Protecting Women and Girls in Za’atari Refugee Camp

Vulnerability to Gender Based Violence (GBV) by Sex, Age and Distance to Nearest Toilet

Background

As Syrian the war has intensified since its beginning in 2011, half of the population is believed to have fled the country. Jordan is one of the largest safe havens for Syrian refugees, where around 1 million Syrians are estimated to have taken refuge. Al-Za’atari is one of the main camps that hosts 80,000 refugees. Za’atari is said to constitute a hostile environment to female refugees, especially young girls. Gender-based violence (GBV) has been reported to occur frequently in the camp, particularly when women are on their way to necessary facilities, such as toilets, at night without being accompanied by male family members. GBV does not only cause serious bodily and mental harm to victims but also motivates many parents to marry off their daughters at young ages. Parents believe that having a male partner for their girls is the best way to provide them with protection. The situation is much worse for families headed by female household since they have no adult male members to provide perceived protection for the family. In other words, young girls and family members of female-headed households are one of the most vulnerable groups in the Camp.

Methods

The main goal of this project is to determine the vulnerability of each block of the camp using a joint analysis of distance and demographic data. Given the Syrian and Za’atari context, vulnerability will be assessed through analyzing the camp demographic data disaggregated by sex and age. The most vulnerable groups are girls in the age groups of 6-17. Another vulnerability element is the gender of the head of a given household. Families headed by females are more vulnerable since they have no grown male family members to walk with them on their way to the toilets in the night. To assess the danger of each district, the assessed vulnerability of each block will be combined with trigger elements, using the distance to the nearest toilets as proxies for such elements. Vulnerability becomes possible when it meets trigger elements. In this case, the distance to the nearest toilet is a major trigger element of GBV. This project will assess the population density of each block, population density of girls who are in between the ages of 6-17, density of female headed households and distance to the nearest toilets. The geospatial question is as follows:

What is density of girls aged 6-17 in each district of the camp?
What is density of female-headed households?
What is the average distance to the nearest toilet from each shelter?
Which area of the camp, based on the above analysis, has the highest danger of GBVs?

Result

The geospatial analysis determined that each block of the camp exhibits a different vulnerability. To evaluate the data, the camp was divided into four categories: Zone 1 (Safe); Zone 2 (Special Attention Required); Zone 3 (Intervention Desired); Zone 4 (Immediate Intervention Needed). In Zone 1, ranging in danger points from 3-5, 1449 girls in the vulnerable age range and 155 families headed by females were living in 5422 shelters labeled as relatively safe. Zone 2, from 6-8 danger points, hosts 8674 girls in vulnerable ages and 1206 female-headed households in 24,295 tents require special attention from relief workers and camp managing personnel on possible GBV; however their environment is assessed as hostile. 12,840 tents in Zone 3, with points ranging between 9 and 12, has 4,506 girls within the vulnerable age group and 714 female-headed households are at their higher vulnerability to GBV. It is recommended that camp staffs consider further intervention or action to reduce the vulnerability of girls and the overall female population in this area. The types of possible interventions vary from constructing additional toilets within the area of danger to relocation of vulnerable families, especially those who have girls in the aforementioned vulnerable age group or those headed by females. Zone 4, with the danger point between 13-15, is at the highest risk of GBV, with a vulnerable population of 81 girls and 24 female-headed households in 976 camps which therefore need immediate intervention. Since it takes time to set up new toilets, immediate relocation or redistribution of shelters is recommended.

References

Sources: Open Street Map, REACH Initiatives, & UNHCR

WGS 1984 UTM 36N

May 8, 2016

Created by Taejeon Kim