

CHILD RIGHTS SITUATION AND ISSUES OF CHILDREN OF REFUGEE FAMILIES IN ARMENIA

Prepared by Save the Children Armenia Country Office



November 2011

Acknowledgements

The research was conducted by Save the Children Armenia Country Office during June – November 2011.

Research editor: Irina Saghoyan

Proof reader: Anna Khachaturyan

Lead researcher: Gayane Panosyan

Research data analyst: Liana Balyan

Research assistant: Zaruhi Aznauryan

Save the Children is grateful to UNHCR/Armenia for its generous support provided for this research.

We also express our gratitude to the marz-level authorities and staff for helping find the refugees and for support in implementation of the field works.

We would like to extend our appreciation to all the experts and refugees who participated in the interviews and who have provided us with important information and insights.

Executive Summary

Since the early 90s, as a result of conflict over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh (NK), over 300,000 ethnic Armenians fled Azerbaijan to make up the largest group of refugees in Armenia. Additionally, since the end of 2004, Armenia has registered a number of asylum seekers and refugees from Iraq. Refugee children are acutely at risk due to lack of positive development opportunities and the impact of conflict on their lives. The objective of this research was to reveal issues of children from refugee families and explore particular problems concerning their rights arising from the refugee status of their parents.

The research was implemented in Yerevan and seven marzes of Armenia, including Ararat, Aragatsotn, Armavir, Syunik, Gegharkunik, Kotayk and Lori. The term “refugee” refers to persons (mainly ethnic Armenians from Iraq and Azerbaijan) who fled to Armenia and still formally hold the refugee status. The summary findings of the research are presented below.

Housing, Living Conditions and Financial Situation

Regarding the housing condition of the refugees it should be noted that while 61% live in multi-house buildings or detached houses, 28% live in communal areas, 8%-in ex-public building (school, kindergarten, hotel), 4% (7 families) live in campers, cottages, in a barn or in a basement. The peripheral position of refugees areas, bad ecological conditions and poor housing facilities at communal areas are main housing problems of Azeri refugees.

Those refugees, who live in temporary shelters (communal areas, ex-public buildings) provided by RA Government, have serious problems regarding their living conditions. The problem is particularly important for refugees living in communal areas. There are no conditions necessary for life – sufficient space for family members, necessary goods, furniture, kitchen, bathroom, lavatory, running water. Poor living conditions have their negative impact on child’s normal development and leads to their marginalization.

The assessment of economic situation of the refugees showed that 44% of respondents have mentioned that they do not earn enough money even for buying food; 39% noted that they earn enough money only for buying food, but not enough to buy clothes; only 14% mentioned that they earn enough money for buying both food and clothes, but not furniture or house appliances.

Access to Social Benefits

At present the refugees have and enjoy the same social security rights as the citizens of the Republic of Armenia. Although there is no State funded social assistance programs designed primarily for refugees, some of the refugees who are in need receive family benefits. Other type of help refugees get is temporary shelter.

Education

In total 91% of 8-18 year old children participated in the survey attend general or vocational schools. Several reasons mentioned for children not attending school are as following: difficult financial situation, language barrier (mainly among Iraqi children), and difficult educational program (mentioned by almost half of children). The difficulties associated with education process are quite different for Iraqi and Azeri refugee children. Thus, language barriers are most commonly mentioned by Iraqi refugee children, whereas Azeri refugee children point out overloaded and difficult education program as a main difficulty encountered.

More than 50% of children who participated in the survey mentioned that they are planning to enter universities and continue higher education. Among the main reasons for not continuing education in universities financial problems and language barriers (incompatibility with native speakers) are mentioned. Some of the children having no intention to enter university are enrolled in vocational schools.

In most cases Azeri refugee parents encountered no difficulties with entering children to school. Whereas Iraqi refugee children faced a lot of difficulties associated with absence of documents from children's previous school from their country of origin, requirements for translation of documents, placing child at a lower grade due to difficulties with Armenian language. In some cases these resulted in high-level of absenteeism and decision not to continue with tertiary education.

Child Leisure and Rest

From all refugee children 66% do not attend after school classes mainly due to financial reasons or due to lack of out of school activities in their communities. Children in their majority are not members of any child/youth organizations. 59% of children have nearby playgrounds, yards or other outdoor places to spend time. However, during in-depth interviews Iraqi refugees reported absence of outdoor facilities for their children to spend free time. Unlike Azeri refugee children, Iraqi refugee children reported spending their free time at home rather than spending it with friends, which reflects their isolation. With regard to summer holidays, 65% children stay at home, and among Iraqi refugees 83% stay at home during summer holidays. Azeri refugee children spend their vacation with their relatives in other parts of Armenia.

Health

Fifty four percent of parents who participated in the research reported that their children have good health conditions. However, some cases of malnutrition both among Iraqi and Azeri refugee children (5%) were also reported. About 50% of children have either congenital or chronic illnesses. Regarding the latter most parents mentioned that their children got such chronic conditions after coming to Armenia, due to huge level of stress caused by terrible living conditions right after the repatriation and the refugee status that they own. In most cases refugee children are provided with equal access to medical services as local children, excluding some cases when parents were asked by doctors to make direct payments for medical care. Despite unpaid primary health care for children aged 0-7 some refugee children were rejected in medical help because of not being able to pay the requested money. Meanwhile, the majority of parents mentioned that they didn't encounter any problem in securing their children's healthcare, except unaffordable medicines for some parents. Some parents believe that in some cases doctors treated the children badly/differently because of their refugee status.

Food and Clean Water

The Azeri refugee children are not enough fed more often than Iraqi refugee children. Similarly, rural children are less fed than the urban children. They eat very little, sometimes even not enough for a day, either because their parents don't have enough money, or the shops are far from their residence and it is difficult to buy needed food for children. Iraqi refugee children are in better conditions, although they were not used to local food. The consumption of such products as meat and fish is relatively low. The access to clean water is available in most of the cases, but 18% of families both from rural (11%) and urban (7%) settings are deprived from clean water.

Working Children and Child Labour

27% of refugee children help families with household chore, which in most cases is not very intensive and constitutes on average 2-7 hours per week. Another 31% is engaged in paid job. Moreover, refugee children in rural areas are engaged in both paid and unpaid seasonal agricultural or farming works. However, there are cases of more intensive paid works performed by children both in rural and urban settings. Children (age from 10 to 18) mainly work during summer holidays, which doesn't impact their school attendance, however several cases of school absenteeism due to work have been recorded as well. It should be noted that although the work performed by children provides additional revenue to the refugee households, the cases when children perform jobs enhancing their professional skills are very rare. Children mainly perform low skilled job which is unpleasant and not satisfactory. The hard socio-economic situation is mentioned as the main reason for child labour. In comparison with local children refugee children work as casual workers (i.e. selling newspapers, transportation of goods, agricultural works) and are not accompanied by their parents. Local children, when they work, are mainly involved in family farming, agriculture or business or are accompanying their parents as work helpers (example, girls helping their mothers to do contracted cleaning or boys helping fathers in construction works). Refugee children, therefore, are more at risk of underpayment and exploitation than local children.

Violence against Children

In general, refugees are not treated badly by locals because of their refugee status. While this is almost always the case with refugees from Azerbaijan, in case of Iraqi refugees, children reported cases of negative attitude and bad treatment by peers mainly at school which happened during the first years after their arrival in Armenia. One of the reasons, as explained by children, was the difference in their spoken language, i.e. their poor knowledge of Eastern Armenian. Currently occurrence of this kind of cases has become very uncommon. However, some Iraqi refugee children still have problems with integration. In case of Azeri refugee children they are better integrated in the society as they lived in the country for a longer time (were born and grew up in Armenia), however they are blamed by locals to be from a refugee family when any problem incurs, such as poor marks or behaviour at school.

Deviance

The majority of experts reported no cases of deviant behaviour among refugee children. There are almost no refugee children registered in police for robbery, prostitution, alcohol or drug use, begging etc. Among children involved in this research only two cases of robbery and two cases of prostitution were reported.

Access to Documentation, Citizenship and Social Adaptation

Access to Documentation

Social conditions, social environment, employment and the State politics towards refugees have a significant influence on their decision to naturalization. Refugees often regard naturalization to be pressured by the State, which speaks about lack of knowledge of refugee rights by both the refugees and State representatives. As a result, from a more than 3,000 refugees registered in 2010 (according to data provided by UNHCR) present research identified 196 refugee households where mainly one or two family members retained refugee status. Lack of formal residence registration needed to undergo naturalization procedures is an obstacle for refugees for obtaining citizenship.

Problems Connected with Documentation

In the past there were some cases when refugees or their children didn't have any identification document, but recently the number of such cases has decreased due to the State policy implemented in this regard as well as support of international organizations. As a result, the majority of refugees without identification documents have acquired RA passports and citizenship.

Iraqi refugees have encountered certain difficulties with obtaining of identification documents, such as CTDs, temporary asylum seeker documents or RA passports. The most frequently encountered problems are associated with incorrect translation of their original documents, absence of the surname, the established proceedings, distance from the registration centers and bureaucratic procedures.

The usage of CTD being issued to the refugees is not particularly helpful as it is not accepted by many State structures or private organizations such as registry office, banks, mobile phone operators, etc. Moreover, although the document is called a "travel document" the respondents claim that with this document it is neither possible to cross the border of Armenia nor to obtain entry visas.

Maintaining Refugee Status vs. Acquisition of Citizenship

The refugees are interested in maintaining the document certifying their refugee status, as they expect to get certain benefits from it such as provision of apartment, exemption from military service, or a possibility to apply to other citizenship or moving to other country. The experts assure that only in case of military service exemption the refugee status document can help. In other cases, the refugee status document will not lead to fulfillment of expectations, but the refugees are not quite aware of exact benefits arising from the refugee status.

Social Adaptation

Community conditions, social environment, employment have significant influence on refugee's social adaptation process. Children of Azeri refugee households that were born in Armenia have not had major problems with social adaptation. However, social adaptation of Iraqi refugee children does not always go smoothly.

Birth Registration

The birth registration of Iraqi and Azeri refugee children is not a serious problem as currently the birth registration procedure for children of non-RA citizens is considerably simplified. Children who were born in Armenia possess birth certificates even if one of the parents (or both) does not have an RA citizenship. Acquisition of documents for children is rather a serious problem for Iraqi refugees. Iraqi Armenians provide "baptism paper" as the only certification they possess for their children. This document is essentially different from the birth certificate or from other identification documents applied in RA or other countries, so the refugees have to obtain a CTD for their children or register them in their own CTDs. Concerning the course of document change for Iraqi children the main problem refers to the translation of the "baptism paper", as usually lots of mistakes are being made.

Military Service

Male children of refugees who were born in Armenia and hold RA citizenship must serve in the Armenian army. The sons of Azeri refugees who were born outside Armenia have generally maintained their refugee status aimed at getting exemption from the military service. The overwhelming majority of Iraqi refugees flatly reject the idea of acquiring citizenship for their sons to avoid their serving in the Armenian army.

Separated Children

Currently there are no separated ~~unaccompanied~~ refugee children in Armenia. However, a few cases of ~~separated~~ children living without parents but with relatives have been reported. Children are being raised by grandparents and other relatives due to several circumstances and reasons, for example a child's parents having passed away; child not wanting to live with parents, parents having abandoned their child etc. There are number of cases of children living with a single parent. In women headed households the majority of women do not have employment and live in poor economic conditions.

Abbreviations

CTD	Convention Travel Document
FAR	Fund for Armenian Relief
FWCD	Family, Women and Children Departments
HH	Household
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NK	Nagorno Karabakh
RA	Republic of Armenia
SPU	Social Protection Unit
SC	Save the Children
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Table of Content

Acknowledgements.....	i
Executive Summary.....	ii
Housing, Living Conditions and Financial Situation.....	ii
Abbreviations.....	vii
Table of Content.....	viii
Part One: Introduction.....	1
Section 1. Background and Justification for Study.....	1
Section 2. Aims and Objectives.....	1
Section 3. Definitions.....	1
Part Two: Methodology.....	2
Section 1. Data Collection Methods.....	2
Section 2. Sampling.....	3
Section 3. Reliability, Validity and Generalization.....	5
Section 4. Ethical Issues.....	6
Section 5. Problems Encountered and Limitations of the Study.....	7
Part Three: Housing, Living Conditions and Economic Situation.....	8
Section 1. Housing.....	8
Section 2. Living Conditions.....	10
Section 3. Economic Situation.....	13
Part Four: Access to Social Benefits.....	16
Part Five: Education.....	18
Part Six: Child Leisure and Rest.....	22
Part Seven: Health.....	24
Part Eight: Access to Food and Clean Water.....	29
Part Nine: Working Children and Child Labour.....	32
Part Ten: Violence against Children.....	36
Part Eleven: Deviance.....	38
Part Twelve: Citizenship, Social Adaptation and Documentation.....	39
Section 1. Access to Documentation.....	39
Section 2. Problems Connected with Documentation.....	40
Section 3. Maintaining Refugee Status vs. Acquisition of Citizenship.....	42
Section 4. Social Adaptation.....	43
Part Thirteen: Birth Registration and Documents of Children.....	47
Section 4. The Documents of Children Born in Armenia and Related Issues.....	47
Section 5. Documents of Children Born Abroad and Corresponding Problems.....	47
Part Fourteen: Military Service.....	50
Part Fifteen: Separated Children.....	52
Main Findings and Recommendations.....	54
Attachments.....	58
Annex 1: List of Tables.....	58
Annex 2: List of Charts and Diagrams.....	59
Annex 3: Questionnaire for HH Survey.....	59
Annex 4: Guide Questionnaire for In-depth Interview with Refugee Families.....	59
Annex 5: Guide Questionnaire for In-depth Interview with Regional Experts.....	59
Annex 5: Guide Questionnaire for In-depth Interview with Local Experts.....	59
Annex 7: Report on Findings on Situation of Naturalized Former Refugees.....	59
Annex 5: List of Experts Interviewed.....	60
Annex 6: Map Illustrating Refugees by Origin and Location.....	61
Reference List.....	62

Part One: Introduction

Section 1. Background and Justification for Study

Generally, refugee children are acutely at risk of neglect, exploitation and abuse due to lack of positive development opportunities and the impact of the conflict on their lives. Hosting countries and communities assume responsibility for protection of needs and rights of refugee children and youth but they often lack the capacity and resources to adequately address these issues in a timely and consistent manner.

Since early 90s, as a result of the conflict over the territory of Nagorno Karabakh (NK), over 300,000 ethnic Armenians fled Azerbaijan to make up the largest group of refugees in Armenia. Additionally, since the end of 2004, Armenia has registered a number of asylum seekers and refugees from Iraq. Escaped from brutalities, upon their arrival these people were settled in abandoned resort houses, hotels, schools, kindergartens, hostels, communal areas, etc. throughout Armenia. Until 1999-2000, the number of refugees who opted to obtain Armenian citizenship was relatively small.

The situation changed starting from 2000 when a lot of refugees from Azerbaijan began to naturalize. The number of refugees from Azerbaijan obtaining Armenian citizenship topped 65,000 by the end of January 2004. Since then the number of naturalized Azeri refugees has been steadily growing and as of the end of 2010, as per UNHCR, only about 3000 people remained refugees.

Section 2. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to reveal issues of refugee children related to the child rights situation. Another aim is to explore the particular problems arising from the refugee status related to child rights. The third objective was to understand whether refugee status hinders or preserves from using services available to nationals.

Section 3. Definitions

Refugee: In this study, the term “refugee” refers to persons (mainly ethnic Armenians from Iraq and Azerbaijan) who fled to Armenia from 1993 till present and still formally hold the refugee status.

Refugee children: The term “refugee children” refers to children under age of 18 whose at least one parent formally holds refugee status. Iraqi refugee children referred to children whose parent(s) migrated from Iraq. Azeri refugee children referred to children whose parent(s) migrated from Azerbaijan.

Child labour: Child labour by its nature is a negative concept and is defined as child work, regardless paid or unpaid, which hinders children’s growth and development.

Naturalization: Naturalization is the acquisition of citizenship by a person of any country, which is accompanied by adoption of behavior norms, language and culture typical of the majority of country’s population¹.

¹ Социологическая энциклопедия: В 2 т. / Национальный общественно-научный фонд; Рук. науч. проекта Г.Ю. Семигин, М.: Мысль, 2003. Т. 2. С. 20

Part Two: Methodology

Section I. Data Collection Methods

The research was implemented in 7 marzes of Armenia and Yerevan. Shirak, Tavush and Vayots Dzor marzes were excluded from the survey as according to pre-assessment available data there were less than 100 refugees residing in these marzes altogether.

The triangulation of methods was chosen in order to increase the validity of data.

Data collection was conducted using the following three methods:

1. Household survey by means of a standardized questionnaire;
2. In-depth interviews with experts, including:
 - a) Local experts: school principals, mayors, communal areas superintendents, and others;
 - b) National-level experts: SPU, FWCD, NGOs, State Migration Service and other experts;
3. In-depth interviews with refugees.

Overall through the three data collection methods, i.e. household survey, in-depth interviews with experts and with refugees the following number of interviews was conducted.

Table 1. Total number of survey and in-depth interviews conducted

Data collection method	Number of respondents/ interviewees
Household survey	196
In-depth interviews with experts	29
In-depth interviews with refugees	22

The research gathered information on the current situation of refugee child rights at 2 levels: family level and community level.

According to the survey objectives, multiple respondents from the households participated in the survey: the most informed adult family member and children aged 8 to 18. In most of the cases, mothers of children were elected to be the adult respondent; in case of her absence, the most informed and available adult member of the household was interviewed. The HH survey questionnaire therefore was composed of two parts, one for interviews with children and another - for interviewing adults. Prior to starting the interview with a child, the interviewer asked for consent of parents for the interview. In cases when the parents did not agree, they were present during the child interviews. In the refugee HHs with children below 8, only the parents were interviewed.

At the community level the in-depth interviews were conducted with service providers, including school teachers, village mayors or staff at the mayors' office, superintendents of communal houses. At the national level interviews with NGOs, including Children's Support Foundation Center of Fund of Armenian Relief (FAR) and Orran Benevolent NGO, staff members of FWCDs, SPUs and State Migration Service were conducted.

The research focused on assessment of the situation related to the following issues:

- Housing and living conditions of the refugee HHs and their revenues;
- Access to social benefits;
- Education related issues;
- Child leisure and rest;
- Health and healthcare related problems;
- Access to food and clean water;
- Working children and child labour;
- Violence against children;
- Children with deviant behavior;
- Access to services to obtain documentation and difficulties in application of documentation, citizenship and social adaptation;
- Birth registration;
- Military service; and
- Separated children.

Section 2. Sampling

Initially it was planned to have around 900 households participating in the survey; the initial plan was grounded by 2010 data on officially registered refugees provided by UNHCR. However, during the implementation process it appeared that many of refugees have already been naturalized. No household sampling was done for survey, so all identified refugee households with children in target marzes participated in household survey.

In total 196 households with children whose parent(s) have refugee status participated in the survey. In total, out of 196 identified HH 113 interviews with children aged 8-18 (30 Iraqi and 83 Azeri) were conducted. In each HH one child aged 8-18 was interviewed and in families with more than two children of that age the child whose birthday is closer to the date of interview was interviewed. In total, there are 359 children age 0-18 in 196 identified HHs. The total number of children in identified 196 refugee HHs is presented in the table below. The data is disaggregated by age, gender and country of origin.

Table 2. Statistics on refugee children (by age, gender and origin)

Country of origin	Girls			Boys			Total
	0-7	8-12	13-18	0-7	8-12	13-18	
Azeri	53	39	64	62	26	40	284
Iraqi	20	9	6	25	4	11	75
Total	73	48	70	87	30	51	359
	191			168			

From 199 children aged 8-18 57% (113) have participated in the survey.

The number of refugee parents participating in 196 survey interviews is 194. The parents of two interviewed children have not participated in the survey. One of the children was an orphan, whose guardianship was carried out by the elder brother. The latter was not in the country during the survey, and his wife, who was responsible for the child, had no authority to answer and didn't possess the information requested. The next case was in Yerevan; only the child was interviewed as it was a single-parent family, where the mother (who was the child's guardian) was mentally ill.

The Table below presents the statistics on surveyed households by marzes and the refugees' origin.

Table 3. Statistics on refugee households (by marzes and origin)

Region	Country of origin			Total
	Iraq	Azerbaijan	Iran	
Aragatsotn	0	7	0	7
Ararat	18	22	0	40
Armavir	1	2	0	3
Gegarkunik	0	10	0	10
Kotayk	1	29	0	30
Lori	0	9	0	9
Syunik	0	12	0	12
Yerevan	22	62	1	85
Total	42	153	1	196

In the report, the analysis of cases where data is disaggregated by refugees' origin, the data on the only family from Iran is presented under the Iraqi household's responses, taking into account similarities of their situations.

To obtain data on refugee households' addresses different sources were used and techniques applied for each particular marz.

1. The database of Azeri refugees and refugees from other countries (along with the residence addresses) was obtained from UNHCR's survey conducted at 2007.
2. Introductory letters about the survey were sent to the heads of regional municipalities. As a result, point persons were nominated by the municipalities to work with the researchers to help acquire the lists of marz refugee households. It should be noted, though, that some marzes did not possess updated data on number of refugees and their residence addresses.
3. The data obtained from marz-level authorities was compared with the information in the UNHCR database, and was then verified by calling the mayors of the respected towns and villages. Additionally, inquiries were sent to the respective police departments.
4. The interviewers paid visits to the all addresses obtained and performed on the ground verification of information: if the residing family continued carrying the refugee status and had children, it was included in the survey.

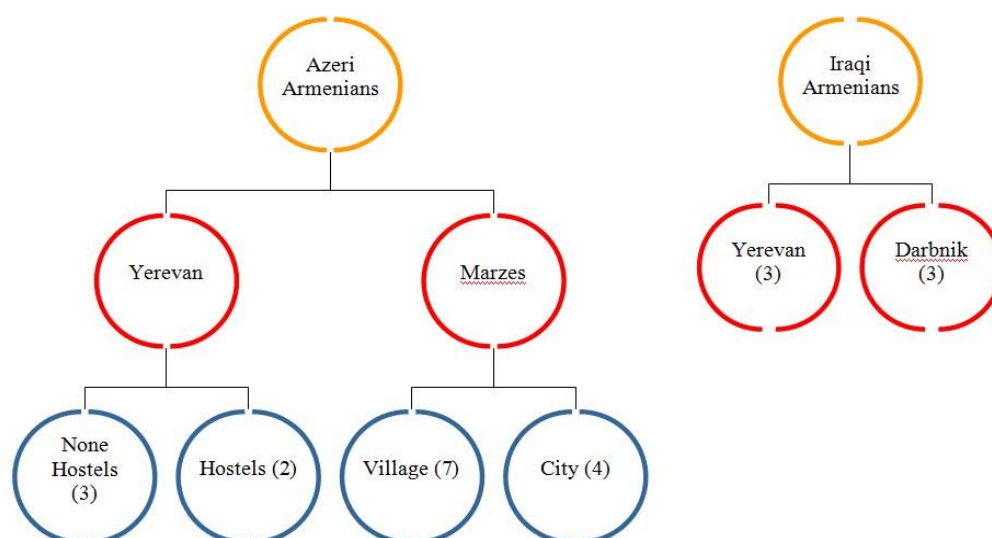
The purposive sample of experts working either with children or involved through community work into the refugee children's issues was applied until a sufficient number of respondents were obtained, i.e. sufficient to answer research questions. As Kvale² (1996, p. 104) noted the number of interviews depends on a study's purpose. He noted that "...if the purpose is to understand the world as experienced by one specific person, this one subject is sufficient. ... If the number of subjects is too large it is not possible to make penetrating interpretations of the interviews". The following local and national level experts were interviewed.

² *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Table 4. Number of in-depth interviews with experts

Corresponding unit	Quantity
Municipality SPU	6
Municipality CPU	8
Village mayor/staff	7
State Migration Service	1
NGO	2
Communal area superintendent	2
School authority/teacher of Azeri refugee children	2
School authority/teacher of Iraqi refugee children	1
Total	29

Regarding the in-depth interviews with households a purposive sampling was conducted as well. Total number of in depth interviews conducted with refugee HHs is 22. At the first stage the HHs were divided by origin: Iraqi and Azeri refugee HHs. Age of children was the next determinant – HHs were selected having children from three age-groups: first group - 0-7 years old, second - 8-12 years old, third - 13-18 years old. Other determinant was location and distribution according to location is presented in the diagram below.

Diagram 1. In-depth interviews with refugee families

Section 3. Reliability, Validity and Generalization

One of the concerns in qualitative interviews regarding the reliability is the reliability of data and interpretation. The quality of recording and documenting data becomes an essential part in assessing their reliability (Flick 2002). In this research, interviews were conducted and transcribed by the same interviewer. This increased the reliability of data by reducing the possibility of misinterpretations and mistakes in transcriptions. Moreover, in order to reduce memory effect and enhance the reliability of data all interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed using these recordings.

In order to enhance the communicative validity of the interviews as per Kvale, when possible, the interview reports were sent to interviewees to assess the content and to check the correctness of the statements.

Three data collection methods were used: 1) in-depth interviews with refugees, 2) in-depth interviews with local and national experts, and 3) survey with refugee HHs. The triangulation of these data collections methods boosted the validity of data.

As Flick³ stated the problem of generalization in qualitative research is that “its statements are often made for a certain context or specific cases and based on analysis of relations, conditions and processes etc.” However, when generalizing an attempt is made to give up the context in order to find out whether the findings are correct out of the context. For our research it would be fair to say that the findings can be generalized geographically for Armenia.

As the survey used the census for survey and did not have any sampling of refugee HHs implemented, the validity of quantitative data is quite high. As to the generalization ability of quantitative data obtained, it can be noted that even though the three regions of Armenia were excluded from the survey, this fact did not affect the data considerably as these regions have very low number of refugee HHs.

Taking into account the method of sampling and the fact that the interviewees represented different organizations, it can be assumed that the findings can be generalized for the entire Armenia.

Section 4. Ethical Issues

Prior to starting filling in the questionnaires, the interviewers explained the purpose of the survey to respondents. The interviewers assured refugees that they are free to participate and to discontinue the interview any time. After getting agreement for participation of adults the consent of parent for conducting survey with a child was also obtained.

When possible the in-depth interviewees were contacted by phone; in such cases, verbal information about the purpose and procedure of the interview, of the purpose of the research and requirements for the interviewee were conveyed. In most cases, the general introduction into the purpose of the research was given during obtaining agreement to participate in the interview. Later, prior to the start of the interview the purpose of the research was restated in more details both orally and in writing. So, the informed consent to participate in the study was obtained (as stipulated by Kvale⁴). The interviewees were suggested to be sent the transcriptions of the interviews allowing them to check the accuracy of transcription and the correctness of statements, and to make necessary changes.

According to Kvale⁵ when reporting the interviews “the issue of confidentiality, as well as the question of consequences of the published report for the interviewees, as well as for the institution they represent should be considered”. To insure the above-mentioned, the results of in-depth interviews with experts are presented in general way, without mentioning the exact source of information. In cases where the interviewed expert was the only staff member of particular organization and referring to the organization would make possible the identification of the person, the organization was not referred in the report.

³ An Introduction to Qualitative Research. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002, p. 230.

⁴ *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications (1996, p. 98)

⁵ *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications (1996, p. 111)

Section 5. Problems Encountered and Limitations of the Study

The main problem encountered right after commencement of the survey field works, was that the lists of refugee households provided to interviewers were not accurate, mainly because vast majority of refugees had recently acquired Armenia citizenship. After the initial 3-4 days, the field works were suspended, as the interviewers would spend the whole day checking the addresses without finding enough respondents with needed criteria. The data on refugees was re-checked (see *Section 2: Sampling*) and updated. Besides, the research design was modified – the in-depth interviews with refugees were added as source of data, which was not initially planned.

Part Three: Housing, Living Conditions and Economic Situation

Section I. Housing

Study of the social situation of the refugees started with the analysis of their housing conditions. The quantitative interviews revealed that 30% out of 196 respondents live in multi-house buildings, 31% live in detached houses, 28% - in communal areas, 8% - in ex-public building (school, kindergarten, hotel), 2% - in campers (3 families), 1% - in cottages (2 families), one family in a barn and one family in a basement.

According to in-depth interview results, upon arrival in Armenia the refugees had two main ways to find housing:

- Resolve the housing issue on their own. Moving into Armenia some Azeri refugees had exchanged their apartments with Azerbaijanis residing in Armenia. Another option to solve the issue on their own was to live with the relatives or friends, or to rent an apartment. During the interviews it turned out that refugees having solved their housing issue through above mentioned options do not have confidence towards their future in Armenia and have intention to go abroad. Currently there are also people among Iraqi refugees who live in rented apartments (due to which they often have to change their apartments and consequently their environment), or live with their relatives.
- Rely on the State support. By means of State institutions, particularly the State Migration Service and local authorities, the refugees were placed in temporary shelters-communal areas, campers, wooden or tin cottages, sometimes in buildings of public use.

As a rule those areas, which were allocated to refugees, geographically are located in inconvenient positions, i.e. community and village suburbs, even though the vast majority of Azeri and Iraqi refugees come from urban settings. The peripheral position first and foremost anticipates difficulties in regard with public transportation (40% of respondents have stated that they have problems with public transportation). Moreover, there are factories, cemeteries and garbage dumps in the suburbs of communities, as a result of which these areas also have air pollution issue. During the quantitative interviews the attempt to find out how the refugees assess the situation of their environment and whether there are green areas in their community. Thus, the respondents have expressed their agreement and disagreement on the following phrases: “There are green areas in our community” and “The environment is very dirty”. The data received are presented in table below.

Table 5. Evaluation of the environment of the community by refugees (by country of origin)

There are green areas in our community	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
Absolutely disagree	17	40%	48	32%	65	34%
Somehow disagree	8	19%	22	15%	30	16%
Somehow agree	17	40%	34	22%	51	26%
Absolutely agree	1	1%	47	31%	48	24%
Total	43	100%	151	100%	194	100%

The environment is very dirty	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
Absolutely disagree	9	21%	31	21%	40	21%
Somehow disagree	12	28%	34	23%	46	24%
Somehow agree	9	21%	32	21%	41	21%
Absolutely agree	13	30%	54	36%	67	35%
Total	43	100%	151	100%	194	100%

About 50% (99) of respondents somehow or absolutely agree that there are green areas in their communities. The environment is very dirty according to 56% (108) of respondents.

The table below presents the respondents' assessment on environmental pollution depending on the type of the apartment they live in.

Table 6. Evaluation of the environment of the community by refugees (by type of the apartment they live in)

Type of the apartments	The environment is not so dirty		The environment is very dirty		Total	
	Multi-apartment building	24	28%	34	31%	58
Ex-public building (school, kindergarten, hotel)	6	7%	10	9%	16	8%
Communal area	16	19%	37	34%	53	27%
House	36	42%	24	22%	60	31%
Camper	1	1%	2	2%	3	2%
Barn	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Basement	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
Cottage	2	2%	0	0%	2	1%
Total	86	100%	108	100%	194	100%

The concern about dirty environment was reported by 56% (108) respondents and mainly reported by the residents of communal areas 34% (37), multi-apartment buildings 31% (34) and houses 22% (24).

Besides the fact that dwelling location may have a negative impact on respondents' health and normal lifestyle, it also has a serious negative impact on the psychology of the refugees and their children. Although the respondents have stated that there is no discrimination and intolerance towards refugees in Armenia, the sheer fact that such phrases as "refugee communal area", "refugee district", "refugee village", "refugee cottages" and many suchlike notions are still in use, proves that by allocating a certain area for refugees the government already "differentiates" the refugees from Armenian citizens. Moreover, the local population names such districts, i.e. the Azeri refugee district. In Armavir for example, such district is called "small Baku" by the locals.

Refugees who are expecting State support, in their majority do not strive for improving their current conditions, as the dwellings they live in are considered temporary; they rather have expectations to be provided with a residence.

Many respondents, mainly those who have moved to Armenia long ago, are registered in the State waiting list for apartments. During the research it turned out that some ex-refugees have already received apartments through State certificate program and have acquired Armenian citizenship. Although according to the experts' opinion, the refugee status is not essential for being enrolled in housing provision program, the refugees believe that by maintaining their status and sparing no efforts to improve their living conditions they increase their chances of getting an apartment from the State. It should be noted that

according to experts, the State budget has not been financing the housing provision program already for two years. As a result hundreds of refugees keep cherishing “unrealistic hopes” (the experts’ definition) to improve their housing conditions. The interviewed respondents have repeatedly stated their expectations and disappointment about housing provision. Quotations: “We are registered for housing provision with the State Migration Service. As my foot hurts, sometimes my daughter makes inquiries and they respond that currently there are no donors and are a lot of people on the waiting list in the mean time”; “We have been registered for an apartment for already 20 years. Every time they find an excuse and we are still waiting for our turn. In 2006 we were told that our turn is coming, but ...Every time we apply, they say that there are hundreds of families like ours”. Thus, a lot of families are waiting for apartments.

Section 2. Living Conditions

As for refugee living conditions, it should be noted that the survey results revealed that good or bad conditions mainly depend on the place of residence. The refugees, having solved their housing issue on their own, i.e. having obtained or rented apartments were able to secure normal living conditions. According to interviewed experts, the majority of refugees who moved to Armenia have somehow managed to create minimum conditions necessary for life. The refugees, who live in temporary shelters provided by the Government, have serious living conditions problems, especially those living in communal areas. Extremely tight space, dilapidated conditions of the premises, extremely bad or not functioning toilets, poor running water system, lack of furniture and appliances are common for these settings. The basic sanitary conditions are not being ensured directly threatening health condition of children and adults. Bathrooms and kitchens are often shared by the residents resulting in conflicts and stress.

It should be noted that in some communal areas the refugees managed to privatize their living premises, and then improved them somehow. However, in their majority the communal areas are owned by the state or local municipalities. The State has not allocated any financial resources for the renovation of the communal areas and bringing them to normal living conditions. Consecutively, the residents uphold attitude of collective irresponsibility. Thus, the respondents residing in the communal areas on Artsakh Street, Yerevan, noted that even the taps of common use are out of order, and no one cares for their repair. According to the respondents, because of extremely poor sanitary conditions, insects and even rats are common in their buildings. There are communal areas, which are at the 4-th (the highest) degree of emergency. Thus for example the communal area on Artsakh Street is being dilapidated to the extent that the refugee residents of the upper floor do not allow their children to use their bathroom, as it may pull down every second. People live in fear and stress, which leaves an indelible mark on children.

Respondents from all communal areas stated the absence of basic conditions for their children, such as lack of bed, desk, etc. In many cases, when there are several school-age children in the family, they disturb each other while preparing their homework. A lot of intrafamily and interfamily conflicts arise as a result of poor social conditions. According to an expert “... the communal area puts its seal on the fate of the child, on child’s lifestyle, mindset, and behavior... Being a refugee or a local resident is not an issue; the issue is residing in the communal area... The kids at school are ashamed to say that they live in a communal area, as because of this fact other children don’t communicate with them, don’t invite them to their home; thus they become outsiders in this society. Usually the complex of inferiority and evil is observed in these children”. During the interview conducted with the superintendent of communal area on Artsakh Street it turned out there are refugee families with minor children, whose

apartments are in an unsanitary state: "Room conditions are so poor that the mother with the child has to stay at friends' houses. The child may become sick of that dirtiness. The father died of tuberculosis, the mother is sick. The child is thirteen years old. There are many boxes scattered over the room, there is no place to sleep; they sleep in these boxes". She also tells the story of another family, the mother of which was keeping the child in dirt, in terrible unsanitary conditions, as a result of which the child died of a lung infection.

The refugees living in campers have almost the same conditions. In some cases refugees living in campers are provided with apartments built in the refugee districts, which are financed by international organizations. The refugees, who had moved to these apartments, have already obtained Armenian citizenship. There are villages (Syunik marz) where the refugees live in wooden cottages. According to the village mayor of one of the villages, if until the end of this year their housing problem is not solved, the refugees living in cottages will leave for Russia. The refugees living in the former apartments of Azerbaijanis previously residing in Armenia also have problems. They assure that their apartments are not firm enough and in case of a weak earthquake there is a hazard that the latter will be destroyed. During the survey the families residing in the village municipality building, in a former house of culture and in other buildings, which are not set up for housing were met. According to respondents their children feel suppressed and ashamed of their conditions, which resulted in their isolation due to lack of interaction with peers who live in better conditions. Quotation: "The child feels bad, asks why we do not have a normal house, do not have normal conditions, large rooms ... all his friends have a computer, he doesn't have one..."

In qualitative interviews the respondents were asked to express their agreement or disagreement on judgments on their living conditions. The results are presented below:

Table 7. The evaluation of their living conditions by refugees (by country of origin)

There is no enough space for all family members	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
	Absolutely disagree	17	40%	19	13%	36
Rather disagree than agree	6	14%	19	13%	25	13%
Rather agree than disagree	9	21%	14	9%	23	12%
Absolutely agree	11	26%	98	65%	109	56%
Don't know	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Total	43	100%	151	100%	194	100%

As it can be seen 68% (132) of respondents absolutely or somehow agree with the statement "There is no enough space for all family members".

The shelter needs to be renovated	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
	Absolutely disagree	10	23%	6	4%	16
Rather disagree than agree	12	28%	14	9%	26	13%
Rather agree than disagree	11	26%	16	11%	27	14%
Absolutely agree	9	21%	114	75%	123	63%
Don't know	1	2%	1	1%	2	1%
Total	43	100%	151	100%	194	100%

About 77% (150) absolutely or somehow agree with the statement "The shelter needs to be renovated". It is to be noted that 76% (114) of Azeri refugees mentioned that their shelter needs to be renovated, whereas 51% (22) of Iraqi refugees do not find renovation of their apartments as acute necessity.

The shelter is in emergency status	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
Absolutely disagree	29	67%	48	32%	77	40%
Rather disagree than agree	12	28%	36	24%	48	25%
Rather agree than disagree	1	2%	14	9%	15	8%
Absolutely agree	1	2%	52	34%	53	27%
Don't know	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Total	43	100%	151	100%	194	100%

The majority of refugees did not find their shelter to be in emergency situation. However, about 35% (68) of respondents, absolutely or somehow agree with the statement that their shelter is in emergency status. About 45% (66) of Azeri refugees mentioned about emergency of their living premises.

The shelter has bathroom	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
Absolutely disagree	0	0%	53	35%	53	27%
Rather disagree than agree	0	0%	13	9%	13	7%
Rather agree than disagree	5	12%	21	14%	26	13%
Absolutely agree	38	88%	64	42%	102	53%
Total	43	100%	151	100%	194	100%

Many (35%, 53 respondents) Azeri refugees mentioned about absence of bathroom in their apartments. There are no Iraqi refugees who mentioned about absence of bathroom.

The shelter has hot and cold water	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
Absolutely disagree	0	0%	53	35%	53	27%
Rather disagree than agree	1	2%	55	37%	56	29%
Rather agree than disagree	3	7%	20	13%	23	12%
Absolutely agree	39	91%	23	15%	62	32%
Total	43	100%	151	100%	194	100%

“The shelter has hot and cold water” - with this statement 32% (62) of respondents absolutely agree and 27% (53) are absolutely disagree. Meantime, 71% (108) of Azeri refugees absolutely or somehow disagree with the statement.

According to refugees, the apartment heating problem is one of the most important ones. Many of the refugees have stated that they use wood stoves for heating; meanwhile they cannot afford purchase of wood. One of the experts noted about meeting a family (the mother and two daughters) who used to heat the apartment in winter by burning grass. There was a refugee family living in a semi-basement of a communal area, which was in emergency state and had no necessary conditions. The family had a certificate about the high humidity level of the apartment. As a result of such conditions the children got serious health problems. There was no sufficient space for all members of the family in that house.

The quantitative interviews revealed that 68% of surveyed refugees are unable to sufficiently heat their apartments in winter.

Table 8. The ability of refugees to heat the apartment in winter (by country of origin)

Heating abilities	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
	Are able to heat the apartment in winter	26	60%	36	24%	62
Are not able to heat enough the apartment in winter	17	40%	115	76%	132	68%
Total	43	100%	151	100%	194	100%

Summarizing, about 69% (132) of respondents consider that they are not able to heat enough the apartment in winter, and the absolute majority (76%, 115) of Azeri refugees agree with this statement.

During the quantitative interviews, the interviewers have subjectively assessed refugees' living condition, the results of which are presented in the table below (by countries of origin).

Table 9. Refugees living conditions (by country of origin)

Housing conditions	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
	Excellent (high conditions)	3	7%	3	2%	6
Good (necessary conditions)	36	84%	55	36%	91	46%
Bad (absence of needed conditions)	3	7%	67	44%	70	36%
Very bad (poor conditions)	1	2%	28	18%	29	15%
Total	43	100%	153	100%	196	100%

It can be noted that the housing conditions of the majority of Iraqi refugees were assessed subjectively by interviewers as good (84%), whereas the housing conditions of Azeri refugees were assessed mainly as bad (44%), very bad (18%). Only 38% of Azeri refugee housing conditions were assessed as good or excellent.

Section 3. Economic Situation

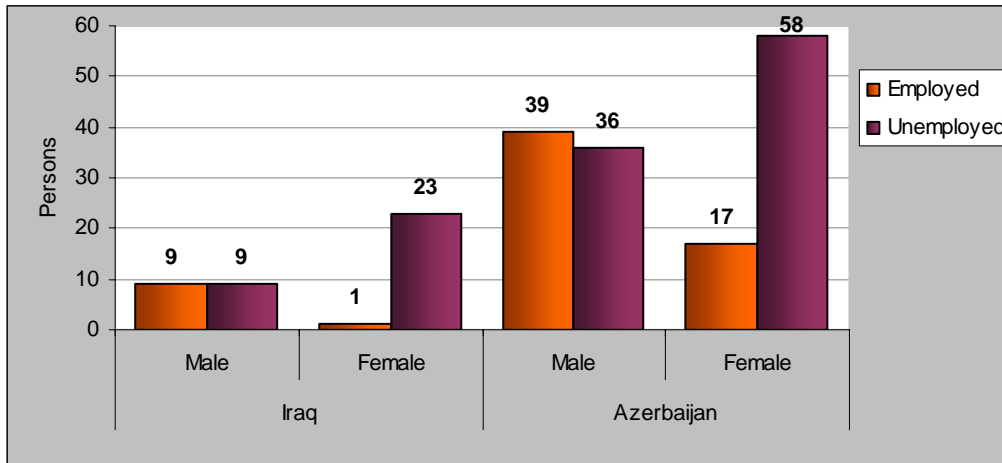
Information on refugees' financial situation was received based on their subjective assessment. It turned out that 44% (85) of respondents have mentioned that they earn "Not enough money even for buying food", 39% (76) - "Enough money only for buying food, but not clothes", 14% (28) - "Enough money for buying both food and clothes, but not furniture, etc." and 3% (5) answered that they can afford buying not only household appliances, but also furniture and car.

Table 10. Economic situation of refugees (by country of origin)

Social status	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
	Not enough money even for buying food	16	37%	69	46%	85
Enough money only for buying food, but not clothes	18	42%	58	38%	76	39%
Enough money for buying both food and clothes, but not furniture, etc.	7	16%	21	14%	28	14%
Can afford buying not only household appliances, but also furniture and car	2	5%	3	2%	5	3%
Total	43	100%	151	100%	194	100%

According to experts some refugees prefer not to work in order to be enrolled into family benefits skims. However, paid labor is one of the main preconditions for improvement of the social-economic condition of a person. The experts assure that refugees either do not work or carry out jobs not requiring any qualification. The following results were revealed on refugee employability during the quantitative interviews: 34% of respondents are engaged in paid labor. Out of this 33% have jobs requiring high qualifications; 21% have jobs requiring low qualifications and 46% have jobs requiring no qualifications. The chart below presents the employment situation of refugees.

Chart I. Employment of refugees (by gender and country of origin)



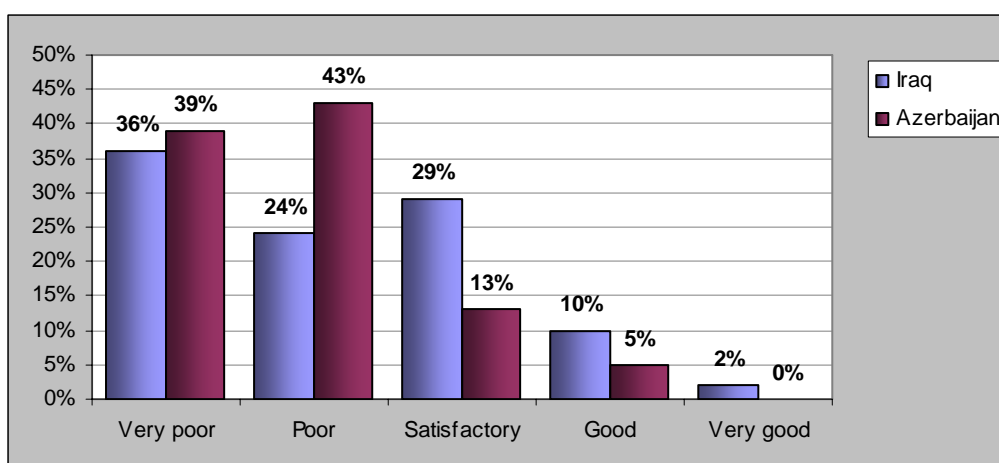
It is obvious that majority of women are unemployed, whereas about 50% of men have employment.

Analyzing expense-income correlation it can be seen that the expenses exceed income. Thus, the average income value ranges from 41.000-90.000 AMD per month per HH, the average expense value ranges from 91.000-150.000 AMD.

Table II. Refugee households' monthly expenses and incomes.

Monthly expenses of household	%	Monthly income of household	%
Less than 20.000 AMD	4	Less than 20.000 AMD	11
21.000-40.000 AMD	10	21.000-40.000 AMD	21
41.000-90.000 AMD	39	41.000-90.000 AMD	33
91.000-150.000 AMD	33	91.000-150.000 AMD	23
151.000-300.000 AMD	6	151.000-300.000 AMD	5
More than 300.000 AMD	1	More than 300.000 AMD	1
Don't know	6	Don't know	5
Refuse to answer	1	Refuse to answer	1
Total	100	Total	100

The respondents have subjectively assessed their economic situation as follows:

Chart 2. Refugees' economic situation (by country of origin)

Thus, the majority of respondents (77%) assess their economic conditions as “poor” or “very poor”, 17%–“satisfactory” and only 6% of respondents have assessed their economic situation as “good” or “very good”.

The economic situation of single parent families is further discussed under [Part Fifteen: Separated Children](#).

Summarizing the above presented data the following should be noted.

Regarding the housing condition of the refugees it should be noted that 28% live communal areas, 8% - in ex-public building (school, kindergarten, hotel), 4% (7 families) live in campers, cottages, in a barn or in a basement. The peripheral position of refugees areas, bad ecological conditions and poor housing facilities at communal areas are main housing problems of Azeri refugees.

Those refugees, who live in temporary shelters provided by the Government, have serious problems regarding their living conditions. The problem is particularly important for refugees living in communal areas. There are no conditions necessary for life – sufficient space for family members, necessary goods, furniture, kitchen, bathroom, lavatory, running water etc. Living conditions negatively impact children’s age-appropriate development. Children living in such conditions are marginalized as bearers of poverty who do not have any own space to live.

Assessment of the economic situation of refugees showed that the average monthly income of all surveyed refugee HHs fluctuate between 41.000-90.000 AMD. Even taking into account that refugees may possibly underreport their incomes, comparing with Food or extreme poverty line (per adult equivalent, per month) which is 19,126 AMD⁶, it is obvious that monthly income of refugee HHs is under the estimated minimum standards of living.

Gender inequity is obvious when comparing unemployment rates between women and men.

⁶ National Statistical Service of RA, Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, 2011. *Global Economic Crisis and Poverty Profile, Labor Market Development in 2008-2010*.

Part Four: Access to Social Benefits

During the in-depth interviews it turned out that currently no social assistant programs are being implemented in Armenia for the refugees. The respondents state that in the beginning suchlike programs were being implemented by government agencies and international organizations, including provision of food or/and clothing as well as allocation of housing certificates. According to interviewed experts, currently humanitarian assistance programs are not being implemented with the aim of eliminating the psychological dependence of refugees upon different structures.

During the qualitative interviews both the experts and the surveyed refugees have enumerated a number of international and local organizations, which provided some assistance, but as it turned out later, all of the implemented programs emphasize not the refugee status of the beneficiaries, but the fact that they are socially unsecured. Thus, “Orran” benevolent NGO provides free of charge food to the children from socially vulnerable families, helps to accomplish their homework assignments, reimburses their transportation fees (to the institution and back), teaches different skills, such as needlework, etc.

Sometimes children from socially vulnerable families get books and stationery provided by directors and/or local authorities. Municipalities organize annual summer camps for children. However, all this is done taking into account the fact of social vulnerability, which can also involve beneficiaries from refugee families. A number of organizations, such as "Mission Armenia", "Save the Children", "Saved Relics", "Yerjanik", "Red Cross", "World Vision", "Ahazang", "Evangelical Church", etc. have also implemented various projects (health and educational programs, vocational training, food provision, coverage for travel expenses, clothing, stationery, etc.) without emphasizing a beneficiary's refugee status. Quotation: *“The assistance is mainly provided by municipality, regional administration and different NGOs. The assistance may be financial (monetary), social (food, clothing, etc.) depending on the situation and regardless the fact whether the beneficiary holds a refugee status or no”*. The interviewed experts agree that there should be no emphasis on refugee status in assistance programs otherwise it can lead to integration problems of refugees in their communities. Quotation: *“In the future, the refugee families will not be psychologically inclined to acquisition of the Armenian citizenship”*. Many respondents have noted that currently the refugees have the same rights and privileges as the citizens. Quotation: *“Refugee families and their children are not provided with any social assistance based on their status. They have neither advantages nor privileges.”*

According to the respondents, even if there are any projects targeting the refugees, the projects do not take into account whether the beneficiary is a current refugee or a former one. For example, they have mentioned that “Mission Armenia” NGO has implemented a project for refugees by providing medications, FAR has implemented a furniture provision project, "Save the Children" has implemented numerous programs for refugees and former refugees, etc.

During the quantitative interviews 6 Iraqi and 47 Azerbaijani refugees have stated that they are involved in social assistance programs provided by state. The types of assistance they are involved in are presented in the table below.

Table 12. The types of state assistance refugees are involved in (by country of origin)

Types of assistance	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
Free medical screening	0	0	3	6%	3	6%
Free food aid monthly	0	0	2	4%	2	4%
Family benefits	6	100%	38	81%	44	83%
Free temporary shelter	0	0	10	21%	10	19%
Cloths aid	0	0	1	2%	1	2%
Total	6	100%	47	100%	53	100%

Thus, the main types of social benefits that the respondents are entitled are state family benefits - 83% (44) and free temporary shelter provided by state - 19% (10).

According to RA Law on Refugees and Asylum (adopted in 27.11.2008) Article 23, **“Refugees having sought asylum in the territory of the Republic of Armenia have the right to enjoy social services defined by RA legislation for the citizens of the Republic of Armenia, get State allowances and other financial assistance, allowances provided in case of temporary disability, occupational injury, accidents, occupational diseases, free medical care and services guaranteed by the State, as well as have pension security defined by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia, right to social protection in case of unemployment, if they meet the requirements defined by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia regulating the sphere”**. Thus, the refugees have the same rights as the citizens of the Republic of Armenia.

According to the experts, the provision of any assistance is of a short-term nature and there is no program aimed at the solution of institutional, permanent problems. According to the respondents, the most essential assistance necessary for the refugees is housing provision. The survey results showed that such programs have been implemented and funded by RA Migration Service, UNHCR and governments of other countries.

Summarizing the aforementioned information it should be noted that at present the refugees have and enjoy the same social security rights as the citizens of the Republic of Armenia. Although there is no State funded social assistance programs designed primarily for refugees, some of the refugees who are in need receive family benefits. Other type of help refugees receive is temporary shelter.

Part Five: Education

According to the Article 25 (Public Education) of Law on Refugees and Asylum Seekers, **“The asylum seeker and refugees in Armenia have the same rights to basic general education as citizens”**.

From 113 of children aged 8 to 18 who participated in the survey 91% (103) mentioned that they either study at school or attend vocational schools. Nine percent of children (10) mentioned that they do not attend school due to the following reasons:

Table 13. The reasons of not going to school (by age).

Reasons	Age of Child					Total
	12	14	16	17	18	
I've finished secondary school	0	1	1	1	1	4
I didn't need the knowledge my new school gave me	0	0	1	0	0	1
It was difficult to flow into new academic program, which differed from the previous one I had	0	0	1	0	0	1
Financial reasons	0	0	0	1	0	1
My parents are afraid that I will be raped	1	0	0	0	0	1
Already studying in the university	0	0	0	0	1	1
Health problems	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	1	1	3	3	2	10

One of the children (boy, age 16, Iraqi refugee) mentioned that he does not need knowledge that the new school provides. He mentioned that he does not intend to finish the school some time in the future. Another child (girl, age 17, Iraqi refugee) mentioned financial situation and language problems as the main reasons of quitting school. She does not intend to finish school in the future. She mentioned that she had difficulties in communication and relationships with schoolmates as schoolmates made fun and ignored her because of her refugee status. Both Iraqi children mentioned that they faced difficulties with educational program at school due to the language barrier.

Another child (girl, age 16, Azeri refugee) mentioned that for her it was difficult to flow into new the academic program, which differed from the previous one. She also mentioned that she does not intend to complete school in future or enter the university, and the reason is the financial situation.

The child (girl, age 12, Azeri refugee) is kept at home by parents as they are afraid for the safety of their child. They think that going out can be dangerous for child as she can be raped by maniacs. So it is about a year the child does not attend school.

In total 18% children (6 Iraqi, 14 Azeri) are ever considered dropping out of school here in Armenia. Below table shows the reasons why they want to leave the school.

Table 14. The refugee children's reasons for dropping out of school (by country of origin)

Reasons of dropping out of school	Iraq	Azerbaijan	Total
Bad treatment at school	1	0	1
Don't want to study	0	2	2
Due to language	1	0	1
Financial problems	0	1	1
For having more time for playing games	0	1	1
I don't like school	1	0	1
To get a profession	1	8	9
To have a rest	0	1	1
Wants to go to art school to learn drawing	1	0	1
Total	5	13	18

Around 10% of children (11) reported that they faced difficulties in communication and relationships with schoolmates due to their refugee status at school out of which 9 are Iraqi and 2 are Azeri refugees. The main reasons mentioned were: “children called me names” (7 answers); “children make fun of me because of my status” (5 answers); “children laugh at me every time I speak up” (2 answers); “children ignored me because of my nationality and status” (2 answers). Two other children mentioned the following difficulties: “children considered me to be an enemy” and “children try not to take me in their teams if needed”.

It should be noted that only 3% of children (3), which are of Iraqi origin mentioned that he/she never faced any difficulties in communication and relationships with teachers concerning their refugee status at school. The problems they mentioned are: calling names, e.g. calling Turk or Arab (1 child), and discrimination, e.g. are not willing to promote children to participate in contests etc. (2 children).

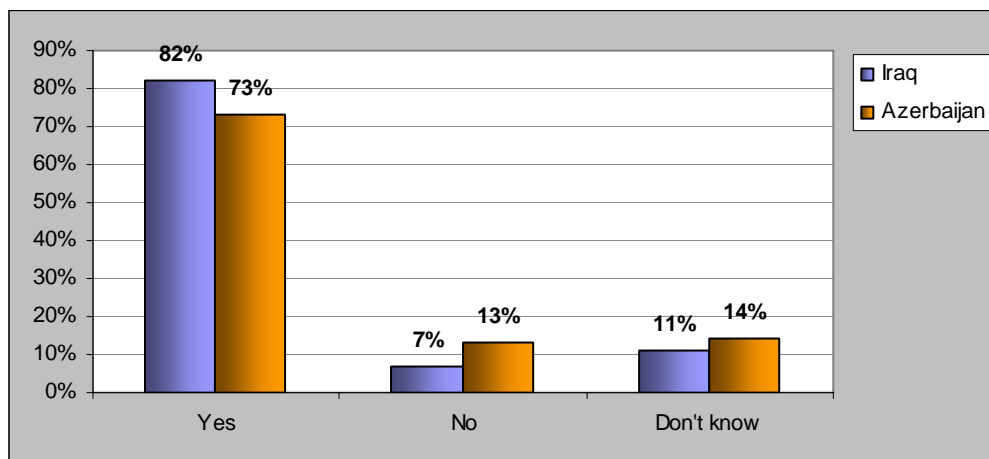
It is worth to note, that 40% (45) children mentioned that they face difficulties with educational program at school. Meantime, 70% (21 of 30) of Iraqi children and 29% (24 of 83) of Azeri children reported on this issue. Among the difficulties encountered the following were mentioned:

Table 15. The difficulties encountered with educational program at school (by country of origin)

Difficulties encountered with educational program	Iraq	Azerbaijan	Total
The textbooks are written in difficult language	3	7	10
Language barriers	17	3	20
Academic program significantly differs from previous one	4	2	6
Overload/hard education program	0	12	12
Teacher treats badly	1	1	2
Difficulties with English language	0	2	2
Teacher does not like hand-writing of child	0	1	1
Total	21	24	45

As it is displayed on the table, the language barriers are most commonly mentioned by Iraqi refugee children, whereas Azeri refugee children point out overloaded/hard education program as main difficulties encountered during education process.

From the total number of children, 74% (84) responded that they have plans to go to the university in future, 12% (13) do not have such plans and the rest 14% (16) has not yet decided. The table below shows the distribution of answers by country of origin.

Chart 2. Refugee children's future plans to go to university (by country of origin)

Out of those who have no plans to go to university, 9 Azeri refugees responded that they do not have enough financial means, 1 Iraqi child told that he/she can not compete with native speakers. Other 2 children study in vocational schools. One has health problems.

The parents of children were asked whether they have encountered any difficulties with the child's entering the school. Around 96% (116) parents out of 121 parents who have school aged children answered that they did not encounter any problems. Three Iraqi refugees answered that they have missed a year and there were problems with translation of documents. One Azeri refugee family reported that they were keen to attend Russian school, but were refused.

The results of in-depth interviews showed that the Iraqi refugees were requested to present documents from Iraqi school. Those who had documents from schools in Iraq reported having no problem with entering the school. However there are children whose schools in Iraq were bombed and did not operate so it was very difficult to acquire documents from Iraq. In some cases the interference of the State Migration Service helped the parents to enroll the child in school. In fact, the role of the principal is very significant in accepting the child to school – in some cases principal agreed to accept the child even without documents from the previous school (the documents were submitted later), in other cases the principal refused to accept. Another problem is that many Iraqi refugees arrived in the middle of the year and were refused by principals to be accepted to schools, hence losing a year, and next September they were placed in a lower grade – losing another year. So, due to the language problems or absence of documents some Iraqi refugee children had to study in grades lower for one or two years, which caused stress and psychological problems. This fact was the reason why some children did not attend schools for long periods of time. It is common for Iraqi children who came at older age (above 12-13) to encounter learning difficulties due to language barrier. This fact combined with studying at lower grades leads to discontinuing school at 9th grade and not entering high school. There are children who continue education in vocational institutions or higher institutions. Parents reported that when they asked teachers to be more tolerant towards children's weak knowledge of Armenian, teachers proposed to conduct additional Armenian language classes for fee.

The situation is deferent with Azeri refugees. All in-depth interview participants reported that there was no problem with entering or transferring children to school. They also told that there was no problem with studying or educational process. In majority of cases teachers did not maltreat children due to their refugee status. However, one or two families

reported teachers blaming children for not speaking literate Armenian and sometimes calling them names. The majority of children attend school regularly. Some were absent due to illnesses. Only one family reported that the child did not attend school due to absence of clothes, bag and other necessary items. Other two families reported that bad living conditions caused chronic illnesses which lead to long absence from school. About half of respondents said that children will not go to high school and will continue education in vocational institutions. The main reason of not entering universities is lack of sufficient finances. Other half told that children will complete the high school and proceed to higher education.

The situation described by Azeri refugee families is supported by the opinion of local authorities and other experts who reported that there are no cases of refugee children not enrolled in the school, neither due to absence of documents, nor due to language barriers. Some problems do exist which are associated with lack of finances, i.e. refugee families (along with non refugee ones) have financial difficulties in obtaining textbooks. The Azeri refugee children do not have language problems any more, so they enter universities. The major remaining problem is lack of finances. Only the Mayor of Darbnik village reported that initially Iraqi refugee children had language problems, which now became less and less significant. One of the school principals reported that Iraqi children have both language problems and curricular differences due to which they attend lower grades. According to the Principal, after school free Eastern Armenian classes were organized for Iraqi children to help overcome language problems.

Summarizing it can be noted that the majority of 7-18 years old children who participated in the survey attend schools. The rest of children (minority) who reported on not attending school had mentioned the following reasons: difficult financial situation, language barrier (mainly among Iraqi children), and difficulties concerning the educational program (mentioned by almost half of children). The difficulties with education differ for Iraqi and Azeri children. Language barriers were most commonly mentioned by Iraqi refugee children, whereas Azeri refugee children point out overloaded/hard education program as main difficulties encountered during the education process.

More than half of the children who participated in survey mentioned that they are planning to enter universities and continue higher education. Among the main reasons for not continuing education in universities financial problems and language barriers (incompatibility with native speakers) were mentioned. Some of children already study in vocational schools.

In most cases, Azeri parents encountered no difficulties with enrolling their children in school. Whereas Iraqi children faced a lot of difficulties: absence of documents from previous schools in the country of origin, prolonged procedures of translation of documents, placing child in a lower grade due to difficulties with spoken Armenian (language barrier). In some cases these led to drop out from school after secondary school or missing school very often.

Part Six: Child Leisure and Rest

To the question “*What do you do more frequently when you are free?*” 50% (57) of children answered “*Internet and computer games*”. Engagement in organized or developmental activities such as music classes, sports, museums, embroidery, etc. was mentioned by 50% (57) of children. Watching TV was the next frequently mentioned leisure activity mentioned by 46% (51) of children. Playing games with friends was mentioned by 33% (37) of children. But, unlike other activities where the distribution was equal for Iraqi and Azeri refugee children, this last activity was mentioned more frequently by Azeri refugee children than the Iraqi ones⁷.

Only 34% (38) of children reported that they attend after school classes, which mainly are sports classes (32%), music classes (45%), art classes (8%) and additional school subjects classes (26%). Among the reasons for not attending after-school activities the following was mentioned: “*it is too expensive*” (39%), “*we do not have the classes I desire*” (27%), “*I am not interested in any class*” (16%), “*I have no time, as I'm busy with my lessons*” (7%). No correlation with gender, age, social situation or origin was found for children who do not attend any after-school activities.

Only 9% (10) of children reported that they are members of any child/youth organizations, which are: Child to Child activities of Save the Children, Orran NGO, Red Cross, school choir, School Council, SOS Children village activities.

The fact that there are no playgrounds for children in their communities was mentioned by 41% (59) of respondents. 19% of respondents mentioned that there is a stadium, 23% mentioned available playgrounds, and 16% said that children’s carousel is available. The majority (76%) of those who have playgrounds for children in their communities mentioned that these are close or not very far from their house and half of them (51%) visit it one or more times weekly while others (42%) once or more per quarter.

As Iraqi families reported during the in-depth interviews, children mainly spend free time at home helping with home chores, spending time on the Internet or doing other stuff. Almost all Iraqi families mentioned that children do not attend any after-school classes mainly because of lack of finances, or lack of access to such classes. They noted: “*My daughter wanted to attend a dance class, but we can not afford it.*” or “*My son used to attend karate classes, but he discontinued due to financial reasons.*”

Families in Darbnik mentioned that children become very frustrated from the fact that they have to stay at home all the time after classes. “*There is no playground around and there are many snakes and we do not allow children to go to play outside*”.

The responses of in-depth interviewed Azeri refugee families are similar of survey results. Children are engaged in diverse activities like playing games with friends in the nearest yard, spending time watching TV or using Internet, reading books, going out with parents to relatives or café. Many of the children attended or attend different after-school classes like ballet, sport, embroidery, computer games, dancing, and chess. However some children do not attend or discontinue attending after-school classes due to financial reasons. For some children the financial difficulties become an issue of social isolation as reported by parents. “*The child does not have a place to play. He is afraid even to go to the nearest building yard as neighbors complain when it is noisy. He compares his room with a prison. He does not attend any*

⁷ The answer choices were not restricted and each respondent could tick up to three answer choices. The percentage is calculated from total number of answers.

after-school classes. Summer holidays are spent at home, in this room”, – reported one of Azeri refugee families.

On the question “where do you usually spend your summer holidays” 65% (73) of children answered that they stay at home. It is interesting to note that among Iraqi refugees 83% (25 from 30 children) stay at home during summer holidays. Around 12% (13) of all children spend their summer holidays in campus or rest house in Armenia and 22% (25) go other communities and stay with their relatives.

The responses of in-depth interviews with Iraqi and Azeri refugees confirmed the data from survey. They also reported that usually children stay at home during summer holidays. Only one family reported that unlike other years this year with the support of “Mission Armenia” NGO children spent 5 days in one of Aghveran resorts. Azeri refugee interviewees also mainly reported that children spend time at home during summer vacations. One family reported that thanks to municipality the child was sent to a resort for 20 days considering social-economic vulnerability of the family. However, there are some families who have relatives outside their communities, so such children often spend their summer vacations with the relatives. Sometimes they go to Lake Sevan but just for a weekend. This is not happening in case of Iraqi refugees.

The head of CPU told about the State program which aims to provide children with a free vacation package in Hankavan resorts and mentioned that children from refugee families are also involved in this program. It should be mentioned, that for these refugee children it turned out that they were offered the resort package not based on their refugee status but as other children from socially-economically insecure families. For refugee children it was physiologically stressful that the refugee status was equated with the social insecurity.

To **summarize**, the majority of refugee children do not attend after school classes mainly due to financial reasons or absence of school classes in their communities. Children in their majority are not members of any child/youth organizations. Some children have access to playgrounds, yards or other outdoor places to spend time. However, during in-depth interviews Iraqi refugees reported absence of outdoor facilities for their children to spend leisure time. Unlike Azeri refugee children, Iraqi refugee children reported playing games with the friends (instead of spending free time at home) less frequently. With regard to summer holidays, the majority of children stay at home. Some Azeri refugee children spend time in other parts of Armenia with their relatives.

Part Seven: Health

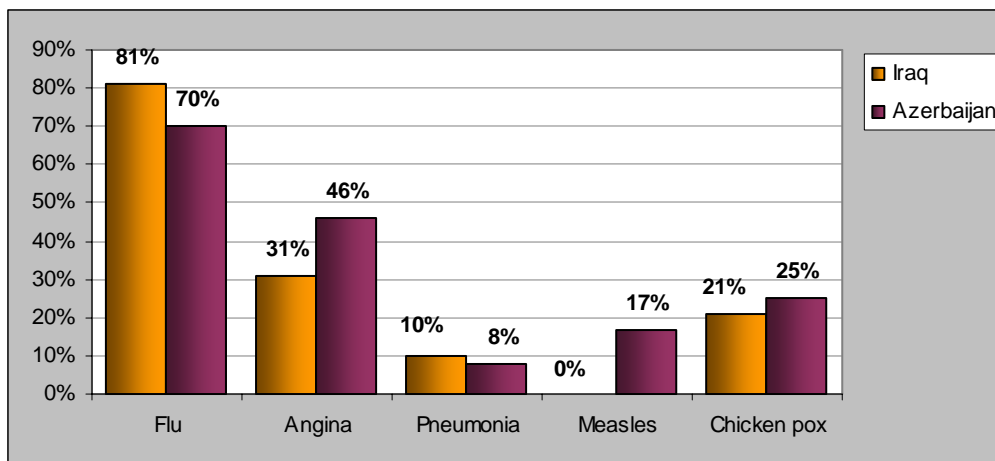
It is well known that all children get ill from time to time, but unfortunately in some cases children get ill due to poor living conditions and undernourishment. The refugee children are prone to chronic illness due to poor living conditions. According to the Article 23 (right to social security and health care) of the Law on Refugees and Asylum Seekers, “The refugees who received the refugee status on the territory of Armenia have the rights to use ... free medical care and services guaranteed by the State”.

Surveyed parents assessed the refugee children’s health status. Thus, 14% (27) of children are believed to have “*Excellent*” health condition, 54% (104) - “*Good*” health condition, 27% (52) - “*Satisfactory*” and about 5% (11) of parents that their children’s health condition is “*Bad*” or “*Very bad*”. Meantime, in urban communities 30% (59) of parents answered the question “how would you evaluate your child's health” that their children have “*Good*” health; 8% (15) of parents said that their children’s health is “*Excellent*”. Similarly, 23% (45) of parents in rural communities answered “*Good*” and 6% (12) of parents – “*Excellent*” to the same question.

Besides the seasonal (flu, angina, fever) and viral/infectious (measles, chicken pox, rosella, mumps etc.), children often have congenital disease. Approximately the half of parents participated in in-depth interviews mentioned that their children have had congenital diseases such as heart disease, lung, leg or arm dislocations, neurotic problems, etc.). Many Iraqi refugee parents reported that some of other illnesses occurred after moving to Armenia is connected with poor conditions.

In order to define the most common illnesses among the refugee children, parents were asked about the most prominent ones their children have had here. The most frequently occurring illnesses differentiated between Azeri and Iraqi children are shown in the chart below (the answer choices were not restricted and each respondent could tick up to three answers; the percentage is calculated from total number of answers):

Chart 3. The most frequently occurred illnesses among refugee children (by country of origin)



As it can be seen from the chart above for 81% (121) of Azeri and 70% (38) of Iraqi children flu is the most frequently occurring illness. Fortunately pneumonia is observed less frequently - among 10% (14) of Azeri and 8% (4) of Iraqi children.

Besides the seasonal and viral illnesses shown in the chart, many refugee children have health accruing due to stresses and psychological condition. In 3 cases children had stress

associated with their limited opportunities and financial means resulted from refugee status. One of parents noted: *“My daughter probably has gastritis; doctors say it’s due to stresses. I believe it is the major factor, as our living conditions and status are stressful themselves.”*

One of refugee children got health issues due to the hard work which was experienced from early years in order to help family in difficult living conditions: Now he is 16, but already has undergone a gall-bladder surgery. Other children in general had problems either with eyes or tonsils, causing frequent anginas and throat laryngitis.

In cases when children are sick or feel bad people act differently. Visiting a doctor was the most frequently mentioned answer⁸ by 87% (170) of parents. Fifty eight percent (100) of 170 parents from urban communities and 36% (70) from rural communities are contacting doctors when their children are ill.

According to the Law on Refuges and Asylum Seekers, refugees have the same rights on health as locals. When asked if the refugee children have had vaccination in Armenia, 92% (178) of parents answered “Yes”, from which 97% (146) of Azeri and 74% (32) of Iraqi refugee parents. The main reason for the rest of 14 refugee parents for not vaccinating, their children in Armenia, was that child’s not appropriate age for vaccination and having had vaccine in the country of origin. Other reasons for non-vaccination are underweight of the child, lack of registration at the local polyclinic or lack of invitation for vaccination by the local polyclinic.

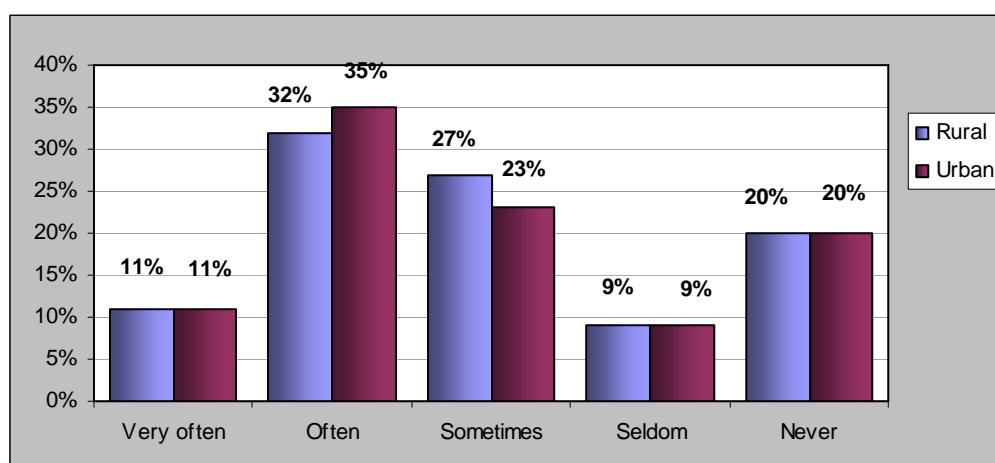
Interviews with parents revealed that they contact doctors when needed. At the same time, experts mentioned that almost all refugee children are registered in policlinics and have equal rights of using medical services as local children. In fact 99% (149) of Azeri refugee parents and 91% (39) Iraqi refugee parents mentioned that their children are registered in the local medical centers. At the same time 69% (104) of Azeri refugee parents and 67% (29) of Iraqi refugee parents know that the primary health care for children of 0-7 is free of charge, as per the Basic Benefit Package (BBP).

The refugee parents were asked whether their children have ever received free healthcare services. Twenty two percent (18) of parents having 0-7 years old children (83) mentioned that their children have “sometimes” received free medical services; 36% (30) answered “often”, and 21% (17) answered “very often” to the same question and 18% mentioned “seldom” or “never” (5 and 10 respectively)⁹.

The whole picture of free medical services for all children (aged 0-18) differentiated by urban and rural communities are shown in the chart below (2% of respondents answered “do not know”).

⁸ The answer choices were not restricted and each respondent could tick up to three answer choices. The percentage is calculated from total number of answers.

⁹ Three answers are “do not know”.

Chart 4. Receiving free healthcare services (by type of communities)

Despite the fact that refugees should be treated as locals sometimes doctors ask refugee families to pay the amount at the rate of non-locals.

One of Iraqi refugee parents mentioned that her son had a congenital disease; he had shoulder dislocation during childbirth. The child received the necessary treatment in Iraq, but due to lack of money the treatment discontinued after the family moved to Armenia. Currently the shoulder bone grows in a wrong direction and the family does not have enough money to take care of the treatment.

In another case both children of the family (age 10 and 13) frequently faint and have nosebleeds and when they applied to the medical center, they were asked to pay double amount of standard fee - the doctor explained that the refugees should pay twice higher rates as per legislation.

One more case was reported about a child with disability; after a repeated screening the doctors refused to reconfirm the disability status of the child, thinking that the parents want it for avoiding military service. The mother of this child noted: *"I told them that I am worried for my son to go to the army in this condition. I would not worry for my younger son, he is OK, but my older son is not. I've decided to act against those doctors in future in order to protect my son's right and get necessary treatment for my child"*.

The rest and probably the majority of parents mentioned that they didn't face any issues related to overpaying or not receiving appropriate medical care due to their refugee status. However, very often they reported problems connected with not having money for medical services.

Parents were asked to list the obstacles occurred during the last year when they were seeking healthcare services for their children. The majority of parents 66% (130) reported that they did not have any problems. The table shown below illustrates less frequently faced obstacles cross tabulated with country of origin and refugee child age.

Table 16. The obstacles parents encountered while ensuring their children's healthcare (by child age)

Obstacles encountered with healthcare	0-7		8-18		Total	
No problems	66	80%	63	57%	129	66%
I could not pay doctor the amount requested	3	4%	17	15%	20	10%
I did not have money to take my child to doctor	4	5%	18	16%	22	11%
There was no free place at hospital	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
My child was discriminated by medical personnel due to refugee status	0	0%	2	2%	2	1%
Didn't help unless I paid the needed money	2	2%	0	0%	2	1%
Didn't give free medicine	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
I don't have enough money for buying medicine	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
There is no appropriate specialist	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Didn't need medical help	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
Don't know	5	6%	9	8%	14	7%
Total	83	100%	111	100%	194	100%

Table 17. The obstacles parents encountered while ensuring their children's healthcare (by country of origin)

Obstacles encountered with healthcare	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
No problems	32	75%	97	64%	129	66%
I could not pay doctor the amount requested	4	9%	16	11%	20	10%
I did not have money to take my child to doctor	4	9%	18	12%	22	11%
There was no free place at the hospital	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
My child was discriminated by medical personnel due to refugee status	1	2%	1	1%	2	1%
Didn't help unless I paid the needed money	0	0%	2	1%	2	1%
Didn't give free medicine	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
I don't have enough money for buying medicine	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
There is no appropriate specialist	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Didn't need medical help	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Don't know	2	5%	12	7%	14	6%
Total	43	100%	151	100%	194	100%

As it is seen from the tables above, 11% (16) of Azeri refugee parents and 9% (4) of Iraqi refugee parents couldn't pay the doctor. At the same time 12% (18) of Azeri and 9% (4) of Iraqi refugee parents didn't have money to take their children to doctor. Despite mentioned BBP for primary healthcare for children aged 0-7, in general 8% (7) of 0-7 years old refugee children were rejected in medical help because of not being able to pay the requested money.

The parents were also asked whether their children have ever suffered from the following: dry skin; frequent headaches; weakness in the muscle; growth retardation and loss of weight; dizziness; weakness, slowness; low memory power; loss of vision; fatigue/loss of energy; bloated stomach; bleeding gums; weak immune system; decayed teeth; loss of appetite. About 58% (113) parents reported that their children have no such symptoms. Others (42%, 81) mentioned one to eight symptoms. As it is known, growth retardation and loss of weight

in conjunction with such symptoms as weakness, slowness, bleeding gums, weak immune system is a sign of malnutrition. As it is seen from the table below there are 9 cases of growth retardation and loss of weight. This means that 5% of children (9) may be subjected to malnutrition as the other symptoms of malnutrition listed below must occur together with growth retardation and loss of weight to indicate on malnutrition.

Table 18. The symptoms of malnutrition occurring among refugee children after coming to Armenia

Malnutrition symptoms	Frequency	Percent
Frequent headaches	26	14%
Dizziness	23	12%
Loss of appetite	23	12%
Weakness, slowness	21	11%
Decayed teeth	21	11%
Loss of vision	15	8%
Fatigue/loss o energy	15	8%
Weakness in the muscle	12	6%
Weak immune system	12	6%
Dry skin	6	3%
Growth retardation and loss of weight	9	5%
Bloated stomach	4	2%
Total	187	100%

To summarize the overall health condition of refugee children in most of the cases is good or satisfactory, excluding some cases when children have either congenital diseases or chronic illnesses. Many parents reported that they can not afford medical treatment of their children. As for the chronic illnesses, most Iraqi parents mentioned that their children acquired those after moving to Armenia, which was caused by stress and poor living conditions. The cases of malnutrition, although rare, but happen among refugee children.

In most cases refugee children have equal access to healthcare services. As mentioned during the qualitative interviews, there are some cases when parents were asked to pay doctors for medical care. Some refugee children were rejected in medical help because they were not able to pay despite that the primary health care for children aged 0-7 is free of charge. However the majority of parents mentioned that they didn't encounter any problems while ensuring their children's healthcare and treatment, except some cases when parents didn't have money to buy medicine or contacting doctors. Some parents stated that they have never been treated badly by the doctors because of their status, but the others mentioned that sometimes doctors treat refugee children differently.

Part Eight: Access to Food and Clean Water

Children's nutrition is very important, as the normal growth of the child depends on appropriate nutrition. Unfortunately, sometimes children do not receive nutritionally balanced food either due to financial reasons or because of lack of awareness. In order to reveal eating habits of refugee children, parents were asked to mention how many times a day their children eat and what is the frequency of consuming various food types.

45% (87) of parents mentioned that their children eat four times a day. 29% (56) of parents reported that they feed their children three times a day. The rest of the participants mentioned that their children eat either less than three times a day (15%, 29 parents) or eat more than 4 times daily (11%, 21 parents). It is important to note that some of the parents (5%, 10 parents) who mentioned feeding their children more than four times a day have children aged 0-1 and who are breast-fed.

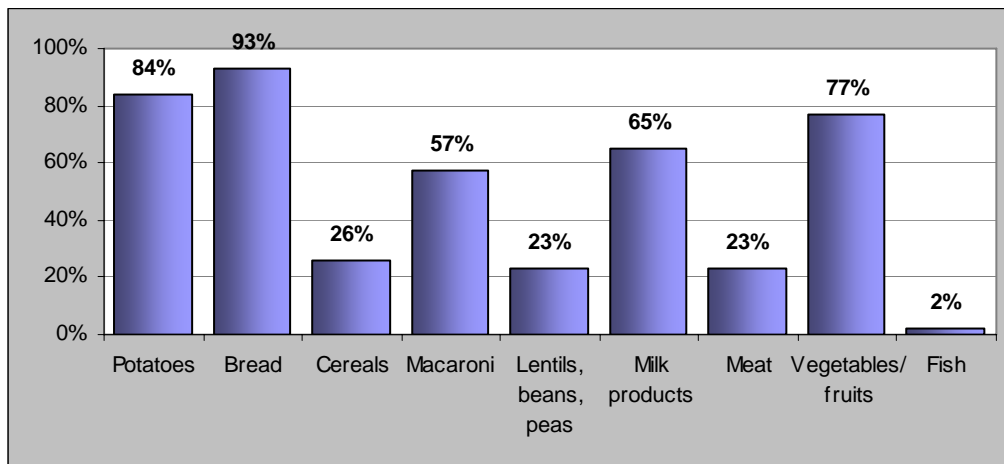
To reveal whether the frequency of feeding depends on the socio-economic condition of the family a cross tabulation was conducted. The table below shows the correlation of socio-economic conditions and frequency of feeding children in refugee families.

Table 19. The economic status of refugee households and number of child meals per day.

Economic Status	Frequency of children's daily meal										Total	
	Once a day		Twice a day		3-times a day		4-times a day		more than 5 times a day			
Very low	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%	1	2%	0	0%	3	2%
Relatively low	3	75%	5	2%	21	24%	15	27%	4	19%	48	25%
Average	1	25%	20	8%	60	68%	34	61%	13	62%	128	66%
Relatively high	0	0%	0	0%	5	6%	6	11%	4	19%	15	8%
Total	4	100%	25	100%	88	100%	56	100%	21	100%	194	100%

As it is seen from the table, 128 of 194 respondents have average socio-economic conditions. Sixty of these 128 reported on feeding children 3 times a day and 34 of 128 mentioned that their children eat four times a day. It is also obvious that three of respondents having very low socio-economic conditions are able to feed their children 3-4 times a day. It can be concluded that economic situation is not a determinant for the frequency of children's meal and parents do their best to provide needed amount of daily nutrition to their children.

Another purpose of this survey was finding out the types of food children eat most frequently. It was revealed that children eat the following food on daily basis or at least several times a week. The results are shown in the chart below.

Chart 5. Types of food consumed by children everyday or several times a week

As it can be seen, the most frequently used products are bread (93%) and potatoes (84%). Vegetables and fruits are consumed on daily basis or several times a week by 77% of respondents. Dairy products are also frequently used by respondents (65%). Meat is eaten everyday or at least several times a week only by 23% of respondents. Moreover, more than 50% of respondents reported that children eat meat several times or once a month or more seldom. To conclude, it can be noted that consumption of costly products as meat and fish is relatively low.

In-depth interviews conducted within refugee families revealed that many Azeri refugee children have malnutrition due to different reasons. The reasons are the following:

- **Financial problems.** Most of the parents don't have permanent job, so they are not able to provide needed food. In case of parents' seasonal job children eat normally during the period when their parents earn money; families switch to "saving mode" during off-season. Parents reported that children get ill very often due to poor nutrition. Unfortunately most of Azeri parents do not have permanent jobs, and live on State subsidies that are very low.

One of the refugees reported: "... we are undernourished, we bake bread at home, as the bread in the stores is too expensive, we mainly consume macaroni. ... when I do not work children eat only bread..."

- **Limited access to markets and stores.** There are no stores or they are very far from some rural communities where refugee families live in. This causes lots of problems in accessing the needed food. These families usually have to go to the nearest towns to buy food, but this requires extra expense for transportation.
- **Low quality of food.** Another problem is the quality of food in the nearest markets and stores in rural areas. Often the food in these stores is overdue/not fresh. In these cases parents prefer to go to the nearest towns knowing that they would find fresher food.
- **Impossibility of irrigation of own garden.** Some of refugee families living in villages are not able to irrigate their land plots, and thus growing vegetables and fruits becomes problematic too. For these reasons children are often deprived of even fresh vegetables and fruits that would not cost much to grow them.

Iraqi refugee children are in better living conditions compared to Azeri refugee children. Iraqi parents mentioned that their children eat less and non-diversified food than they used to when they lived in Iraq. A number of Iraqi families indicated the impossibility of buying enough food or clean water for children, but they also do their best to provide at least some food to their children.

The representatives of municipality mentioned that in their communities all children have the same problems despite being a refugee or not.

The superintendents of the communal areas mentioned that almost all children in communal houses are not enough-fed. Some of them turn to the superintendent for food and/or go to relatives to eat. According to a superintendent: *“Some families borrow food and needed things from the nearest stores, but are not able to pay back later on. For this reason stores no longer provide food to these families in debt, and so they starve.*

Refugee families living in the rural areas mentioned that living in such settings allows having land plots and growing pest-free fruits and vegetables which are good for their children and is an economic benefit to the HHs.

About 82% (159) of respondents of HH survey reported that they have potable water at home. However 18% (35) mentioned that they do not have tap water and that they get clean water from the following sources:

Table 20. The source of everyday clean water (by type of community)

Source of clean water	Rural	Urban	Total
Buying	5	0	5
Closest spring water	7	5	12
Closest town/village	1	0	1
Nowhere (boiling, using dirty tap water or frozen water)	7	8	15
Refuse to answer	1	1	2
Total	20	13	35

Those 15 HHs who do not have access to clean water mentioned using boiled water as drinking water (9), not clean water from tap (5), frozen and melted water (1). Six of those who mentioned “nowhere” are Iraqi refugees from Darbnik collective center; others live in urban areas in former administrative buildings or in hostels (7).

During the in-depth interviews some families reported about not having potable water at home or nearby; in such cases they buy or collect water at the neighbors.

To **summarize**, it can be concluded that Iraqi refugee children are fed better than Azeri refugee children. Similarly, urban children are fed better than rural children. Rural children eat very little, sometimes even not enough for a day since their parents do not have enough money to buy food, or the stores are far from their neighborhood. Although Iraqi children are in better living conditions, they are not used to local food consumption habits and types. The consumption by children of products such as meat and fish is relatively low. The access to clean water is available to many families, but some families especially in rural areas are deprived of clean water.

Part Nine: Working Children and Child Labour

According to the Labor Code, children aged 14-16 can work with the written consent of their parents or legal guardians, and children aged 16-18 are allowed to sign contracts themselves. The work hours for children should not exceed 20 hours per week and the work should not harm health and development of the child.

Child labor – whether paid or unpaid - by its nature is a negative concept as it may hinder child's growth and development¹⁰. It is considered as a form of economic exploitation of a child, which is defined as “*The use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labor*”. In this context even home chore can be considered as child labor if it hinders age appropriate physical, physiological and cognitive development of a child. Within the framework of “Unite for Children Save Futures” project implemented by Save the Children Armenia in 10 marzes and Yerevan, through community assessments of violence against children it was revealed that child labor is a wide-spread issue in Armenia.

The research aimed to understand whether refugee children work and whether this work is hindering their health or development.

To the question “*Have you ever worked?*” one third of children (31%, 35 children) answered positively. The majority of refugee children (68%, 76 children) responded negatively.

However, to the next question “*Which of the following jobs you have performed?*” only 44% (49) answered that they have not performed any job. This can be explained that job performed for family is not considered as work by some of the children. Others mentioned the following job types¹¹:

Table 21. Types of work undertaken by refugee children

Types of job	Frequency	Percent
None of the works	49	43%
Cultivate or harvest agricultural products, catch fish	14	12%
Prepare food, clothes or handicrafts for sale	8	7%
Other paid jobs (cleaning leaves in the cemetery, selecting trees for sale, making wedding baskets for rent, teaching French, transportation of goods to market for sale)	5	4%
Sell newspapers, beverages, food or agricultural products	4	3%
Cleaning cars and shining shoes	3	2%
Construction, maintenance of buildings, home or cars for someone else	2	2%
House work, unpaid work for household	31	27%
Total	116	100%

As it is seen from the table about one third of children undertake tasks or jobs at home. Another third refers to money earning activities.

According to the experts, refugee children are mainly engaged in seasonal agricultural works or farming in rural areas helping their parents. Besides agricultural works children help their

¹⁰ Although currently there is a huge debate in international and scientific organization on the nature of child labour definition: should it be understood solely in negative and destructive for child sense or not.

¹¹ The answer choices were not restricted and each respondent could tick up to three answer choices. The percentage is calculated from total number of children.

parents in different jobs - paid house cleaning, paid fruits collection, paid works in poultry factory etc.

The following are categories of children’s work:

Table 22. Basic work categories performed by children in the last 12 months

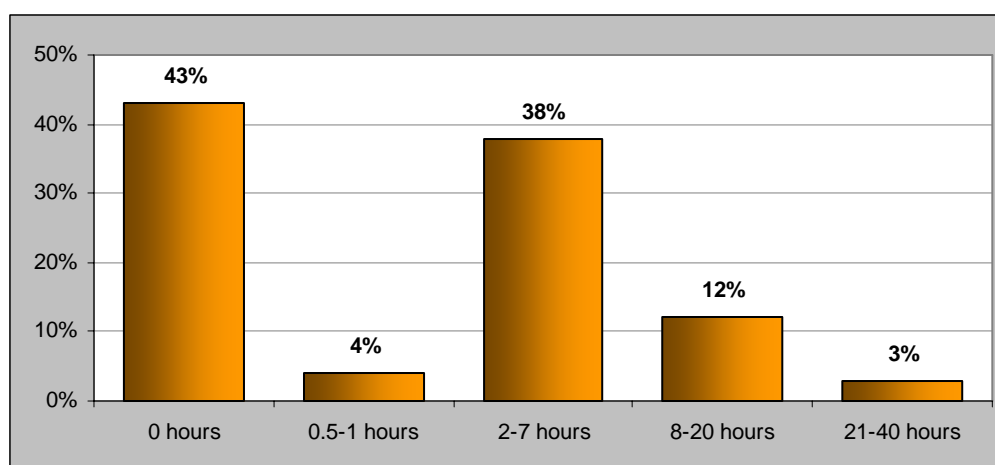
Work type	Frequency	Percent
None	50	45%
Unpaid family work helper	50	45%
Regular employee	8	6%
Individual business without paid employee	1	1%
Casual employee without contract	1	1%
Volunteer unpaid work	1	1%
Unpaid work for friends/relatives	1	1%
Total	112	100%

It is obvious that only 11% (12) of the children have a job, for which they get paid. Others work to help adults earn money.

The results of in-depth interviews with parents confirm that children work with and for their families performing unpaid job (mainly doing agricultural work and household chores). Many parents also mentioned that their children perform paid work either helping them (working with father in car repair centre, helping parents to cultivate others land), or working with other businesses without parental support (land cultivation, loader, shop assistant, car repairer, delivery man, furniture maker, etc.). This is important as children working with their parents are more protected and less exposed to exploitation. In this context it was mentioned that local children mainly work with or for their families. In the meantime refugee children work for others and do not receive adequate remuneration. One of the experts stated: “Children who work are paid 20%-30% of performed job and this negatively affects their health and they lose their weekends and holidays”. Parents reported two cases when children’s health was seriously affected by the job performed. One child worked with his father at furniture production factory and got serious health issues due to air pollution. He had to undergo a complicated surgery. The other child had nose fracture at the workplace and has been since suffering from respiratory issues.

The work duration performed by the children varied from just one day to more than two years. To the question “How many hours do you work weekly” the following answers were received:

Chart 6. Hours worked per week by refugee children



It can be noted that the hours worked per week are not intensive for the majority of children. Children who work regularly are mainly aged 16-18, which is the allowed working age according to the Labor Code of Armenia (it is allowed for children to work up to 20 hours per week).

Children aged 10, 14 and 15 worked on average 1 day/week or several times/week. However a 14 year old boy worked over 20 hours per week selling newspapers, beverages, food or agricultural products for about a 1 year. Another 17 year old boy worked on transportation of goods for more than a year and a girl aged 15 helped her mother in the market.

Speaking about hours worked, during the in-depth interviews parents mainly noted that during vacation, children usually work 7-12 hours per day and only 1-3 hours/day otherwise.

It should be noted that the majority (92%, 103) of respondent children reported that they never missed classes due to the performed job. But some children (3%, 3) reported missing classes very often or sometimes.

Table 23. Frequency of missing classes due to the work

Frequency of missing classes	Frequency	Percent
Very often	2	2%
Sometimes	1	1%
Seldom	5	5%
Never	103	92%
Total	111	100%

During the in-depth interviews, parents like children noted that children mainly work during holidays and sometimes after school and they do not miss classes because of work. However in some cases there are children who spend their main time at work often missing classes and do not proceed to high school after completing the secondary school. Taking this into consideration it can be concluded that the work performed did not have an impact on the education process of children.

About 55% (34 of 62) of working children reported that they worked due to poor economic situation of their families. Others, 11% (7 of 62), noted that they are willing to do the work in order to learn new things.

During in-depth interviews the experts also mentioned that children work mainly because of hard social-economic conditions. *“Sometimes the living conditions are so devastating that the child is going to work to escape from the overwhelming atmosphere at home”*. Even though, experts and parents mainly think that work performed by children do not have negative impact on their physical health, many experts noted that children start having serious psychological problems when they perform unskilled job (like collecting empty bottles, car cleaning etc).

Experts noted that while children perform agricultural works it is difficult to ensure adequate working conditions for them. However, no cases of school drop outs or absenteeism were recorded due to engagement in agricultural works. It was also mentioned that children are not forced to work; they rather understand the financial circumstances of their family and also try to earn their pocket money.

In comparison with non-refugee children the opinions of experts varied. According to the experts opinion locals work more often. Others think that as refugees are in worse social conditions comparing with locals hence they will be more often engaged in work. The third group thinks that there is no difference in intensity and types of job performed by refugees

and locals - all depend on social conditions. In this regard it was mentioned that local children mainly work with or for their families. Meanwhile refugee children work for others and do not receive adequate remuneration.

According to the majority of experts there are no cases of child trafficking, begging, children engaged in street trade or other activities among refugee children. However one of the experts noted: *There are working refugees, who work to overcome hard social-economic conditions. They perform work not controlled either by parents or by state and are exposed to exploitation. For example: now there are brother and sister from refugee family, the boy used to perform different physical works/activities, and both did not attend school due to absence of birth certificate, prior to applying to Fund for Armenian Relief. Currently children live in institution.*”

Another refugee child in one of the regions was collecting empty bottles for sale when his father was imprisoned (the child does not have a mother). After father’s release from prison he discontinued to collect bottles.

Another case is about a child whose mother left her 4 children. After escaping from the orphanage one of the children ran to rural areas and stayed in a sheep barn. Now s/he is 23-24 years old and lives in one of communal areas in Yerevan.

To **summarize** it can be concluded that 27% children help families with household chore, which in most of the cases is not very intensive and constitutes on average 2-7 hours per week. Another 31% is engaged in paid job. Moreover, refugee children in rural areas are engaged in both paid and unpaid seasonal agricultural or farming works. However, there are cases of more intensive paid works performed by children both in rural and urban settings.

Children mainly perform seasonal work during summer holidays and it is not affecting their school attendance, however several cases of school absenteeism due to work have been recorded. It should be noted that though the work performed by children provides additional revenue to the refugee households, the cases when children perform jobs enhancing their professional skills are very rare. Children mainly perform low skilled job which is unpleasant and not satisfactory. The hard socio-economic situation is mentioned as the main reason for child labour. In comparison with local children refugee children work as casual workers (i.e. selling newspapers, transportation of goods, agricultural works) and are not accompanied by their parents. Local children, when they work, are mainly involved in family farming, agriculture or business or are accompanying their parents as work helpers (example, girls helping their mothers to do contracted cleaning or boys helping fathers in construction works). Refugee children, therefore, are more at risk of underpayment and exploitation than local children.

Part Ten: Violence against Children

To the question “have you ever been mocked, insulted or laughed at because of your or your family’s refugee status?” 14% (16) refugee children answered positively. Meantime, about half (47%, 14) of Iraqi children answered “Yes” compared to just 2% (2) of Azeri children.

Table 24. Cases when children were mocked or insulted because of their or their family refugee status (by country of origin)

Being mocked, insulted or laughed because of refugee status	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
	Yes	14	47%	2	2%	16
No	16	53%	81	98%	97	86%
Total	30	100%	83	100%	113	100%

Around 75% (12) children reported that the insulting behavior was demonstrated by other children and would happen mainly at school - 69% (11), and in the community - 31% (5). 50% (8) of children reported that these kinds of cases are seldom; some 37% (6) mentioned “sometimes” and only 13% (2) answered “often”.

However, to the question “Have you ever been slapped, beaten or pushed because of your or your family’s refugee status?” only 3 children answered positively and all are Iraqi refugees. Two children mentioned that the perpetrators were children from their school, and that this was happening sometimes or rather rare, in fact the last time this happened several months ago. Children either did not report to anybody or only told the teacher and parents about the scratches received as a result. One child experienced violence from the community adults, which happens sometimes and the last time it happened a year ago.

It should be mentioned that children reported that they are experiencing difficulties in communication with classmates at school (please see [Education](#) section of this report).

During the in-depth interviews, Iraqi refugee adults reported that their children experienced frequent negative attitude by other children at school and in the community when they arrived to Armenia. This was in form of laughing at children, mocking, calling them Arab or Turk, ignoring and not communicating with them. Parents explain it by poor knowledge of Armenian language; as soon as children overcame the language barrier and learned Eastern Armenian there were no such problems any more. Those children who were young when they came to Armenia learned the language easier and quicker and had fewer problems with peers. Many Iraqi interviewees reported that currently there are no cases of maltreatment due to their refugee status. Sometimes when conflicts would happen Iraqi parents would appeal to the school principal or teacher. In some cases when the principal explained the classmates that Iraqi Armenians are also Armenians and that it is the same nation, it helped, and children discontinued maltreatment. To the question “Do they think that their children experience worse treatment more frequently comparing with locals?” Iraqi parents told that in the past it was true, but currently it is not the case. Many told that locals also experience maltreatment from classmates mainly due to low social status.

Among Azeri refugee families interviewed about 77% answered that their children did not experience violence or negative attitude on the ground of being refugees. One family reported that cases of maltreatment happen due to their poor social status. Two families

reported that there are no such cases now, but in the past once the child was called “Turk” by classmates and teachers used to differentiate refugee children from the locals. Only one family responded that they are treated badly by neighbors due to refugee status.

According to the experts the maltreatment or violence did not happen due to refugee status, but more frequently due to bad social situation of refugees (as well as locals). One of the experts said: *“Children often hide the fact that they live in communal house to avoid mocking from classmates. The cases of violence can not be solely linked with the refugee status, but more with poor social situation.”*

As for Azeri refugees, their status is reminded when other socially significant cases happen. As an example when the child was late to bring money for organization of event at school teachers replied: *“The refugees as usual are late with payment”*.

However one of the superintendents mentioned that in contrary to Azeri refugee children Iraqi children, living in the communal house, do not play and freely communicate with other children. Meanwhile, there are no cases of violence or maltreatment against them. *“While Azeri refugees are integrated in the society, Iraqi refugees still have communication and integration issues.”*

To **summarize**, it can be concluded that in general refugees are not treated badly by locals due to their refugee status. However unlike present situation in the past upon their arrival to the country the locals did not treat them well. Azeri refugees’ acculturation has happened while ago and now they do not experience such problems; in case of Iraqi refugees, they have reported cases of negative attitude and maltreatment towards children from peers mainly at school, which happened during the first years of their arrival to Armenia and is rarely happening now. One of the reasons of maltreatment by other children was language barrier. Currently occurrences of such kind of cases are very uncommon. However, some Iraqi refugee children still have problems with integration, like communication problems with classmates. As for Azeri refugees they are better integrated in the society as they live in country for a longer time and children were born in Armenia. For these children, the maltreatment is associated with their low social level, rather than refugee status.

Part Eleven: Deviance

A question on whether there are refugee children with deviant behavior, i.e. children having alcohol or drug abuse, street children, thieves or beggars was addressed to experts from Family, Women and Children Departments (FWCD) of Regional Municipalities, Social Protection Units of local municipalities, village mayors, school principals, as well as superintendents of communal areas and NGO staff.

Almost all interviewed experts reported that there are no cases of deviant behavior among refugee children. However, one of the FWCD interviewees mentioned that among the children registered with deviant behavior there are few children from former refugee families.

In particular, interviewees from FWCD reported that they receive information from juvenile department of police on monthly bases regarding children who were taken to police due to alcohol or drug abuse, street children, minor prostitutes, thieves, begging children, etc. There is currently no registered refugee children committed a crime or deviant behavior recorded at the police according to the experts from FWCD.

Regarding the drug addiction one of the experts mentioned: *“The drugs are very expensive; they (refugee children) do not have such money to buy drugs. The refugee children, as well as adults do not like to drink alcohol, so there is no problem with alcohol abuse.”*

As for the cases of robbery the following three were mentioned: a refugee child committed a robbery and was taken to police; a refugee child had stolen cigarettes from the market and was taken to police; 17 year-old child committed a robbery and was imprisoned for 3 months (he left the country for Russia as it was ashamed to continue living in that community after that case).

With regard to prostitution the following two cases were mentioned.

A 16-year-old girl (the sister of the above-mentioned boy that committed robbery) is engaged in prostitution. The reporter noted that the girl’s mother is engaged in prostitution too and that the girl does not find it shameful. She was raised in orphanage and had antisocial behavior, smoked, used alcohol, and says inappropriate words to children.

Another case is about a family, where the mother is a prostitute who encourages her children to do the same; she even dressed her son as a girl to attract men customers. The State officials reported that the mother was offered to place children in boarding institution for socially vulnerable children, but she refused as she earns money by exploiting her children, who are 15 and 16 years old.

To summarize, the majority of experts reported that there are no cases of deviant behavior among refugee children. There are very few refugee children registered in police for robbery, prostitution, alcohol or drug use, begging etc. The only three cases of robbery and two cases of prostitution were reported.

Part Twelve: Citizenship, Social Adaptation and Documentation

Section I. Access to Documentation

When asked “When you came to Armenia did you have any documents with you?” 99% of respondents answered “Yes”, and 1% of respondents, who are Azeri refugees, answered “I don't know”, as they were young then. According to 96% of respondents these documents were accepted by the State authorities of Armenia, 2% were asked to submit additional documents (2% of respondents are unaware whether these documents were accepted or no, as they were too young then). The majority of respondents (71%, 137) were required to present only one type of document - mainly the Iraqi or USSR passports or birth certificates. Others (29%, 57) were asked to present two documents - mainly Iraqi or USSR passports and birth certificates.

According to interviewed experts, in the past there were some cases when refugees or their children didn't have any identification documents. Thanks to the new State policy which has been recently adopted it is now possible to get quick registration and thus avoid having refugees with no documentation. As stated by a respondent, “Those people have received their documentation in an order prescribed by legislation. Currently the refugees don't face any problems or difficulties. They are also being photographed free of charge (UN is reimbursing the expenditures), and they enjoy discounts in the Passport Department”. Another expert's quotation: “State policy was implemented with regard of refugee documents, and now the term “refugee” is no longer on the registration documents, apartment lease agreements etc”.

The majority of refugees have acquired Armenian citizenship. According to the in-depth interviews conducted with refugees they claim that some community authorities were requested to eliminate refugee population and on the eve of presidential elections were compelling the refugees to acquire Armenian passports. The experts say that refugees do not have the right to participate in elections on national level; they can participate in local elections only.

During the in-depth interviews it turned out, that some refugees had to acquire Armenia citizenship in order to have the “right” to be engaged in entrepreneurial activities as reported by refugees. Meanwhile, according to RA Law on Refugees and Asylum, Article 22, **“The refugees having sought asylum in the Republic of Armenia have the same rights as RA citizens to be engaged in entrepreneurial activities in an order defined for RA citizens”**. Misunderstanding arises because not only the refugees, but also the local authorities are unaware of refugees' rights. During the expert interview one Mayor stated: “Refugee status doesn't have any positive or negative aspects. There is nothing compulsory regarding documentation change. Everyone acts the way he/she wants. There are seven families in the village having obtained Armenian passports and two families, who have CTDs. There are no advantages or disadvantages of it”:

According to respondents the main difficulty connected with citizenship acquisition arises if refugees do not have residence registration. There are refugees who reside at relatives' house or have rented apartments but don't have registration. Refugees say that because of this fact they can't obtain Armenian passports.

About 94% of respondents have only one identification document. At present, CTD is used as identification document by the majority of refugees: 70% (135 out of 194) of respondents have CTD of which 74% (32 out of 43) of Iraqi refugees and 68% (103 out of 151) of

refugees from Azerbaijan have CTD. Around 22% (42) of total respondents stated that they possess refugee cards of which 12% (5) of Iraqi refugees and 25% (37) of refugees from Azerbaijan.

The survey results revealed that there are refugees (10) who hold even several identification documents. As they mentioned during the in-depth interviews they use different documents for different purposes. Five respondents out of 194 have mentioned that they have both a refugee card and a CTD, 4 respondents stated that besides a refugee card or a CTD they also hold Armenia passports, and 1 respondent noted that holds a CTD and a USSR Passport.

Section 2. Problems Connected with Documentation

As it was already mentioned the process of documentation acquisition has become rather easy especially for Azeri refugees. During quantitative interviews, 87% of respondents mentioned, that they didn't encounter any difficulties in relation with documentation acquisition. Nevertheless, some people have faced certain difficulties. Thus, 7% of respondents mentioned that "those are very long drawn-out proceedings", 4% of respondents had problems with the translation: as the documentation procedure was carried out in Yerevan, in some cases it was a rather serious problem for people residing in the regions to come to Yerevan. For 2% of respondents "problems with a refugee's surname" was an issue. This was a rather serious handicap for Iraqi refugees in particular.

More detailed information about the difficulties of documentation acquisition process was received through qualitative interviews. It turned out that Iraqi passports contain the name, patronymic and grandfather's name of a person, so Armenians arriving from Iraq faced problems concerning their surnames. Quotation: "*In many cases we have to prove that we are Armenians, as our Iraqi passports don't contain our Armenian surnames*". In many cases people have to draw-up new surnames.

Moreover, one of the most frequent problems that Iraqi refugees face is the incorrect translation when acquiring CTDs and/or Armenia passports. In many cases the translation from Arabic language is not being done correctly, which results in misrepresentation of the names and other important information. Due to this documentation acquisition procedure lasts for months requiring additional financial means. "*My date of birth mentioned in the CTD is not correct, there are also some typos in my name...to fill in these data correctly, it is required to go to Iraq and have the mistakes corrected*".

The next issue of documentation acquisition refers to procedure itself and the distance to travel to get the documents issued. For acquiring and/or extending the expiry date of documents the refugees have to travel. Thus, Azeri refugees have to come to Yerevan in relation with the refugee card or CTD, Iraqi refugees have to go to Iraq or Georgia. If for Azeri Armenians this is a loss of time and finance, in case of Iraqi Armenians the situation is paradoxical: on the one hand to submit additional documents people have to go back to the country they have escaped from, on the other hand, as the respondents stated, they are not able to depart from Armenia with their CTDs or temporary residence certificates as exit visa cannot be provided with these documents. For the solution of this problem there are two options – get a visa from Iraq or settle the matters through the Iraqi embassy, which is a widely used option. As the Republic of Iraq doesn't have an embassy in Armenia, Iraqi Armenians have to go to Georgia, which requires additional finances and time. Respondents claim that there are many Iraqi Armenians, whose Iraqi passports have expired and they have become citizens of neither of countries as they can't go to Iraq or to Georgia (sometimes conditioned with financial difficulties) to extend their passport validity dates.

Abovementioned circumstances make the documentation acquisition procedure more complicated. Quotation: *“When the validity date of a CTD expires, acquisition of a new one is a complicated bureaucratic procedure, which lasts for months. If for an ordinary citizen it takes a week to get a passport, refugees get it in six months at best”*.

There are also many problems referring the usage of a CTD. According to the Armenian Law on Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Article 30, Paragraph 1, **“Convention travel document is a valid document identifying the legal residence of a refugee in the Republic of Armenia and used when departing from the Republic of Armenia. It is also a basis for refugees to enjoy their rights and freedoms defined by this law”**. But according to the respondents' opinions the most frequently occurred problem regarding this document arises while crossing the border of RA. Quotation: *“We wanted to leave for Syria, but they refused to give us a visa stating that they have no right to stamp the visa in this document”*. Another respondent stated: *“Actually this is a travel document, but the point is that we can't go anywhere with it as they refuse to stamp a visa in this travel document”*.

The next important issue regarding CTDs is that in Armenia number of state institutions and private organizations don't recognize it. During the in-depth interviews many cases were presented stating that people could not open a bank account, make purchase on credit, or obtain deposit account. Quotation: *“...This passport is not accepted in banks. I was supposed to get my salary transferred to my bank card but as not all the banks issue a card based on this document, I ended up doing a meaningless long-lasting procedure, which is a violation of human rights*. The respondents also have had problems while dealing with telecommunication operators as the latter had refused to provide phone cards based on CTDs.

The most serious problem regarding the CTD arises when officials refuse to give a certificate of marriage. Young people with refugee status cannot register their marriage in the Registry Office as the CTD causes certain difficulties and bureaucratic delays. According to the experts in such cases the spouse who has no citizenship should submit an application to the Ministry of Justice and pay 30.000 AMD to get the marriage certificate. In such situation the refugees especially those from rural communities are not eager to getting the certificate as it requires additional time and money. A quotation from an expert interview: *“Only one of ten families may be persistent enough to obtain the marriage certificate”*. Unregistered marriages today do not affect child's birth registration. Quantitative data on the CTD was analyzed and quantitative distribution was made. During the quantitative interviews people holding CTDs mentioned the problems they faced regarding CTDs. 62% of respondents mentioned that *“there was no problem”*, and 3% mentioned that they *“have not used it yet”*. According to 18% of respondents *“CTDs are not acceptable in some State or private organizations (banks, schools, elections, marriage etc.)”*. According to 15% *“it's difficult to go abroad”* with CTDs and according to 2% - *“birthday is not mentioned in the passport and it's a problem”*. The experts reported that the mechanism of documents provision exempts refugees from any obstacles. Quotation: *“During the acquisition or usage of documents no problem should arise; and the problems that have arose are due to “bureaucratic” State officials not the overall system”*.

The problems with CTDs arise due to weak knowledge of it by the citizens, employers, governmental officials and the public at large, which can be explained by relatively short time of its application in Armenia. Thus, the main information is written in English in the CTD, in couple of cases even the date of birth is not provided, CTD contains special pages for children's photos which cannot be found in Armenian passports, etc.

The problems related with obtaining proper documents have negative influence on refugees' psychological status, resulting in depression and disappointment towards the country that sheltered them.

Section 3. Maintaining Refugee Status vs. Acquisition of Citizenship

Despite the aforementioned difficulties, the respondents seek to maintain the documents certifying their refugee status.

The results of in-depth interviews conducted with refugees prove that Azeri refugees more often try to keep the refugee card or former USSR passport. Obviously, there are lots of issues arising for refugees when the validity period of these identification document expires. A quotation of an Azeri refugee: *"I did not want to take the refugee blue passport (CTD is meant), because the red one might give us some privileges"*.

During the survey the attempt was made to find out why refugees continue to maintain their status identification documents and what advantages these documents may provide. According to the experts, people having certain expectations for benefits do not obtain Armenian passports. These expectations usually include the possibility to get a free apartment, get exemption from military service, migrate to other country as political/other asylum seeker or apply for asylum to relevant authorities/structures of the European countries.

The refugees themselves talked about this during in-depth and quantitative interviews. During the quantitative interviews 194 refugees were surveyed to find out whether they have a desire or intention to acquire Armenia citizenship. For 18% of respondents it was difficult to answer to this question, 10% of respondents mentioned that they plan to apply for Armenian passport during the upcoming 12 months, 5% noted that they have already applied and are waiting for the decision. It turned out that 67% of respondents are not willing to apply for Armenia citizenship and have various justifications. Thus, 29% are not willing to apply for citizenship because they are waiting for property restitution, 11% stated that they don't want to become citizens of Armenia as the Government does nothing to help them. The "lack of confidence towards the Government" was repeatedly expressed by the respondents during the in-depth interviews.

Table 25. The intention to apply for Armenian citizenship (by country of origin)

Plans to apply for citizenship	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
I do not want to apply as I have apartment problems /waiting for an apartment from the government	3	7%	53	35%	56	29%
I don't want to become Armenian citizen. The Government doesn't help us	5	12%	17	11%	22	11%
I plan to apply during coming 12 months	7	16%	12	8%	19	10%
I do not want to apply as I'm not planning to stay in Armenia	6	14%	8	5%	14	7%
I do not want to apply as I don't want to lose my refugee status	3	7%	10	7%	13	7%
I do not want to apply as I do not want to lose social benefits	5	12%	6	4%	11	6%
I have already applied and wait for decision	4	9%	5	3%	9	5%
I do not want to apply as I don't want my child/me to serve in the armed forces	2	5%	6	4%	8	4%
I do not want to apply as the procedure is very complicated	0	0%	7	5%	7	4%
Don't know	8	19%	27	18%	35	18%

Total	43	100%	151	100%	194	100%
--------------	-----------	-------------	------------	-------------	------------	-------------

Refugee parents whose children are over 14 years old (39 people) and whose children do not have Armenian citizenship were asked whether they have intention to apply for children's citizenship. 36% of respondents (10 Iraqi and 3 Azeri refugees) answered: "I don't want to, because I don't want him to serve in the army", 31% of respondents (13 Azeri refugees) - "I've planned to apply within 12 months", 20% (5 Iraqi and 3 Azeri refugees) - "I don't want to, because I'm not planning to stay in Armenia" and 13% (5 Azeri refugees) - "I've already applied and I am waiting for the answer". Those refugees, whose children are already Armenian citizens, have not been asked this question. It should be outlined, that the children of families having moved to Armenia from Azerbaijan during 1988-1992, who were born outside Armenia are 19-22 years old and majority of them already have Armenian Passports. But there are cases, when the Azeri refugees' sons (already 25-27 years old) do not apply for Armenian passports to get exempt from the military service¹². Answering to the question "How many of your children have refugee status" 19% of respondents (25 Iraqi and 11 Azeri refugees) have mentioned, that at least one child has a refugee status.

To **conclude**, according to the results of qualitative and in-depth interviews on the opportunities the documents provide, the refugees and experts have contradictory opinions. On the one hand the refugees believe, that by maintaining their refugee documents, they have more opportunities to gain certain privileges, on the other hand the experts assure that refugees have privileges regardless whether they retain the refugee documents or not. According to the majority of experts' both representing SPUs, FWCDs and local level experts, the documentation certifying refugee status does not give any privileges compared to those refugees who have acquired Armenian passports. Quotation: "The document certifying refugee status doesn't give anything, the refugees just do think they have some privileges. For example, in case of housing provision program both the refugees with relevant documents as well as those having obtained RA Passports are being provided with apartments. Only those boys, who were not born in Armenia, do not serve in the army, other children of the same family born in Armenia are Armenia citizens and the boys are conscripted into the military service". Thus, based on the survey results it can be concluded that the refugees are either unaware of their rights and privileges, or have no confidence towards the Government and State structures.

This comes to prove that a discrepancy between expectations and reality exists among refugees, which is due to lack of knowledge of refugees' rights. There are some experts who stated that the refugees do not apply for citizenship not only because of unawareness of their rights, but because of their inconsistency and indifference.

Section 4. Social Adaptation

Naturalization is the acquisition of citizenship of any country by a person, which is accompanied by social adaptation involving adoption of behavior norms, language and culture typical for the majority of country's population¹³. In Armenia the peculiarities of refugee social adaptation are associated with the following factors: 1) in what social conditions refugees currently live in, 2) what behavioral norms uphold the overwhelming majority of population, 3) what similarities or differences refugees and locals have.

¹² See more details in Part Fourteen: Military Service.

¹³ Социологическая энциклопедия: В 2 т. / Национальный общественно-научный фонд; Рук. науч. проекта Г.Ю. Семигин, М.: Мысль, 2003. Т. 2. С. 20

The legal aspect of naturalization is presented in the above section. To understand how the social adaptation of refugees proceeds in Armenian reality, the several important aspects of their life should be considered.

- housing and living conditions
- social environment
- employment
- State policy

During the in-depth interviews both the experts and refugees have outlined that they used to have a higher status in the countries they were displaced from; they used to have better economic capacity and social recognition. As already presented in [Part Three: Housing, Living Conditions and Financial Situation](#), currently refugees reside in suburbs-periphery, where they were provided with a dormitory, camper constructions or other public facilities. There are refugees from Azerbaijan, who had exchanged their apartments during the period of 1988-1992 with Azeris residing in Armenia thus repopulating former Azeri villages. Centralizing refugees in one place is also typical for a number of Iraqi refugees, who reside in Darbnik or Darakert villages. During the survey, especially when visiting rural communities the researchers have repeatedly heard the phrases such as "refugee dormitory", "refugee district", "refugee cottages", "refugee houses", etc. Thus, while living within the society, they are still somehow marginalized from the society. Regional marginalization has its certain impact on the consciousness and perceptions of people. As for the employment of certain groups of refugees, according to interviewed experts, many of them are still unable to become adapted to rural life, carry out agricultural activities. The interviews conducted with the refugees revealed that housing is still the major issue of the refugees. Quotation: *"We lived in the very center of Baku, we had everything...there were factories, we were working...here we have nothing ..."* According to the interviewed experts, refugees living in such conditions are mainly dependent on the State assistance and benefits, which is deeply enrooted in their mentality by poor social conditions and idea of "lost homeland", as well as many assistance programs provided by the State or international organizations in the past. As a result, according to experts, the refugees hold demanding positions; do not want to get Armenia citizenship, especially because they have expectations to be provided with free housing. On the one hand they don't want to become RA citizens, as they have certain expectations with regard of the Government protection; on the other hand they fail to succeed in integration as they mainly reside in the refugee areas.

Based on the survey results it can be concluded that in such situations people may express two behavior models:

- denial;
- adaptation.

As a rule, the denial is manifested in two ways:

- creation of own environment;
- migration.

Creation of an own environment may be expressed mainly by denying to use Armenia state language, i.e. Eastern Armenian, denying to preserve the local traditions and uphold general behavior patterns. Quantitative interviews reveal that for writing skills, 47% of adult respondents feel more comfortable to express themselves in Eastern Armenian, 34% in Russian, 14% in Arabic, 3% in Western Armenian, 1% in English, and 1% in Persian. In case of

verbal language knowledge, 65% use Eastern Armenian, 20% use Russian, 12% - Western Armenian, 2% - Arabic, and 1% - English.

As for migration, it should be noted that both Azeri and Iraqi Armenians expressed an intention to depart from Armenia. Migration is conditioned with *internal* (repellent) and *external* (magnetic) factors. The interviews conducted with refugees revealed that people who have housing problem and have no confidence towards the State system, and, are dissatisfied of the support and are more inclined to leave the country. A Quotation of an Iraqi refugee: *"In Armenia we have no employment, no income, no housing, why should we stay here? Here my sons have no future...the father always wants the best for his children...here we go one step forward, two steps backwards"*. People, having relatives or family abroad, have stronger intention to leave. Interviews conducted with experts, regional authorities and local authorities of the villages populated with refugees revealed that there are very few young refugee families in the communities who have young children. Young people of working age mostly go abroad leaving their parents here. Any story of success achieved overseas generates a chain of repeated attempts to leave the country.

Refugees who used to have or already have obtained an apartment in Armenia and/or live in the neighborhood along with the local residents, overcome local culture adaptation process easier and therefore their social adaptation also proceeds in a smoother way. Discussing the language factor in the context of adaptation, it can be noted that there are some people among Azeri and Iraqi refugees who have mastered the local language and are easily communicating with the locals. This is the group of refugees who live in an environments (buildings, community, village), where the majority of population are locals.

As for refugee children's adaptation and naturalization process, research results prove that the children of Azeri refugees do not have suchlike problems because they were born and brought up in Armenia. They are full members of the Armenian society. Quotation of an expert: *"I can say that their parents used to have problems with integration, language, whereas these children were born in Armenia and do not have similar problems"*.

The children of Azeri refugees who were not born in Armenia and are over 18 years are not included in this research. However, some information was also received about them. It turns out that at the beginning children used to have certain difficulties with everyday communication. Quotation: *"There were some language related problems with the peers as the refugees had Russian education and some language problems were appearing during the communication, but now this is not an issue"*. As these children adopted the language, they also adapted to this society.

As for Iraqi refugee children, their situation is slightly different. These children, like their parents, came from other country, other culture; they have other values and behavioral patterns. Since they speak Western Armenian, they are not immediately accepted by their peers because of their language.

Therefore, particularly at the very beginning children had problems with communication and interaction. The social adaptation process of Iraqi refugee children did not always proceed smoothly. As Iraqi refugees appear to be somewhat flexible by their nature, they strive to get adapted to local conditions. A respondent stated: *"As for Iraqi refugees, they automatically get adjusted to their situation and begin to communicate."*

Summarizing the aforementioned, the research results revealed the following.

Access to Documentation

Social and economic conditions and environment, and the State politics towards refugees have a significant influence on their decision to naturalization. Refugees often regard naturalization to be pressured by the State, which speaks about lack of knowledge of refugee rights by both the refugees and State representatives. As a result, from a more than thousand refugees registered few years ago present research identified 196 refugee HHs where mainly one or two family members retained refugee status.

Lack of place to live and residence registration is an obstacle for refugees for obtaining citizenship.

Problems Connected with Documentation

In the past, there were some cases when refugees or their children didn't have any identification document, but recently the number of such cases has decreased due to the new State policy implemented in this regard, and with the support of international organizations. As a result, the majority of refugees without identification documents have now acquired RA passports and citizenship.

Iraqi refugees have encountered certain difficulties with obtaining of identification documents, such as CTDs, temporary asylum seeker documents or Armenia passports. The most frequently encountered problems are associated with incorrect translation of source documents, absence of the surname, long procedures, distance from the registration centers and bureaucratic ways of processing paperwork.

The CTD being issued to the refugees is not particularly helpful as it is not accepted by many State structures or private organizations such as registry office, banks, mobile phone operators, etc. Moreover, although the document is called "travel" the respondents complain that with this document it is neither possible to cross the border of Armenia nor to obtain entry visa to any country.

Maintaining Refugee Status vs. Acquisition of Citizenship

The refugees are interested in maintaining the document certifying their refugee status, as they expect to get certain benefits from it such as provision of housing, exemption from military service, or a possibility to apply to other citizenship or moving to other country. The experts assure that only in case of military service the exemption can be provided to persons with the refugee status. In other cases, the refugee status document does not bring additional benefits but the refugees are not aware of this.

Social Adaptation

Community conditions, social environment, employment have significant influence on refugee's social adaptation process. Children from Azeri refugees' households born in Armenia have not had major problems with social adaptation. However, social adaptation of Iraqi refugee children does not always go smoothly.

Part Thirteen: Birth Registration and Documents of Children

The peculiarities of children's birth registration and documentation acquisition process are conditioned with refugee child's country of birth. This chapter looks at two groups of refugee children: born in Armenia and born abroad.

Section 4. The Documents of Children Born in Armenia and Related Issues

In total, 164 respondents, 90% out of which are Azeri refugees have stated that they have one or more children born in Armenia. Families whose children were born in Armenia where surveyed to find out whether they faced with any issues when obtaining child birth certificate. The answers were distributed as follows: 9% of respondents have answered "Yes", 91% - "No", and there is no essential difference from which country the respondents have immigrated.

By means of both quantitative and qualitative methods an attempt was made to find out whether there are children who do not have a birth certificate. Quantitative data showed that there is only one such case. The child was born in Georgia, and on their way to Armenia they had lost the birth certificate. As the acquisition of a new certificate is a long and complicated process the child still remains without any document.

Expert interviews revealed that currently birth registration has become quite an easy process for stateless persons. A quotation expressed by the Head of FWCD: *"There are no refugee children who do not have a passport and birth certificate"*. According to another Head of the aforementioned department *"During a year there were 84 children with no birth certificate, but they are not connected with refugees. This phenomenon has not entirely disappeared yet, because the fathers of these children are not in Armenia. Issues connected with refugee children were arising in past, as parents sometimes would not register their marriage in the registry office. But this issue is already being regulated"*. Currently only paternity recognition certificate is required to issue a birth certificate.

The picture is the same in almost all regions regarding the birth certificate of children born in Armenia. Both experts and refugees assure that in general refugee children who were born in Armenia possess birth certificates even if the parents or one of them don't have Armenia citizenship. According to RA Law on Citizenship (adopted in 20.09.2010), Article 12, **"The child of the stateless persons, who was born on the territory of the Republic of Armenia, acquires citizenship of the Republic of Armenia"**.

The quantitative survey results revealed that 5% of respondents, who were displaced from Azerbaijan (out of 164 people), had paid money for obtaining child birth certificate. Respectively, 95% of respondents have received birth certificates in the manner prescribed by law, i.e. free of charge. Basically, money was paid at the registrar's request (4 people), at the medical agency's request (1 person) and voluntarily (2 people).

Section 5. Documents of Children Born Abroad and Corresponding Problems

32 Iraqi and 20 Azeri refugee children were born outside of Armenia. Thus, attempts were made to find out what documents were obtained for them in Armenia. The answers are presented in the below mentioned table.

Table 26. Type of documents obtained for refugee children in Armenia (by country of origin)

Documents	Iraq		Azerbaijan		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
No document	4	13%	5	25%	9	17%
RA passport	3	9%	4	20%	7	13%
CTD	19	59%	3	15%	22	42%
Temporary shelter seeker	5	16%	0	0%	5	10%
Birth certificate	1	3%	5	25%	6	12%
Refugee card	0	0%	3	15%	3	6%
Total	32	100%	20	100%	52	100%

It should be noted that 6 respondents have mentioned that they have had certain difficulties with obtaining the document in Armenia (refugee card, CTD, passport, temporary shelter), and 1 person noted that he had to pay additional money.

Acquisition of children's documents is a serious problem for Iraqi refugees. During the quantitative interviews they had noted that children who were born in Iraq have birth certificates, but as it turned out during the in-depth interviews the respondents meant the so-called "baptism paper" or ID number. In Iraq the newborns are given special cards in the hospital (written in Arabic) containing information regarding the child's birth - when and where he was born, child and maternal health situation, child's name, parents' names, etc. Then, many children of Iraqi Armenians are being baptized in the Armenian Church when they are 40 days old and a "baptism paper" is being issued based on the birth card. The "baptism paper" is written in two or three languages (Arabic and Western Armenian, in some cases also in English). When moving to Armenia, Iraqi Armenians took their children's "baptism paper" with them.

The main problem which arises in the course of document change is connected with the translation of the "baptism paper" which was mentioned by all Iraqi refugees. A quotation from an interview with Iraqi refugee: *"Baptism paper is written in 3 languages – Western Armenian, Arabic and English, but when we apply for CTDs, they still require the translation"*. Moreover, several complications arise in this process. The errors made during the translation are the most widely occurring ones as a result of which people's names, birthdates and other important data are being misrepresented. Because of incorrect translations discrepancy with other documents occurs or refugees are being obliged to have the documents translated again which stipulates additional resources (financial and time). A quotation: *"... sometimes the same thing is being translated for several times due to errors and every time we pay 4000 AMD as the "baptism paper" which is written in Armenian (Western Armenian is meant) is not accepted by State institutions"*.

Thus, the Iraqi refugees either obtain a CTD for their children or register them in their own CTDs. If the child is over 16 years s/he obtains an Armenian passport. It should be mentioned that Iraqi refugees have practice to obtain Armenian passports for girls only. During the qualitative and quantitative surveys there was not a single case of obtaining Armenian passport for Iraqi refugee sons. In order to obtain CTDs for their children, 11% of respondents have applied to the corresponding authorities (35% of Iraqi refugees and 5% of Azeri refugees). The respondents having applied for CTDs for their children were asked to present the results of their request. It turned out that 12 Iraqi applicants and 1 Azeri applicant have received their documents without any problem. 1 Iraqi and 5 Azeri refugees have stated: *"My child was refused to get the CTD and is not registered in any CTD"*. 1 Azeri

refugee child was refused to get the CTD and was registered in parents' documents, and other 2 Iraqi refugees have applied and are still waiting for the response.

21% of respondents have mentioned that they have applied for obtaining passport for their children. Among them 5 were Iraqi refugees (as already mentioned only the girls) who have received their passports without any problem. 33 Azeri refugee children also have obtained passports without any problem, 1 more case is still in process. The following answers were given by Azeri refugees: "*My child was refused to get Armenian passport*" (1 person), "*My child received Armenian passport with problems*" (1 person), "*There is no blank passport available, we are waiting for it*" (1 person). In total, 5 respondents have talked about the issues in regard with passport acquisition, out of which 2 respondents have stated that they didn't have any problems, the rest of 3 respondents have stated that the acquisition process was too long.

Summarizing the aforementioned, birth registration part the following can be concluded. The birth registration of Iraqi and Azeri refugee children is not a very serious problem as currently the birth registration procedure for children of non-RA citizens is considerably simplified. Children who were born in Armenia possess birth certificates even if one of the parents (or both) does not have Armenian citizenship. Acquisition of documents for children born abroad is rather a serious problem for Iraqi refugees. Iraqi Armenians provide "baptism paper" as the only certification they possess for their children. Concerning the course of document change for Iraqi children the main problem refers to the translation of the "baptism paper", as usually lots of mistakes are being made.

Part Fourteen: Military Service

The RA Law on Compulsory Military Service, Article 3, Paragraph 1, defines that **“Compulsory military service is the constitutional duty of RA citizens to participate in the defense of the Republic of Armenia”**. Accordingly, this law applies only to RA citizens. Since the survey was conducted with children under 18 years old, an attempt was made to find out whether refugee children were going to serve in the Armenian Army. 14 children out of 113 surveyed respondents were of pre-military age (16-18 years old boys). During the quantitative interviews they were asked whether they have passed military registration. It should be noted that according to the above mentioned law, Article 5, **“Military registration is the state system registering the pre-conscripts (16-18 years old), conscripts (18-27 years old) and in-reserve citizens and analyzing conscription and mobilization resources”**. It turned out that there are 7 respondents (boys) of this age-group registered for military service. Moreover, of them only 3 respondents have RA passport, others are intended to apply during the upcoming 12 months. The other 7 respondents of the same age-group are not willing to obtain Armenian passports and serve in the army.

As a result of conducted in-depth interviews it turned out that refugees' children who were born in Armenia and are Armenian citizens serve in the army. Azeri refugees' children born outside Armenia have generally maintained their refugee status aimed at getting exemption from the military service. The information was obtained from two types of respondents: parents under 27 years, who have immigrated to Armenia with their parents in their childhood; refugee parents having children both under 18 years old and over 18 years old. As a rule, the persons under 27 years had refugee status and were exempt of military service. Answering to the question *“When are you going to obtain RA citizenship”* they mentioned *“when I am 27 years old”*, i.e. after the military age. Thus, according to the respondents, refugee status “gives privileges” to boys in case of military service. During the survey there was a case in one of the villages when a refugee child had served in the army despite the fact that the family was a single parent. As the grandmother told: *“The eldest of the three sons did not have RA passport, but he was illegally conscripted to the army...”* The Mayor of the village also confirmed this fact during the interview conducted with him.

As for the Iraqi refugees, the vast majority of them flatly reject the idea of serving in the Armenian Army. Quotation: *“We have been warring for years, all of my sons have served in the army, I don't want my grandson to serve. When I see a soldier my heart dies out. Is my Saro (the grandson) the only hope of Armenia? The child wants to serve in the army, but I don't want him to do that”*. A young parent stated: *“I haven't served for my country, why should I serve for Armenia?”* A quotation of a respondent child: *“Although I was young, I remember well enough bomb blasting and firing sounds in Iraq, I don't want wars anymore, I don't want the army to exist”*. Thus, the unwillingness of Iraqi refugees to serve in Armenian Army is conditioned by the fact that they had witnessed war, the memories of which are still fresh. Quotation: *“... If they do not provide us with a house, do not assist, why my children should serve for this country.”*

Azeri and Iraqi refugees avoid military service as they do not have confidence not only towards the State, but also towards the Armenian Army. Quotation: *“...my child will not serve in the army, as there are lots of violence in the Armenian army. Every day people are informed about the problems of the army via internet and television, we don't have confidence towards the army...”*.

Thus, as a **result** of the research conducted in regard with military service the following circumstances were revealed. Refugees' children who were born in Armenia and hold

Armenian citizenship serve in the Armenian army. The sons of Azeri refugees who were born outside Armenia have generally maintained their refugee status aimed at getting exemption from the military service. The overwhelming majority of Iraqi refugees mainly reject the idea of acquiring citizenship for their sons, consequently, the idea of serving in Armenian army.

Part Fifteen: Separated Children

Separated children are children under 18 years of age who are outside their country of origin and separated from both parents or their legal/customary primary caregiver but not necessarily from other relatives.

According to information revealed by both the survey and in-depth interviews the majority of children live with one or both parents. However, there are a few cases reported when children are being raised by grandparents or other relatives, because parents died, or are in custody or are not able to financially take care of their children.

One of such cases is about a girl whose parents had died in a car accident and now she lives with old grandparents for whom raising a girl is a big challenge, because they don't work and are not healthy. The experts find that the girl has financial and socio-psychological difficulties. Another girl was abandoned by parents, but the reason was not mentioned, and now she is also living with the grandparents. There is also a family, in one of the villages, consisting of 3 children, whose mother has died and they are left alone. Two of them are already adults (18 and more), one of them has served in armed forces and the second one is in military service currently, the third child has a disability. They have had a fourth sibling, who was adopted by their aunt and lives with her. The results of the quantitative data revealed only 3 cases of children living without both parents. One of them is the case of a passed away mother and imprisoned father whose infant daughter lives with adult brother who is her formal guardian. Another child was given by parents to her aunt. In the third case parent died and child lives with the grandparents.

There are a lot of cases of children having a single parent, especially mothers, because their fathers had either divorced or died (including those died during Artsakh War).

The survey revealed 29 cases of single-parent families, 24 of which are mother-headed and 5 are father-headed families. There are 20 cases of divorced spouses. In most cases divorced fathers live in Armenia. In 7 cases of 17 divorced mothers, children have no contact with their fathers, 5 children had mentioned that they meet fathers several times a month, 4 children reported on contacting fathers more rarely and only 2 children contact their father everyday. In cases when children remain with fathers after divorce children never contact mothers.

It is to be noted that in 83% of single mother families, the women reported that they do not have jobs, have low income which is enough for buying food but not clothes. Moreover, 79% of single mothers reported that they receive social benefits, mainly family benefits and monthly food aid. Besides it is to be noted that many experts and research interviewers report on number of cases among naturalized single mothers who are sex workers.

In most cases of Iraqi families both parents came to Armenia with their children. One of the experts reported the case of Iraqi children living with one parent: the father had divorced from his wife in Iraq and came to Armenia with his children. Now children are separated from their mother and are being raised by father.

During the research the information from the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues was obtained certifying that there are no refugee children in state run institutions for children without care, i.e. in orphanages and care and protection boarding institutions.

Summarizing, it can be noted that currently there are no reported cases of separated refugee children in Armenia, i.e. children without both parents or a legal guardian. However, a few cases of children living without parents but with a legal guardian have been reported.

Children are being raised by grandparents and other relatives due to some circumstances and reasons: parents are died; parents have left children, etc. A number of cases of children living in single-parent families were also mentioned. In such women-headed households the majority of women does not have employment and live in poor economic conditions.

Main Findings and Recommendations

Housing, Living Conditions and Financial Situation

Housing condition remains one of the important issues of refugees. In particular the housing and living conditions of refugees who live in communal areas are extremely bad. Another issue is low economic security of refugee HHs which is a result of high unemployment rate especially among women.

The recommendations are:

- Continue implementation of State- and non-State programs targeted on improvement of living conditions of refugee HHs, in particular those who currently reside in communal areas in extremely poor living conditions. Both permanent and temporary shelter options can be applied to improve refugees living conditions.
- Where feasible avoid concentration and isolation of refugees in one communal area or one community to support their integration into society and avoid marginalization.
- Take measures to increase employability of refugees, in particular women. Encourage and support skills development, self-employment and business development programs for refugee populated communities.
- Draw Armenian Diaspora attention on the needs of refugees and seek its financial and political support to extend refugee assistance programs, and housing in particular.

Access to Social Benefits

As revealed through the assessment, the refugees now enjoy the same benefits as economically vulnerable local population. This means that, it has been generally assumed that the needs of refugees would be addressed through general State programs for vulnerable groups to alleviate poverty. However, the State programs do not account for the particular needs of refugees, for example, in the government-run vulnerability assessment system's (PAROS) vulnerability index used to determine eligibility for payment of state family benefits does not include refugee status as a factor of vulnerability. It can be recommended to have such factor included in the future in the vulnerability assessment tools.

Education

Iraqi refugees have been facing number of difficulties enrolling their children in local schools such as absence of documents from previous schools in country of their origin, extended procedures of translation of documents and placing child to a lower grade due to difficulties with the Armenian language. The language barrier was the most significant constrain leading to placing child in a lower grade or school drop-out after completing secondary school.

To improve educational opportunities of refugee children it can be recommended:

- Raise awareness of refugee families on their right to have their children enter the grade corresponding to their age. For 2011-2012 academic years the MoE order was released instructing school principals to place children attending to non-Armenian schools in other countries to the same grade irrespective to their level of knowledge.
- Create opportunities for refugee children to enhance their knowledge of Armenian language to eliminate this gap and support better integration.

- Strengthen the link between secondary and vocational schools; ensure professional orientation of students of higher classes to raise their interest in getting vocational skills and thus better position them for job search.

Leisure and Rest of Children

Refugee children have very low enrollment in after school activities mainly due to financial reasons or absence of school classes in their community. Similarly they do not participate in youth organizations or activities. Another major problem connected with leisure and rest of refugee children is inability to spend summer holidays in rest houses or camps.

It is recommended to improve access of refugee children to leisure and rest:

- Create low-cost opportunities for community refugee and non-refugee children's out of school classes and leisure, summer camps and rest houses by covering their transportation and attendance costs.
- Advocate with donors, communities and the State Government to provide funding support to establish sport and art classes in remote and marginalized rural communities targeting both local and refugee children in support to integration.

Health

While the overall health condition of refugee children in most of the cases is good or satisfactory, there are several cases of chronic illnesses acquired by children after moving to Armenia. While in most cases refugee children have equal access to healthcare services there are cases when refugees were requested to pay for free-of-charge services or pay at the rate of non-locals. Buying medicines have also been problematic due to lack of financial resources and poor economic situation of the vast majority of refugee HHs.

It is recommended to:

- Raise awareness of refugee families about BBP and right to equal to locals healthcare;
- Advocate with the Ministry of Health of Armenia about provision of free-of-charge medicines for children with chronic diseases.

Food and Clean Water

Malnutrition in children and poor access to food is especially persisting in rural refugee communities. Also many communities have problems accessing clean water. It is recommended to:

- Advocate with donors, communities and State Government to provide funding support provision of drinking water programs.
- Develop and implement small scale income generating agricultural programs for rural refugee communities.

Working Children and Child Labour

As it can be seen from the research, refugee children in their majority help families with household chores, but child labor is usually neither very intensive nor hampering school attendance. Refugee children work more than locals but in the meantime their work experience does not contribute to children's professional development. There is a potential threat to have more children engaged in longer work hours with the persistent economic crisis and decrease of HH income. It is recommended to:

- Take measures to increase awareness of children and their parents about child rights, as part of prevention of child exploitation and abuse.

Violence against Children

While in general the refugee children are not treated badly by locals, they all mentioned integration difficulties during the initial stage upon their arrival to the country caused by poor behavior towards them by locals including mocking and depriving them from participation. The language barrier was mentioned among key issues causing marginalization and stress among refugee children.

For current cohort of refugee children this problem has been more or less resolved, given the amount of time passed since their arrival in Armenia. Going forward, however, in order to avoid same issues, which may potentially arise due to new waves of refugees' influx into the country, it is believed that the State Government should take preparatory measures and develop a system for acculturation activities, involving local, international NGOs and community authorities and leaders.

Deviance

There are very few refugee children registered in police for robbery, prostitution, alcohol or drug use, begging etc. It could be recommended that local communities watch closely these cases, and conduct social work with the parents and children. Peer-to-peer approach involving local schools could be also very effective to prevent and respond to child crime incidents.

Access to Documentation, Citizenship and Naturalization

As noted, the refugees had encountered certain difficulties with obtaining of identification documents due to long and bureaucratic procedures, and the need to travel to central locations to get the documents done. The CTDs being issued to refugees are not accepted by many State structures or private organizations such as the registry office, banks, and mobile phone operators. Moreover, although the document is called "travel" the respondents claim that with this document it is neither possible to cross the border of Armenia nor to obtain an entry visa. It is recommended to:

- Develop mechanisms for simplification of the process of issuance of identification documents and their extension;
- Create One Stop Shop for refugees involving local non-governmental organizations which are active in the sphere of refugee rights protection in order to raise awareness of the refugees on procedures of documents acquisition and to provide legal counseling.
- Increase the awareness of State employees and large businesses on application of CTDs and refugees' rights.
- Recommend the State Government to review the application of CTDs and make a provision on its use for obtaining visas and departing from the country.
- Increase awareness of refugees and State officials on refugee rights, i.e. right to entrepreneurship, real estate acquisition, and health service right.
- Organize an awareness campaign on the refugees rights with the focus on their retained right to seek housing support after acquisition of Armenian citizenship.

Birth Registration and Documents of Children

Birth registration is not a serious problem for either Iraqi or Azeri refugees. However, acquisition of documents for children born abroad is a problem for Iraqi refugees. It is recommended to:

- Develop a group of consultants specialized in children's documentation issues which could be run by local non-governmental organizations active in the sphere of refugee rights protection.

Separated Children

There are not many cases of children living without parents. However, State structures, particularly FWCDs should have a mandate to better monitor and support refugee children living without both parents, as well as develop and implement measures to assist single mothers. This can be achieved by working with Regional Employment Centers helping these women get vocational education and/or find jobs.

Attachments

Annex I: List of Tables

Table 1. Total number of survey and in-depth interviews conducted	2
Table 2. Statistics on refugee children (by age, gender and origin).....	3
Table 3. Statistics on refugee households (by marzes and origin).....	4
Table 4. Number of in-depth interviews with experts	5
Table 5. Evaluation of the environment of the community by refugees (by country of origin)	8
Table 6. Evaluation of the environment of the community by refugees (by type of the apartment they live in)	9
Table 7. The evaluation of their living conditions by refugees (by country of origin)	11
Table 8. The ability of refugees to heat the apartment in winter (by country of origin).....	13
Table 9. Refugees living conditions (by country of origin)	13
Table 10. Economic situation of refugees (by country of origin)	13
Table 11. Refugee households' monthly expenses and incomes.	14
Table 12. The types of state assistance refugees are involved in (by country of origin)	17
Table 13. The reasons of not going to school (by age).	18
Table 14. The refugee children's reasons for dropping out of school (by country of origin)	19
Table 15. The difficulties encountered with educational program at school (by country of origin)	19
Table 16. The obstacles parents encountered while ensuring their children's healthcare (by child age).....	27
Table 17. The obstacles parents encountered while ensuring their children's healthcare (by country of origin)	27
Table 18. The symptoms of malnutrition occurring among refugee children after coming to Armenia	28
Table 19. The economic status of refugee households and number of child meals per day. .	29
Table 20. The source of everyday clean water (by type of community).....	31
Table 21. Types of work undertaken by refugee children.....	32
Table 22. Basic work categories performed by children in the last 12 months.....	33
Table 23. Frequency of missing classes due to the work	34
Table 24. Cases when children were mocked or insulted because of their or their family refugee status (by country of origin)	36
Table 25. The intention to apply for Armenian citizenship (by country of origin).....	42
Table 26. Type of documents obtained for refugee children in Armenia (by country of origin)	48

Annex 2: List of Charts and Diagrams

Diagram 1. In-depth interviews with refugee families.....	5
Chart 1. Employment of refugees (by gender and country of origin).....	14
Chart 2. Refugee children’s future plans to go to university (by country of origin).....	20
Chart 3. The most frequently occurred illnesses among refugee children (by country of origin)	24
Chart 4. Receiving free healthcare services (by type of communities).....	26
Chart 5. Types of food consumed by children everyday or several times a week.....	30
Chart 6. Hours worked per week by refugee children.....	33

Annex 3: Questionnaire for HH Survey



Questionnaire for HH
Survey.pdf

Annex 4: Guide Questionnaire for In-depth Interview with Refugee Families



Guide questionnaire
for HHs_eng.pdf

Annex 5: Guide Questionnaire for In-depth Interview with Regional Experts



Guide questionnaire
for regional experts_

Annex 5: Guide Questionnaire for In-depth Interview with Local Experts



Guide questionnaire
for local experts_eng

Annex 7: Report on Findings on Situation of Naturalized Former Refugees

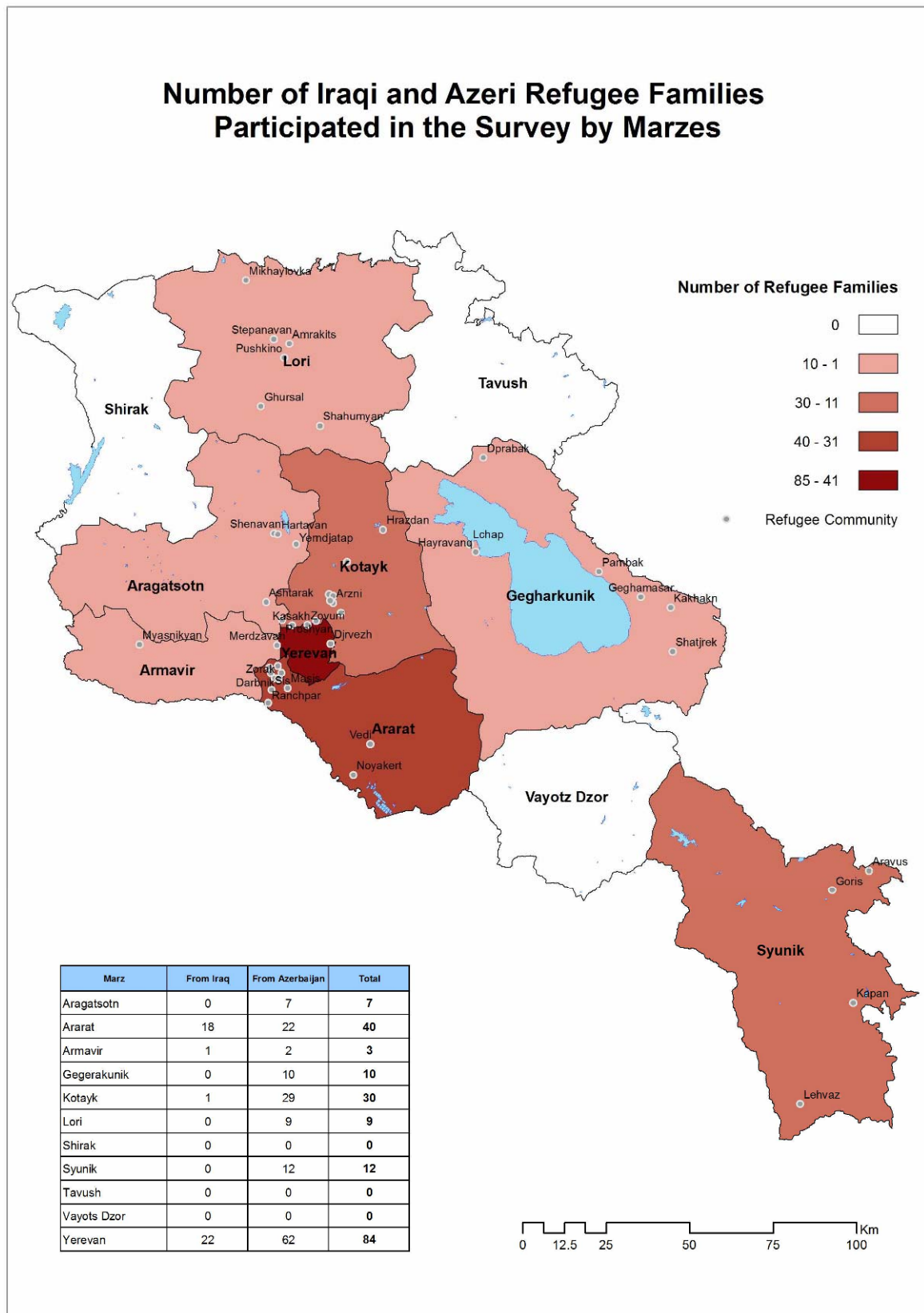


Survey Data on
Naturalized Refugee I

Annex 5: List of Experts Interviewed

	Name of Expert	Position
Syunik	Vladimir Avanesyan	Specialist on Refugees' issues of Goris SPU
	Marine Papyan	Main specialist of Syunik FWCD
	Lilit Grigoryan	Specialist of Syunik FWCD
	Argam Hovsepyan	Aravus village mayor
	Vache Avetisyan	Achanan village mayor
Ararat	Gegham Mirzoyan	Head of Artashat SPU
	Azat Khachatryan	Darbnik village mayor
	Gagik Pogosyan	Head of Ararat FWCD
Kotayk	Artyush Petrosyan	Head of Kotayk FWCD
	Vanik Hunanyan	Head of Hrazdan SPU
	Samson Serobyan	Specialist on Refugees' issues of Abovyan SPU
	Susanna Tadevosyan	Jrvej village mayor
Armavir	Roza Hambardzumyan	Specialist of Armavir FWCD
	Andranik Petrosyan	Myasnikyan village mayor
Aragatsotn	Gayane Danielyan	Main specialist of Ashtarak SPU
	Hrach Sahradyan	Ernjatap village mayor
Gegarkunik	Mamikon Galoyan	Head of Gegarkunik FWCD
	Gagik Petrosyan	Gegamasar village vice-mayor
Lori	Mher Minasyan	Ghursali village mayor
	Narek Sargsyan	Head of Lori FWCD
Yerevan	Hranush Kharatyan	Ethnographer, Specialist on Refugees' issues
	Margarita Ter-Hovhannisyan	Social worker in "FAR" NGO
	Armine Sukiasyan	Head of educational unit of "Orran" NGO
	Ljusya Karapetyan	Main specialist on refugees' issues, State Migration Service
	Lilia Sargsyan	Main Specialist of Yerevan FWCD
	Galya Vasilyan	Principal of 174 school
	Anjela Grigoryan	Principal of 164 school
	Anna Pogosyan	Superintendent of Artsakh communal areas
Murad Mejlumyan	Superintendent of Nor Nork communal areas	

Annex 6: Map Illustrating Refugees by Origin and Location



Reference List

Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified 20 November 1989

Flick, U. (2002) *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Geneva Convention (1951) on the Status of Refugees, July 28.

Ghazaryan, Y. *Obstacles to the Integration and Naturalization of Refugees. A Case Study of Ethnic Armenian Refugees in Armenia*. American University of Armenia.

Goette, J. (2005) *Hopes Fulfilled or Dreams Shattered? From resettlement to settlement* Background Paper. Issues in Nutrition for Refugee Children. Centre for Refugee Research.

Kvale, S. (1996) *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

RA Law on Refugees and Asylum, adopted in 27.11.2008

RA Law on Citizenship, adopted in 20.09.2010

RA Law on Compulsory Military Service, adopted in 27.11.2008

UNHCR (2008) *Armenia: Analysis of Gaps in the Protection of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*. Armenia: UNHCR.

UNHCR (1994) *Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care*. Geneva: UNHCR

ՀՀ Ազգային օրենսդրություն (2003) ՀՀ օրենսդրության մասին: Գ 2 Օ. /
ՀՀ օրենսդրության մասին-ՀՀ օրենսդրության մասին: Գ. 2. Օ. 20