disabilities



30 percent of returnee HHs are headed by a member with disabilities. Concurrently, 51 percent of HHs have at least one member with disabilities. The presence of members with disabilities disproportionately exposes HHs to on-going socio-economic shocks following their return. Indeed, only 14 percent of HHs with multiple members with disabilities report sufficient income (further analysis on economic conditions available on page 7).

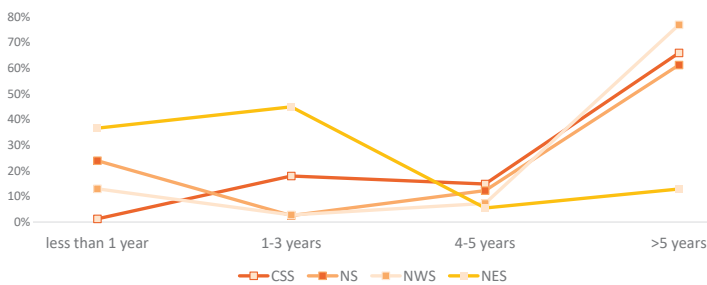
### Marital status (% of returnees age 15+)



37 percent of females with disabilities (age 15 and up) are not married. This is higher than females without disabilities (27 percent) and significantly higher than males with disabilities (13 percent). Although HNAP's Returnee 2020 Demographic Overview confirms that males have a higher rate of mortality than females, resulting in a national gender imbalance, high out-of-marriage rates for females with disabilities suggests they face increased barriers to accessing traditional care structures.

## DISPLACEMENT DYNAMICS

### Length of time in displacement (% returnee HHs with members with disabilities)



**47%**  
of HHs w/out members with disabilities were displaced 3 or more times

**47%**  
of HHs with 1 member with disabilities were displaced 3 or more times

**57%**  
of HHs with >1 member with disabilities were displaced 3 or more times

There were minor differences in length spent in displacement for HHs with members with disabilities at the national level. Regionally, however, the presence of members with disabilities correlated with distinct displacement timelines. In NWS, 21 percent of HHs without members with disabilities were displaced for less than a year, compared to only 13 percent of HHs with at least one member with disabilities. Meanwhile, an inverse trend is detected in NES, where 24 percent of HHs without members with disabilities were displaced for less than a year, compared to 37 percent of those with members with disabilities. Findings are likely linked to number of displacements; indeed, 46 percent of HHs with members with disabilities displaced at least 4 times, compared to only 34 percent of those without members with disabilities.

## REASONS FOR DISPLACEMENT

Push factors are conditions or incidents in the place of displacement which encourage displaced HHs to return to their place of origin. Concurrently, reasons encouraging return specifically to the place of origin can be classified as pull factors. Evidence suggests that HHs with members with disabilities are often encouraged to return for distinct reasons. Over half (52 percent) of returnee HHs with more than one member with disabilities were pushed from their last place of displacement due to the deterioration of the economic situation, but were moderately less likely to be pulled by economic opportunities - 47 compared to 54 percent of HHs without members with disabilities. Meanwhile HHs with multiple members with disabilities were more likely to be pulled to repossess assets- 53 percent compared to only 40 percent of HHs without members with disabilities.

### Reasons for return (% returnee HHs)

	HHs without members with disabilities	HHs with 1 member with disabilities	HHs with >1 members with disabilities	
Deterioration of economic situation	41%	40%	52%	Push factors
Lack of basic services/assistance	7%	7%	8%	
Deterioration of security situation	2%	3%	3%	
Forced return	1%	1%	1%	
COVID 19	1%	-	1%	
Improved security situation	88%	87%	86%	Pull factors
Access to economic opportunities	54%	52%	47%	
To re-possess assets	40%	44%	53%	
Access to basic services/assistance	20%	21%	9%	
Access to markets/goods	11%	11%	7%	
Socio/cultural reasons	10%	8%	7%	
Family reunification	6%	3%	4%	

## RETURN JOURNEY AND DOCUMENTATION

**22%**

of returnee HHs with >1 members with disabilities felt the situation at place of return was worse, or much worse than their expectations, compared to 15% of HHs without members with disabilities.

### Previous region of displacement (% of HH with members with disabilities)<sup>a</sup>

**71%**

of returnee HHs with members with disabilities returned from within the same region of return

**24%**

of returnee HHs with members with disabilities returned from outside region of return

**5%**

of returnee HHs with members with disabilities returned from outside Syria

### Possession of identification (% of HH)



**8%**

of returnee HHs with member(s) with disabilities have disability-specific identification

No returnee HH members with disabilities



**73%**

of returnee HHs have individual id

1 returnee HH member with disabilities



**64%**

of returnee HHs have individual id

>1 returnee HH member with disabilities



**60%**

of returnee HHs have individual id

### Return process, perceptions of safety and future intention of HHs with members with disabilities<sup>a</sup>



No returnee HH members with disabilities



1 returnee HH members with disabilities



>1 returnee HH member with disabilities

Return

**68%**  
experienced a smooth return journey

**65%**  
experienced a smooth return journey

**60%**  
experienced a smooth return journey

Safety

**79%**  
Feel safe in their day-to-day life

**79%**  
feel safe in their day-to-day life

**75%**  
Feel safe in their day-to-day life

Future

**91%**  
are likely to remain

**93%**  
are likely to remain

**92%**  
are likely to remain

<sup>a</sup> Previous region of displacement references only the most-recent place of displacement in relation to region of return.

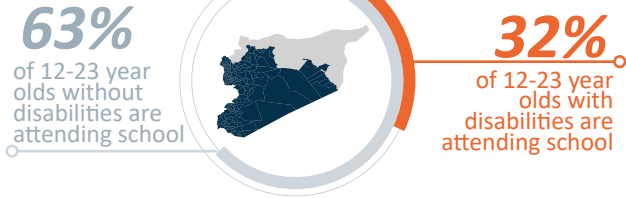
<sup>b</sup> Those reporting "smooth journey", "feeling safe", and "likely to remain" are aggregated between responses of: 'smooth' or 'very smooth'; 'safe' or 'very safe'; 'very likely' or 'likely' to stay in their place of origin, respectively.

## EDUCATION

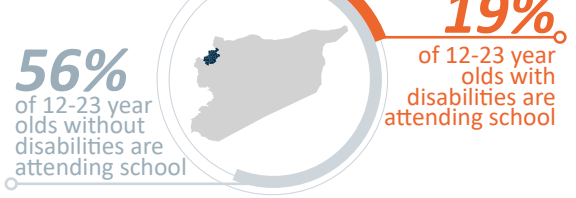
**22%** of returnees age 12-23 with disabilities are attending school, compared to **56%** of returnees without disabilities

### Education attendance rates by region (returnees 12-23 years)<sup>10</sup>

#### Central & south



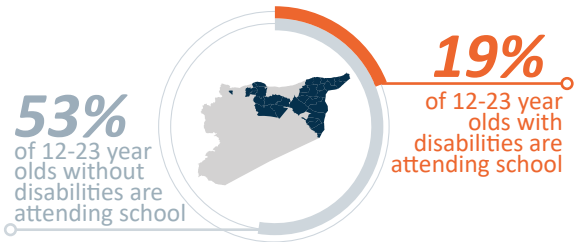
#### North-west



#### North



#### North-east

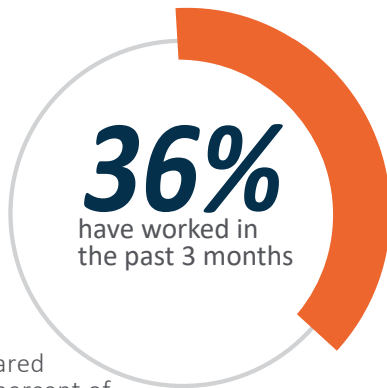


School attendance of returnees reveals a stark disparity between children (ages 12-23) with and without disabilities. Overall, 22 percent of returnees ages 12-23 with disabilities are attending school, compared to 56 percent of returnees without disabilities. CSS maintains

the highest regional attendance rate with nearly a third of all children with disabilities attending (32 percent), but still pales in comparison to the two-thirds (63 percent) without disabilities in CSS who are currently in education.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Work rate for returnees with disabilities (18-64)



Compared to 37 percent of returnees without disabilities

### Forms of paid work (of those who have worked in the past 3 months) for returnees with disabilities



### NEET RATES

#### Rate of 16-26 years with disabilities not in education or work



<sup>10</sup> Attendance is defined as those "in-education" through face-to-face instruction, via remote modalities, or a combination of both, these figures individuals ages 18-23 who report school attendance is not a relevant option for them. Of note, 22 percent of returnees aged 12-17 with disabilities are attending school, compared to 78 percent of those without disabilities nationally.

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

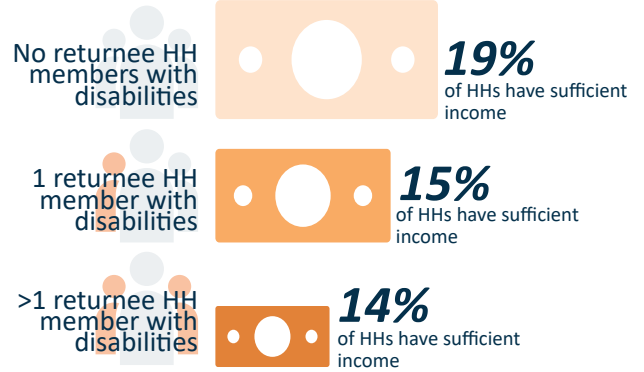
Average monthly income from all sources in returnee HHs with >1 members with disabilities<sup>11</sup>



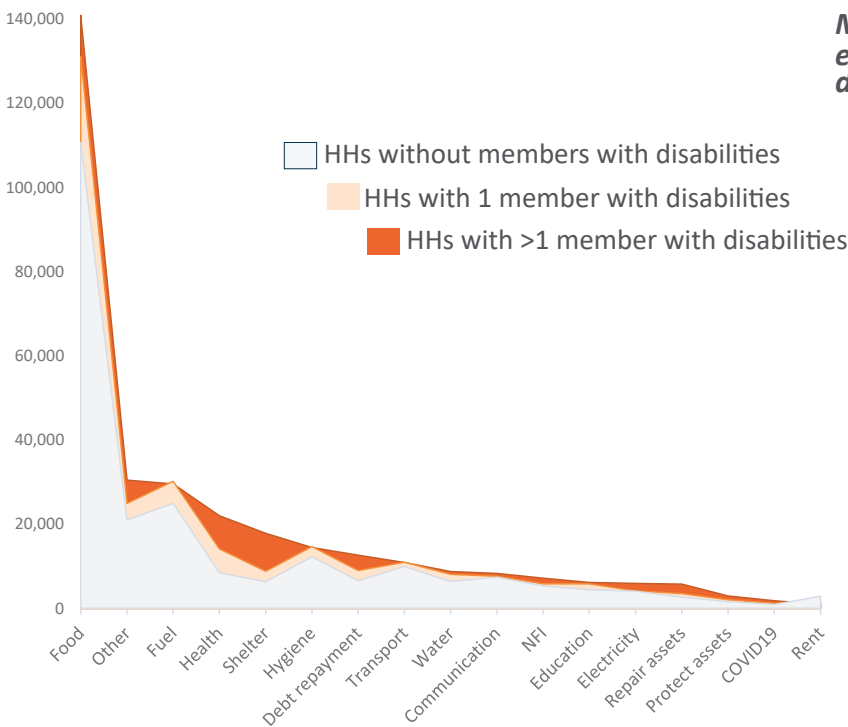
**230,400 SYP**  
approx. \$80 USD<sup>12</sup>

Compared to HHs with one member with disabilities: 206,701 SYP (\$72 USD); and HHs with no member with disabilities: 178,110 SYP (\$62USD)

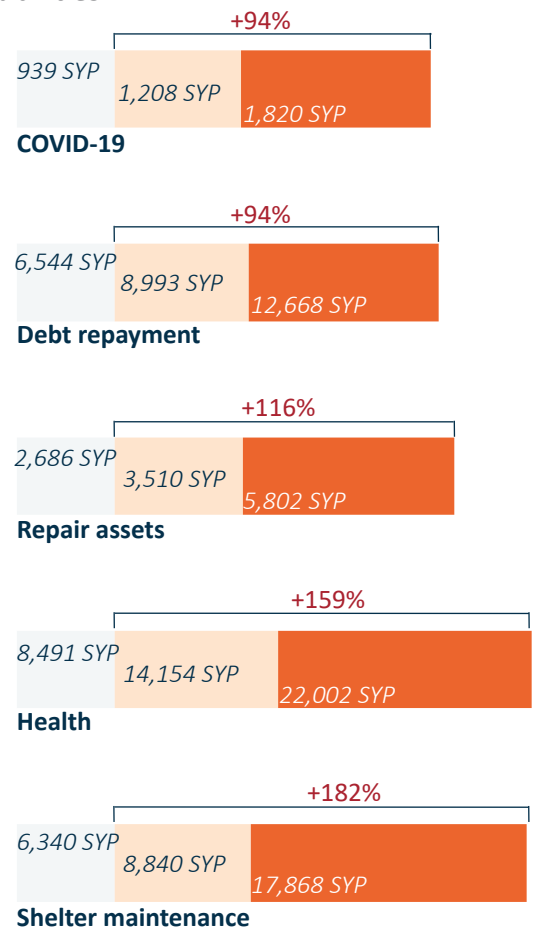
### Income sufficiency



Average monthly expenditure by returnee HHs with members with disabilities<sup>13</sup>



### Most significant average monthly expenditures for HHs with members disabilities



Returnee HHs with more than one member with disabilities report the highest average income (230,400 SYP), compared to HHs with one member with disabilities (206,701 SYP) and HHs with no members with disabilities (178,110 SYP). Despite the moderately higher income, only 14 percent of returnee HHs with multiple members with disabilities report having sufficient income to meet their basic needs, slightly less than the 19 percent of HHs without a member with disabilities.

This phenomena can be explained, in-part, by increased expenditures, which are essential to ensure HHs with members with disabilities can adequately cope with increased needs (like health care expenses) associated with disabilities. Returnee HHs with members with disabilities are more likely to report higher average monthly expenditure in all surveyed domains, especially shelter maintenance, health, repairing assets and in debt repayment. In total, returnee HHs with more than one member with disabilities spend 42 percent more than their average income, with an average monthly expenditure of 326,846 SYP (114

USD); compared to HHs with one member with disabilities who spend 37 percent more than their average income- 283,713 SYP (99 USD); both rates are significantly higher than HHs without any members with disabilities- 236,092 (82 USD). Although investment in assets like shelter or repairs may benefit returnee HHs in the future, returnee HHs with more than one member with disabilities also engage in increased debt/lending expenditure: 12,668 SYP (4 USD), nearly double the 6,544 SYP spent by returnee HHs without members with disabilities.

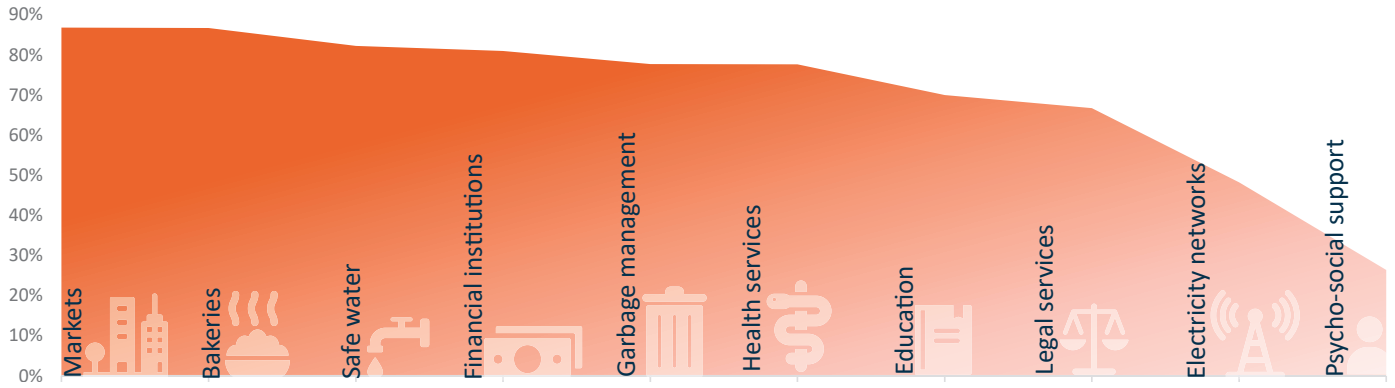
<sup>11</sup> Please note that this figure takes into account **income from all sources**

<sup>12</sup> Despite fluctuations in the SYP value, HNAP determined the exchange rate of 2,872 SYP: 1 USD the best estimate. The figure is based on daily exchange monitoring and a trimmed mean methodology to establish a more "conservative value". Please note, figures are an estimate, are not verified through external sources and should not be extrapolated beyond December.

<sup>13</sup> Amount based on the average monthly reported expenditure based on the last three months prior to data collection.

## ACCESS TO SERVICES AND PRIORITY NEEDS

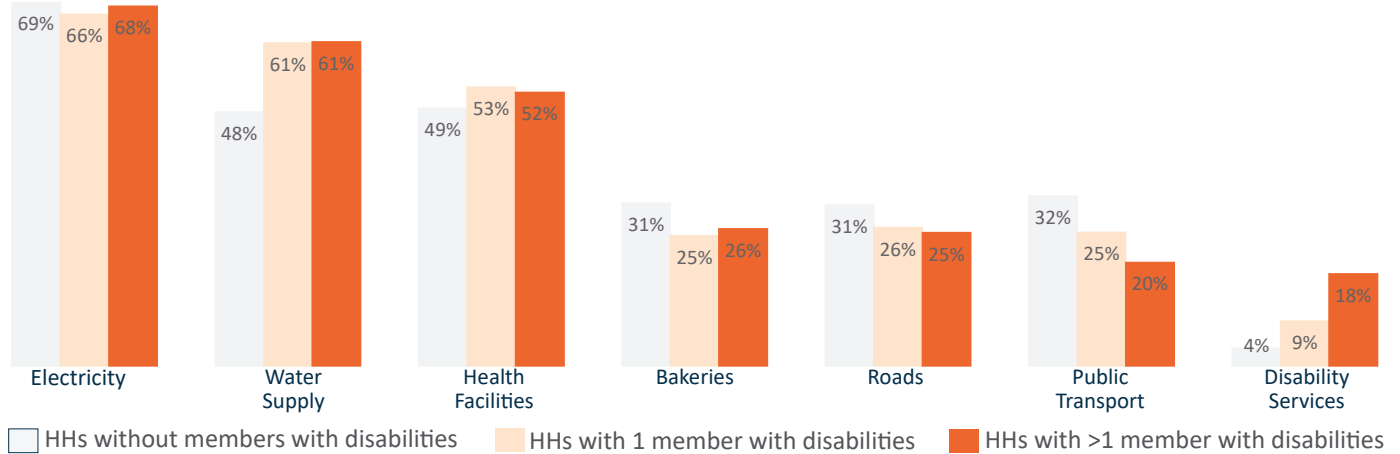
Access to services for HHs with members with disabilities (% of returnee HHs reporting sufficient access)



Over 80 percent of returnee HHs with members with disabilities report having access to markets (87 percent), bakeries (87 percent), water (82 percent) and financial institutions (81 percent). Although reported access, or lack thereof, does not imply a need for the listed service, returnee HHs with members with disabilities report moderately less access to legal services- 67 percent, compared to 77

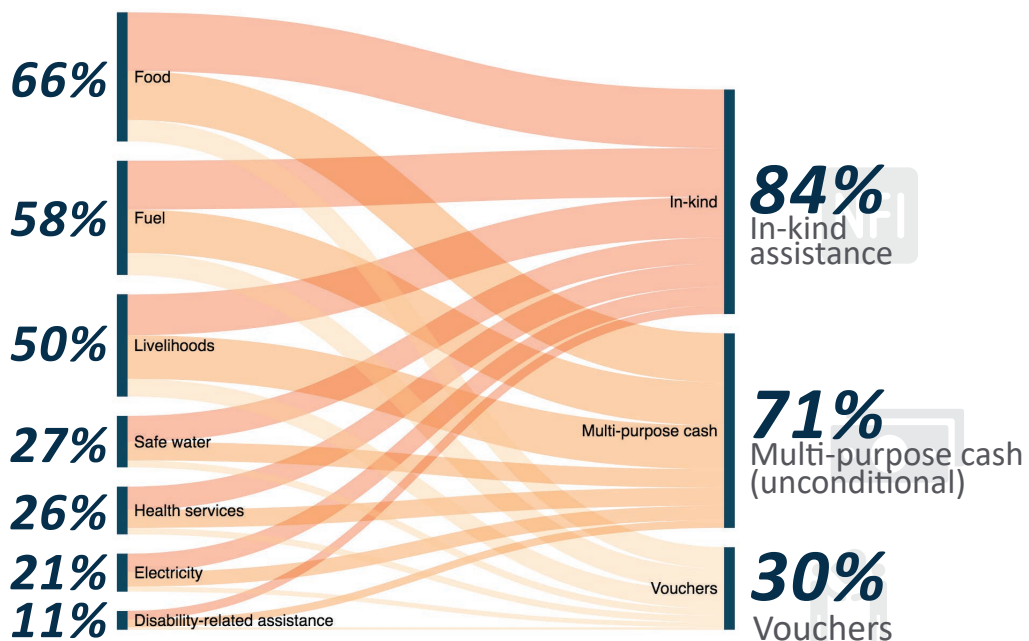
percent of HHs without members with disabilities, as well as decreased access to water networks- 82 percent compared to 91 percent of HHs without members with disabilities. HHs with members with disabilities face critical water shortages across NWS and NES with only 83 and 41 percent reporting access to regular water, respectively.

### Aggregated (top 3) infrastructure needs for returnee HHs



## PRIORITY NEEDS

Aggregated (top 3) priority needs with affiliated preferred modality of assistance for returnee HHs with members with disabilities



### DISCLAIMER

The contents of this report are based on data collected by field staff using a questionnaire. The reported findings and conclusions represent the views and opinions of the surveyed households, for which H NAP cannot be held responsible. Challenges to bear in mind include standard forms of survey bias and data collection obstacles in a challenging environment.