



FROM DISPLACEMENT TO RESILIENCE

AID, ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND SOCIAL
COHESION IN POST-WAR IRAQ

Part I: Baseline Findings – Impact Evaluation of
Individual Livelihoods Assistance

The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM, the European Union, KFW, NSF, Emory University, or the University of California, Santa Barbara. The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the publication do not imply expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

This publication was made possible through support provided by the European Union, KFW, the National Science Foundation, and Emory University URC - Halle Institute.

This project was approved by the Emory University Institutional Review Board (protocol 7493) and the Human Subjects Review Committee at the University of California, Santa Barbara (protocol 10-24-0066).

This publication was issued without formal editing by IOM.

Publisher: International Organization for Migration
UNAMI Compound (Diwan 2), International Zone, Baghdad/Iraq
Email: iomiraq@iom.int
Website: <https://iraq.iom.int> | <https://edf.iom.int>

The names of the individuals on the photos were changed to protect their identity.

Cover photo: Qasim is a mechanic who returned to Sinjar, Iraq after the conflict with Daesh ravaged the city. He is now using his skills to help rebuild homes and businesses that were destroyed. IOM supported him through the ILA programme with business training and a grant to equip his shop with the tools he needed. © IOM Iraq 2024/Angela Wells

Required citation: Cafilisch, A., M. Fidakar, D. Materson, S.D. O'Connell, M. Roze and J.L. Smith-Omomo (2025). *From Displacement to Resilience: Aid, Economic Recovery, and Social Cohesion in Post-War Iraq. Part I: Baseline Findings – Impact Evaluation of Individual Livelihoods Assistance*. International Organization for Migration (IOM), Baghdad.

ISBN 978-92-9278-058-6 (PDF)

© IOM 2025



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 IGO License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/) (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 IGO).*

For further specifications please see the [Copyright and Terms of Use](#).

This publication should not be used, published or redistributed for purposes primarily intended for or directed towards commercial advantage or monetary compensation, with the exception of educational purposes, e.g. to be included in textbooks.

Permissions: Requests for commercial use or further rights and licensing should be submitted to publications@iom.int.

PUB2025/040/R

FROM DISPLACEMENT TO RESILIENCE

AID, ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND SOCIAL
COHESION IN POST-WAR IRAQ

Part I: Baseline Findings – Impact Evaluation of
Individual Livelihoods Assistance

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	V
ACRONYMS	VIII
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	IX
KEY FINDINGS	IX
ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY AND LIVELIHOOD	IX
HUMANITARIAN, PEACE AND SECURITY OUTCOMES	IX
SOCIAL COHESION	X
CORRELATION BETWEEN BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS AND SOCIAL COHESION	X
CORRELATION BETWEEN ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY AND SOCIAL COHESION	X
RECOMMENDATIONS	X
INTRODUCTION	XI
I. INDIVIDUAL LIVELIHOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME BACKGROUND	1
II. POLICY FRAMEWORK	2
DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO DISPLACEMENT	2
PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT PREVENTION	2
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	2
III. LITERATURE REVIEW	3
ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF MICROENTERPRISE GRANTS	3
EMPLOYMENT AND PEACE	3
RECOVERY AID AND SOCIAL COHESION	3
RESOURCE COMPETITION	3
GRIEVANCES	4
INTERDEPENDENCE	4
SOCIAL CONTACT	4
INTERPERSONAL TRUST	4
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	5
INCLUSIVE ATTITUDES	5
IV. METHODOLOGY	6
SURVEY DESIGN AND SAMPLING	6
SUBGROUP ANALYSIS	7
MEASURING SOCIAL COHESION	8
INTERPRETING THE REGRESSION ANALYSIS	8
V. DEMOGRAPHICS AND MIGRATION	9
KEY POINTS	9

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS	9
MIGRATION HISTORY	9
VI. ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY AND LIVELIHOOD	10
KEY POINTS	10
EXPENDITURE	10
DEBT	12
SAVINGS	14
EMPLOYMENT AND CONTRACTS	15
HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS' ECONOMIC ACTIVITY	16
RESILIENCE TO SHOCKS	17
VII. HUMANITARIAN OUTCOMES	18
KEY POINTS	18
EDUCATION	18
DOCUMENTATION	19
SHELTER AND HOUSING TYPE	19
RISK OF EVICTION	20
HOUSING TENURE	21
HOUSING AND BUSINESS BUILDINGS DESTROYED OR SEIZED	22
SAFETY AND SECURITY	23
VIII. SOCIAL COHESION	25
KEY POINTS	25
INTERPERSONAL TRUST	25
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	29
INCLUSIVE ATTITUDES	32
INTERDEPENDENCE	36
COMPETITION	40
CONTACT AND SUBJECTIVE INTEGRATION	44
GRIEVANCES	49
CONCLUSIONS	53
RECOMMENDATIONS	55
REFERENCES	57
APPENDIX: REGRESSION MODELS	60

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Internally displaced person and returnee stock in Iraq from 2014 to 2024	xi
Figure 2. Individual Livelihood Assistance beneficiaries per governorate from January 2018 to March 2025	1
Figure 3. Communities included in the RCT	7
Figure 4. Displacement history of respondents by sample	9
Figure 5. Reason for moving by year from 2014 to 2023	9
Figure 6. Mean monthly household expenses by displacement history	10
Figure 7. Mean monthly household expenses by sample	11
Figure 8. Households' mean monthly spending by expense type	11
Figure 9. Households' mean monthly spending in IQD by expense type, displacement history and sample	12
Figure 10. Percentage of indebted households by displacement history	13
Figure 11. Mean debt across indebted households, by displacement history and creditor	13
Figure 12. Percentage of indebted households by sample	13
Figure 13. Mean debt across indebted households, by sample and creditor	13
Figure 14. Proportion of respondents by saving amount	14
Figure 15. Proportion of respondents by saving amount and sex	14
Figure 16. Proportion of households by saving amount and displacement history	14
Figure 17. Proportion of households by saving amount and sample	14
Figure 18. Respondents work status across sample, displacement history and sex	15
Figure 19. Household members' primary activity by displacement history	16
Figure 20. Primary activity of male household members by age	16
Figure 21. Primary activity of female household members by age	16
Figure 22. Precarity index across all households	17
Figure 23. Precarity index of households by displacement history	17
Figure 24. Precarity index of households by sample	17
Figure 25. Proportion of children in education by age group and displacement status	18
Figure 26. Proportion of children in education by age group and sex	18
Figure 27. Respondents' level of education by displacement history	19
Figure 28. Respondents' level of education by sex	19
Figure 29. Respondents' type of shelter by displacement history	20

Figure 30. Households' risk of eviction by displacement history	20
Figure 31. Households' risk of eviction by sample	20
Figure 32. Household occupation arrangement	21
Figure 33. Household occupation arrangement by urban or rural status	21
Figure 34. Household occupation arrangement by displacement history	21
Figure 35. Household occupation arrangement by sample	21
Figure 36. Respondents' homes and business buildings damaged/destroyed or occupied/seized since 2014 as a result of the conflict, by displacement history	22
Figure 37. Safety and security	23
Figure 38. Safety concerns regarding young men in their household	24
Figure 39. Safety concerns regarding young women in their household	24
Figure 40. Trust	25
Figure 41. Trust by displacement history	26
Figure 42. Trust by sex	26
Figure 43. Correlation between demographic characteristics and trust	27
Figure 44. Correlation between background characteristics and trust	28
Figure 45. Civic engagement	29
Figure 46. Civic engagement by displacement history	29
Figure 47. Civic engagement by sex	29
Figure 48. Correlation between demographic characteristics and civic engagement	30
Figure 49. Correlation between background characteristics and civic engagement	31
Figure 50. Inclusive attitudes	32
Figure 51. Inclusive attitudes linked to perceived affiliation	33
Figure 52. Inclusive attitudes linked to perceived affiliation, by respondent's displacement history	33
Figure 53. Inclusive attitudes linked to perceived affiliation, by respondent's sex	33
Figure 54. Correlation between demographic characteristics and inclusive attitudes	34
Figure 55. Correlation between background characteristics and inclusive attitudes	35
Figure 56. Interdependence	36
Figure 57. Interdependence by displacement history	37
Figure 58. Interdependence by sex	37
Figure 59. Correlation between demographic characteristics and interdependence	38
Figure 60. Correlation between background characteristics and interdependence	39

Figure 61. Competition	40
Figure 62. Competition by displacement status	41
Figure 63. Competition by sex	41
Figure 64. Correlation between demographic characteristics and reduced competition	42
Figure 65. Correlation between background characteristics and reduced feelings of competition	43
Figure 66. Contact	44
Figure 67. Contact by displacement history	45
Figure 68. Contact by sex	45
Figure 69. Subjective integration	46
Figure 70. Subjective integration by displacement history	46
Figure 71. Subjective integration by sex	46
Figure 72. Correlation between demographic characteristics and contact	47
Figure 73. Correlation between background characteristics and contact	48
Figure 74. Grievances	49
Figure 75. Grievances by displacement history	50
Figure 76. Grievances by sex	50
Figure 77. Correlation between demographic characteristics and reduced grievances	51
Figure 78. Correlation between background characteristics and reduced grievances	52

ACRONYMS

HLP Housing, Land and Property

IDP Internally Displaced Person

ILA Individual Livelihood Assistance

IOM International Organization for Migration

IQD Iraqi Dinars

RCT Randomized Controlled Trial

USD United States Dollars

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Large-scale displacement and return can disrupt the economic and social fabric of communities, leading to intergroup tensions and increased competition over resources. Iraq has experienced high levels of displacement caused by the 2014 conflict with Daesh. As of August 2024, 1.1 million Iraqis remain internally displaced, while an additional 4.9 million have returned to their area of origin after displacement (IOM, 2024a). IOM Iraq implements a range of livelihoods programmes to support economic recovery and resilience in communities affected by forced displacement, one of the largest interventions being microenterprise grants known as Individual Livelihood Assistance (ILA).

This baseline report is the first in a series of publications that will be produced as part of a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the impact of the ILA programme on economic outcomes and social cohesion across the Iraqi governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Salah al-Din and Ninewa. A total of 6,159 survey interviews were conducted with eligible applicants, members of their social and economic networks, and neighbouring community members between May and September 2024, before the announcement of programme beneficiaries and the start of aid delivery. The report describes baseline economic conditions and social cohesion among people targeted by the ILA programme and the surrounding communities, providing evidence of a robust correlation between measures of economic vulnerability and different dimensions of social cohesion. Based on these findings, this report provides evidence-based guidance for policymakers and practitioners supporting local recovery efforts in Iraq and similar post-conflict settings.

KEY FINDINGS

Displacement-affected communities targeted for ILA in Iraq experience high levels of poverty and unemployment, by both national and international standards. While IDPs and returnees tend to be worse off in specific dimensions such as housing (for IDPs), debt and employment (for returnees), members of the host community (stayees) living in the same villages and neighbourhoods also experience high levels of deprivation. Differences in economic well-being between eligible ILA applicants, members of their social networks, and other neighbouring households are modest because of widespread vulnerability among the neighbouring population. At the time of the study, most respondents were no longer concerned about threats to their personal safety, but the data reveal widespread tenure and housing insecurity across the communities in the study.

Looking at a range of indicators of social cohesion, the data show that the most prevalent challenges are perceptions of resource competition and material grievances about a lack of economic opportunities. Although still important, low levels of interpersonal trust and absence of community engagement are relatively less widespread issues. Better economic conditions, in particular access to employment and higher levels of wealth, are robustly correlated with improved social cohesion outcomes. Experiences of forced displacement and property

loss during conflict are also associated with current social dynamics, although the direction of the relationship varies across dimensions of social cohesion. The findings in this report lead to several hypotheses about the socioeconomic impact of livelihoods assistance in displacement-affected communities, which will be subject to further study and rigorous evaluation in the following stages of the study.

ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY AND LIVELIHOOD

- 58.9% of respondents live below the national poverty line of 136,000 Iraqi dinars (IQD) per person per month (104 United States dollars, USD),¹ compared with 17.5% of Iraqis.²
- 18.3% of female respondents and 34.3% of male respondents worked during the previous month.
- Among those in the labour force, the unemployment rate is 44.7% compared with 13.5% at national level.³
- 98.5% of respondents who are working do not have any written work contract.
- 69.5% of households report having no savings.
- Among those surveyed, 22.1% of all households and 28.7% of IDP households are in debt, which is mostly owed to family and friends and to landlords.
- Indebted households owe on average IQD 4.716 million (USD 3,600), which is equivalent to five times the average household's monthly expenditure reported.

HUMANITARIAN, PEACE AND SECURITY OUTCOMES

- Adult women were twice as likely as adult men to have received no formal education (24.6% and 11.6% respectively).
- Shelter is a key issue in the communities: 28.0% of all respondents and 45.3% of IDPs do not live in a residential building in good condition; 34.3% of respondents and 53.2% of IDPs are at risk of eviction.
- 62.1% of respondents had their house and/or business seized or damaged since 2014. For 27.2% of respondents, their house and/or business remain seized or destroyed.
- While almost all respondents feel safe walking alone in their village or neighbourhood (96.8%), a minority reported moderate to severe concern about mistreatment by armed groups (13.2%) or property-related crime (15.6%),

1 USD 1 = IQD 1,310 on 13 June 2025.

2 The national figure is based on the Iraq Household Socioeconomic Survey (IHSES) conducted by the World Bank, Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO) in 2024.

3 Unemployment is defined as (number of people actively looking for work)/[(number of people actively looking for work) + (number of people currently employed)].

SOCIAL COHESION

- Around half of respondents feel pressure due to competition over humanitarian aid, employment and business opportunities, and housing.
- Grievances are primarily economic in nature. While 86.8% of respondents reported being treated with respect and dignity by other community members, 82.3% feel that they do not have the same opportunities as most in Iraq and 49.7% feel pressured to move to find economic opportunities.
- Few respondents express exclusionary attitudes towards IDPs or returnees in their communities. However, IDP respondents were more likely to report feeling like outsiders (22.3% of IDPs) and less likely to feel able to receive community support (55.6% of IDPs) than other groups.
- A majority of respondents expressed a desire for inclusion and reconciliation regardless of others' displacement history (78.5%), perceived affiliation during conflict (64.8%) or perceived affiliation of family members (76%).
- Levels of interpersonal trust and civic engagement are relatively high among respondents.

CORRELATION BETWEEN BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS AND SOCIAL COHESION

- Returnees and IDPs in our sample report lower levels of interpersonal trust and contact but more inclusive attitudes. Additionally, returnees tend to report lower grievances and perceptions of competition.
- Female respondents tend to report reduced grievances and competition, but also lower levels of contact, civic engagement and trust.
- Being more educated is associated with higher interdependence and reduced grievances, but also with lower levels of contact.

CORRELATION BETWEEN ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

- Having worked in the past month is significantly correlated with higher trust, civic engagement, inclusive attitudes and contact, as well as lower competition and grievances. It is, however, also correlated with lower interdependence. Having a household member who works shows similar correlations.
- Income, expenditure and asset ownership have mixed associations with social cohesion. Higher income is correlated with less competition and higher contact while also being correlated with lower interdependence.
- Housing, land and property (HLP) issues are significantly associated with social cohesion, as facing issues of having one's home still destroyed is correlated with lower social cohesion in five out of seven dimensions of social cohesion measured.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One set of recommendations is intended for professionals involved in programmes that focus on improving economic well-being, addressing HLP issues, and supporting human capital development. These recommendations are based on evidence of specific gaps among targeted populations that may be addressed through complementary programming, with the potential to enhance the effectiveness of livelihoods interventions. Such complementary programming includes: (i) interventions aimed at addressing housing and property rights insecurity, (ii) supporting households with high debt balances through financial literacy or digital financial inclusion interventions, (iii) addressing limited resilience to shocks by supporting saving practices through financial inclusion efforts, commitment-based saving, and community-based savings and loans groups, (iv) strengthening opportunities for female entrepreneurs to identify and build their skills, and (v) monitoring and encouraging school attendance of children among recipient households, as well as supporting job placements or technical/vocational education programmes for youth above the minimum working age and young adults.

Another set of recommendations is for those working on livelihoods programming and consider its effects on social cohesion. These recommendations are based on descriptive findings highlighting the correlation between economic vulnerability and low levels of social cohesion, as well as evidence of material grievances and competition over jobs and aid. First, these findings reinforce the importance of need-based targeting at both the geographic and individual level, in order to reduce inequalities that may be linked to feelings of competition or material grievances. Second, they suggest taking measures to prevent the emergence of tensions and competition over the distribution of targeted assistance. These measures include combining individual-level assistance with public goods provision benefiting the entire community, informing the balance of individual and community-level aid through consultation with affected communities, and incorporating community-engagement mechanisms to monitor and respond to possible tensions.

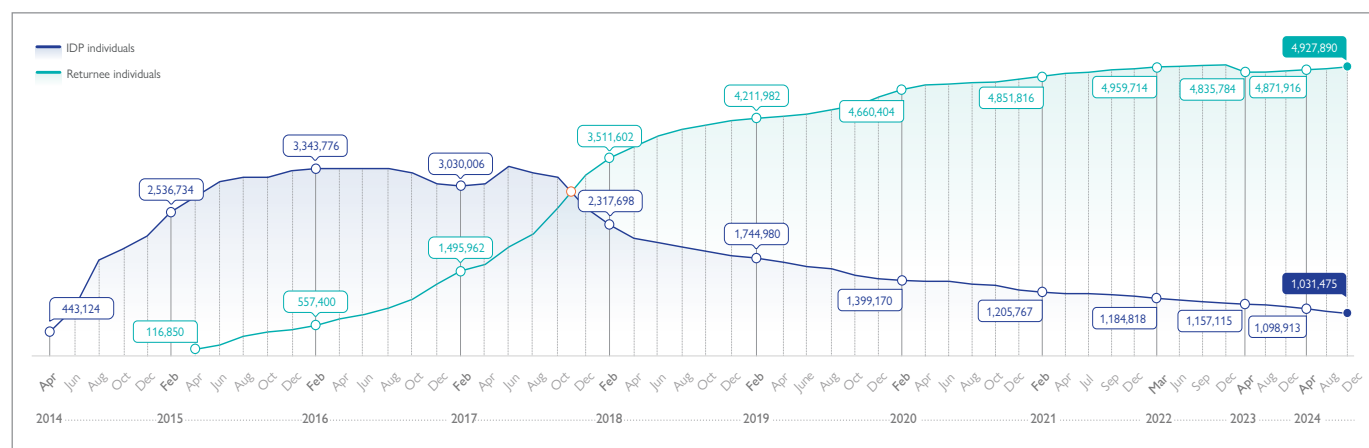
The findings also highlight the importance of further research to understand the nature and strength of the relationship between employment and socially cohesive attitudes, gathering data from other contexts recovering from the effects of conflict and forced displacement.

INTRODUCTION

Iraq has experienced high levels of displacement caused by armed conflict since 2014. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Iraq rose from 440,000 in 2014 to 3.3 million in 2017 (IOM, 2024a). Following the military defeat of Daesh in 2017, the number of IDPs decreased as more and more displaced individuals started returning home. As of December 2024, 1.0 million Iraqis remain internally displaced, while an additional 4.9 million have returned to their area of origin (ibid.).

The conflict resulted in the destruction of infrastructure and assets, while the country has continued to contend with political, economic and social instability. The economic impact of the conflict has been compounded by challenges to fiscal reform, the effects of environmental degradation and climate change, and chronic underinvestment in infrastructure. As a result, unemployment is high in Iraq, with male labour force participation at 68 per cent and female labour force participation at only 11 per cent, which is one of the lowest female labour force participation rates in the world (ILO et al., 2022).

Figure 1. Internally displaced person and returnee stock in Iraq from 2014 to 2024



Note: Data collected by IOM DTM since 2014 using a network of key informants across the country.

Large-scale displacement and returns can disrupt the economic and social fabric of affected communities, leading to intergroup tensions and increased competition over resources such as housing, jobs, aid and public services. These tensions can intersect with the ethnic, religious, and political identities that were prominent during the war, and that have sometimes been actively constructed, amplified and instrumentalized by the parties to the conflict. Competition and intergroup tensions can lead to low social cohesion and fuel conflict in communities affected by displacement.

IOM Iraq implements a range of livelihoods programmes to support economic recovery and resilience in communities affected by forced displacement. One of the largest interventions, known as Individual Livelihood Assistance (ILA), offers tailored support to vulnerable individuals worth USD 2,000 through business development and expansion grants for microenterprises.⁴ ILA has reached over 21,000 micro-entrepreneurs and jobseekers across 15 governorates since 2018, targeting IDPs, returnees and host community members in areas affected by mass displacement. This type of livelihood intervention is designed to address the economic barriers preventing durable solutions to displacement. Access to livelihoods is challenging for communities in Iraq. Over three in four IDP households and half of returnee households in Anbar, Ninewa and Salah al-Din lack a stable source of income (IOM, 2023a; IOM, 2023b; IOM, 2024b). Less than a quarter of IDP households in

each governorate and a third of IDPs in Diyala reported being able to face an unexpected expense of up to IQD 450,000 (USD 344) (IOM, 2023a; IOM, 2023b; IOM, 2024b; IOM, 2024c). In Ninewa, the lack of livelihood opportunities was the second most cited reason by IDPs for not returning to their area of origin, after issues of housing destruction (IOM, 2023a). At the global level, livelihoods and employment opportunities are the second most influential factor on solutions preferences after safety and security (IOM, 2024d), highlighting the need for more research to better understand the impact of livelihoods interventions.

This baseline report is the first in a series of publications that will be produced as part of a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to evaluate the impact of the ILA programme on recipients, their networks and their wider communities. This research initiative explores two main questions. First, we examine whether economic recovery programmes improve or erode social cohesion among hosts, returnees and IDPs in post-conflict settings. Second, we study how the programme indirectly impacts community members connected to beneficiaries through social and economic networks. By examining factors such as economic opportunities, inequalities, grievances, intergroup contact and competition for resources, the study aims to understand the mechanisms linking economic recovery and social cohesion.

⁴ ILA also offers vocational training and on-the-job training packages for individuals who prefer not to run their own business. These forms of support are less common than the microenterprise grants and are not included in this study.

The report documents the situation prior to the delivery of assistance in 18 communities targeted by the ILA programme in 2024 in the Iraqi governates of Anbar, Diyala, Salah al-Din and Ninewa. It presents the findings of a large survey conducted on individuals eligible to receive ILA support, members of their social and economic networks and randomly sampled community members. In total, 6,159 interviews were conducted between May and September 2024, before the announcement of programme beneficiaries and the start of aid delivery. By providing a detailed description of baseline economic conditions, social dynamics and progress towards durable solutions in targeted communities, this report provides important contextual information that will complement future impact findings.

The report starts by providing an overview of the relevant literature and of the methodology used to develop, conduct and analyse the interviews. Data analysis is then divided into four sections: (1) demographics and migration history of respondents; (2) economic vulnerability and livelihoods; (3) humanitarian outcomes, including security and HLP; and (4) social cohesion outcomes and links between background characteristics and social cohesion. The findings are presented for the entire population surveyed, in addition to specific analyses on the differentiated impacts of displacement history and sex. Throughout, the report refers to relevant durable solutions criteria from the Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons.



This photo shows the old town of Sinjar in 2023. Housing and business buildings across Ninewa were severely affected by the conflict with Daesh. © IOM Iraq 2023/Aram HAKIM

I. INDIVIDUAL LIVELIHOOD ASSISTANCE

PROGRAMME BACKGROUND

The present study focuses on ILA business development and support packages, which aim at improving people's skills, encouraging entrepreneurship and generating decent employment opportunities. Through the programme, participants receive a USD 2,000 cash grant to develop their own business. By generating sustainable employment, ILA aims to contribute to economic recovery and resilience in communities affected by conflict and forced displacement, including by addressing the economic barriers preventing durable solutions to displacement. The business development and support packages accounted for over 90 per cent of ILA beneficiaries in Iraq since 2018, while the rest received vocational training, on-the-job training or job referrals.

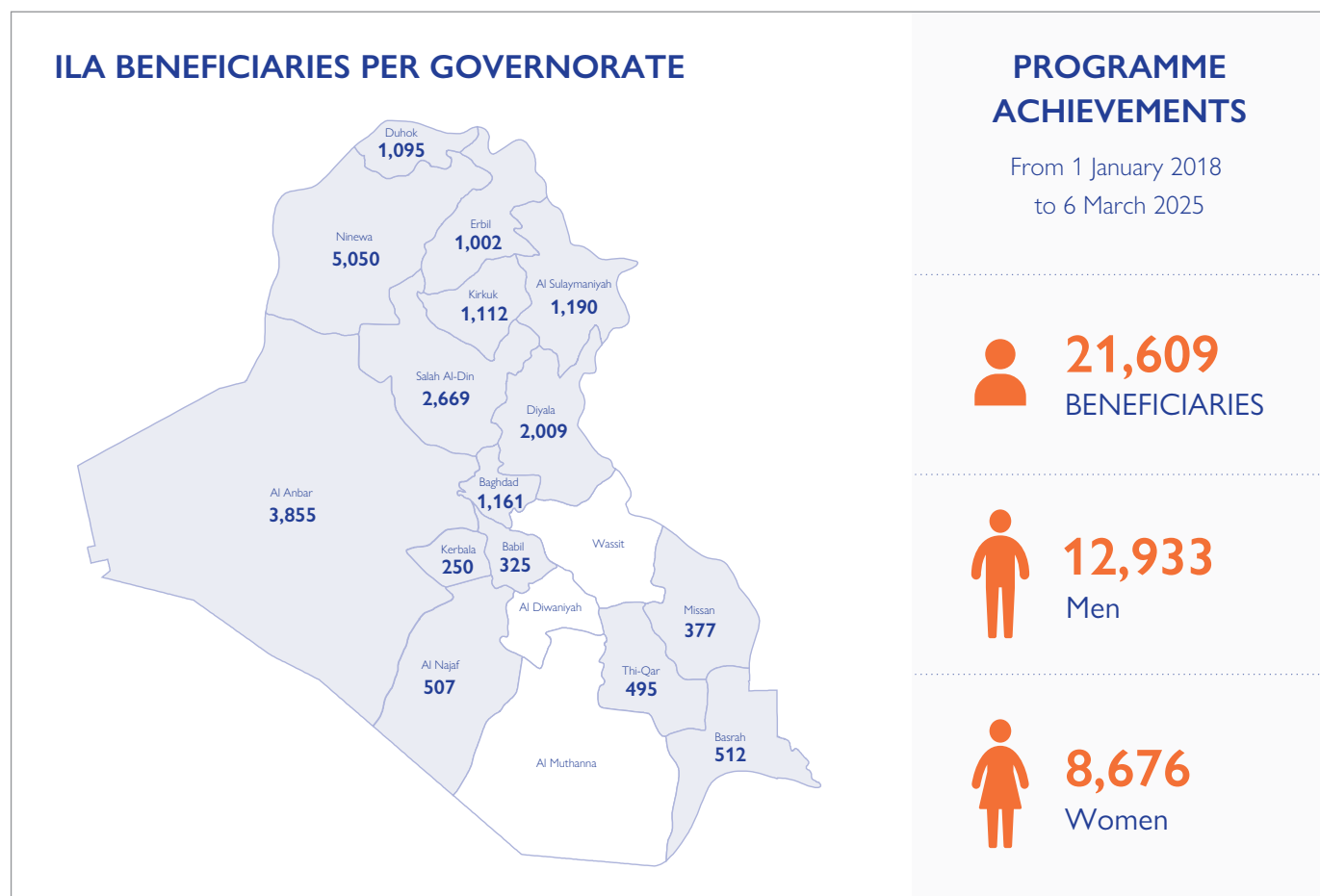
IOM employs an evidence-based, consultative approach in the selection of communities targeted for ILA. In the first stage, communities are screened based on their IDP and returnee populations, economic and social vulnerabilities, and security considerations. In a subsequent step, candidate communities are assessed following a community engagement approach, identifying local needs and capacities through community consultations and partnerships with local authorities. In addition to ILA, targeted communities receive additional support in the form of infrastructure rehabilitation, short-term employment for public works, and community-based initiatives.

Within targeted communities, support is provided to IDPs, returnees and members of host communities. ILA beneficiaries are first referred through

an online expression of interest process supported by local authorities, non-governmental organizations and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Expressions of interest are shortlisted using a combination of geographic targeting (for example selecting areas with a high concentration of returnees and IDPs), assessment of the individual's ability to work and an in-person household profiling and vulnerability ranking. IOM uses multidimensional vulnerability criteria to prioritize specific vulnerable groups including women, youth and people with disabilities. For the ILA business development and support package, ILA beneficiaries are additionally expected to have a business idea, to have prior experience or skills in a related business and to be willing to manage the business by themselves.

Started in 2006 as an in-kind programme to promote community revitalization, ILA was eventually updated to be cash-based and standardized at USD 2,000 per household. Since 2018, over 21,000 individuals have received ILA support in 15 out of 18 Iraqi governorates. Most beneficiaries are located in the governorates of Ninewa, Anbar, Diyala, Salah al-Din, Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, Baghdad, Erbil and Dahuk in the northern and eastern regions of Iraq. These governorates were particularly affected by the war and by displacement and are the governorates hosting the largest numbers of IDPs, alongside high numbers of returnees (IOM, 2024a). Forty per cent of ILA recipients are women, an important achievement in a context characterized by stark gender disparities.

Figure 2. Individual Livelihood Assistance beneficiaries per governorate from January 2018 to March 2025



Note: Data provided by IOM Iraq in April 2025. Governorates in white do not have ILA beneficiaries to date.

II. POLICY FRAMEWORK

DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO DISPLACEMENT

The study contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between employment programmes and the achievement of durable solutions, in line with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (2010) [Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons](#) and IOM's (2016) [Progressive Resolution of Displacement Situations Framework](#). It primarily provides evidence to inform programming on access to livelihoods, while also contributing to the understanding of safety and security; adequate standard of living; restoration of HLP; access to documentation; and participation in public affairs.

PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

The study also aligns with global policy priorities around peacebuilding and conflict prevention. For instance, a joint statement from the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Peacebuilding, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2016) on [Employment Programmes and Peace](#) identifies several theories of change for employment-creation programmes to pursue peacebuilding, calling for more empirical evidence to substantiate these links. Similar priorities are highlighted by the [United Nations and World Bank \(2018\) Pathways for Peace](#) report, which emphasizes the importance of conflict prevention through addressing inequality and exclusion to develop more resilient societies. The Pathways for Peace

report recognizes that economic growth and poverty alleviation need to be coupled with more attention to inclusion and social cohesion. This study contributes to these global efforts by evaluating the relationship between poverty alleviation by a cash grant programme supporting microenterprise in post-war Iraq and different dimensions of social cohesion.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This study also contributes to several [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), with a focus on ending poverty (SDG 1), promoting gender equality (SDG 5), generating decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), reducing inequalities (SDG 10), and supporting peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16). It also shows a commitment to partnerships for sustainable development (SDG 17) by bringing together universities and development actors. At the national level, the [Iraq National Development Plan \(2024–2028\)](#) and the [United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(UNSCDF\) for Iraq \(2025–2029\)](#) emphasize the importance of supporting entrepreneurship, including women-owned businesses; diversifying the Iraqi economy away from oil; and promoting good governance and human rights, including civil engagement and social cohesion. This study provides evidence on how cash grant programmes can contribute to reducing poverty, support a more diverse economy, increase women's participation in the workforce and improve social cohesion in post-war Iraq.



Through the ILA programme, IOM support enabled Ahmed to buy the tools he needed to open his own Mosul-based barber shop and become a profitable enterprise. He now serves ten clients per day and says most of his clients have become more like friends. © IOM Iraq 2024/Angela Wells

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF MICROENTERPRISE GRANTS

How does livelihoods programming targeting a selected group of entrepreneurs affect the broader community in post-conflict settings? Do non-beneficiaries benefit from cash injections into the local community, thanks to higher employment opportunities, better availability of goods and services, and informal sharing of assistance? Are some people negatively affected as a result of price inflation and higher competition in output markets? The spillovers, or indirect impacts, of livelihoods programmes remain an open area for research.

Previous research has found that livelihoods interventions supporting microenterprises through a combination of cash and training can effectively reduce poverty among recipients, financing investment in productive assets and increasing employment and income (Blattman et al., 2014, 2016; Blattman and Dercon, 2018). Grants to microenterprises have also been shown to speed up recovery after disasters (de Mel et al., 2013) and buffer the impact of negative macroeconomic shocks, preventing loss of business and employment (Domenella et al., 2021). These findings support the use of cash-based livelihoods interventions as an economic recovery tool in post-conflict settings.

Evidence on spillovers is scarcer. A recent study in Kenya looked at the impact of one-time unconditional cash transfers worth about USD 1,000 to poor households in rural villages, a shock worth over 15 per cent of local gross domestic product (Egger et al., 2022). The study found large positive effects on direct beneficiaries, but also on non-recipient households and firms. The effect on price inflation, by contrast, was minimal. Other research has found that when recipients of livelihoods assistance shift to more capital-intensive occupations, low-skilled wages among non-beneficiaries can increase because of reduced competition (Bandiera et al., 2017). While these results suggest the potential for positive spillover effects under specific conditions, it is critical to explore these questions in a post-conflict recovery setting characterized by social divisions, weak property rights and large-scale displacement.

EMPLOYMENT AND PEACE

Poverty and economic scarcity may drive individuals, in particular young men, to join armed groups as a way of securing additional income for themselves and their families (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998 and 2004; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008). At an aggregate level, several studies have found a causal relationship between negative economic shocks and the duration and intensity of conflict (Bazzi and Blattman, 2014; Burke et al., 2015; Dube and Vargas, 2013; Harari and La Ferrara, 2018; Miguel et al., 2004). Some evidence exists that the same relationship holds at the individual level. For instance, a randomized controlled trial of an employment programme targeting high-risk former fighters in Liberia with a combination of cash or capital inputs, training and cognitive-behavioural therapy showed a significant reduction in the likelihood of engaging in illicit activities and mercenary work in a nearby war 14 months after the intervention, while training alone was ineffective (Blattman and Annan, 2016). To the extent that economic recovery programmes benefit individuals at high risk of violence, particularly young men, they may reduce conflict by generating peaceful economic opportunities and a meaningful alternative to participation in violence.

A recent review estimates that, since 2005, international donors across the world have spent over USD 10 billion in programmes aiming to build peace and stability by generating employment (Brück et al., 2021). According to the authors of the review, there are several reasons to be optimistic about the potential for these interventions to have the desired effects. Yet, they also highlight the lack of empirical evidence on this question and the need for more research empirically testing this relationship – the goal of this study. While this study does not directly measure participation in violence as an outcome, it will allow evaluating the extent to which recipients and other community members engage in productive and prosocial activities. More specifically, it focusses on the potential for employment to improve social cohesion between community members benefiting from livelihoods programming, while also recognizing the possibility of tensions and backlash among those who are unable to access such aid.

RECOVERY AID AND SOCIAL COHESION

Despite its importance as a policy goal, social cohesion is an abstract and multifaceted concept. To study it empirically, breaking it down into more specific and concrete dimensions is necessary. In this section, we define the dimensions of social cohesion examined in this study, each of which corresponds to an outcome identified in the literature as contributing to a cohesive society. Each subsection below describes one dimension of social cohesion and discusses how livelihoods programming might impact post-conflict stabilization and social cohesion. In this report, we will describe the levels of these dimensions of social cohesion in the study communities in Iraq, before the delivery of livelihoods assistance. In the subsequent RCT evaluation – to be presented in future reports – evidence on the impact of the ILA programme in Iraq on social cohesion will be presented.

RESOURCE COMPETITION

In the context of social cohesion, competition refers to a sense of threat, or pressure, due to material constraints on resources needed for survival and economic well-being including jobs, housing, land, public services or social assistance. Real or perceived threats to individual or collective interests and status can be exacerbated by the arrival of competing groups into a community (Bobo, 1983). Accordingly, conflicts often arise in areas with high migrant populations, where natives and newcomers vie for the same limited resources (Adida, 2014; Dancygier, 2010; Fearon and Laitin, 2011). In post-conflict settings, frictions over jobs, housing, or public services can extend to populations returning from displacement as well as their host communities, presenting significant barriers to the reintegration of returnees (Arowolo, 2000; Bascom, 2005; Fransen and Kuschminder, 2012).

Livelihoods programmes that successfully generate new employment and income opportunities may mitigate competition and related tensions. In displacement settings, this is most likely to be the case when aid is perceived to benefit host community members as well as migrants (Baseler et al., 2025). Aid programmes that exclusively or disproportionately target displaced persons and returnees can instead result in population influxes that strain local resources and cause increased competition with the non-displaced population (Blair and Wright, 2022; Schwartz, 2019; but see, Lehmann and Masterson, 2020). In these circumstances, host community members may feel that perceived outsiders

are “getting ahead” through external help. Similar outcomes may occur when pre-existing social welfare programmes are opened to new incomers without a corresponding increase in budget, increasing material scarcity (Cavaillé and Ferwerda, 2023; Dancygier, 2010).

GRIEVANCES

Theories of relative deprivation explain conflict as the result of frustration linked to real or perceived inequities between individuals and groups (Gurr, 1970). Grievances are distinct from competition because grievances emphasize the perceived unfairness or injustice of past experiences or events. Previous studies have shown that social, political and economic inequalities between ethnoreligious groups (“horizontal” inequality), including inequality in access to employment opportunities, produce grievances that are reliably associated with the likelihood of conflict within and across countries (Buhaug et al., 2014; Cederman et al., 2011, 2013 and 2015; Østby, 2008; Stewart, 2008). In settings characterized by a history of population displacement and return, new grievances and social divisions may emerge among groups defined by their migration history, particularly when displacement history constitutes the basis for the allocation of aid and public services (Schwartz, 2019).

The effects of livelihoods programming on grievances may vary depending on the distribution of material benefits that result from such aid and their perceived fairness. To the extent that economic recovery programmes reduce existing inequalities and provide fair access to jobs and business opportunities, they may dampen grievances and reduce conflict. On the contrary, if livelihoods programmes are perceived to reinforce or create new inequalities, they risk fuelling conflict and tensions between groups.

INTERDEPENDENCE

Interdependence refers to the belief that the success or well-being of other members of a community contributes to one’s own well-being. Individuals holding this belief perceive their well-being as connected to the prosperity of others, fostering a sense of shared destiny and mutual responsibility. Historical examples, such as Indian port towns where Muslim seafarers and Hindu textile artisans thrived through cooperative trade, underscore the importance of this belief, exhibiting lower rates of intercommunal riots and conflicts attributed to the complementary economic activities that deepened stakeholders’ investment in each other’s success (Jha, 2013, 2014 and 2018). Such beliefs in interdependence motivate the development of institutions capable of managing disputes and preventing conflicts effectively.

Livelihoods programmes may foster beliefs in interdependence if they stimulate trade between groups with complementary economic activities, thereby strengthening community cohesion and stability. Previous work on immigration finds that economic scarcity can exacerbate perceptions of zero-sum competition between natives and immigrants over pre-existing social transfers (Dancygier, 2010; Cavaillé and Ferwerda, 2023). However, the converse may also hold – when aid is a response to population movement and improves individuals’ economic well-being among host community members as well as migrants, they may experience reductions in beliefs about zero-sum competition in their community (Baseler et al., 2025).

SOCIAL CONTACT

Socially cohesive communities will typically be characterized by regular positive interactions between community members. A wealth of research has explored social contact in a distinct though related angle, studying contact as a cause

or driver of improved social cohesion. The idea that meaningful social contact between individuals belonging to different groups can reduce prejudice and conflict has a long history in social psychology. Positive social contact tends to happen between individuals of equal status who share common goals, in the absence of intergroup competition, and when it is sanctioned by social and political authorities (Allport, 1954; Lemmer and Wagner, 2015; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew et al., 2011). Interventions promoting social contact in conflict-prone settings tend to have positive but modest effects, that often do not extend beyond the specific social environment in which contact takes place and require repeated contact over extended periods of time (Mousa, 2020; Scacco and Warren, 2018). A recent study of a professional training programme in Afghanistan found no effect for extended (3 to 6 months) classroom contact between IDPs and host community members on discrimination and attitudes towards IDPs (Zhou and Lyall, 2023). While previous studies have looked at the effect of interventions bringing community members in contact with each other, we consider contact to be a possible outcome of microenterprise support and the resulting increase in economic activity.

INTERPERSONAL TRUST

In this project, trust refers to generalized social trust – the belief that other community members (including those of different backgrounds) are honest, helpful and will act in ways that benefit the whole community. In fragile settings like Iraq, where contract enforcement is uncertain, trust helps to sustain the functioning of market institutions (Fafchamps, 2003). Traders are more likely to engage in economic transactions when they trust that their counterparts will respect their contractual obligations. Evidence also suggests that improved livelihoods may positively influence social trust in post-conflict settings.

Livelihoods programmes may promote community trust if mutually beneficial market exchanges involve personal contact and establish new social relationships between individuals (Choi and Storr, 2020). Positive experiences in the market can lead successful entrepreneurs to update their beliefs about other people’s trustworthiness, while individuals who suffer from economic and social exclusion are less likely to trust others (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002). Improvements in economic conditions can also increase trust by reducing the risk of crime and misappropriation of resources (Brückner et al., 2021). In post-conflict settings, cross-country evidence suggests that robust economic recovery lowers the risk of renewed violence (Blattman and Miguel, 2010; Collier et al., 2008). Such reductions in insecurity can foster a more trusting environment, where people feel less threatened and more confident in the goodwill of their neighbours. Based on this evidence, it is hypothesized that microenterprise grants can stimulate trust by promoting mutually beneficial interactions in markets and, indirectly, by supporting economic recovery and therefore reducing the risk of renewed violence and crime.

Livelihoods assistance might also inadvertently undermine trust if not carefully managed. In communities with diverse groups, targeted aid might unwillingly be perceived as favouritism, breeding resentment and distrust in beneficiaries or the institutions or processes for allocating social assistance. Research on ethnically divided societies shows that when one group perceives another as economic competition for scarce goods (jobs, land, aid), social tensions rise and groups grow suspicious or outright hostile towards each other (Adida, 2014; Cavaillé and Ferwerda, 2023; Dancygier, 2010). Favouritism – whether real or perceived – can reactivate pre-existing divides, leading individuals to trust only their in-group while viewing other groups’ gains with skepticism (Adida et al., 2014).

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement refers to individual participation in public affairs and community activities, primarily those that address community issues. Colletta et al. (1999), drawing on Durkheim's seminal work, describe social cohesion as "glue that bonds society together." Contributions in time and effort to one's community are a critical component of this social glue. Strengthening livelihoods in post-conflict areas could encourage greater civic engagement. When people attain a degree of economic stability, they may have more time, resources and personal security to invest in local meetings, community projects or even local politics. Livelihoods programming may empower citizens to shift from day-to-day survival to longer-term community involvement, as basic needs are met. Indeed, a robust middle class and secure property rights have long been linked to higher political participation and volunteering rates (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2005; Lipset, 1959; Putnam, 2000; Verba et al., 1995). Livelihoods programming can also increase incentives for civic engagement, as business owners look to direct resources to public goods either complementary to enterprise and/or to ensure distributional goals amongst the broader community.

Empirical studies support this connection: for example, communities with higher income and education levels (which may be promoted by economic recovery programmes) tend to show more voting, grassroots organizing and communal cooperation (Alesina and Giuliano, 2011; Putnam et al., 1993). When individuals are less economically precarious, they can afford to engage in civic duties and build the social networks that underpin effective collective action. Building on these insights, previous livelihoods grants have been explicitly designed to promote social stability among youth in conflict-affected regions (see for example, in Uganda, Blattman et al., 2014). Yet, while research in post-war Uganda found large economic impacts of the livelihoods grant, it did not find impacts on civic engagement or on its converse, anti-social behaviour. The relationship between economic conditions and civic engagement may possibly only manifest in the long term or require more structural socioeconomic transformations.

Concerns also exist that certain types of aid or economic programmes might dampen local civic engagement. Critics of foreign aid have argued that an influx of aid can undercut grassroots initiative and weaken citizens' demand for accountability from local leaders (Deaton, 2015; Easterly, 2007). Recent research, based on several experiments in Ghana and Uganda, has downplayed these concerns, finding no evidence for such negative effects of aid on citizens' engagement (de la Cuesta et al., 2021). Under the right conditions, local citizens can feel similar ownership and demand accountability over aid as over public funds derived from taxation (de La Cuesta et al., 2019; de la Cuesta et al., 2022).

INCLUSIVE ATTITUDES

Inclusive attitudes refer to the acceptance of members of other social groups as equal and full members of one's community. This involves seeing people of different backgrounds (such as displacement history, ethnicity, religion) as neighbours who belong and even welcoming them into one's family or social circle. Livelihoods programming has the potential to promote more inclusive attitudes in post-conflict societies. By facilitating positive interaction and economic interdependence between groups, such programmes may break down prejudices born of war and displacement. Market-based livelihoods also increase material incentives to have the largest output market possible, counteracting exclusionary feelings or practices. It is expected that by increasing mutually beneficial economic exchange, livelihoods programmes may nurture more inclusive tolerant attitudes. This hypothesis is based on classic theories in social psychology positing that positive interactions can reduce bias: Allport's contact hypothesis suggests that when groups work together toward common goals on an equal footing, they develop greater mutual acceptance (Allport, 1954). More recent evidence has found some support for the impact of positive contact on inclusive attitudes. Mousa (2020), for example, finds that when Iraqis from opposing groups engage in a cooperative endeavour (club football, in Mousa's case), it can increase their willingness to interact and trust one another in the future.

Conversely, poorly implemented livelihoods programmes could reinforce or even worsen exclusionary attitudes. If benefits are perceived to favour a particular group, it may heighten a sense of "us versus them." Seminal work on group conflict argues that prejudice often stems from perceived competition between groups over resources or status (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). In a post-conflict community, for example, if returnees receive business grants but host community members do not, the latter may feel threatened and view returnees with increased suspicion rather than solidarity. Instead of fostering inclusion, aid that is seen as unfair can solidify grievances and exclusionary norms, where each faction looks out for itself and denies the legitimacy of others' claims of belonging.

IV. METHODOLOGY

SURVEY DESIGN AND SAMPLING

The data were collected through in-person structured interviews that took place at respondents' homes from May to September 2024, as the baseline survey for a randomized controlled trial evaluating ILA. As such, the survey took place before the announcement of ILA beneficiaries and delivery of any ILA support. The questionnaire used in the interviews included around 200 questions on a wide range of topics, including demographics, household expenditures, social dynamics, migration history, contact networks, ILA programme exposure through social networks and women's role in household decision-making.

The interviews were conducted in Arabic and Kurdish by local Iraqi enumerators. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and respondents were able to skip any questions they did not feel comfortable answering and interrupt the survey at any time. A small in-kind contribution of IQD 6,500 (approximately USD 5) in phone credit was offered to all survey participants to thank them for the time dedicated to the study. The interviews had an average duration of 35 minutes.⁵ Follow-up visits and calls were conducted when required.

Data collection took place in 18 communities targeted by IOM for ILA assistance in 2024 in the Iraqi governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Salah al-Din and Ninewa, where the RCT was run. These governorates were selected because they experienced large-scale displacement during Daesh's control of the region and the subsequent fighting. At the time of the study, they hosted the largest numbers of returnees by governorate in Iraq and large numbers of IDPs (IOM, 2024a).

Within these governorates, 29 communities were selected to receive ILA in the 2024 programming cycle based on the results of assessments with local

key informants by IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and community engagement teams. The selection criteria employed by IOM to select communities for livelihoods assistance included: (i) hosting large populations of recent returnees or, less commonly, locally integrating IDPs, (ii) the severity of local conditions in terms of access to basic services, livelihoods and social cohesion, and (iii) access and security conditions allowing safe operations.

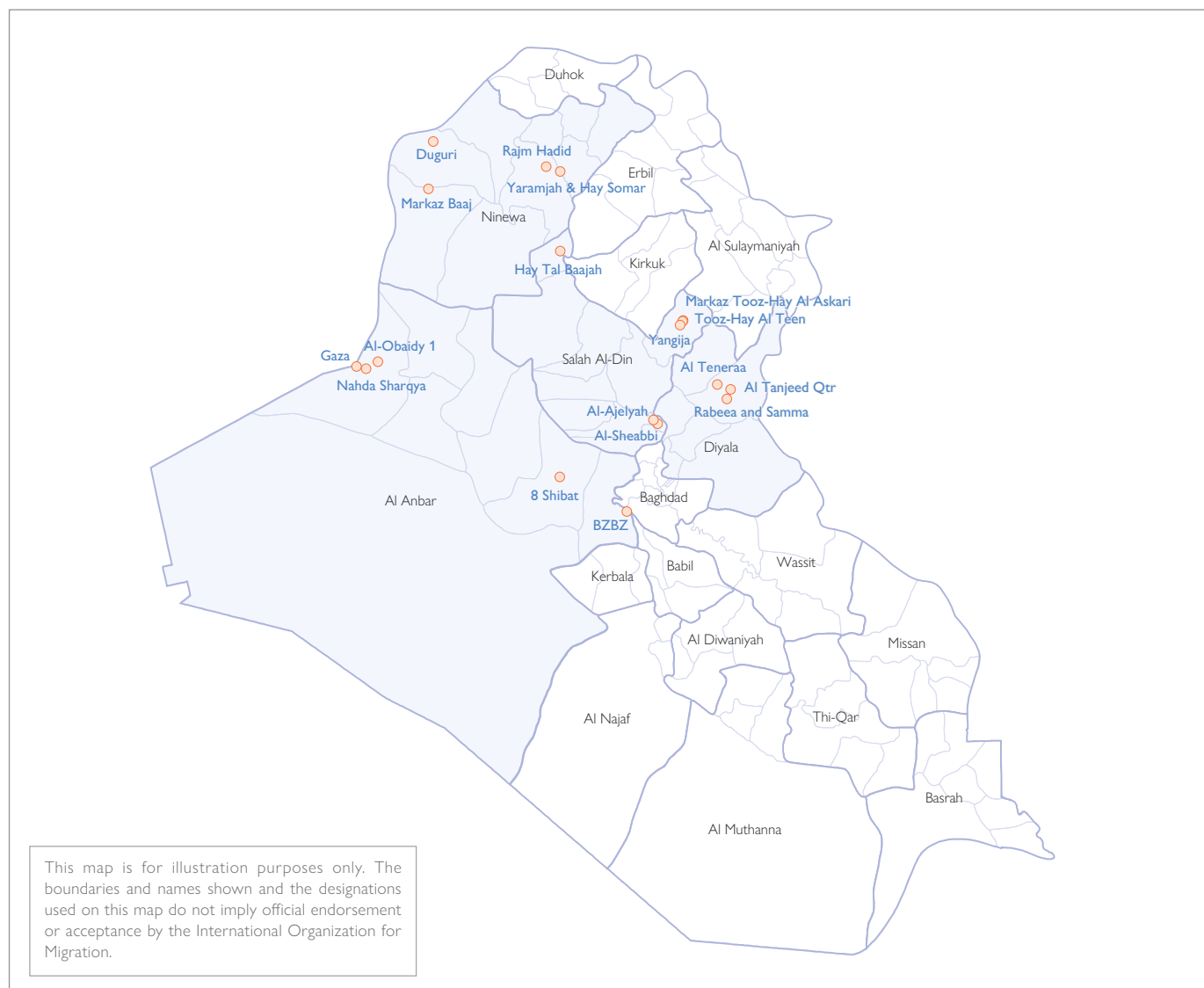
Among these 29 targeted communities, the 18 study communities were selected through consultations between the research and programme teams to ensure a diverse range of population groups and displacement experiences, avoid non-standard programming modalities delivered in a small number of communities and exclude communities where levels of need or security conditions were considered unsuitable for a randomized evaluation. The data presented in this report aim to describe the living conditions and attitudes of ILA applicants and their community member populations in the 18 study communities.

It is important to note that the findings should not be considered representative of the attitudes of the broader population in these towns, or their district or governorate.

Findings in this report describe four populations: (i) eligible ILA applicants, (ii) the social networks of ILA applicants, based on a survey of their friends, (iii) the economic networks of ILA applicants, based on a survey of their economic competitors, and (iv) a random sample of community members living around the ILA applicants. Taken together, these samples describe the situation for people directly and indirectly impacted by the ILA programme.

⁵ The median was 31 minutes, with interview durations ranging from 27 minutes at the first quartile to 38 minutes at the third quartile.

Figure 3. Communities included in the RCT



Note: Each orange dot indicates one of the 18 communities that are part of this RCT. The governorates they are located in are highlighted in light blue.

Source: List of communities selected by the authors for this research study.

A total of 6,159 respondents participated in the study; 2,132 respondents (35%) are eligibles for ILA support who have been selected because of their high level of vulnerability and 2,981 respondents (48%) have been referred to this study as social and economic contacts by respondents eligible for ILA support. An additional 1,046 respondents (17%) are community members.

The sub-samples are defined as follows:

- **ILA eligibles:** Individuals identified as eligible for ILA support by IOM programme staff following a screening process based on multidimensional vulnerability criteria and stated capacity and willingness to run a business. For ethical reasons, individuals eligible for the ILA programme but in critical need of support were not included in the study, as any ILA eligible individual participating in the RCT only has a 50 per cent chance of receiving ILA support during the study cycle. Aside from this exception, the entire population of individuals eligible for ILA was surveyed in each community.
- **Social network members:** We asked people to refer us to their friends who live in the same community for interviews. We can think of friends, as community members with direct social ties with the respondent. These

connections were identified through a referral sampling procedure in which ILA eligibles were asked to provide the names and contact details of individuals with whom they have regular positive social interactions.

- **Economic network members:** Next, we wanted to interview economic competitors of the ILA applicants. Community members with direct economic ties with the respondent. These connections were identified through a referral sampling procedure in which ILA eligibles were asked to provide the names and contact details of individuals with whom they work in a similar sector and geographic area in order to make their living.
- **Community members:** We gathered a representative sample of the 18 communities where eligible individuals live. A comprehensive sampling frame of all buildings in each community was constructed from Microsoft GIS footprints⁶ and a manual review of recent high-resolution satellite imagery. Sampling of geotagged buildings was geographically weighted based on the number of ILA eligibles living within 300 metres. Within each building, a household was selected at random by the enumerators.

6 See Microsoft / GlobalMLBuildingFootprints.

SUBGROUP ANALYSIS

The data was analysed for the full sample and then disaggregated by sex, displacement history (stayees, returnees and IDPs), subsample (ILA eligibles, social network, economic network and community members).⁷

The displacement history of respondents was determined based on their migration history since the start of the year 2014:

- Stayees are respondents who have not migrated since 2014.
- Returnees migrated in or after 2014 but have since returned to their formal area of habitual residence prior to displacement.
- IDPs migrated in or after 2014 and continue living in an area different from where they lived in 2014; they may have been displaced several times.

This study operationalizes migration history according to movement and location, rather than reported reason for migrating (such as violence, economic pressure), because measurement or inference of individual-level reasons for migration is prohibitively difficult. While the importance of understanding migration drivers is recognized, retrospective questions about people's reason for migration are not a reliable assessment of underlying causes for migration. These categories are intended exclusively for statistical purposes within the scope of this study.

PROGRESS TOWARDS DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR IDPs

Text boxes throughout this report highlight the data most relevant to the IACS durable solutions criteria, using the indicators developed by JIPS (2020). Six of the eight IACS criteria are reported against in this report – safety and security; adequate standard of living; access to livelihoods; restoration of housing, land and property; access to documentation; and participation in public affairs. Cases when the data collected do not match the exact specifications of the JIPS indicators are explicitly detailed.

MEASURING SOCIAL COHESION

Social cohesion is a multifaceted concept that is measured in this report with tailored survey questions that capture distinct dimensions – that is, interpersonal trust, civic engagement, inclusive attitudes, resource competition, interdependence and social contact. In the regression analysis, survey questions measuring one dimension are transformed into a single index variable using inverse covariance weighting.

In order to describe intergroup social cohesion, a number of questions ask about attitudes and experiences vis-a-vis different social reference groups. People may hold different perceptions about their own displacement group (for example an IDP respondent's trust in IDP community members) and people with a different displacement history (such as an IDP respondent's trust in returnee and stayee community members).

INTERPRETING THE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Each regression plot in this report presents estimated relationships between characteristics listed on the y-axis and one facet of social cohesion. As described above, we separately measured seven dimensions of social cohesion

– interpersonal trust, civic engagement, inclusive beliefs, interdependence, contact, competition and grievances – and each has its own regression analysis. In the regression results, horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals, which are centred on the point estimate recovered from the regression. Each plot presents analysis of only one subcomponent of social cohesion. The outcomes were constructed, as described above, as indices in unit of standard deviations. For reference, a 0.1 standard deviation difference is considered small, 0.2 is moderately small, 0.3 is a moderate difference and 0.4 or greater is a relatively large difference.

For each component of social cohesion, regression coefficients are estimated in six separate models. Five models focus on economic variables – employment, income, expenditure, assets and housing – while controlling for demographics and displacement history, while the sixth only includes the latter. Empty circles in the figures indicate the reference categories in each regression model. These reference categories serve as the baseline against which other characteristics are compared. Equations for all regression models are listed in the appendix.

Regression models provide estimates of associations between respondents' characteristics and social cohesion outcomes. However, many factors may simultaneously influence these relationships, making it difficult to isolate the role of any one characteristic. We include control variables – displacement history, age, sex and education level – that help account for broad differences between individuals that might contribute to obscuring the patterns of interest. These controls ensure that, for example, the estimated relationship between working and social trust is not simply due to differences in age or education levels between workers and non-workers. However, including control variables does not establish causation. The estimates still reflect correlational associations in the data, even after adjusting for observable differences between units.

In the graphs, X-axis values represent the magnitude of the estimated relationships between respondents' characteristics listed on the Y-axis and the outcome analysed in the plot. The indices are normalized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. This means that, for example, in Figure 48, which presents correlates of social trust, respondents who reported working have an estimated 0.10 standard deviation higher social trust than those who did not report working, after accounting for background characteristics. In other words, the estimate suggests that if we compare two respondents who are similar in age, education, sex and displacement history, but differ in whether they work, the working respondent is expected to have social trust levels that are, on average, 10 per cent of one standard deviation higher than the non-working respondent.

The data used in these regressions come from the 2024 study baseline survey, conducted in 18 communities in Iraq and described above. The regression analyses include all respondents: programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and a community sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. The total sample size is 6,159, although the number of observations can vary across regressions due to item non-response on variables included in each specification. The work, expenditure and assets models include 6,154 respondents, while the housing and income models retain 6,096 and 6,064 respondents, respectively.

⁷ For all responses provided in monetary values, an outlier removal process was implemented due to the presence of a small number of implausibly high values in the data. Outliers were removed through the winsorization of the top 2 per cent of non-zero values for monetary questions. The choice to winsorize only among non-zero values was made to avoid losing relevant data in cases when a low number of respondents gave positive values.

V. DEMOGRAPHICS AND MIGRATION

KEY POINTS

- Among the 6,159 respondents, 80% have been displaced at least once since 2014; 58% are returnees, while 22% remain internally displaced and 20% are host community members.
- From 2014 to 2017, three out of four moves (75.0%) resulted from conflict, generalized insecurity, targeted violence and threats. Since 2018, four in five moves (79.0%) have been returns to former area of habitual residence.
- Female-headed households account for 9.8% of IDP households, 8.9% of returnee households and 10.6% of stayee households.

This section provides an analysis of the demographics of the population surveyed including displacement history, schooling rate and education level in the communities.

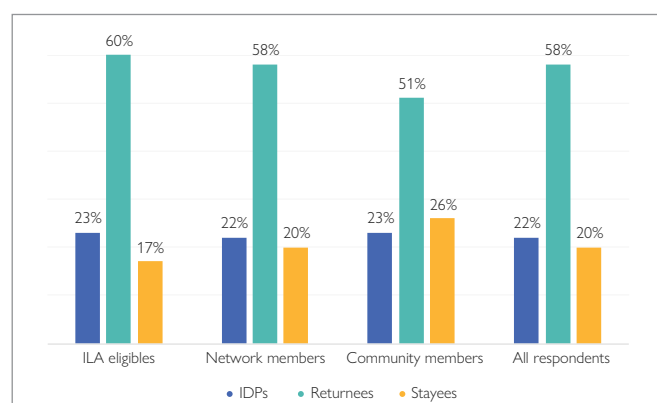
RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 6,159 respondents were interviewed for this research, 53 per cent of whom were female. Respondents provided individual information on themselves and their 30,409 household members, with an average household size of 5.9. IDPs have an average household size of 6.3, compared to 5.9 for returnees and 5.6 for stayees. Respondents have a median age of 34 years, while the median age across all household members is 20 years. The age of the respondents is consistent across sample groups: the median age is 35 for IDPs, 34 for returnees and 33 for stayees. Female-headed households account for 9.8 per cent of IDP households, 8.9 per cent for returnees and 10.6 per cent for stayees.⁸

MIGRATION HISTORY

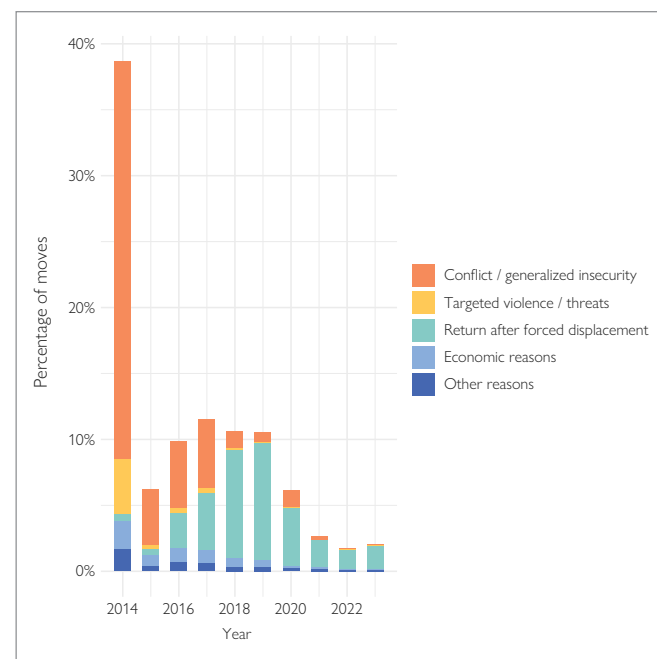
Overall, 80 per cent of respondents have been displaced in the last 10 years and are now returnees or IDPs. Most respondents are returnees (58%) who have been displaced since 2014 but have since returned to their original living area; 22 per cent are IDPs and 20 per cent are stayees who were not displaced since 2014. The table below shows the breakdown of respondents' displacement history (IDP, returnee and stayee) by sample type (ILA eligible, network member and community member).

Figure 4. Displacement history of respondents by sample



A total of 38.7 per cent of moves reported by respondents between 2014 and 2023 occurred in the year 2014 alone. After 2014, the overall trend shows an increase in moves per year from 2015 to 2017, followed by a gradual decrease after 2018. Based on self-reported reasons for movement, most moves since 2014 have been forced displacement caused by conflict and generalized insecurity (47.2%) and targeted violence and threats (5.3%). Only 6.9 per cent of moves were reported to be primarily caused by economic needs, spread between a lack of ability to cover basic needs (3.8%) and being able to meet basic needs but looking for better opportunities elsewhere (3.1%). A total of 36.3 per cent of all moves since 2014 were respondents returning to their area of habitual residence after forced displacement.

Figure 5. Reason for moving by year from 2014 to 2023



Note: n = 8,861. Moves that did not have a year associated with them were filtered out. All respondents were asked for each migratory move they made since 2014. All moves are included, including moving to a different village within the same subdistrict. There was no cap on the maximum number of moves a respondent could record. Some responses were rephrased or combined as follows: (1) Conflict / generalized insecurity: original spelling; (2) Targeted violence / threats: original phrasing; (3) Return after forced displacement: "Return to former area of habitual residence after forced displacement"; (4) Economic reasons combines "Lack of livelihoods (unable to cover basic needs)" and "Looking for better economic opportunities (able to cover basic needs)". Other reasons include: Drought / environmental degradation; Studying / university; Health care; Marriage / joining family elsewhere; Joined armed group / militia / army; Other (specify).

There is a clear shift between the reasons for moving from 2014 to 2017 and the reasons for moving from 2018 to 2023. The difference reflects a transition from displacement to returns. From 2014 to 2017, over three quarters of moves were displacement caused by conflict and generalized insecurity (67.4%) and targeted violence and threats (7.6%). During that period, less than one in eight moves were individuals or households returning to their former area of habitual residence (12.2%). In addition, 7.8 per cent were moving for economic reasons. However, from 2018 there is a shift towards returns. From 2018 to 2023, four out of five moves (79.0%) were returns to their formal area of habitual residence after forced displacement; 11.3 per cent of the moves were displacement resulting from conflict and generalized insecurity and 0.8 per cent from target violence and threats. In addition, 5.3 per cent were caused by economic reasons. Regardless of the time period, marriage, joining family elsewhere, studying, and accessing health care were the principal cause of less than 2 per cent of all moves.

⁸ Female-headed households are defined as having no man of working age (18–60 years old) in the household.

VI. ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY AND LIVELIHOOD

KEY POINTS

- Surveyed communities face high levels of economic deprivation, with all groups facing high rates of debt and unemployment regardless of their displacement history.
- 58.9% of respondents live below the national poverty line, compared with 17.5% of Iraqis in the Iraq Household Socioeconomic Survey (IHES).⁹
- Unemployment is high in these communities: 42% of IDPs, 49% of returnees and 35% of stayees in the labour force are unemployed.
- Only one in four respondents (26%) worked in the month preceding the study: 30.9% of IDPs, 23.1% of returnees and 27.6% of stayees did not work in the month preceding the study. Male respondents were twice as likely to have worked in the previous month than female respondents.
- Households spend on average IQD 939,000 per month (USD 717).¹⁰ Over a third of these expenses are on food, followed by health expenses and debt repayment.
- 22.1% of households are in debt, which is mostly owed to family, friends and to landlords. Indebted households owe on average IQD 4.716 million (USD 3,600), which is five times the average household's monthly expenditure reported. A higher proportion of IDP households are indebted, while returnees have the highest average amount of debt per household.

This section provides an analysis of the socioeconomic situation among respondents and their household including expenditure, debt, savings, employment and business ownership.

EXPENDITURE

Overall expenditure

Durable Solutions
Adequate standard of living 3.2.8: Population below the poverty line

- 56.0% of IDPs, 48.9% of returnees and 56.0% of stayees were below the global poverty line of USD 3.00 per person per day.¹¹
- 61.9% of IDPs, 56.0% of returnees, and 63.9% of stayees are below the IHSES national poverty rate of IQD 136,000 per person per month (USD 104). This is much higher than the national average of 17.5% of Iraqis living below the national poverty line (World Bank et al., 2024).¹²

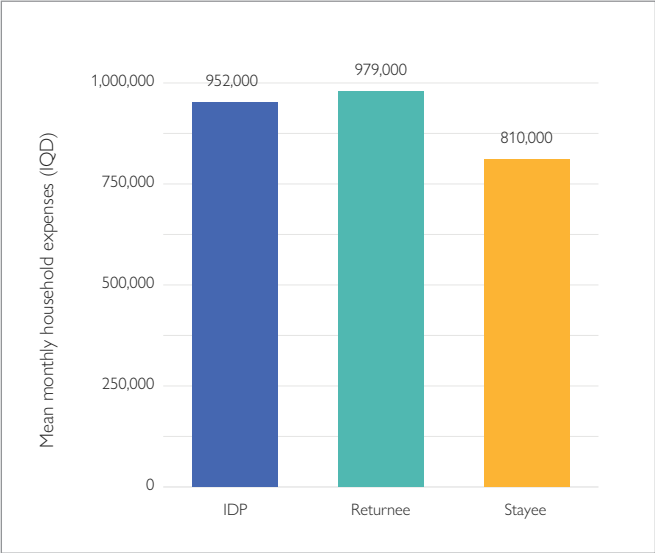
The mean total monthly expenditure across all households is IQD 939,000 per month (USD 717). This includes expenses on food, rent and mortgage, household items, transport, health, entertainment and clothing, education, durable goods, savings and debt repayment.

Stayees have the lowest average expenditure at IQD 810,000 per month (USD 618), which is around 15 per cent below returnees (IQD 979,000 / USD 747) and IDPs (IQD 952,000 / USD 727). The mean monthly expense per person is IQD 179,000 (USD 137) for IDP households, IQD 193,000 (USD 147) for returnees, and IQD 167,000 (USD 127) for stayees. This is notably lower than the average monthly expenditure per person of IQD 248,000 across Iraq (USD 189) (World Bank et al., 2024). While the lower 50 per cent of

households have similar spending amounts regardless of displacement history, there is a notable difference in higher quartiles. Stayees with the highest levels of expenses spend less than IDPs and returnees in the same quartiles.

When considering the breakdown by sample, ILA eligibles' households spend on average 10 per cent more each month than other groups. ILA eligibles spend IQD 996,000 (USD 760) monthly on average, compared to IQD = 905,000 (691 USD) for their network members, and IQD 919,000 (USD 702) for other community members. The mean monthly expense per capita is IQD 180,000 (USD 137) for ILA eligibles' households, and IQD 187,000 (USD 143) for network members and community members.

Figure 6. Mean monthly household expenses by displacement history



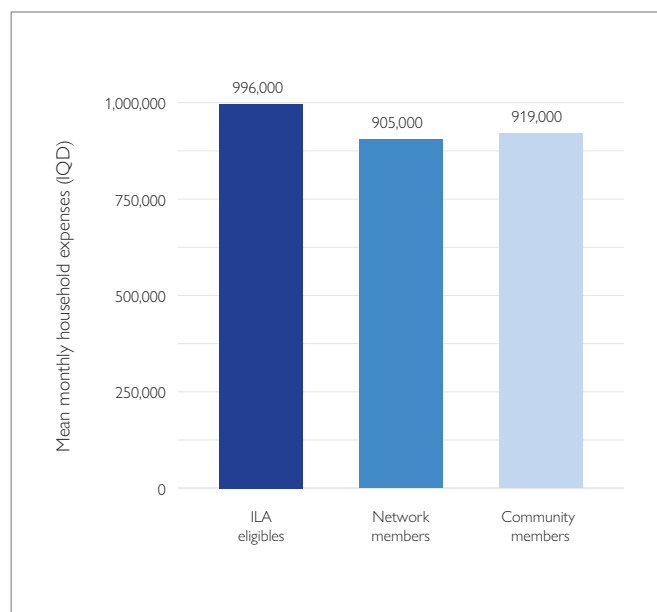
9 Poverty line of IQD 136,000 per person per month (USD 104), as defined in the IHSES. The national figure is based on the IHSES conducted by the World Bank, Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO) in 2024.

10 USD 1 = IQD 1,310 on 13 June 2025. All responses were provided in IQD. Conversion to USD at the official exchange rate of IQD 1,310 per USD 1, which was consistent for the entire duration of the data collection period (United Nations Operational Rates of Exchange).

11 Calculated based on monthly expenditure per household member per day, with 30 days in a month and the official exchange rate of IQD 1,310 per USD 1 (United Nations Operational Rates of Exchange).

12 Calculated based on monthly expenditure per household member per month.

Figure 7. Mean monthly household expenses by sample



Note: n = 6,156. Total expenses combine eight questions on monthly household expenditure. Within each question, values above the 98th percentile of non-zero values were winsorized. Seven out of eight questions were asked as "In the past 30 days, how much money has your household spent on [type of expense] (in IQD)". The original question phrasing of the types of expense were (1) food and beverages; (2) rent or mortgage; (3) household items (furniture, utensils, kitchen supplies, personal care/hygiene); (4) utilities (water, electricity, gas), transportation and vehicle fuel; (5) medicine and health (products and services/care); (6) entertainment, clothing/footwear, and mobile/internet service; (7) education (services/tuition and supplies). The eighth question was: "In the last 30 days, how much money has your household put towards savings (in IQD)".

Expenditure by type

Durable Solutions

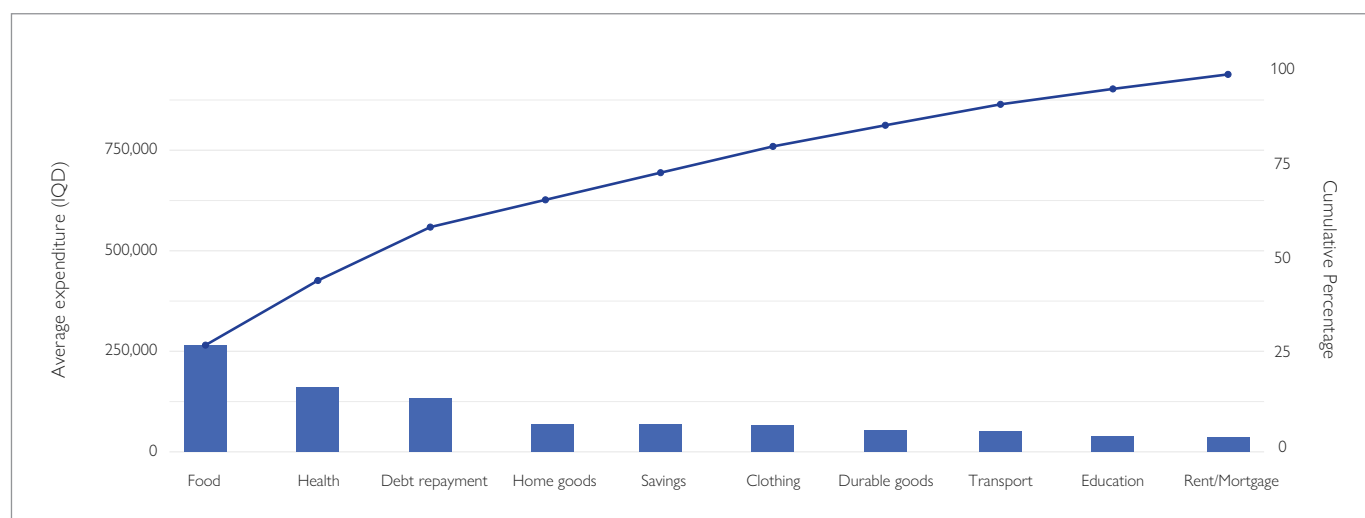
Adequate standard of living 3.2.7: Ratio of food expenditures against total expenditure

The ratios of average monthly food expenditure against average total monthly expenditure were 27% for IDPs, 28% for returnees' and 32% for stayees' households.

The three main types of expenses for respondents' households are food (IQD 265,000 on average per month / USD 202), health (IQD 161,000 / USD 123), and debt repayment (IQD 133,000 / USD 102). This is followed by money put aside for savings; home good purchases; and entertainment, phone, internet and clothing purchases, which are each around IQD 65,000 per month per household (USD 50). Respondents spend IQD 52,000 per month on transport (USD 40), and on durable goods. Education expenses are lower at IQD 38,000 per month on average (USD 29), followed by IQD 36,000 per month on average on rent and mortgage payments (USD 27). However, the section of this report on debt highlights that all households owe, on average, IQD 275,000 to their landlord (USD 210).

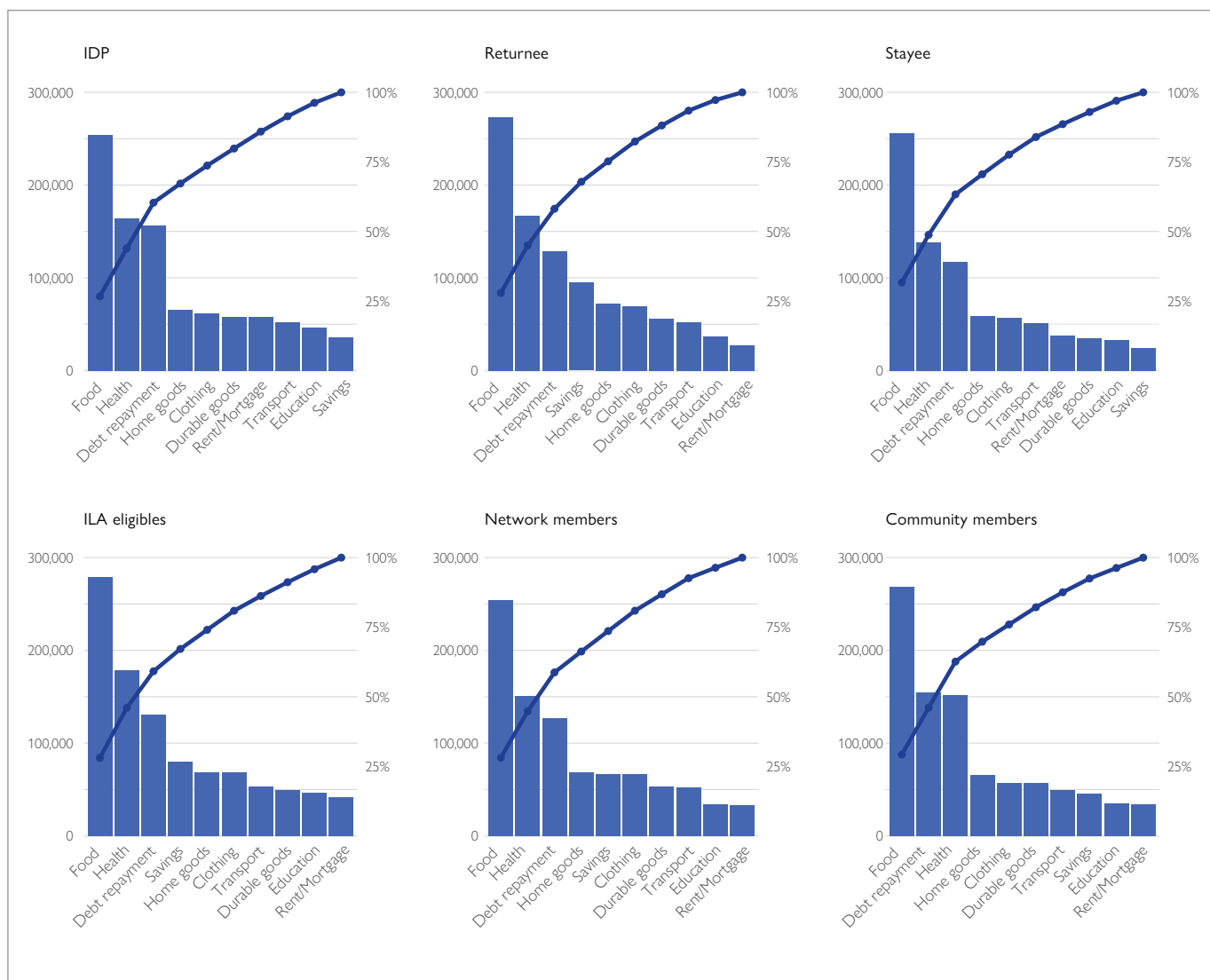
A total of 22.8 per cent of households paid rent or mortgage in the previous month. For households who pay rent or mortgage, the mean monthly rent and mortgage expense is IQD 159,000 per month per household (USD 121). For these households, rent and mortgage are equivalent to a fifth of their monthly expenses (21.0%), from 18.9 per cent of returnee households' total expenses to 21.9 per cent for IDPs and 23.8 per cent for stayees. Returnees have a higher tendency to put money into savings (close to IQD 100,000 per month / USD 76), while IDPs and stayees put less than IQD 50,000 into savings monthly (USD 38).

Figure 8. Households' mean monthly spending by expense type



Note: n=6,156. The bars show the households' mean monthly expenditure in IQD per category (primary y-axis on the left-hand side). The line shows the cumulative percentage of mean expenditure per category (secondary y-axis on the right-hand side). The mean total expenditure combine eight questions on monthly household expenditure. Within each question, values above the 98th percentile of non-zero values were winsorized. Seven out of eight questions were asked as "In the past 30 days, how much money has your household spent on [type of expense] (in IQD)". The original question phrasing of the types of expense were (1) food and beverages; (2) rent or mortgage; (3) household items (furniture, utensils, kitchen supplies, personal care/hygiene); (4) utilities (water, electricity, gas), transportation and vehicle fuel; (5) medicine and health (products and services/care); (6) entertainment, clothing/footwear and mobile/internet service; (7) education (services/tuition and supplies). The eighth question was: "In the last 30 days, how much money has your household put towards savings (in IQD)".

Figure 9. Households' mean monthly spending in IQD by expense type, displacement history and sample



Note: n=6,156 across all three graphs by displacement history (IDP, returnee, stayee).

n=1,656 across all three graphs by sample (ILA eligibles, network members, and community members). On each graph, the bars show the households' mean monthly expenditure in IQD per category (primary y-axis on the left-hand side). The line shows the cumulative percentage of mean expenditure per category (secondary y-axis on the right-hand side). The mean total expenditure combine eight questions on monthly household expenditure. Within each question, values above the 98th percentile of non-zero values were winsorized. Seven out of eight questions were asked as "In the past 30 days, how much money has your household spent on [type of expense] (in IQD)". The original question phrasing of the types of expense were (1) food and beverages; (2) rent or mortgage; (3) household items (furniture, utensils, kitchen supplies, personal care/hygiene); (4) utilities (water, electricity, gas), transportation and vehicle fuel; (5) medicine and health (products and services/care); (6) entertainment, clothing/footwear and mobile/internet service; (7) education (services/tuition and supplies). The eighth question was: "In the last 30 days, how much money has your household put towards savings (in IQD)".

DEBT

Overall debt

Over one in five households (22.1%) report being in debt. Total debt for households averages IQD 1.03 million (USD 786) across all households. On average, each household owes over IQD 598,000 (USD 456) to family and friends,¹³ which represents over half of their total debt. Debt owed to landlord is the second highest, with an average of IQD 275,000 per household (USD 210). These are followed by money owed to local merchants and shops (IQD 85,000 / USD 65) and to business providers (IQD 53,000 / USD 40). Medical debt is lower and averages IQD 18,000 (USD 14) per household.

When considering only the households who report being indebted (22.1%)

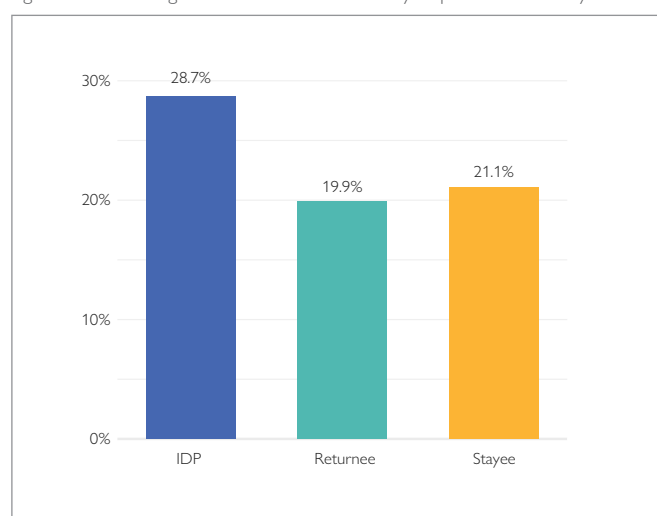
and not the entire population, indebted households are on average IQD 4.716 million (USD 3,600) in debt. This amount is equivalent to five times the average monthly household expenditure reported in the survey. For these indebted household, this includes on average IQD 2.734 million (USD 2,087) owed to banks, family and friends, IQD 1.259 million (USD 961) owed to landlords, IQD 390,000 (USD 298) owed to merchants, IQD 244,000 (USD 186) owed to business providers, and IQD 83,000 (USD 63) owed to health providers.

Debt by displacement history and sample

¹³ While the data do not allow us to disaggregate debt owed to banks and debt owed to family and friends, qualitative insights suggest that access to formal credit is negligible in the communities included in the study.

IDPs and returnees face higher challenges with debt than stayees, but all groups have high levels of debt. Debt rate is higher among IDPs, with 28.7 per cent of IDP households in debt compared to 21.1 per cent of stayees and 19.9 per cent of returnees. Among indebted households, indebted returnee households have a much higher average debt amount (IQD 5.759 million / USD 4,396) than IDPs (IQD 3.509 million / USD 2,679) and stayees (IQD 3.744 million / USD 2,858). This means that despite fewer returnee households being in debt, those who are in debt face high amounts of debt. All groups experience the same pattern of owing money to family and friends the most, followed by landlords. Debt owed to landlord is high regardless of displacement group, but it is notably higher among returnees than among IDPs and stayees. Debt owed to local merchants and

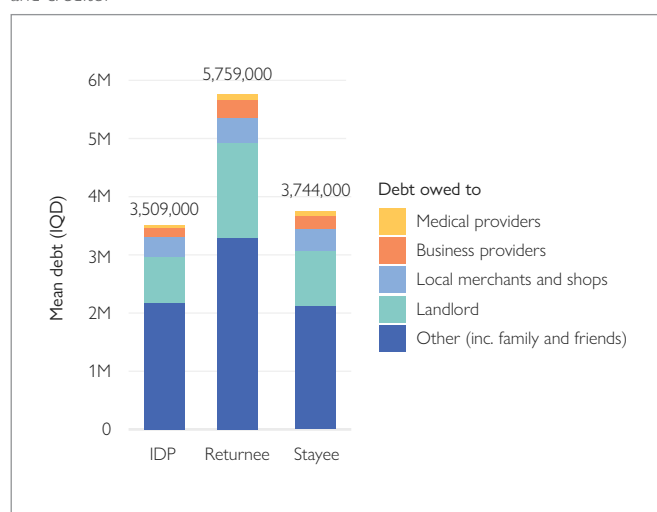
Figure 10. Percentage of indebted households by displacement history



Note: n=6,145. Filtered out cases when the participant refused to respond. Respondents were asked the following question: "Does the household owe any debt, including delayed rents, items purchased for credit, mortgage, informal loans?"

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Figure 11. Mean debt across indebted households, by displacement history and creditor



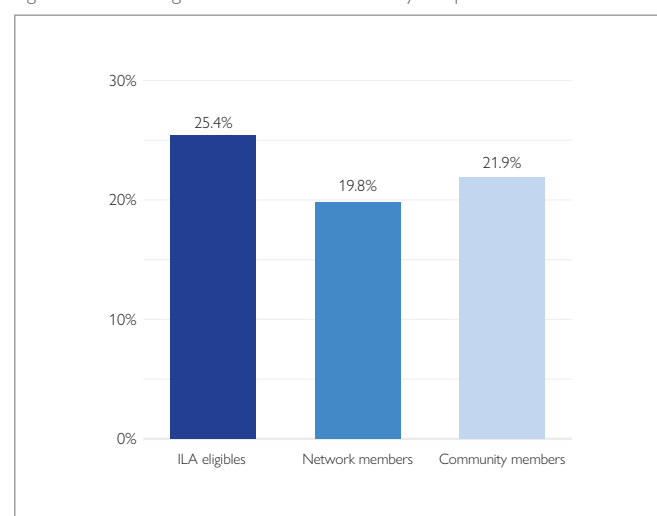
Note: n=1,345. This figure includes households who reported being indebted (n=1,358) that gave a positive value to at least one debt question. Only 13 households who reported being indebted did not give at least one positive value to any of the debt questions. Indebted households were identified using the question: "Does the household owe any debt, including delayed rents, items purchased for credit, mortgage, informal loans?". Five debt questions were asked as follows: "Total debt currently owed by this household to [...] (in IQD)": (1) to the landlord; (2) to merchants and local shops (for food/household goods); (3) clinic, hospital, pharmacy or a medical provider; (4) to suppliers of business inputs, machinery, tools or business rent; and (5) all other (friends, family, banks).

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

shops and business providers is high too, while medical debt is lower on average.

One in four ILA eligibles (25.4%) are in debt, compared to one in five of their network members (19.8%) and other community members (21.9%). Indebted ILA eligible households are on average IQD 4.832 million (USD 3,689) in debt, compared to IQD 4.572 million (USD 3,490) for indebted network members and USD 4.810 million (USD 3,672) for indebted community members. For all groups, this mostly includes money owed to family and friends, followed by debt owed to landlords. Lower amounts of debt are owed to local merchants and shops, followed by business providers and medical providers.

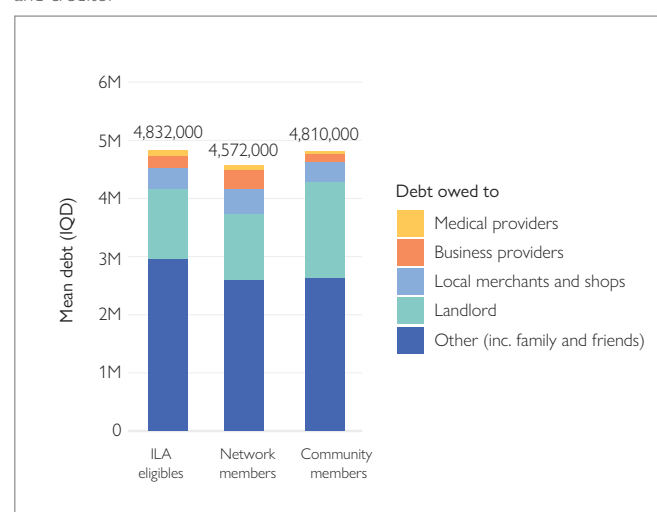
Figure 12. Percentage of indebted households by sample



Note: n=6,145. Filtered out cases when the participant refused to respond. Respondents were asked the following question: "Does the household owe any debt, including delayed rents, items purchased for credit, mortgage, informal loans?"

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Figure 13. Mean debt across indebted households, by sample and creditor



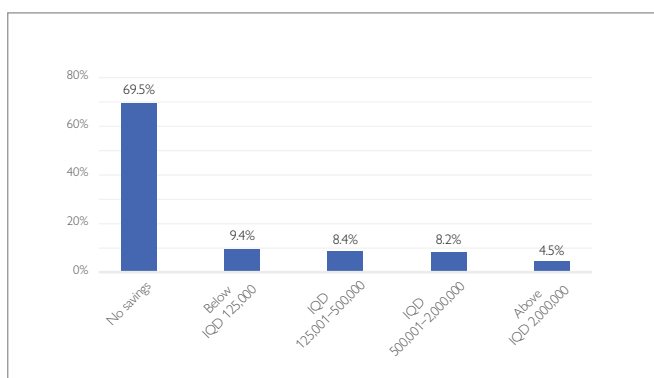
Note: n=1,345. This figure includes households who reported being indebted (n=1,358) that gave a positive value to at least one debt question. Only 13 households who reported being indebted did not give at least one positive value to any of the debt questions. Indebted households were identified using the question: "Does the household owe any debt, including delayed rents, items purchased for credit, mortgage, informal loans?". Five debt questions were asked as follows: "Total debt currently owed by this household to [...] (in IQD)": (1) to the landlord; (2) to merchants and local shops (for food/household goods); (3) clinic, hospital, pharmacy or a medical provider; (4) to suppliers of business inputs, machinery, tools or business rent; and (5) all other (friends, family, banks).

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

SAVINGS

A total of 89.3 per cent of households have no savings or have saved less than the average monthly household expenditure of IQD 939,000 (717 USD). Two thirds of households (69.5%) did not have any savings in cash or in bank accounts 9.4 per cent of respondents have some savings but less than IQD 125,000 (USD 125) saved and an additional 8.4 per cent have less than IQD 500,000 (USD 382) saved. Only one in eight households (12.7%) have more than IQD 500,000 (USD 382) saved.

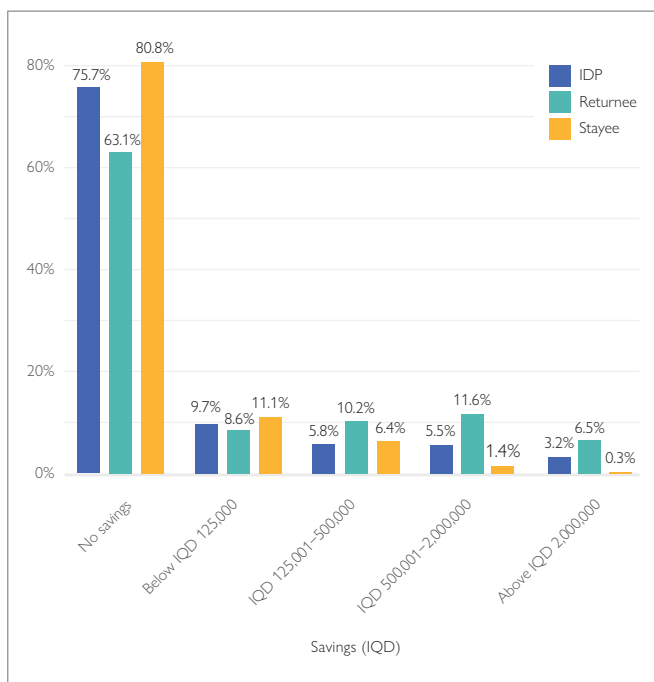
Figure 14. Proportion of respondents by saving amount



Note: n=6,032. The measure adds responses to two questions on cash savings and bank savings. Participants who refused to respond to either or both questions were filtered out. The questions were "Total liquid/cash savings currently owned by this household (in IQD)" and "Household liquid/cash savings in a formal financial institution (bank) (in IQD)." Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

IDP and stayee households were much more likely to have no savings, and less likely to have high savings, compared to returnees. Stayees showed even higher vulnerability than IDPs in this measure. Over three in four IDPs (75.7%) and stayees (80.8%) did not have any savings in cash or at the bank, which is much higher than the proportion of returnees without savings (63.1%). IDPs (8.7%) and stayees (1.7%) were also less likely than stayees (18.1%) to have high savings

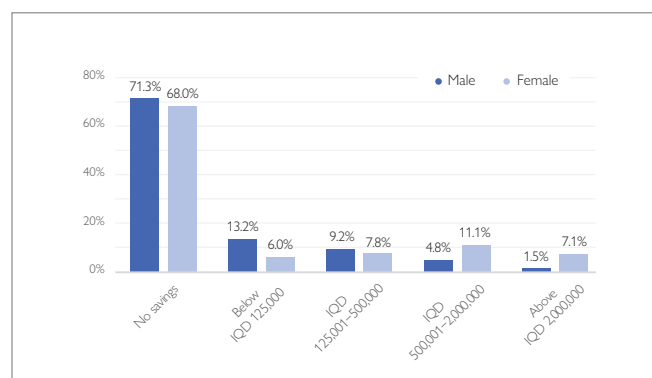
Figure 16. Proportion of households by saving amount and displacement history



Note: n=6,032. The measure adds responses to two questions on cash savings and bank savings. Participants who refused to respond to either or both questions were filtered out. The questions were "Total liquid/cash savings currently owned by this household (in IQD)" and "Household liquid/cash savings in a formal financial institution (bank) (in IQD)." Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

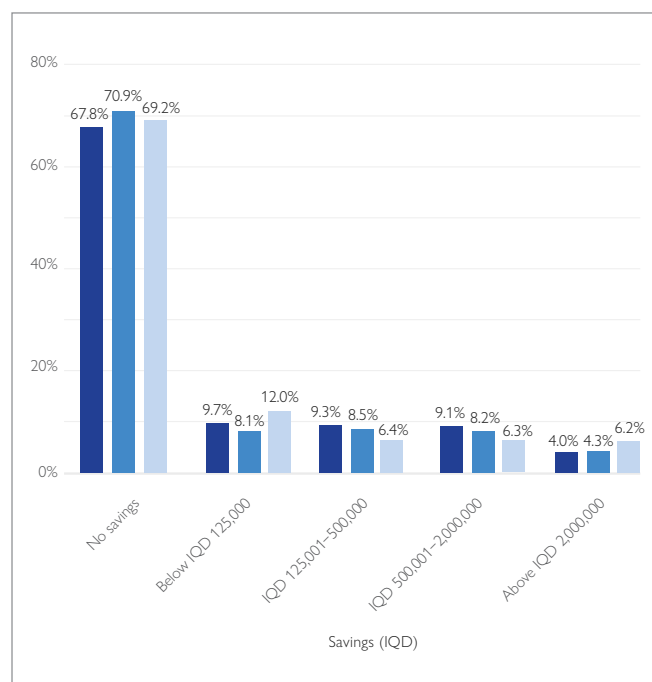
Female respondents were more likely to report that their household had large amounts of savings set aside than male respondents: 18.2 per cent of women reported savings above IQD 500,000 (USD 382), compared to 6.3 per cent of men. Meanwhile, male respondents were more likely to report that their household had no savings or low savings compared to the average.

Figure 15. Proportion of respondents by saving amount and sex



above IQD 500,000 (USD 382), equivalent to half of a household's average monthly expenditure. The difference between ILA eligibles, their network and community members is not as notable. ILA eligibles are slightly less likely to have no savings (67.8%) than the average (69.5%) and are slightly more likely to have high savings over IQD 500,000 (USD 382) (13.1%) compared to the average (12.7%).

Figure 17. Proportion of households by saving amount and sample



EMPLOYMENT AND CONTRACTS

Employment rate

One in four respondents (25.8%) had worked in the month preceding the study. This includes working on their own business, a family business, as a daily labourer and regular employment.

Employment is higher among IDPs at 30.9 per cent, compared to returnees (23.1%) and stayees (27.6%). There is a clear gender difference, with men being almost twice as likely to have worked in the last month (34.3%) compared to women (18.3%). ILA eligibles are also more likely to have worked in the previous month (29.2%) than their network members (25.2%) and other community members (20.4%).

Durable Solutions

Access to livelihoods and employment 3.1.1: Population aged 15 to 64 employed in formal and informal sector

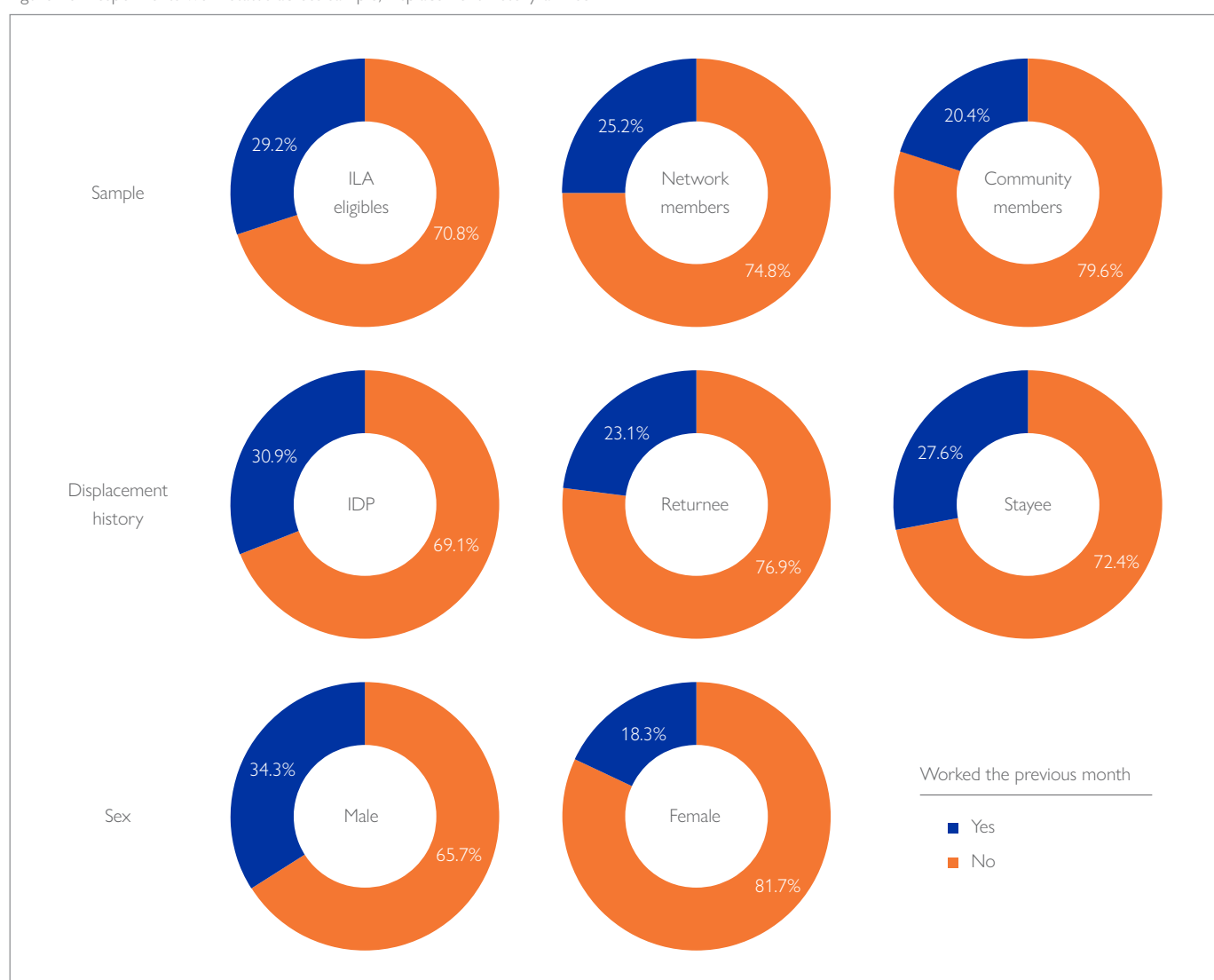
31.0% of IDP respondents, 23.5% of returnees and 27.8% of stayees aged 18 to 64 worked in the month preceding the study.¹⁴

Durable Solutions

Access to livelihoods and employment 3.1.10: Labour force population who are unemployed

42.2% of IDPs, 49.1% of returnees and 35.0% of stayees in the labour force are unemployed.¹⁵

Figure 18. Respondents work status across sample, displacement history and sex



Note: n=6,157. Respondents were asked: "Did you work in the past month? Please include any kind of work, including for your own or a family business, for cash or goods or to pay off debt?". Responses are broken down by displacement history on the first row of graphs (total n=6,157); by sample on the second row (total n=6,157); and by sex on the third row (total n=6,157). No filtering by age was done as all respondents are 18 years or older.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

¹⁴ Note: all respondents were 18 years or older at the time of the study; therefore, there are no respondents aged 15 to 18.

¹⁵ Unemployment is calculated as the number of respondents that sought paid employment in the month preceding the study, divided by the total of respondents who were either working or seeking employment in the month preceding the study. A total of 2,868 out of 6,159 respondents were either working or seeking employment in the month preceding the study.

Type of employment

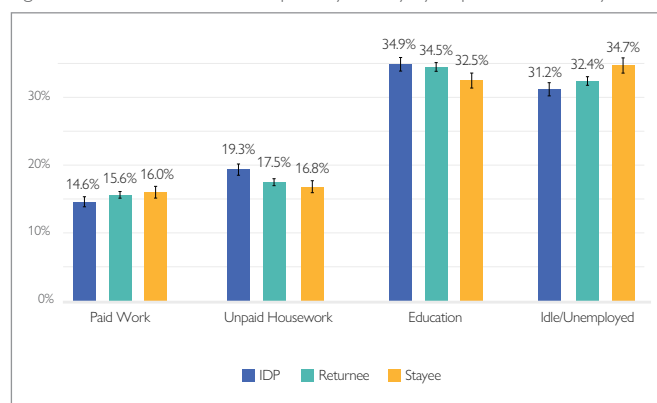
A total of 58.8 per cent of respondents who are working are daily labourers working short-term jobs for different employers; 22.8 per cent of working respondents are working for their own business. In addition, 19.1 per cent are in regular employment and 4.1 per cent work for family members.

Contract

A total of 98.5 per cent of respondents working as employees, day labourers or as part of a family member's business do not have any official or unofficial working contract. Among respondents who are consistently working for the same person or organization, 95.8 per cent do not have any employment contract. Only 2.9 per cent of these long-term employees have an official long-term contract with their employer.

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS' ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Figure 19. Household members' primary activity by displacement history



Note: n=36,568. Respondents were asked the number of members of their household, including the respondents themselves. Household members are defined as: "a group of people who spend most nights in the same dwelling and share meals most of the time, whether or not they are related". For each household member, respondents were asked: "What is the primary activity of [...]?" The options were: (1) Working (for wage, in kind, own or family business, or to pay expenses or debt); (2) Unpaid housework; (3) Education; (4) Idle (such as ill, disabled, retired, unemployed, etc.). Respondents were only able to report one activity per household member. This figure includes all household members of all ages. Household members' displacement history is determined based on the respondent's displacement history.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Durable Solutions

Access to livelihood and employment 3.1.7: Population aged 5 to 17 engaged in paid work

1.9% of IDPs, 1.5% of returnees and 1.9% of stayees aged 5 to 17 were engaged in paid work.¹⁶

Durable Solutions

Access to livelihood and employment 3.1.8: Population aged 15 to 24 not in education, employment or training

42.4% of IDPs, 39.1% of returnees and 42.4% of stayees aged 15 to 24 are not in education and are not employed.¹⁷

Around a third of household members are in education (34.2%), another third is not economically active (32.6%), while around one in six does unpaid housework (17.8%) and one in six is in paid work (15.4%). Displacement history does not have a notable impact on the primary activity of respondents, although stayees are slightly more likely to be economically inactive (34.7%) than IDPs (31.2%) and returnees (32.4%).

Household members' primary activity is highly dependent on their age and sex. Half of male household members aged 18 to 59 are employed, with lower employment among young men aged 18 to 34 than men aged 35 to 59. For the same age groups, the majority of women are doing unpaid housework, and only 5.0 per cent are in situations of paid employment. This result aligns with data from the recent Labour Force Survey, which reports that Iraq has one of the lowest female labour force participation rates in the world, at 11 per cent compared to 68 per cent for men (ILO, CSO and KRSO, 2022). Around a third of all household members aged 18 to 59 are in a situation of unemployment or idleness. Employment is low among 12- to 17-year-olds, with 78.3 per cent of boys and 71.0 per cent of girls in education past the age of mandatory education from 6 to 11 years. A total of 15.1 per cent of girls aged 12 to 17 have unpaid housework as their primary activity. For those older than 60 years, four out of five of men are in idle/unemployment and retirement situations, with the remaining in paid employment. At the same age, half of the women are mostly involved in unpaid housework, and the other half are economically inactive.

Figure 20. Primary activity of male household members by age

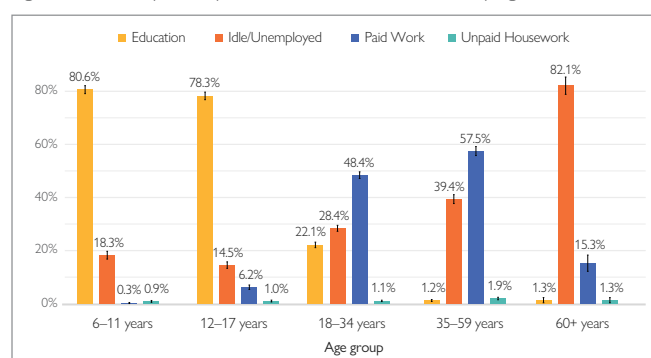
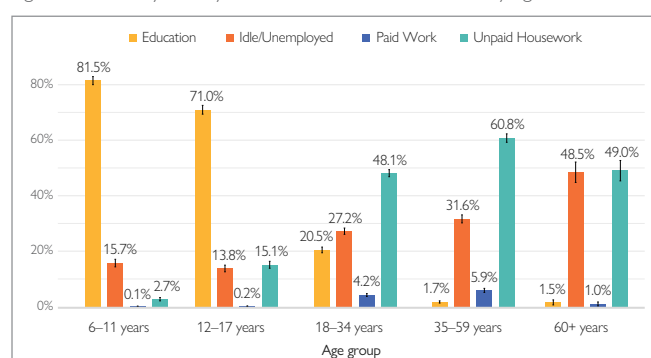


Figure 21. Primary activity of female household members by age



Note: Male household members older than 6 years: n=15,821. Female household members aged over 6: n=16,458. Respondents were asked the number of members of their household and the sex and age of each of them, including the respondent themselves. Household members are defined as: "a group of people who spend most nights in the same dwelling and share meals most of the time, whether or not they are related". For each household member, respondents were then asked: "What is the primary activity of [...]?" The options were (1) Working (for wage, in kind, own or family business, or to pay expenses or debt); (2) Unpaid housework; (3) Education; (4) Idle (including ill, disabled, retired, unemployed, etc.). Respondents were only able to report one activity per household member.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

¹⁶ Main activity reported by the respondents for each of their household members aged 5 to 17. No data were collected on the working conditions of these household members. Only one main activity was reported by household members, meaning that children aged 5 to 17 who were reported as being in education and might also be working would not be included in this figure.

¹⁷ Includes respondents and their household members.

RESILIENCE TO SHOCKS

Durable Solutions

Adequate standard of living 2.1.14: Population owning a mobile phone

77.6% of IDPs, 85.3% of returnees and 78.5% of stayees own a smartphone.

To assess households' resilience to shocks, we compute a simple additive index combining high risk of eviction, having debt, no savings and being below 30th percentile of asset ownership using Principal Component Analysis PC1. It ranges from 0 (none of these issues) to 4 (respondent's household facing all four issues); 13.7 per cent of households have a high precarity index of 3 or 4 out of 4.

A total of 2.1 per cent of households are simultaneously facing high risks of eviction, debt and low asset ownership while having no savings; 11.6 per cent are facing three out of four of these issues. On the other hand, close to half of the households only face one of these (46.3%). Only one in eight (12.4%) households do not face any of these issues.

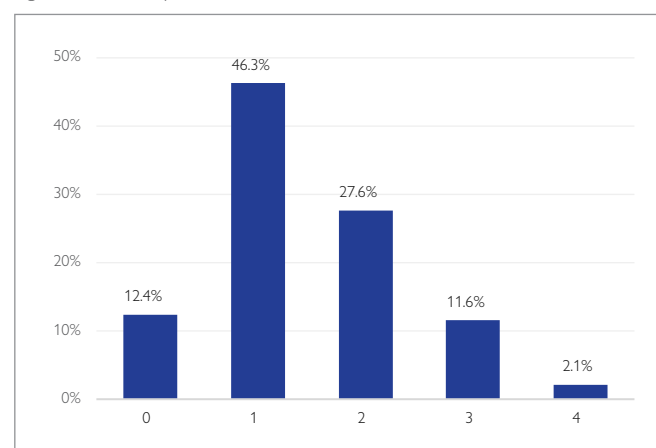
There are significant variations depending on the displacement history of the household. This index indicates that IDPs are in particularly precarious situations with a lower ability to face unexpected challenges, while returnees have a relatively lower precarity than the average on this index. Despite these variations, each group contains some households at very low, moderate and very high levels of precarity.

Close to one in four IDP households (22.7%) scores 3 or higher out of 4, while 4.9 per cent of IDP households reported facing all four issues simultaneously, placing them in a particularly vulnerable position to face unexpected difficulties. Returnee households are scoring relatively better in this precarity index, with a high proportion of returnees with a low precarity score of 0 (16.3%). Returnee households are also less likely to have a high precarity score of 3 or 4 (10.2%).

Stayee households mostly have a moderate precarity score of 1 or 2. A lower proportion score very low on the precarity index with a score of 0 (5.8% compared to the average of 12.4%), but the proportion of stayee households with a score of 3 or 4 is similar to the average.

There is no large difference in precarity index between ILA eligibles, their network and other community members; 14.9 per cent of ILA eligibles have a precarity score of 3 or 4, compared to 13.2 per cent of network members and 12.5 per cent of community members.

Figure 22. Precarity index across all households



Note: n=6,156. Scale ranging from 0 (low precarity) to 4 (high precarity). The precarity index is calculated as an additive index. The four components are: (1) one point if the household does not have savings; (2) one point if the household is indebted; (3) one point if the household reports being at "high risk" or "very high risk" of eviction; (4) calculated using Principal Component Analysis: one point when asset ownership is below the 30 per cent of PC1. The assets measured are Car, Motorcycle, Fridge, Electric washing machine, Electric generator, TV, Water heater (electric, gas, solar or kerosene), Heater (kerosene, gas heater or electric), Air conditioning unit, Sewing Machine, Freezer, Water cooler, Dishwasher, Personal computer, Satellite dish and Smartphone.

Figure 23. Precarity index of households by displacement history

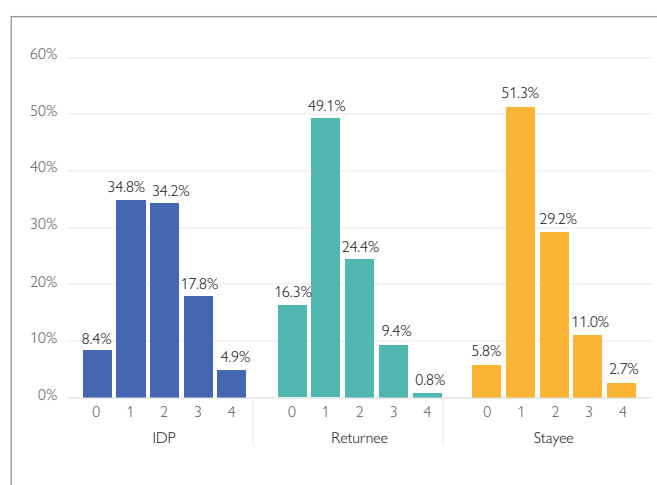
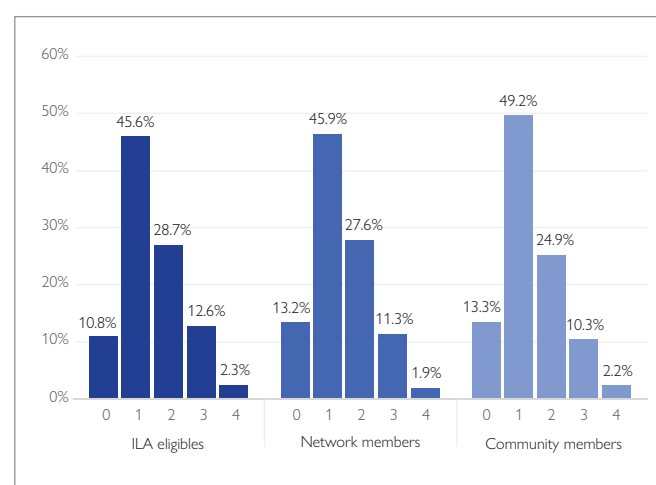


Figure 24. Precarity index of households by sample



Note: n=6,156. Scale ranging from 0 (low precarity) to 4 (high precarity). The precarity index is calculated as an additive index. The four components are: (1) one point if the household does not have savings; (2) one point if the household is indebted; (3) one point if the household reports being at "high risk" or "very high risk" of eviction; (4) calculated using Principal Component Analysis: one point when asset ownership is below the 30 per cent of PC1. The assets measured are Car, Motorcycle, Fridge, Electric washing machine, Electric generator, TV, Water heater (electric, gas, solar or kerosene), Heater (kerosene, gas heater or electric), Air conditioning unit, Sewing Machine, Freezer, Water cooler, Dishwasher, Personal computer, Satellite dish and Smartphone.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

VII. HUMANITARIAN OUTCOMES

KEY POINTS

- 81.0% of children of mandatory schooling age (6–11 years) are in education. This percentage is lower for IDPs (78.8%) and stayees (74.3%); 17.2% of children aged 3 to 5 are in education and 71.0% of children aged 12 to 18 are in education.
- Adult women were twice as likely as adult men to have received no formal education (24.6% and 11.6% respectively), but there is no gender difference in the schooling rate of children currently aged 3 to 5, 6 to 11 and 12 to 18 years.
- 18.5% of respondents do not have any formal education and 56.1% only have some education up to the primary level. Only 10.8% of respondents completed secondary school or a higher level of education. IDPs and male respondents are more likely to have received at least some formal education.
- Shelter is a key issue, with 28.0% of respondents not living in a residential building in good condition and 34.3% at risk of eviction.
- IDPs are particularly vulnerable in term of housing: 45.3% of IDPs were living in subpar housing and 53.2% were at risk of eviction. Nevertheless, some IDPs are in more stable positions reflecting progress towards local integration, as 24.1% have purchased the property they now live in.
- 62.1% of respondents experienced their home or business building being seized or having been damaged since 2014.
- Returnees and stayees are both in similar positions in term of shelter type, risk of eviction and occupation arrangement. Returnees were severely affected by housing and business buildings destruction and seizures, but many have now recovered their properties.
- Most respondents feel safe walking around their neighbourhood, but 13.2% of respondents reported at least a moderate level of concern about harassment, intimidation and arbitrary detention by armed groups. Alcohol and drugs issues, labour exploitation and gender-based violence are the main concerns expressed by respondents towards young people aged 14 to 30 in their household.

EDUCATION

Schooling rate

Durable Solutions

Adequate Standard of Living 2.1.11: Schooling rate

78.8% of IDPs, 84.3% of returnees and 74.3% of stayees aged 6 to 11 are enrolled in education.

The schooling rate is low among the population surveyed, with just above four in five (81.0%) children of mandatory schooling age (6–11 years) in education. A total of 17.2 per cent of children aged 3 to 5 are in education, and 71.0 per cent of children aged 12 to 18 are in education. The schooling rate for stayees is below average, with 74.3 per cent of stayees aged 6 to 11 in education, compared to 84.3 per cent of returnees and 78.8 per cent of IDPs. Children in returnee households are more likely to be in education past the mandatory age of 11 years (74.5%) compared to children from IDP households (66.5%) and stayee households (66.4%).

There are limited differences between sexes in the proportion of children in education: 78.7 per cent of boys aged 6 to 11 and 82.9 per cent of girls of the same age are in education; 70.5 per cent of boys and 71.3 per cent of girls are in education at ages 12 to 18. The sample group is uncorrelated with the education rate of children aged 6 to 11 and 12 to 18. However, there is a notable difference before the age of 6 years: 14.6 per cent of ILA eligibles, 17.1 per cent of network members and 23.3 per cent of community members' children are in education before the age of 6.

Figure 25. Proportion of children in education by age group and displacement status

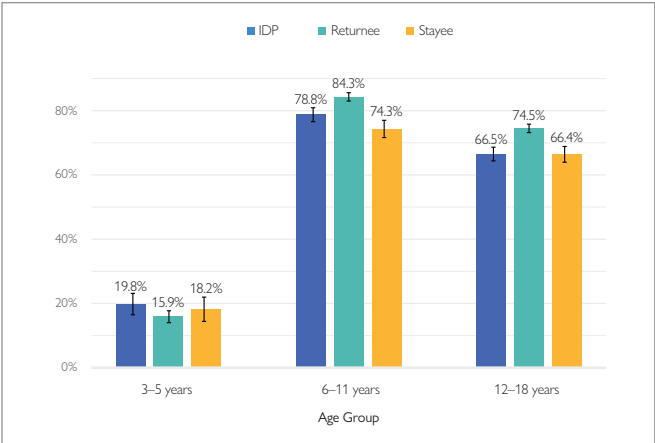
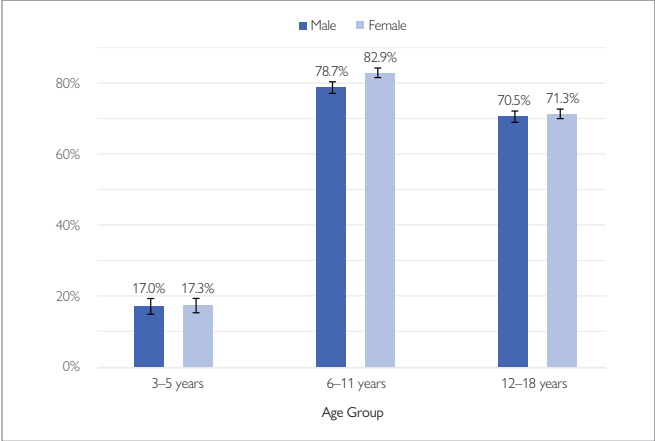


Figure 26. Proportion of children in education by age group and sex



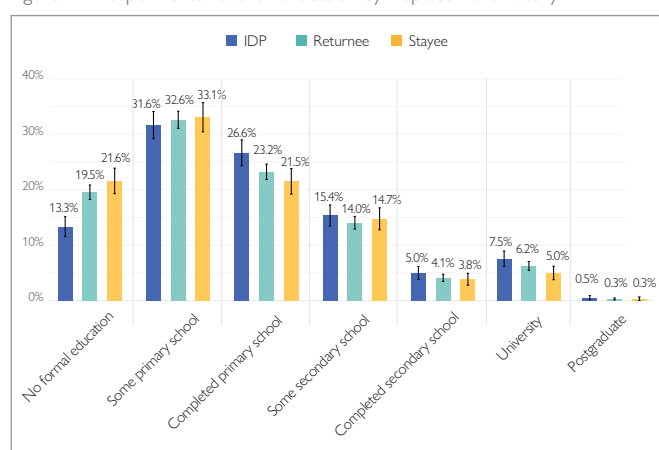
Note: n=15,362. Respondents were asked the number of members of their household and the sex and age of each of them. For each household member, respondents were then asked: "What is the primary activity of [...]?". Respondents were only able to report one activity per household member. These figures show household members who were reported as having "Education" as their primary activity. Household members' displacement history is determined based on the respondent's displacement history.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Respondents' education level

Durable Solutions Demographics A.1.9: Highest level of education for over 18s			
	IDP	Returnee	Stayee
% no formal education / some primary	45.0	52.1	54.6
% completed primary / some secondary	42.0	37.3	36.2
% completed secondary	5.0	4.1	3.8
% university/postgraduate	8.0	6.5	5.3
% total	100	100	100

Figure 27. Respondents' level of education by displacement history



Note: n=6,153. Only six participants did not provide an answer to this question and were filtered out. Respondents were asked for their "Highest level of education". Response options were: No formal education; Some primary school; Completed primary school; Some secondary school; Completed secondary school (including vocational certificate); University; Postgraduate.

DOCUMENTATION

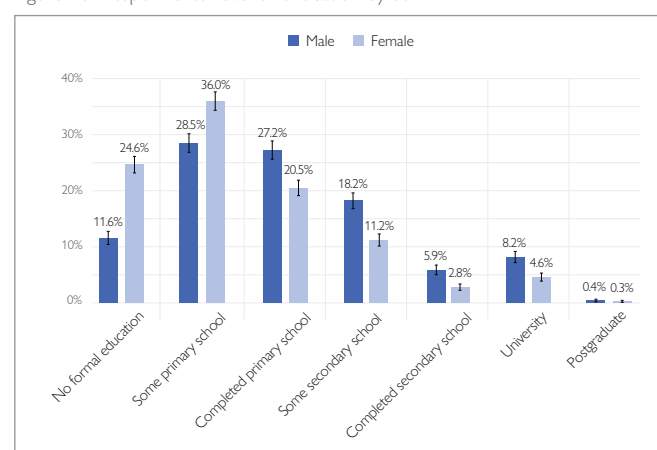
Durable Solutions Access to documentation 5.1.1: Population in possession of documentation
Households where all adults have access to a unified ID card, or a national ID card and a nationality certificate: 96.8% of IDPs, 97.4% of returnees and 95.8% of stayees.

Almost all adult household members have access to documentation. In 97.0 per cent of respondents' households, every adult has either a unified ID card or a national ID card and a nationality certificate, which are valid and stored in a secure place they can access. By displacement history, 96.8 per cent of IDPs, 97.4 per cent of returnees and 95.8 per cent of stayees' households have full access to documentation for all adult household members. There are no notable changes across sample groups. A total of 96.8 per cent of ILA eligibles, 96.9 per cent of their network members and 97.4 per cent of community members' households have full access to documentation for all adult household members.

A total of 18.5 per cent of all respondents do not have any formal education and 56.1 per cent have some education up to the primary level. Among them, 32.5 per cent started primary school and 23.6 per cent completed their primary school education. In addition, 14.5 per cent of respondents have some secondary education, 4.2 per cent completed secondary school, 6.3 per cent received a university degree and less than 0.5 per cent have a postgraduate degree.

Adult stayees are more likely to have no formal education (21.6%) compared to IDPs (13.3%) and returnees (19.5%) and less likely to have completed university or a postgraduate degree (5.3%) than IDPs (8.0%) and returnees (6.5%). Gender plays an important role in the level of education achieved by respondents. Women are twice as likely as men to have no formal education (24.6% and 11.6% respectively) and more likely to only partially complete primary school compared to men (36.0% and 28.7% respectively). A much higher proportion of men completed primary school, secondary school and received a university degree; 4.6 per cent of women and 8.2 per cent of men in the respondents have completed a university degree and below 0.5 per cent has a postgraduate degree.

Figure 28. Respondents' level of education by sex



SHELTER AND HOUSING TYPE

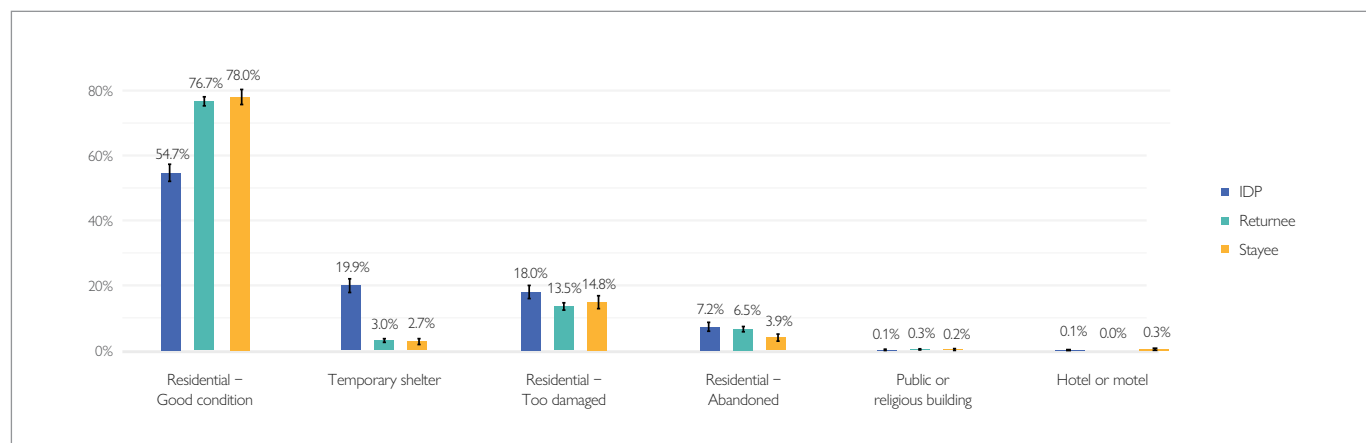
Durable Solutions Adequate standard of living 2.3.8: Residing in durable housing structures
54.7% of IDPs, 76.7% of returnees and 78.0% of stayees live in residential buildings in good condition.

Securing appropriate housing is a notable issue in these communities, particularly among IDPs. Only 72.0 per cent of respondents live in a residential building in good conditions. There is a clear variation by displacement history, as 54.7 per cent of IDPs, 76.7 per cent of returnees and 78.0 per cent of stayees live in a residential building in good condition. Returnees and stayees who are not in good residential housing mostly live in damaged residential buildings (around 14%) and abandoned residential buildings (around 5%). Three per cent of returnees and 2.7 per cent of stayees live in temporary shelters. For IDPs, the second most common housing type after good residential housing is

temporary shelter (19.9%), followed by damaged residential buildings (18.0%) and abandoned residential buildings (7.2%). Temporary shelters include makeshift shelter (with scavenged material such as zinc sheets, cardboards, etc.), tents, substandard shelter not for residential purposes and non-residential

structure (garage, farm building, shop, etc.), prefab, caravan and reinforced housing units. Less than 1 per cent of respondents live in public or religious buildings, and in hotels or motels.

Figure 29. Respondents' type of shelter by displacement history



Note: n=6,156. Three invalid responses were filtered out. This variable was observed by the enumerator when they visited the respondent. Original options were combined as follows: "Residential – Good condition" includes Apartment/house- good condition (ok for living inside). "Temporary shelter" includes (1) Makeshift shelter (with scavenged material such as zinc sheets, cardboards, etc.); (2) Tent; (3) Substandard shelter not for residential purposes/non-residential structure (garage, farm building, shop, etc.); and (4) Prefab/caravan/reinforced housing units. "Residential – Too damaged" includes Apartment/house- damaged/destroyed (not appropriate for living). "Residential – Abandoned" includes Unfinished or abandoned residential building. "Public or religious building" includes (1) Religious building; and (2) Public building (school, etc.). An "Other (specify)" option was available to enumerators; these were then manually recategorized into the existing categories.

RISK OF EVICTION

Durable Solutions

Adequate standard of living 2.3.6: Risk of eviction

53.2% of IDPs, 27.8% of returnees and 31.8% of stayees reported being at risk of eviction.

In addition to subpar types of housing, the risk of eviction is a significant concern within the communities. A total of 34.3 per cent of all respondents were at risk of eviction. This included 12.0 per cent who reported being at very high risk of eviction, 10.6 per cent at high risk and 11.7 per cent at low risk. This rate varies based on displacement history, with IDPs facing much higher risks of eviction than respondents with other displacement histories. Over half of IDP households (53.2%) and close to a third of returnee (27.8%) and stayee households (31.8%) are presently at risk of eviction. In addition, IDPs are the most affected by higher risks of eviction, as 38.7 per cent of them reported being at high or very high risk of eviction, compared to 17.5 per cent of returnees and 19.1 per cent of stayees.

Figure 30. Households' risk of eviction by displacement history

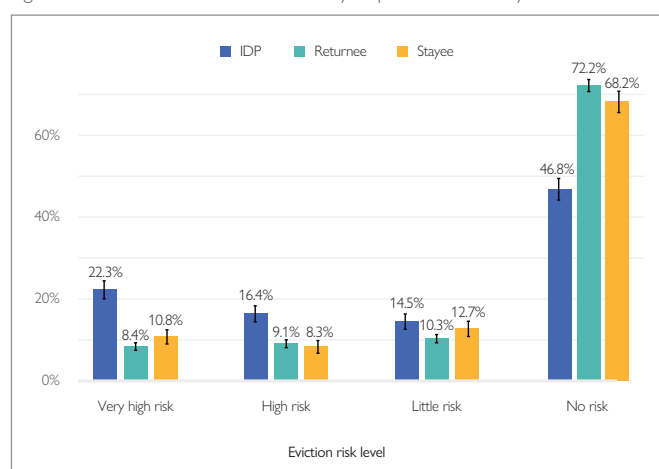
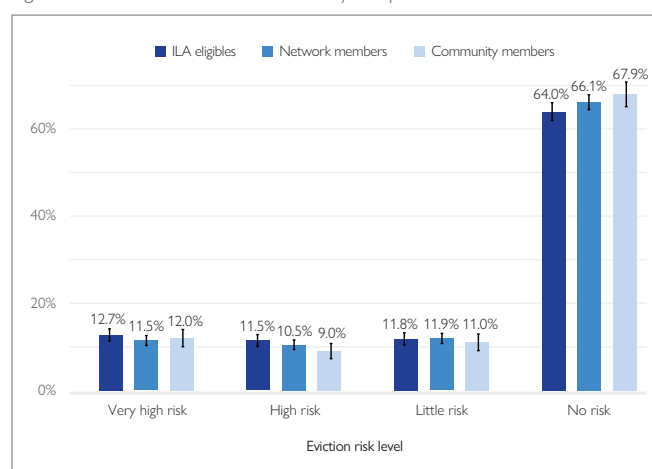


Figure 31. Households' risk of eviction by sample



Note: n=6,149. 10 respondents did not answer this question and were filtered out. Respondents were asked "Is your household presently at risk of eviction?". Response options were: Very high risk; High risk; Little risk; No risk.

There is less variation by sample type than by displacement history, but ILA eligibles are more likely to report being at risk of eviction than other respondents. A total of 36.0 per cent of ILA eligibles, 33.9 per cent of their network members and 32.1 per cent of community members were facing some risk of eviction.

HOUSING TENURE

House ownership is common among respondents, with 48.3 per cent of respondents owning the shelter they live in. This is much below the national

average, as 77.6 per cent of Iraqi households own the house they live in (World Bank et al., 2024). The second and third most common occupation arrangements are being hosted for free (22.4%) and renting (21.5%); 7.9 per cent of respondents did not have any occupancy agreement.

Respondents living in rural areas are more likely to report owning their house (56.5% compared to 43.4% in urban settings), while urban residents are much more likely to rent their house (28.0% compared to 10.4% of those in rural areas). There are no notable changes in proportions missing any type of occupancy arrangement between urban and rural residents.

Figure 32. Household occupation arrangement

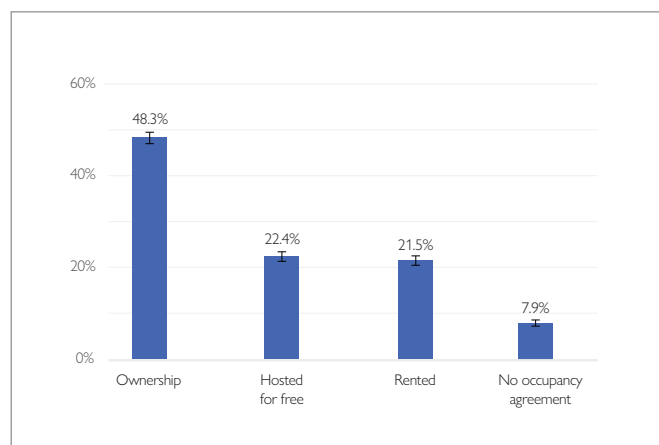
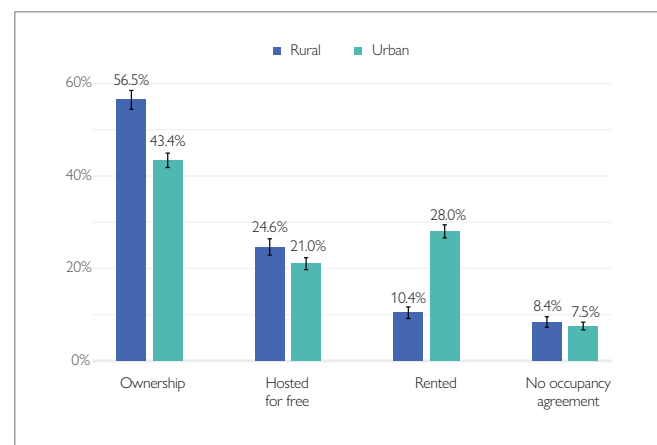


Figure 33. Household occupation arrangement by urban or rural status



Note: n=6,155. Four respondents did not reply and were filtered out. Respondents were asked: "What is the occupancy arrangement for your current shelter?". Options were: "Ownership", "Rented", "Hosted for free", "No occupancy agreement / squatting", "Other (specify)". Responses of "Other (specify)" were then manually re-categorized. Rural and urban settings were determined based on IOM's list of rural and urban ILA communities.

Just over half of returnees (56.5%) and stayees (51.5%) own the house they live in. Only one in four IDPs (24.1%) owns the house they live in; for these IDPs, having bought a house to live in while being displaced may reflect an intention to settle in the area they live in. However, it is more common for IDPs to rent their house or to be hosted for free than to live in a house they own. Overall, 33.8 per cent of IDPs, 16.0 per cent of returnees and 23.4 per cent of stayees are renting. In addition, 28.4 per cent of IDPs, 22.1 per cent of returnees, and 16.3 per cent of stayees were hosted for free, making it one

of the most common housing arrangements. In addition, 13.7 per cent of IDP households do not have any occupancy agreement, which is much higher than the figure for returnees (5.3%) and stayees (8.8%).

ILA eligibles are less likely that their network members and community members to own the house they live in and more likely to be renting, although the differences are limited: 45.6 per cent of ILA eligibles, 48.5 per cent of network members and 53.0 per cent of community members owned the house they live in, while around a quarter was renting and a quarter was being hosted for free.

Figure 34. Household occupation arrangement by displacement history

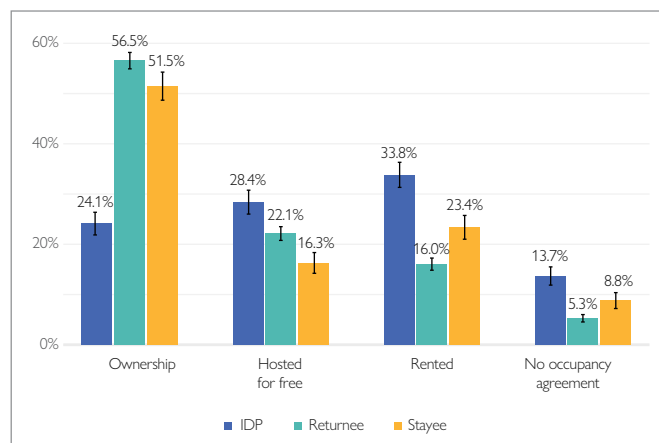
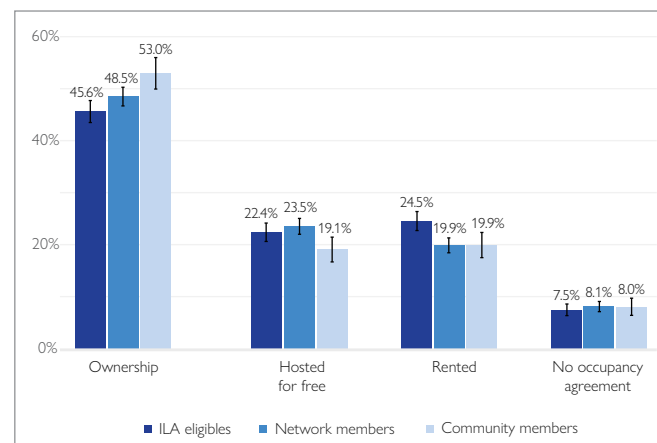


Figure 35. Household occupation arrangement by sample



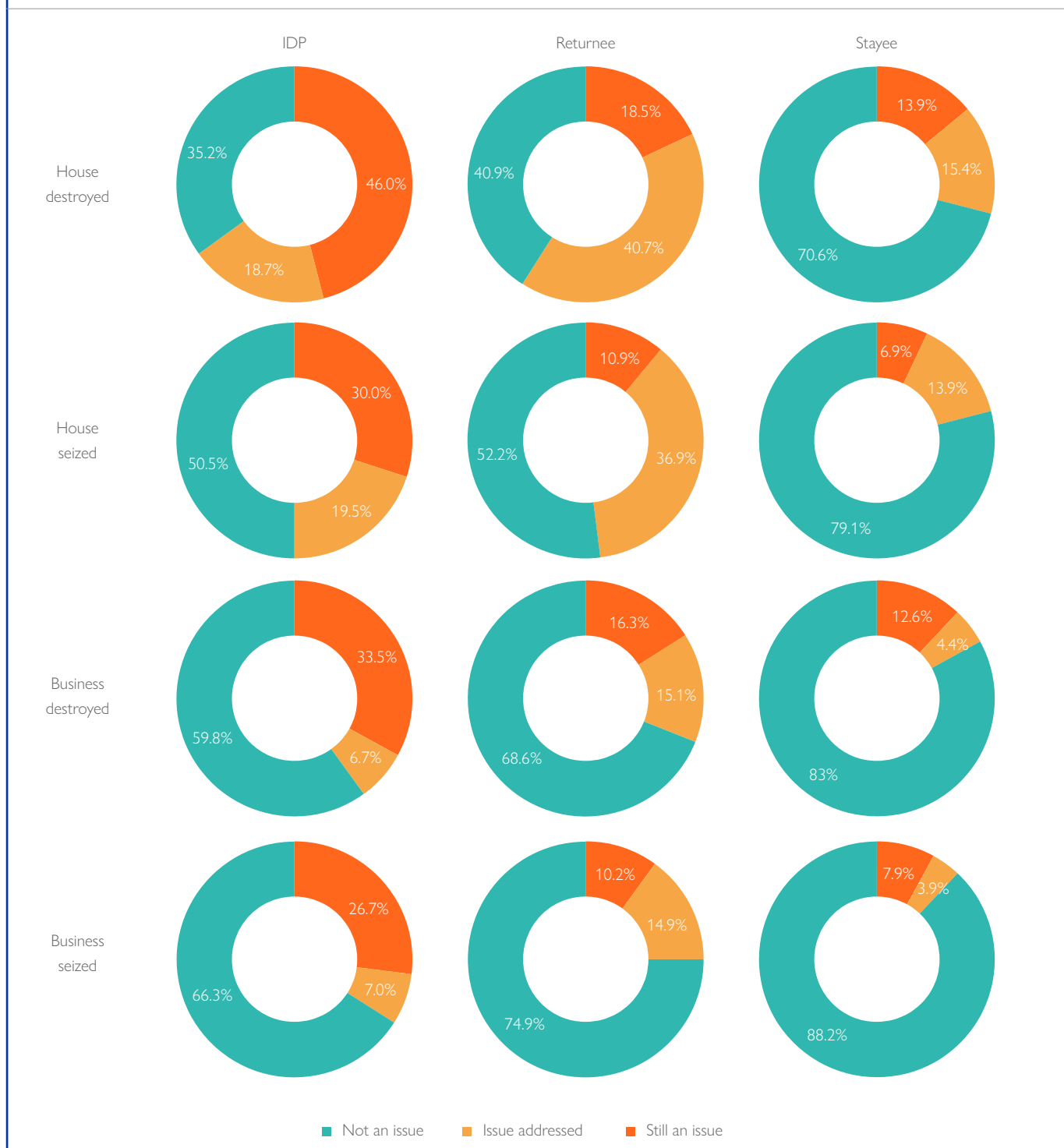
Note: n=6,155. Four respondents did not reply and were filtered out. Respondents were asked: "What is the occupancy arrangement for your current shelter?". Options were: "Ownership", "Rented", "Hosted for free", "No occupancy agreement / squatting", "Other (specify)". Responses of "Other (specify)" were then manually re-categorized.

HOUSING AND BUSINESS BUILDINGS DESTROYED OR SEIZED

Durable Solutions

Mechanisms to restore HLP 4.2.4

Figure 36. Respondents' homes and business buildings damaged/destroyed or occupied/seized since 2014 as a result of the conflict, by displacement history



Note: House destroyed: n=6,098. Respondents who did not know or did not reply and were filtered out. Respondents were asked: "Was your primary residence (the home where you live most of the time) destroyed or significantly damaged since 2014?". Response options were: "Yes, but I have now rebuilt or repossessed it", "Yes, it still is", "No". House seized: n=6,123. Respondents who did not know or did not reply and were filtered out. Respondents were asked: "Was your primary residence (the home where you live most of the time) occupied or seized at any point since 2014?". Response options were: "Yes, but I have now recovered it", "Yes, it still is", "No". Business destroyed: n=4,454. Respondents who did not know or did not reply and were filtered out. Respondents who replied that they "did not have a business before the conflict" were filtered out. All respondents were asked: "Was your shop, farm or other building hosting business activity destroyed or significantly damaged since 2014?". Response options were: "Yes, but I have now rebuilt it", "Yes, it still is", "No", "Did not have a business before the conflict". Business seized: n=4,379. Respondents who did not know or did not reply and were filtered out. Respondents who replied that they "did not have a business before the conflict" were filtered out. All respondents were asked: "Was your shop, farm or other building hosting business activity occupied or seized at any point since 2014?". Response options were: "Yes, but I have now recovered it", "Yes, it still is", "No", "Did not have a business before the conflict".

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Housing destroyed and seized

Housing was highly disrupted by the conflict, particularly for IDPs and returnees. At the time of data collection, 46.0 per cent of IDPs, 18.5 per cent of returnees and 13.9 per cent of stayees still had their home destroyed. Over two thirds of IDPs (64.7%) had their primary residence destroyed since 2014, and only a quarter of them (18.7%) have been able to rebuild their house. Returnees were also heavily impacted with 59.2 per cent having their house destroyed, but 40.7 per cent have since rebuilt it. Stayees were less affected but one in four faced significant damage or the destruction of their house, and only half of them were able to rebuild it. In addition, half of IDPs and returnees, and one in five stayees experienced their primary residence being seized or occupied since 2014.

Business destroyed or seized

Business owners were heavily impacted by the conflict, with frequent cases of business buildings being seized and/or severely damaged and destroyed during the conflict. Some owners managed to recover or rebuild their building, while others remain heavily impacted. Among the respondents who reported owning a business in 2014, many were strongly affected by HLP issues at the time of the study. Among IDP business owners, over 40.2 per cent faced significant damage to their business building, with only 6.7 per cent who have been able to rebuild or repair it. In addition, 33.7 per cent of IDPs experienced the building getting seized, only 7.0 per cent have recovered it. Returnees were also significantly affected, but a higher proportion of returnees has been able to rebuild or recover their business building; 31.4 per cent of returnees faced

business destruction, and half of them have rebuilt it. Moreover, among the 25.1 per cent of returnees who faced their business getting seized, 14.9 per cent have now recovered it. Among stayees, 17.0 per cent experienced business damaged or destroyed while 4.4 per cent rebuilt it; 11.8 per cent experienced business seizure, including 3.9 per cent who were able to recover it.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Durable Solutions

Safety, security, and freedom of movement 1.1.4:

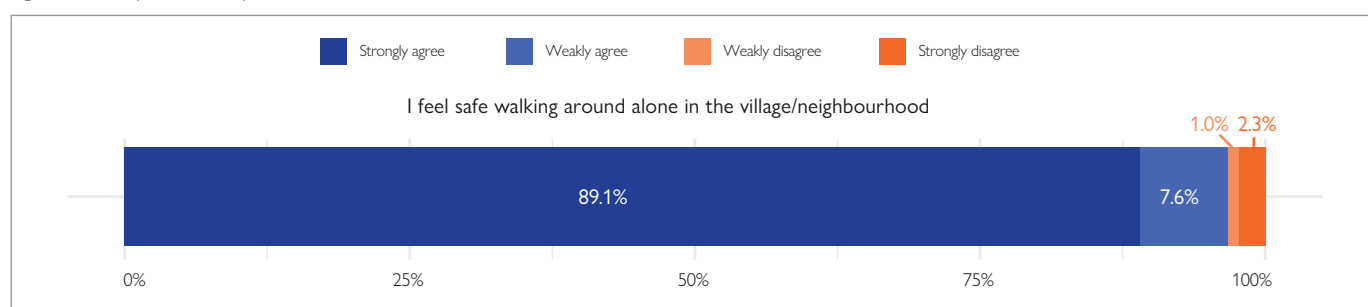
Feel safe walking alone

94.7% of IDPs, 97.4% of returnees and 97.0% of stayees feel safe walking alone.

Safety

Respondents reported feeling some concern about authorities and theft during their daily activities, but few were concerned about walking alone in their village or neighbourhood. Most respondents (96.8%) felt safe walking alone in their village or neighbourhood. This result is consistently high across displacement histories and regardless of sex, with 97.6 per cent of men and 95.9 per cent of women reporting feeling safe walking alone locally.

Figure 37. Safety and security



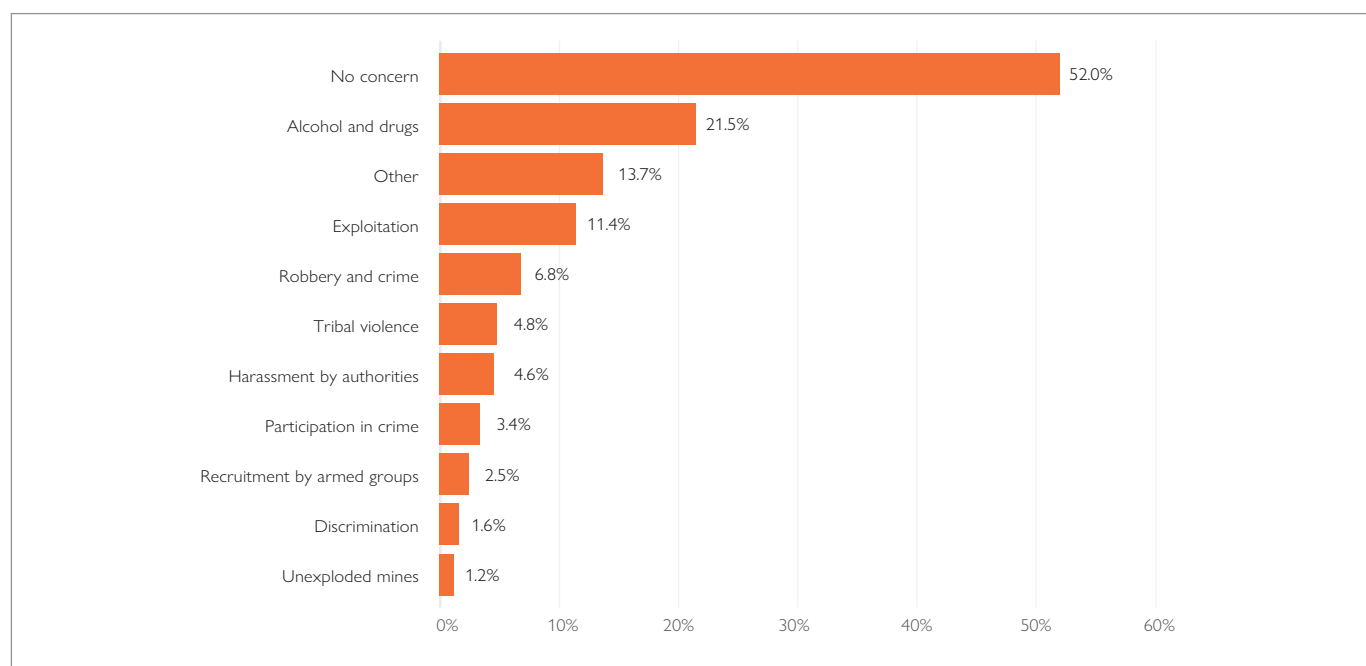
Note: n=6,159.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

However, 13.2 per cent of respondents expressed moderate to severe concern about intimidation, harassment and arbitrary detention by armed actors (including the police, army, militias, and non-State armed groups) during their daily activities. This concern is higher among returnees at 15.5 per cent compared to 10.8 per cent for IDPs and 9.5 per cent for stayees. Concerns about intimidation, harassment and arbitrary detention by armed actors are more frequent among female respondents: 15.8 per cent of women report being at least moderately concerned, compared with 10.3 per cent of men.

A similar share of respondents, 15.6 per cent, expressed moderate to severe concern about theft, robbery and extortion during their daily activities, including 14.6 per cent of IDPs, 17.7 per cent of returnees and 10.8 per cent of stayees. Looking at actual experiences of crime, 2.3 per cent of respondents report that at least one member of their households has been forced to pay or give up some money against their will in the previous month: 2.3 per cent of IDPs, 2.7 per cent of returnees and 1.4 per cent of stayees. This includes money paid in order to access essential public services (that is, corruption) and money stolen or taken by force.

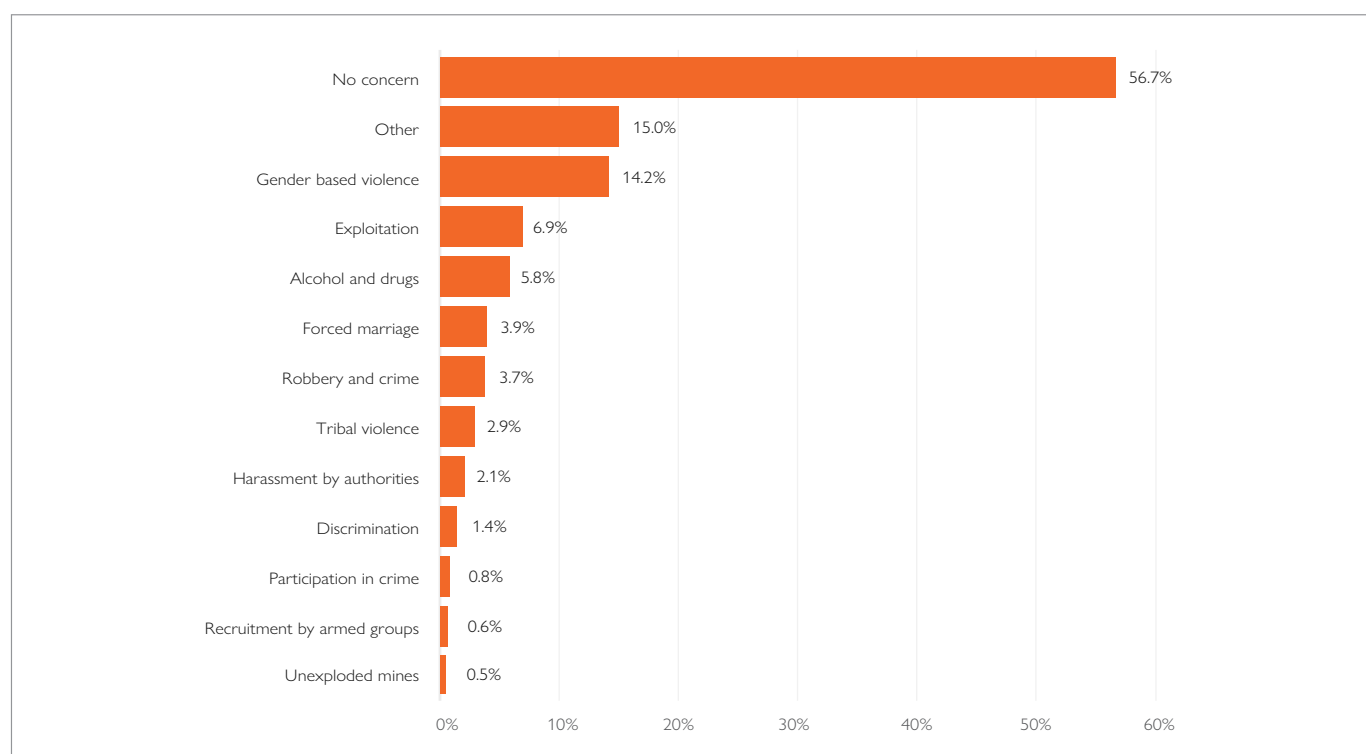
Figure 38. Safety concerns regarding young men in their household



Note: n=4,147. Respondents were asked: "Please think about men aged 14 to 30 in your household. What are your main concerns for their safety?". Enumerators were asked not to list any options. Respondents' answers were then categorized. There was no limit to the number of concerns a respondent could report. Respondents who chose not to reply are excluded from the analysis.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Figure 39. Safety concerns regarding young women in their household



Note: n=4,443. Respondents were asked: "Please think about women aged 14 to 30 in your household. What are your main concerns for their safety?". Enumerators were asked not to list any options. Respondents' answers were then categorized. There was no limit to the number of concerns a respondent could report. Respondents who chose not to reply are excluded from the analysis.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Over half of the respondents to this question did not report having any concerns for the young men (52.0%) and young women (56.7%) in their households. Alcohol and drugs, exploitation and gender-based violence are the main concerns expressed by respondents towards young people aged 14 to 30 in

their household. The main concerns towards young men are alcohol and drugs (21.5% of respondents), exploitation (11.4%) and robbery and crime (6.8%). For young women in the households, the main concerns are gender-based violence (14.2% of respondents), exploitation (6.9%) and alcohol and drugs (5.8%).¹⁸

¹⁸ Around 14 per cent of respondents reported other types of concern for young people that did not match these categories. Frequently, they reported a broad feeling of insecurity and lack of safety without specifying the source of this threat.

VIII. SOCIAL COHESION

KEY POINTS

- Most respondents report positive outlooks on trust, civic engagement and inclusive attitudes. Interdependence findings are mixed, with four in five respondents believe that others doing well would benefit them, but less than two thirds (62.0%) feeling able to receive community support in difficult times.
- There are relatively high levels of perceived competition in the form of economic pressure within the communities, with around half of the respondents feeling pressure when seeking access to humanitarian resources, employment and business development and housing.
- Economic grievances are commonly reported: 82.3% of respondents feel like they do not have the same opportunities as most in Iraq and 49.7% feel pressured to migrate to find economic opportunities. Grievances relating to fair treatment within the community tend to be lower. Nine respondents out of 10 agree that they are treated fairly in their community and do not feel discriminated against.
- There is some degree of in-group bias towards community members who have the same displacement history as the respondents, with slightly higher trust. For example, returnees are around 10% more likely to find other returnees trustworthy, compared to finding IDPs and stayees trustworthy.
- Few respondents express exclusionary attitudes towards IDPs or returnees in their communities. However, IDP respondents were more likely to report feeling like outsiders (22.3% of IDPs) and less likely to feel able to receive community support (55.6% of IDPs) than other groups.
- Having worked in the past month or having a working household member is correlated with higher social cohesion across all dimensions apart from interdependence.
- Income, expenditure, and asset ownership have mixed associations with social cohesion. Higher income is correlated with less competition and higher contact but also correlated with lower interdependence and lower civic engagement.
- HLP issues appear significant for social cohesion, as facing issue of having one's home still destroyed is linked to lower social cohesion in five out of seven indicators.

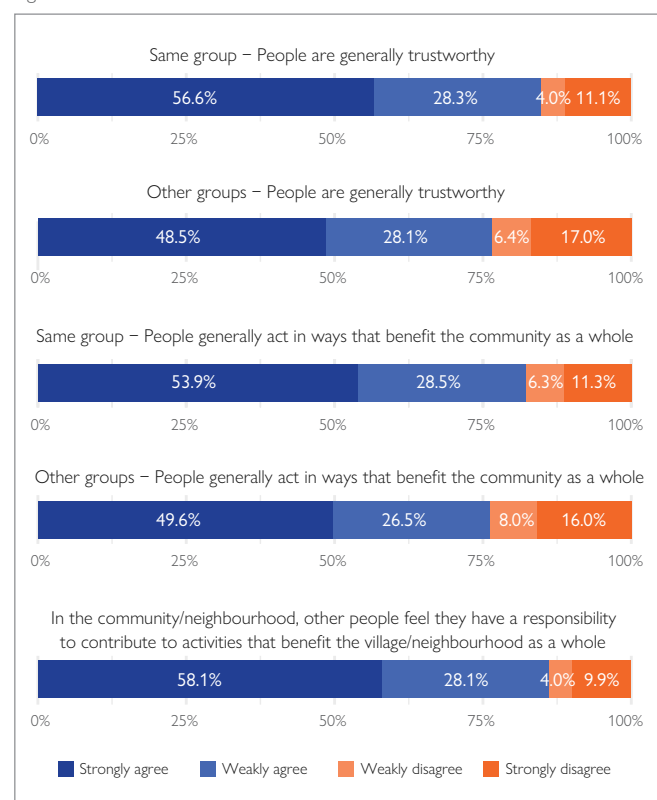
This section provides an analysis of social cohesion across seven dimensions: interpersonal trust, civic engagement, inclusive attitudes, interdependence, contact, grievances and competition. First, descriptive findings are outlined for the whole population and disaggregated by displacement history and sex. Second, each subsection shows the correlation between respondents' background characteristics and social cohesion outcomes.

INTERPERSONAL TRUST

Descriptive analysis

Most respondents agree with statements evaluating trust in their communities. On average, over three in four respondents believe that others help locally, that people are generally trustworthy and that people generally act in ways that benefit the whole community. There is some degree of in-group bias, with respondents reporting higher levels of trust towards community members with the same displacement history as them. For example, 84.9 per cent of respondents consider that people with the same displacement history as theirs are generally trustworthy, while 76.6 per cent of respondents consider other community members to be generally trustworthy. This is also the case for respondents believing that people generally act in ways that benefit the whole community, with 82.4 per cent feeling positively towards their own displacement group, compared to 76.0 per cent towards other groups. There are limited differences in perceptions of trust between people belonging to different displacement groups, or between men and women.

Figure 40. Trust



Note: The figure contains shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated across rows. Reading: 56.6 per cent of respondents “strongly agree” that “people are generally trustworthy” when referring to others with a with similar displacement history to the respondent.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts and an additional sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Figure 41. Trust by displacement history

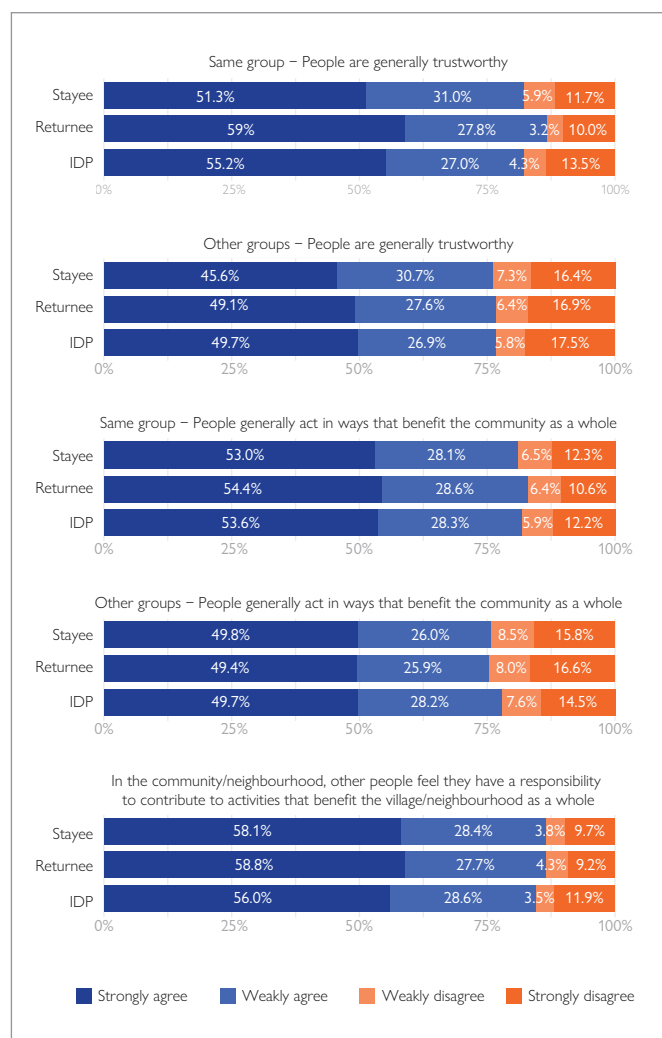
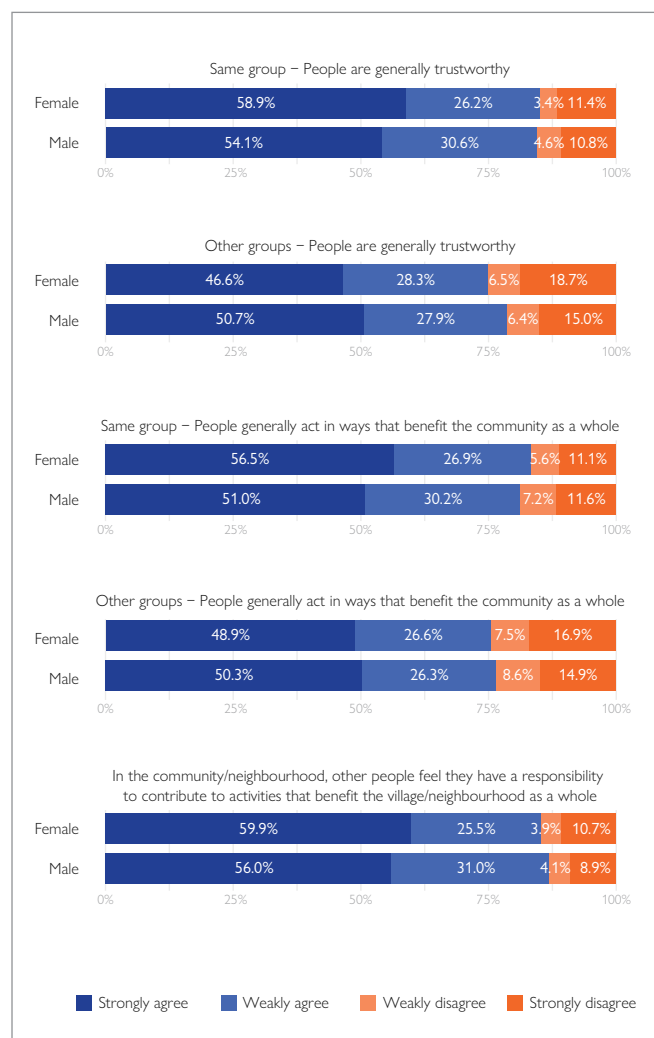


Figure 42. Trust by sex



Note: The figure contains shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles and displacement history subsamples indicated in rows. Reading: 54.4 per cent of returnee respondents “strongly agree” that “people generally act in ways that benefit the community as a whole” when referring to other returnees.

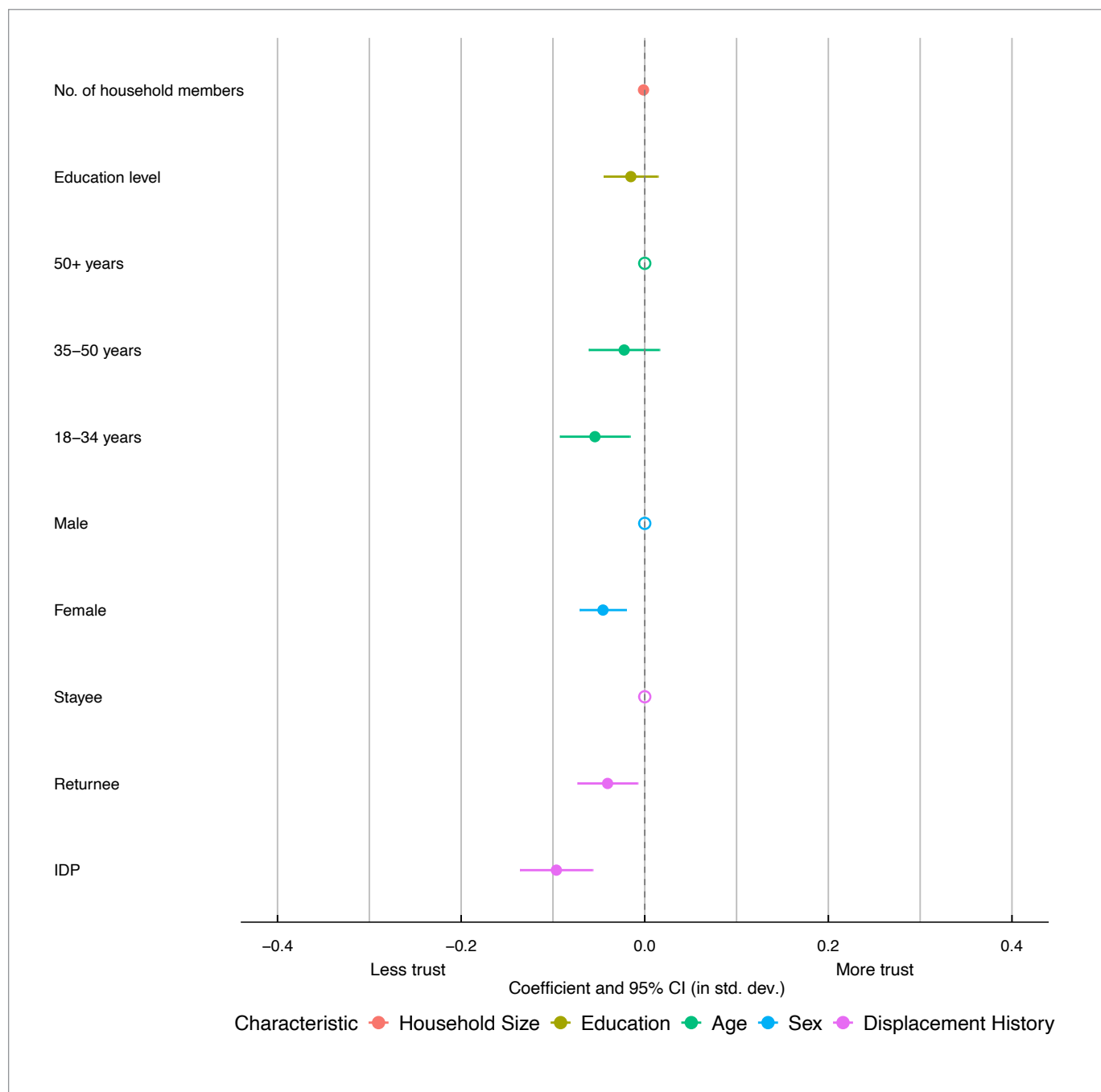
Source: Authors’ calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants’ neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Regression analysis

IDP status and returnee status are associated with lower levels of trust than stayee status when holding all other background characteristics constant. This is also the case for female respondents and younger respondents, who tend to report lower levels of trust. Respondents who worked report higher levels of trust than others. Patterns across income terciles suggest slightly lower trust

among the lowest-income households, and wealthier households who own more assets report higher levels of trust. Respondents whose house remains destroyed since the conflict report lower levels of trust, while those whose house was rebuilt indicate higher levels of trust.

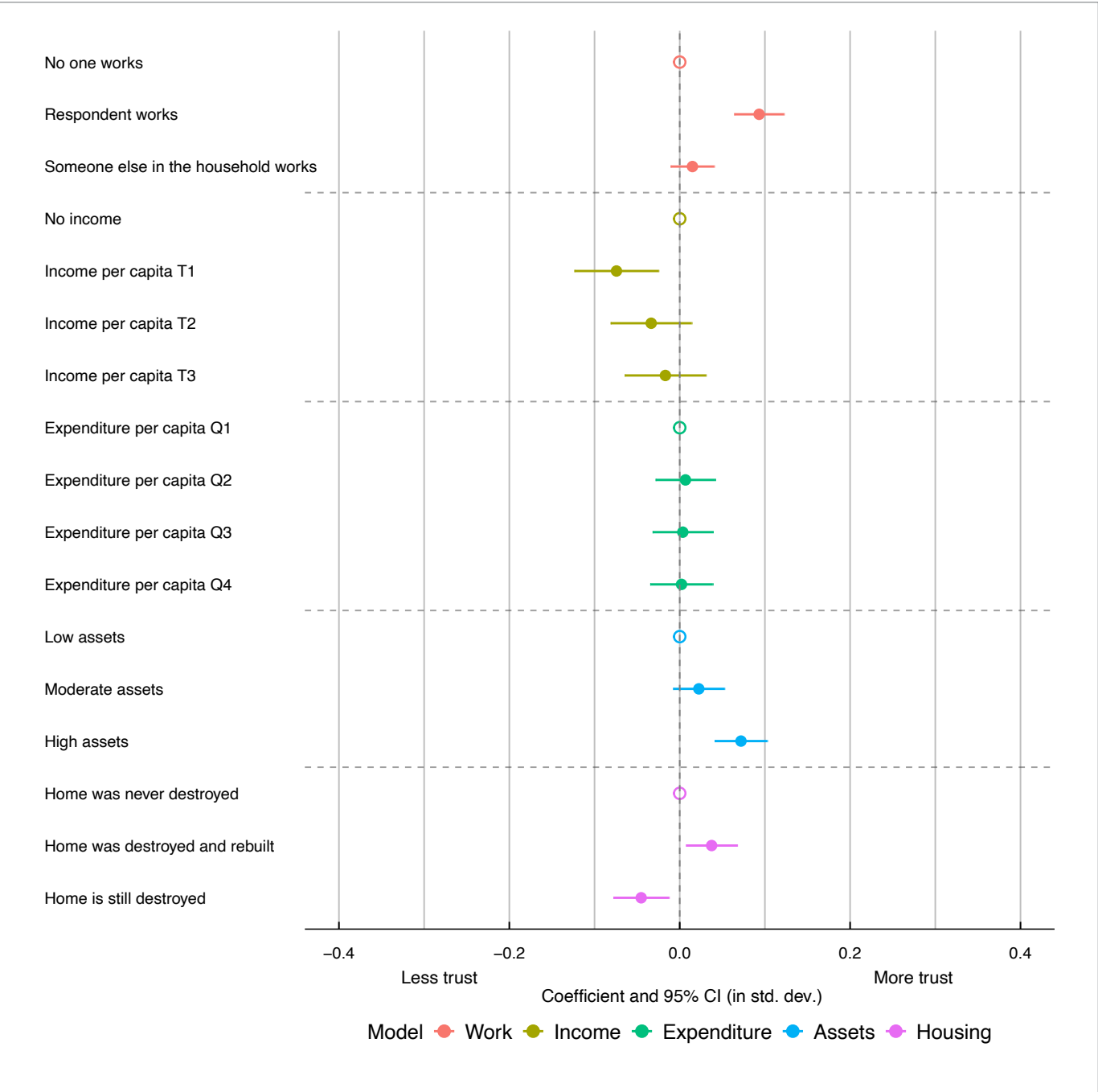
Figure 43. Correlation between demographic characteristics and trust



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in a single model including all four characteristics. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent demographic characteristic on the y-axis and social trust. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit higher levels of trust than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of social trust, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, "Interpreting the Regression Analysis" for more guidance on interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Figure 44. Correlation between background characteristics and trust



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in five separate models, separated by horizontal gray dashed lines. Models are defined in the table legend. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent characteristic on the y-axis and social trust. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. Each model controls for displacement history, age, sex and education level. "T" refers to being in a given tercile of the distribution of income per capita and "Q" refers to being in the specified quartile of the distribution of expenditure per capita. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit higher levels of trust than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of social trust, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, "Interpreting the Regression Analysis" for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Durable Solutions

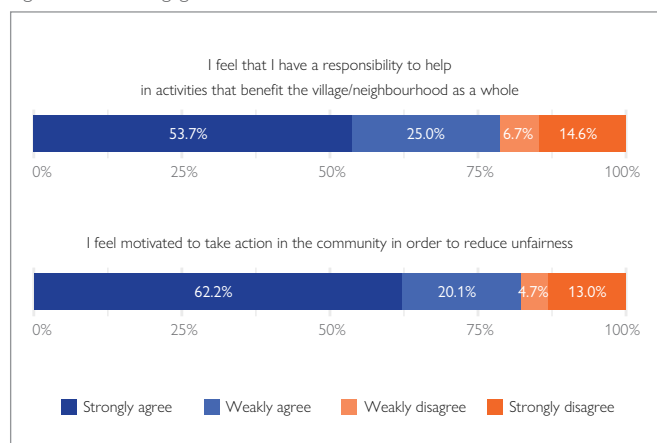
Participation in public affairs 7.1.5: Population who actively participated in community, social, or political organizations

31.7% of IDPs, 32.1% of returnees and 30.6% of stayees participate in collective action at least once a month.¹⁹

Descriptive statistics

Most respondents agree with the statement evaluating civic engagement. Four in five respondents report feeling motivated to act to reduce unfairness, while only one in eight (13%) strongly disagree with the statement. A similar proportion of respondents feel the responsibility to help in activities that benefit the community, although less intensely. IDPs are 8 per cent less likely to report a sense of civic engagement through feeling motivated to act to reduce unfairness, with a higher proportion strongly disagreeing with the statement (17.7%) compared to stayees (10.2%) and returnees (12.2%). Differences are less notable in the feeling of responsibility to act to benefit the community, but returnees report feeling less responsibility to do so. When considering gendered differences, men are around 5–10 per cent more likely to report feel motivated to take action to reduce unfairness or feeling a responsibility to take action to benefit the community than women. Strikingly, 20.1 per cent of female respondents strongly feel that they do not have a responsibility to act to benefit the community.

Figure 45. Civic engagement



Note: The figure contains shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Figure 46. Civic engagement by displacement history

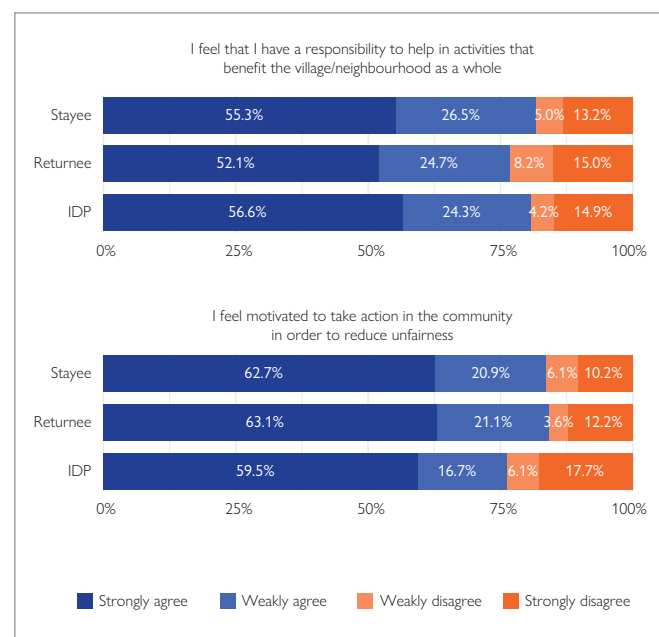
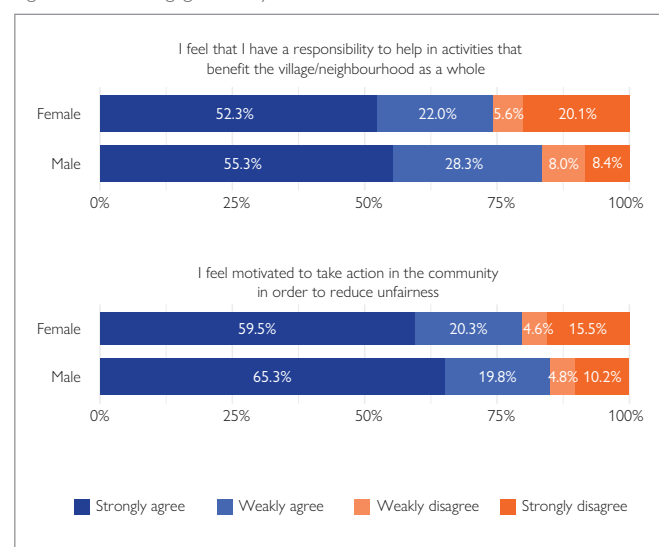


Figure 47. Civic engagement by sex



Note: The figures contain shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles, sex, and displacement history subsamples indicated in rows.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

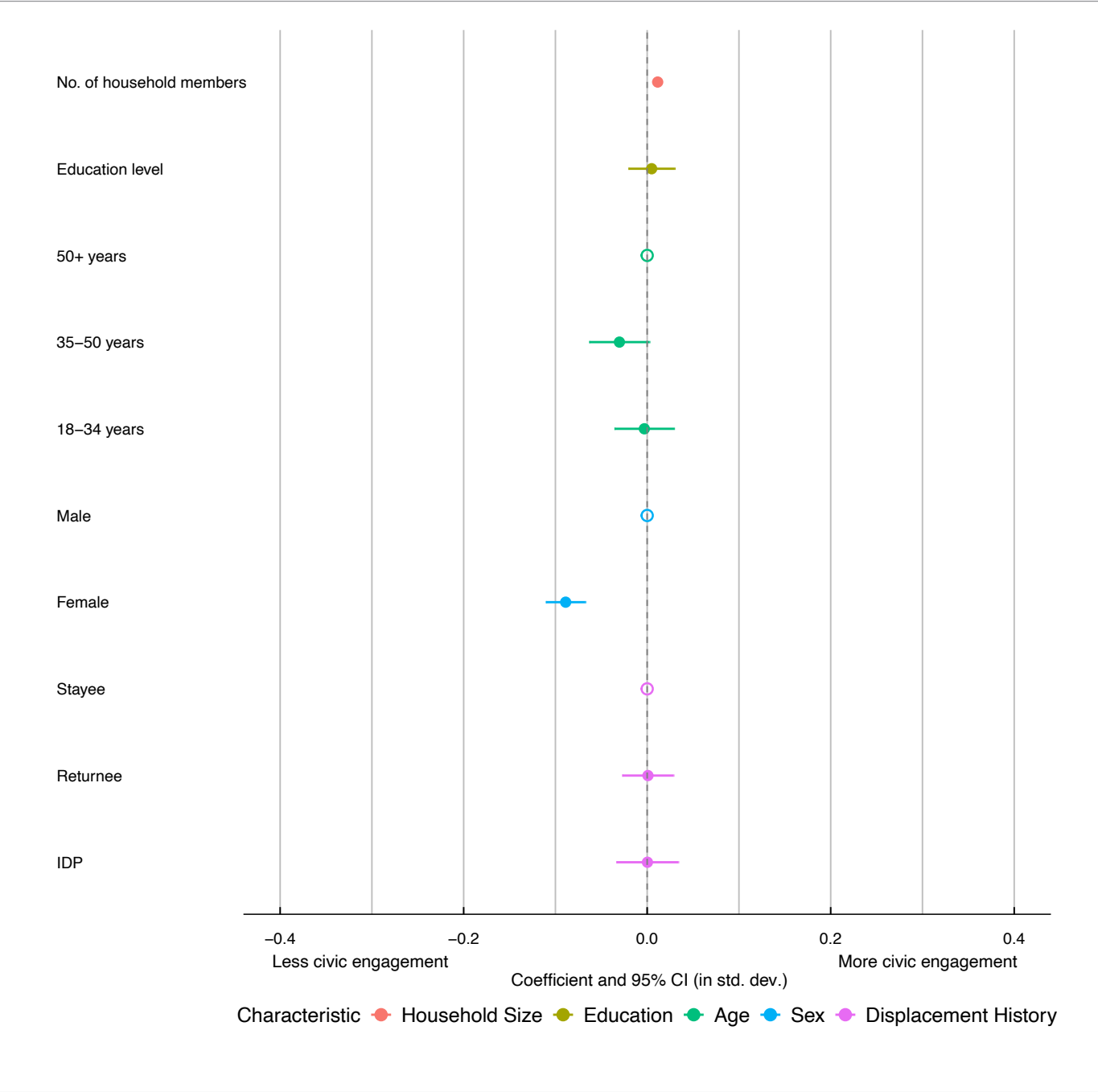
19 Respondents were asked how often they meet with other residents of [village/neighbourhood] to do something that benefits residents in [village/neighbourhood], such as improving public spaces or addressing community issues or needs.

Regression analysis

Being female is associated with notably lower levels of civic engagement reported. Displacement history, education, and age do not appear to be correlated with notable changes in levels of civic engagement. Individuals who work, and those with others in the household working both report higher

levels of civic engagement; similarly, those in the highest brackets of wealth and expenditure tend to have higher civic engagement. Low and middle income terciles appear to have lower civic engagement, as do individuals who owned a house that got destroyed by the conflict and was not rebuilt.

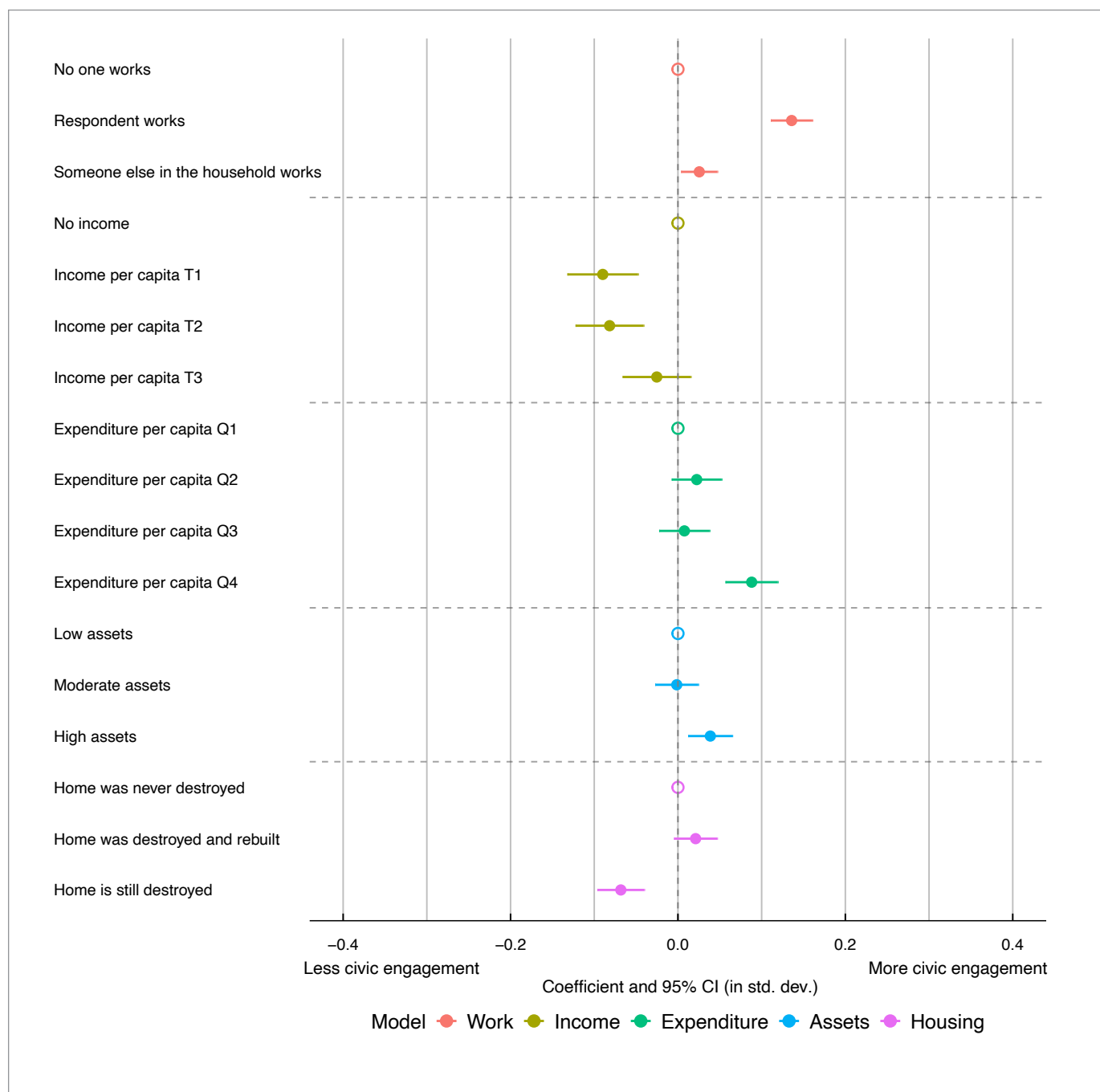
Figure 48. Correlation between demographic characteristics and civic engagement



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in a single model including all four characteristics. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent demographic characteristic on the y-axis and civic engagement. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit higher levels of civic engagement than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of civic engagement, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, "Interpreting the Regression Analysis" for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Figure 49. Correlation between background characteristics and civic engagement



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in five separate models, separated by horizontal gray dashed lines. Models are defined in the table legend. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent characteristic on the y-axis and civic engagement. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. Each model controls for displacement history, age, sex and education level. "T" refers to being in a given tercile of the distribution of income per capita and "Q" refers to being in the specified quartile of the distribution of expenditure per capita. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit higher levels of civic engagement than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of civic engagement, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, "Interpreting the Regression Analysis" for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

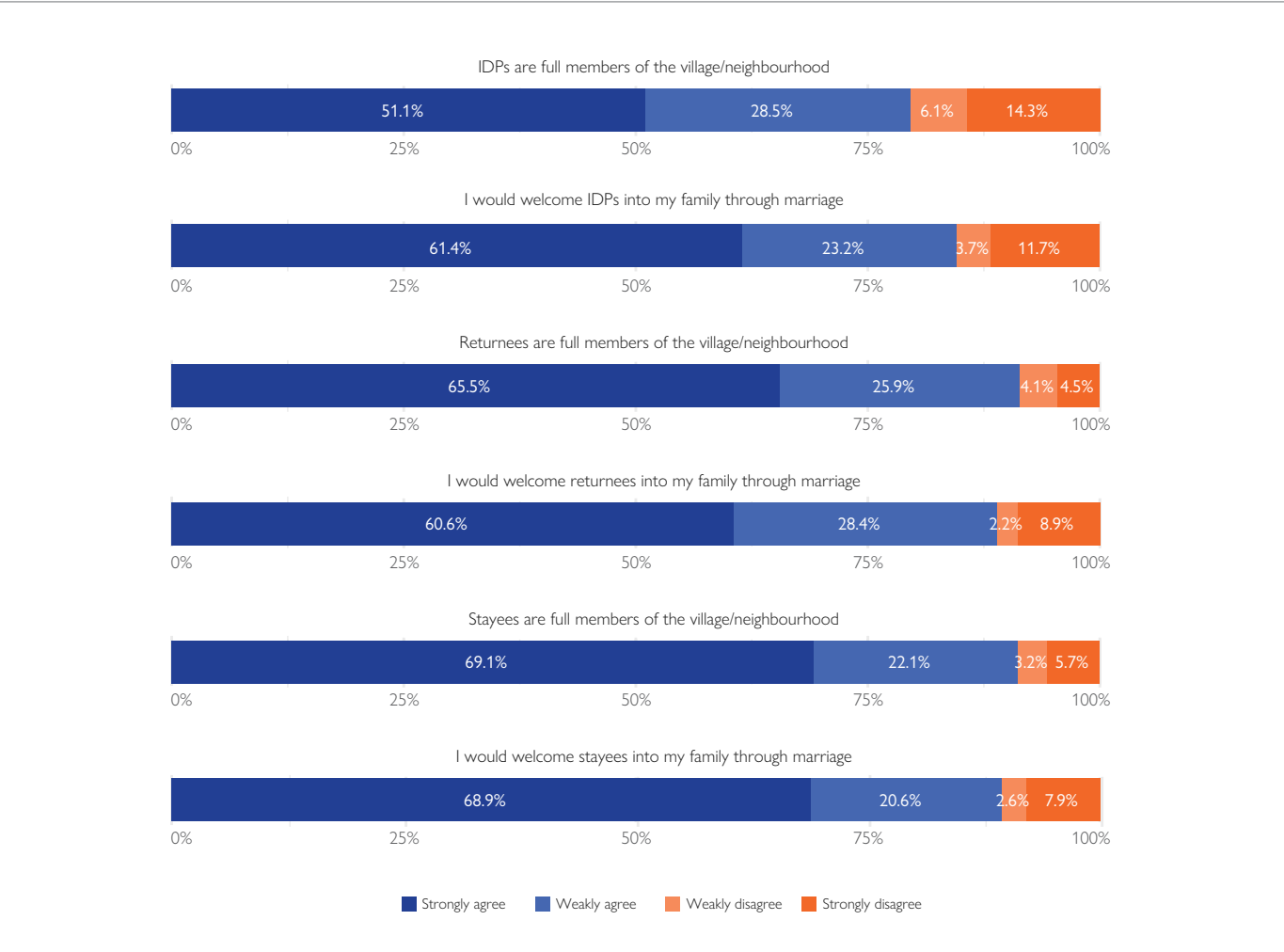
INCLUSIVE ATTITUDES

Descriptive analysis

People tend to report inclusive attitudes, with a large majority of respondents perceiving people as full community members regardless of their displacement history, and expressing a willingness to welcome them into their family. In general, attitudes towards IDPs are less inclusive, while attitudes towards

returnees and stayees are similar. This result highlights that more importance is placed on the community of origin of individuals than on whether they have been displaced during the conflict. For instance, only half of the respondents strongly agree that IDPs are full community members, compared to around two thirds for returnees and stayees.

Figure 50. Inclusive attitudes

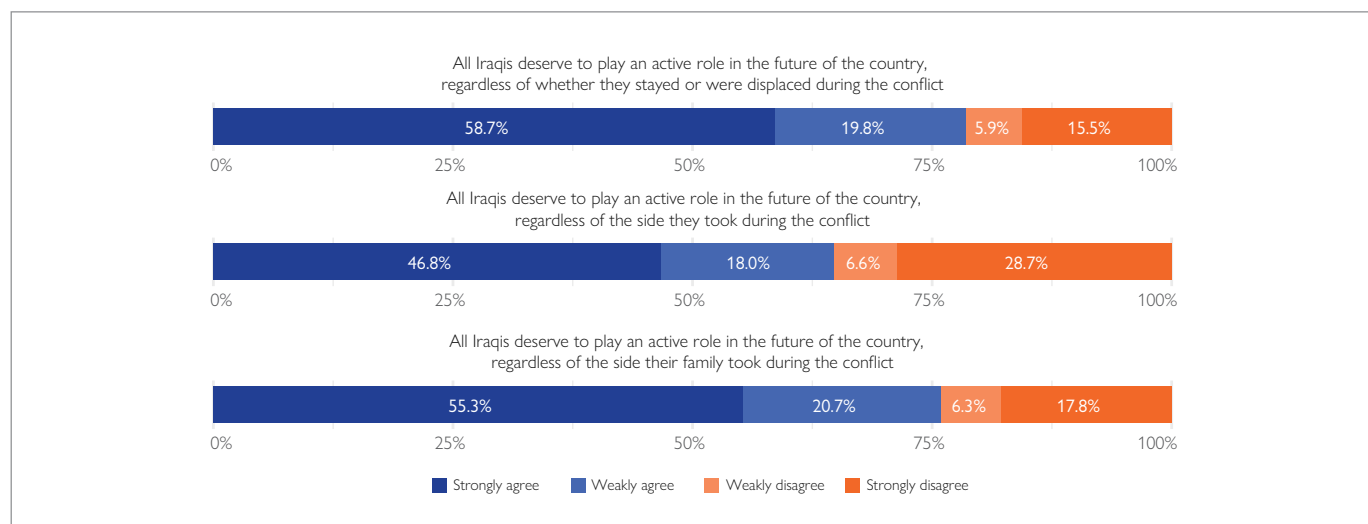


Note: The figure contains shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles.
Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Perceived affiliation with a party to the conflict has a larger impact on others' attitudes towards them than their displacement history. Less than half of respondents strongly agree that all Iraqis deserve to be involved in the future of Iraq regardless of the side they took during the conflict, and less than two thirds agree overall. The impact of the side one's family took during the conflict is less influential on how they are perceived.

Inclusive attitudes are associated with the displacement history and sex of the respondent. Respondents who have experienced displacement since 2014 report more inclusive attitudes than stayees. Men tend to place a higher importance on perceived affiliation: 62.1 per cent of men support other's involvement in the future of Iraq regardless of the side they took, compared to 67.0 per cent of women. However, men and women tend to respond similarly when the question focuses on the side a person's family took during the conflict and their displacement history.

Figure 51. Inclusive attitudes linked to perceived affiliation



Note: The figure contains shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Figure 52. Inclusive attitudes linked to perceived affiliation, by respondent's displacement history

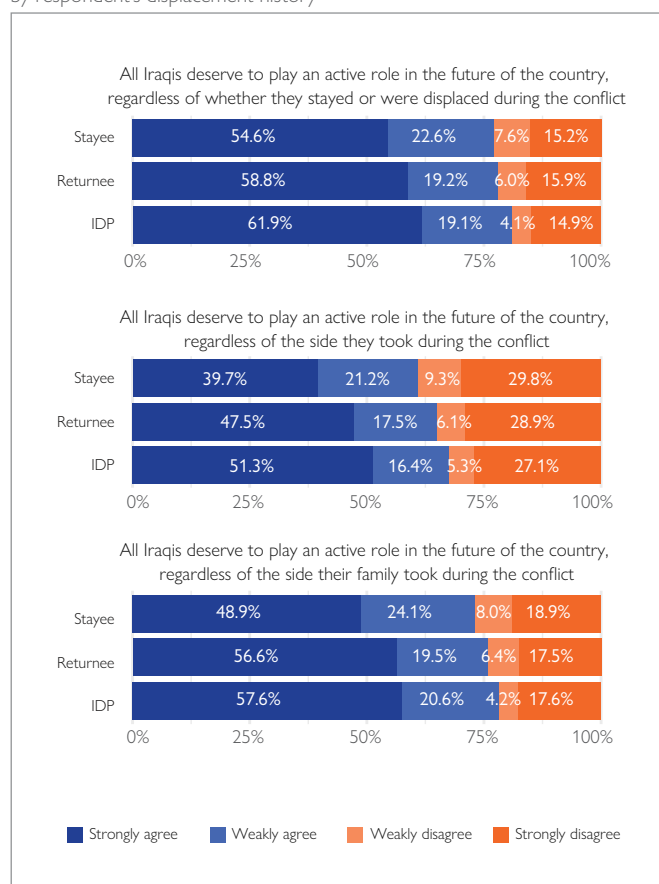
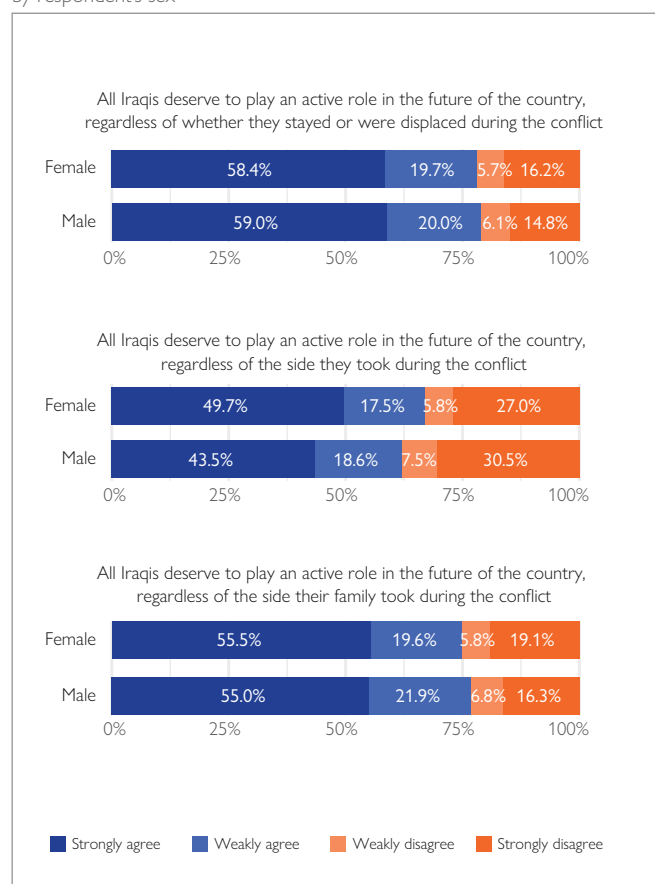


Figure 53. Inclusive attitudes linked to perceived affiliation, by respondent's sex



Note: The figures contain shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles and displacement history subsamples indicated in rows.

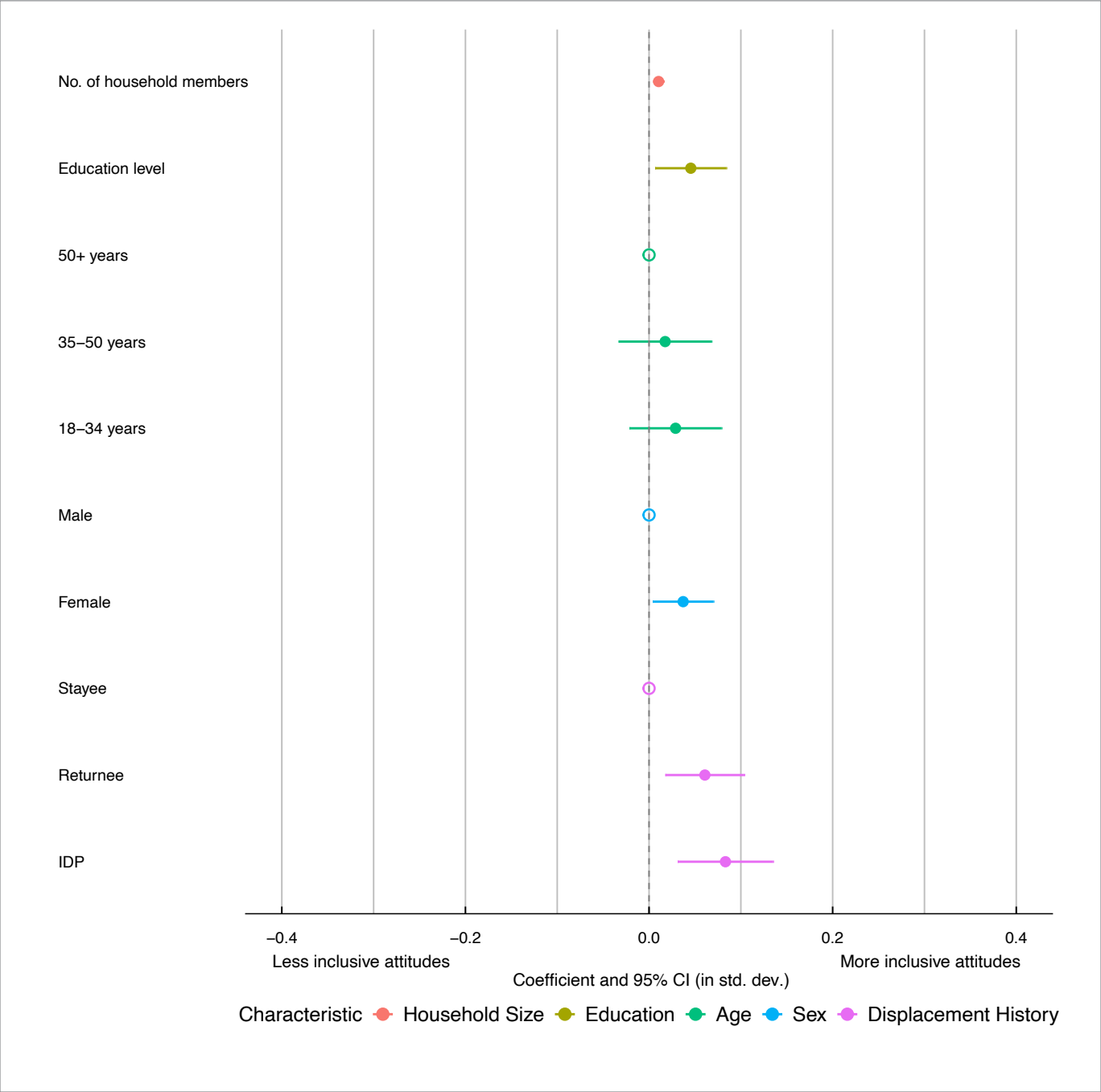
Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Regression analysis

Respondents with IDP and returnee status report more inclusive attitudes than stayees. This is most notable among IDPs, which is the background characteristic associated with the most inclusive attitudes. Being female and having a higher education level are associated with slightly higher inclusive attitudes. Wealthier

individuals and individuals having worked in the past month are also more likely to report inclusive attitudes. On the other hand, individuals whose house was destroyed during the conflict, and remains destroyed, tend to be less inclusive, while the correlation is positive if the house has been restored.

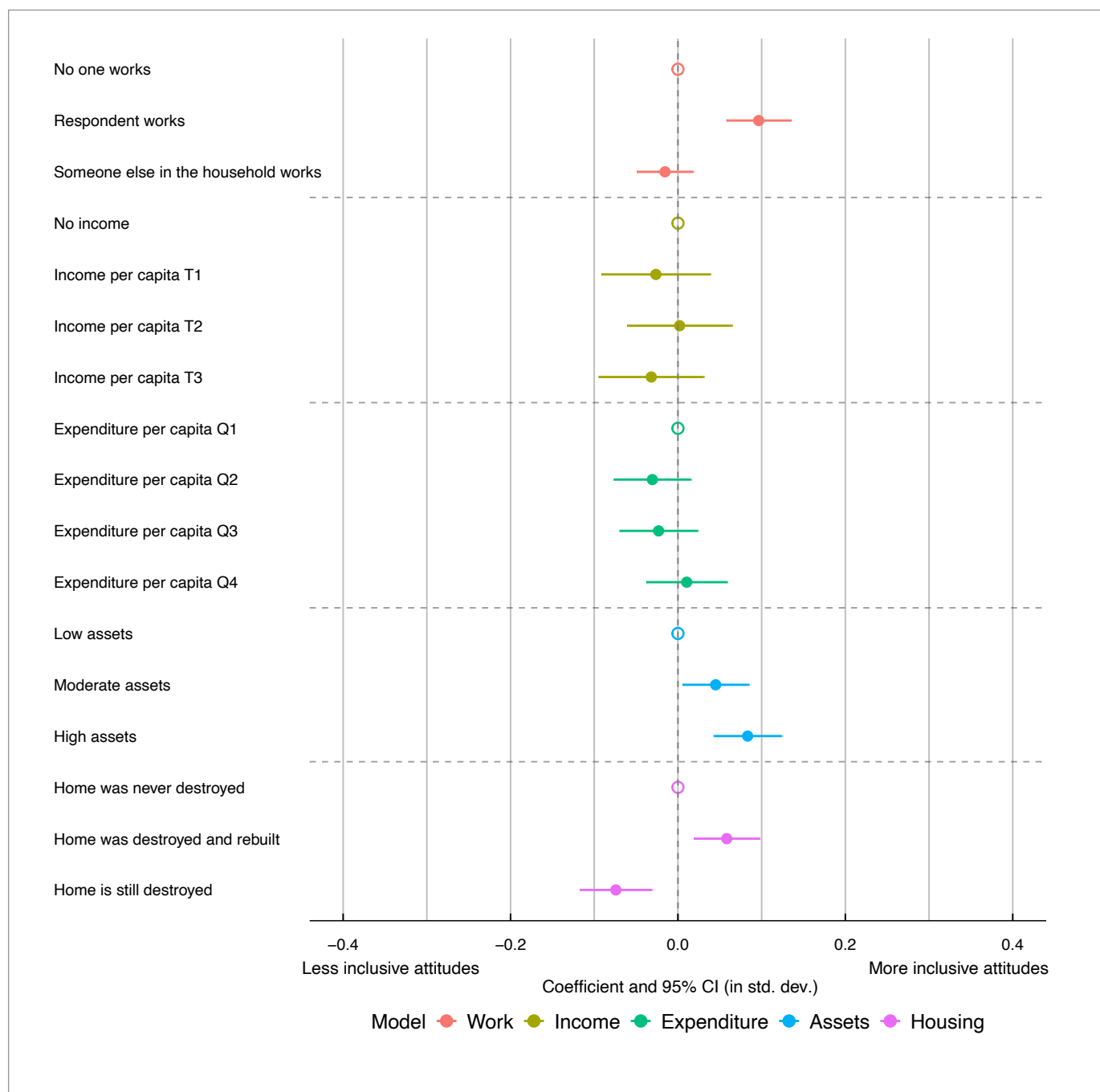
Figure 54. Correlation between demographic characteristics and inclusive attitudes



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in a single model including all four characteristics. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent demographic characteristic on the y-axis and inclusive attitudes. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit higher levels of inclusive attitudes than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of inclusive attitudes, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, “Interpreting the Regression Analysis” for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors’ calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Figure 55. Correlation between background characteristics and inclusive attitudes



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in five separate models, separated by horizontal gray dashed lines. Models are defined in the table legend. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent characteristic on the y-axis and inclusive attitudes. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. Each model controls for displacement history, age, sex, and education level. "T" refers to being in a given tercile of the distribution of income per capita and "Q" refers to being in the specified quartile of the distribution of expenditure per capita. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit higher levels of inclusive attitudes than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of inclusive attitudes, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, "Interpreting the Regression Analysis" for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

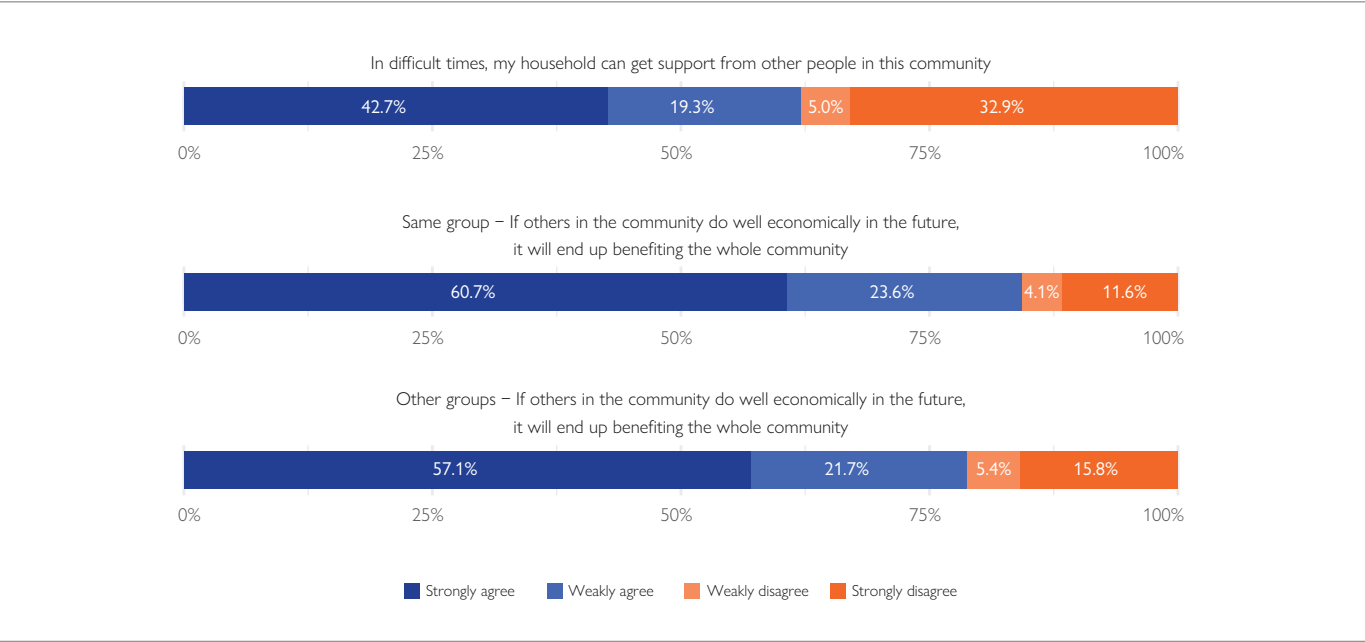
INTERDEPENDENCE

Descriptive analysis

Interdependence outcomes are more mixed. Specifically, a third of respondents (32.9%) feel strongly that their household would be unable to get support from the community when needed. IDP respondents feel less able to get community support (55.6%) than returnees (64.3%) and stayees (63.0%). Gender also has an impact, with women reporting a lower ability to get community support

(58.3%) than men (66.3%). A higher proportion of respondents, around three quarters, believe that if someone does well in the community everyone benefits. This feeling is consistently high regardless of displacement history and sex. There is a slight in-group bias, with a higher proportion of respondents expecting to be positively affected if someone with the same displacement history as them does well. This bias is more accentuated among women.

Figure 56. Interdependence



Note: The figure contains shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles. Reading: 60.7 per cent of respondents “strongly agree” that “if others in the community do well economically in the future, it will end up benefiting the whole community” when referring to others with a similar displacement history as theirs.

Source: Authors’ calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants’ neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Figure 57. Interdependence by displacement history

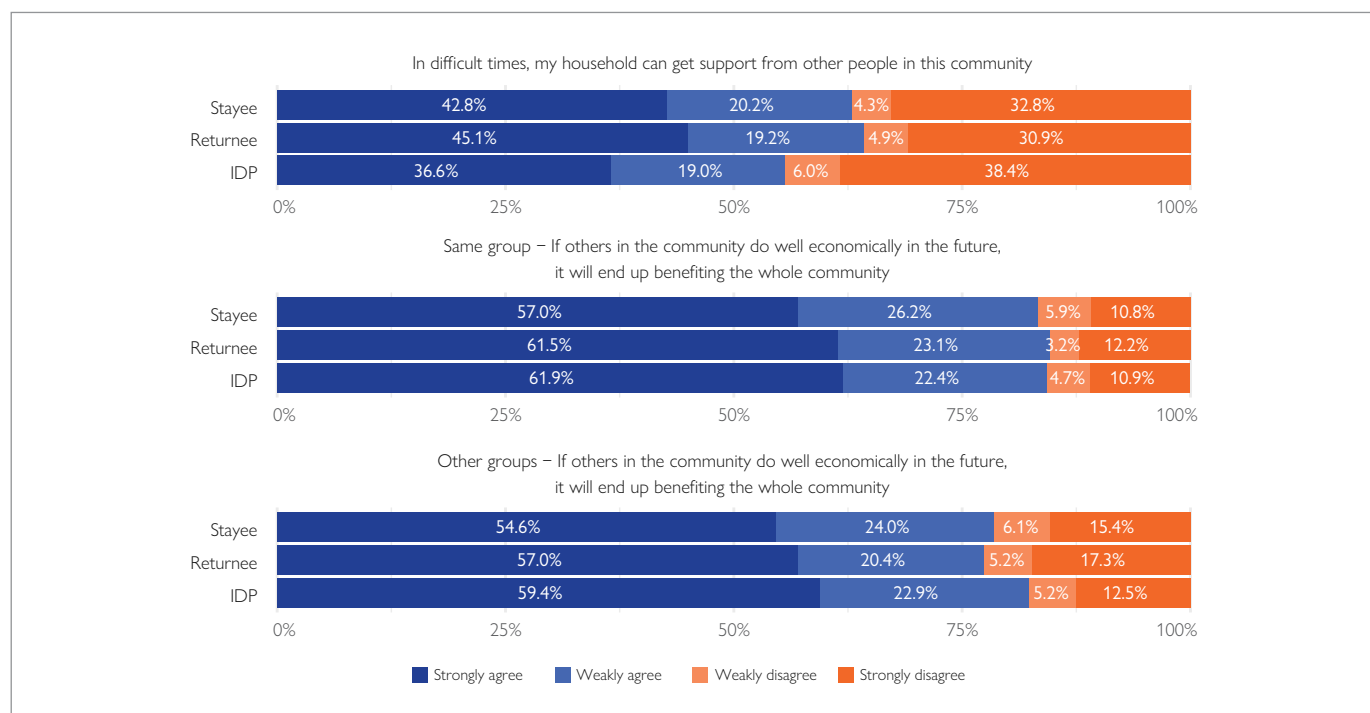
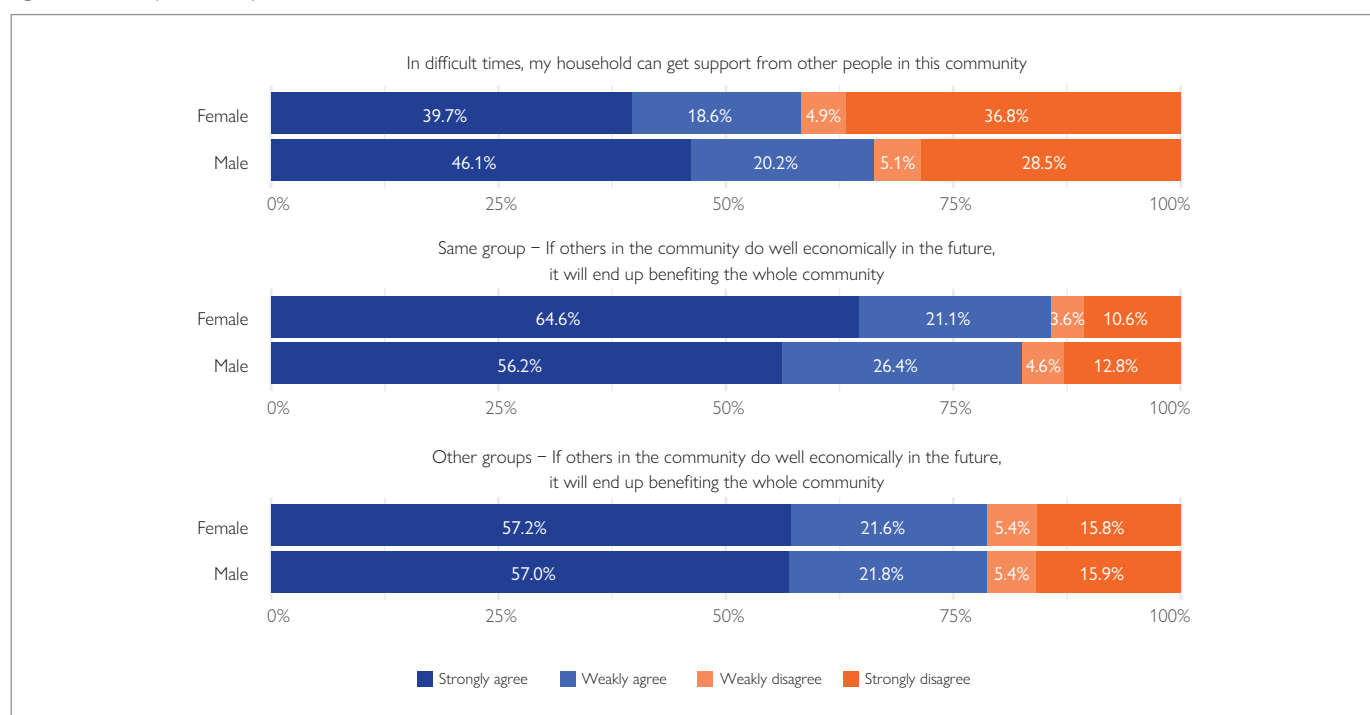


Figure 58. Interdependence by sex



Note: The figures contain shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles and displacement history and sex subsamples indicated in rows. Reading: 64.6 per cent of female respondents “strongly agree” that “if others in the community do well economically in the future, it will end up benefiting the whole community” when referring to others with a similar displacement history as theirs.

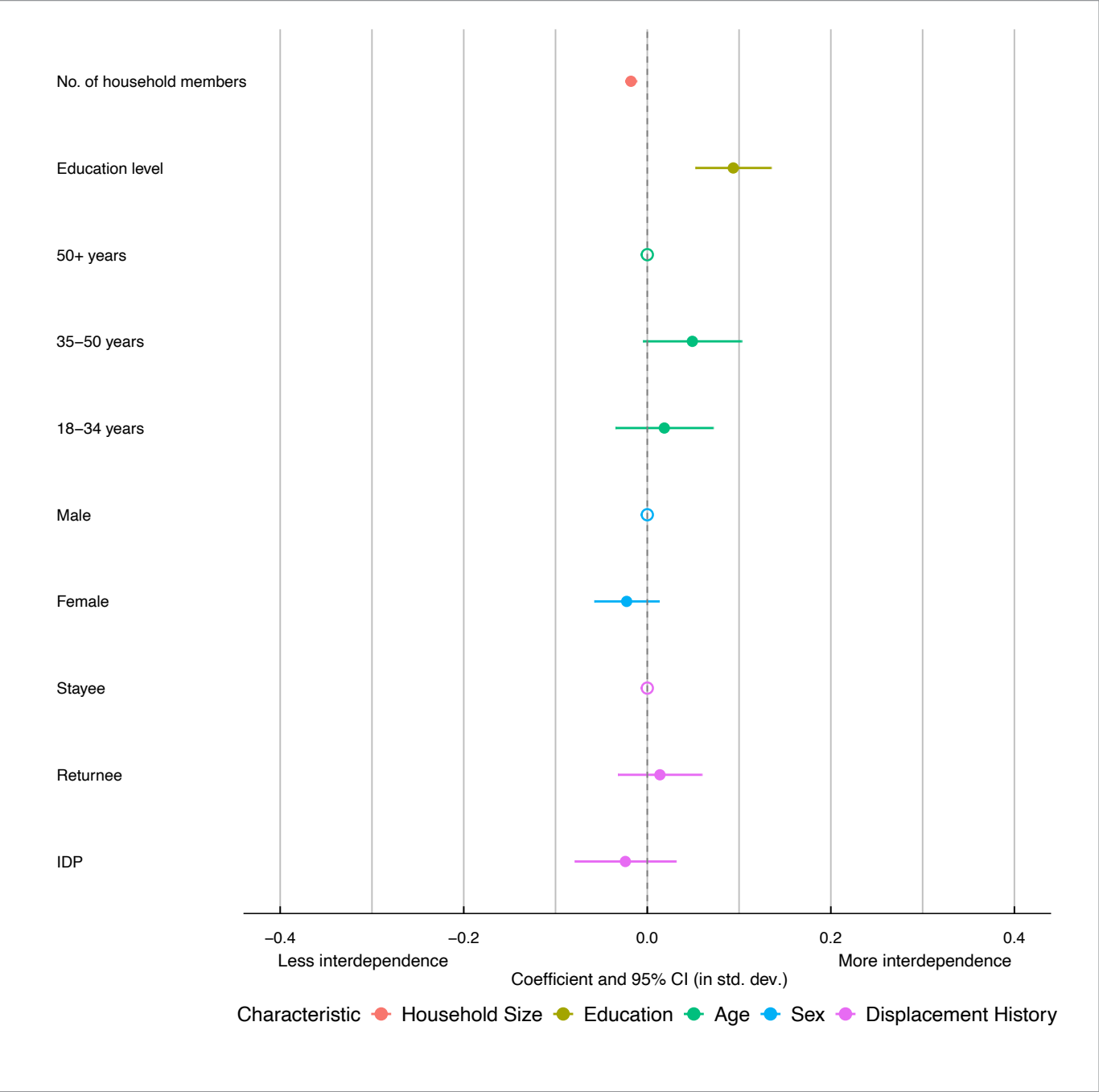
Source: Authors’ calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants’ neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Regression analysis

Having a higher level of education is associated with a higher level of interdependence. Other demographic characteristics such as age, sex, and displacement history are not associated with changes in levels of interdependence. Individual and household work is interestingly correlated with lowered feelings of interdependence, relative to those who have less work.

Correspondingly, those with higher incomes also report lowered feelings of interdependence. Other variables, including expenditure, wealth and housing situation do not exhibit distinct patterns of observational relationships with a recognition of interdependence.

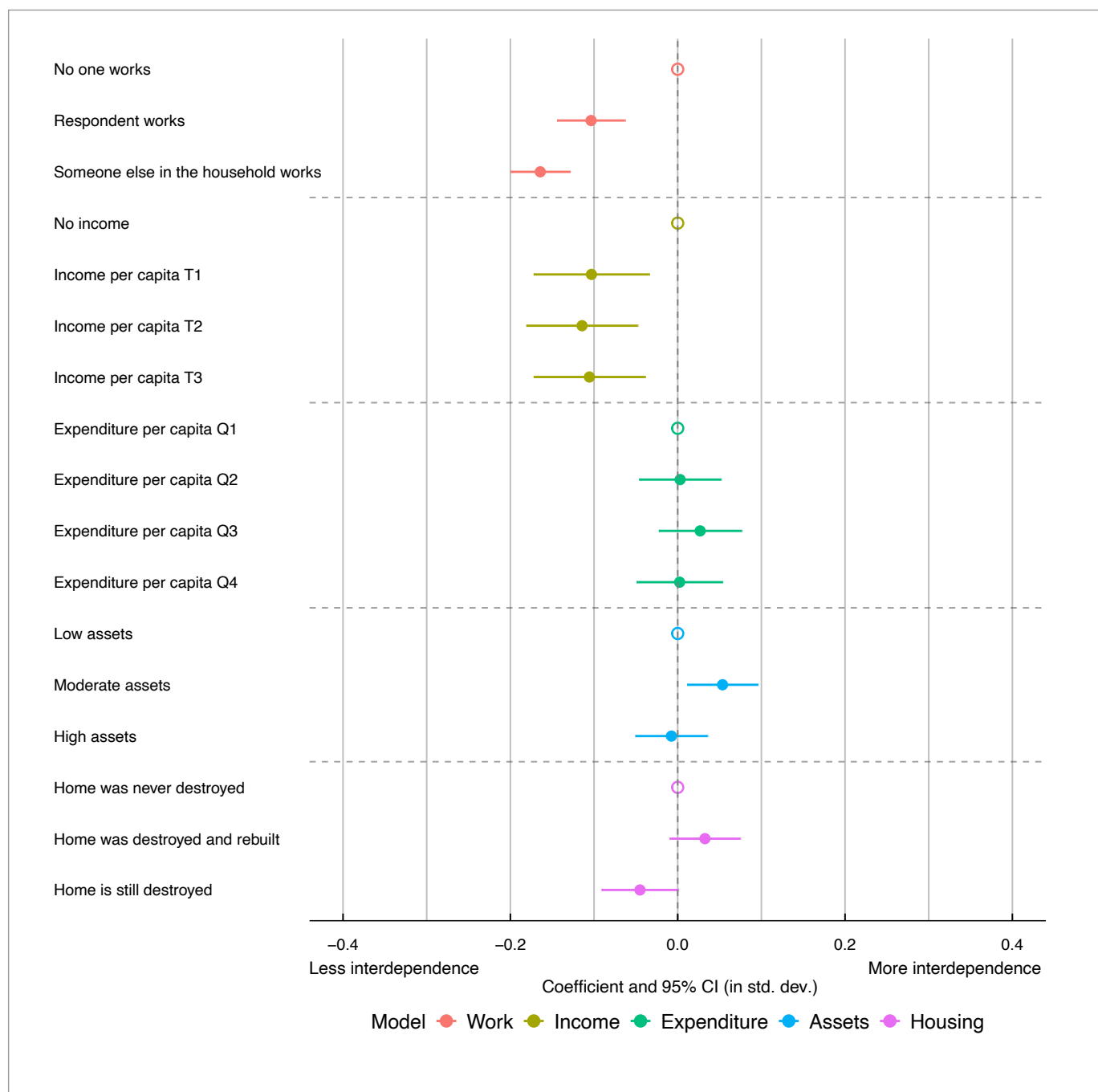
Figure 59. Correlation between demographic characteristics and interdependence



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in a single model including all four characteristics. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent demographic characteristic on the y-axis and interdependence. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit higher levels of interdependence than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of interdependence, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, “Interpreting the Regression Analysis” for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors’ calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Figure 60. Correlation between background characteristics and interdependence



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in five separate models, separated by horizontal gray dashed lines. Models are defined in the table legend. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent characteristic on the y-axis and interdependence. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. Each model controls for displacement history, age, sex, and education level. "T" refers to being in a given tercile of the distribution of income per capita and "Q" refers to being in the specified quartile of the distribution of expenditure per capita. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit higher levels of interdependence than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of interdependence, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, "Interpreting the Regression Analysis" for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

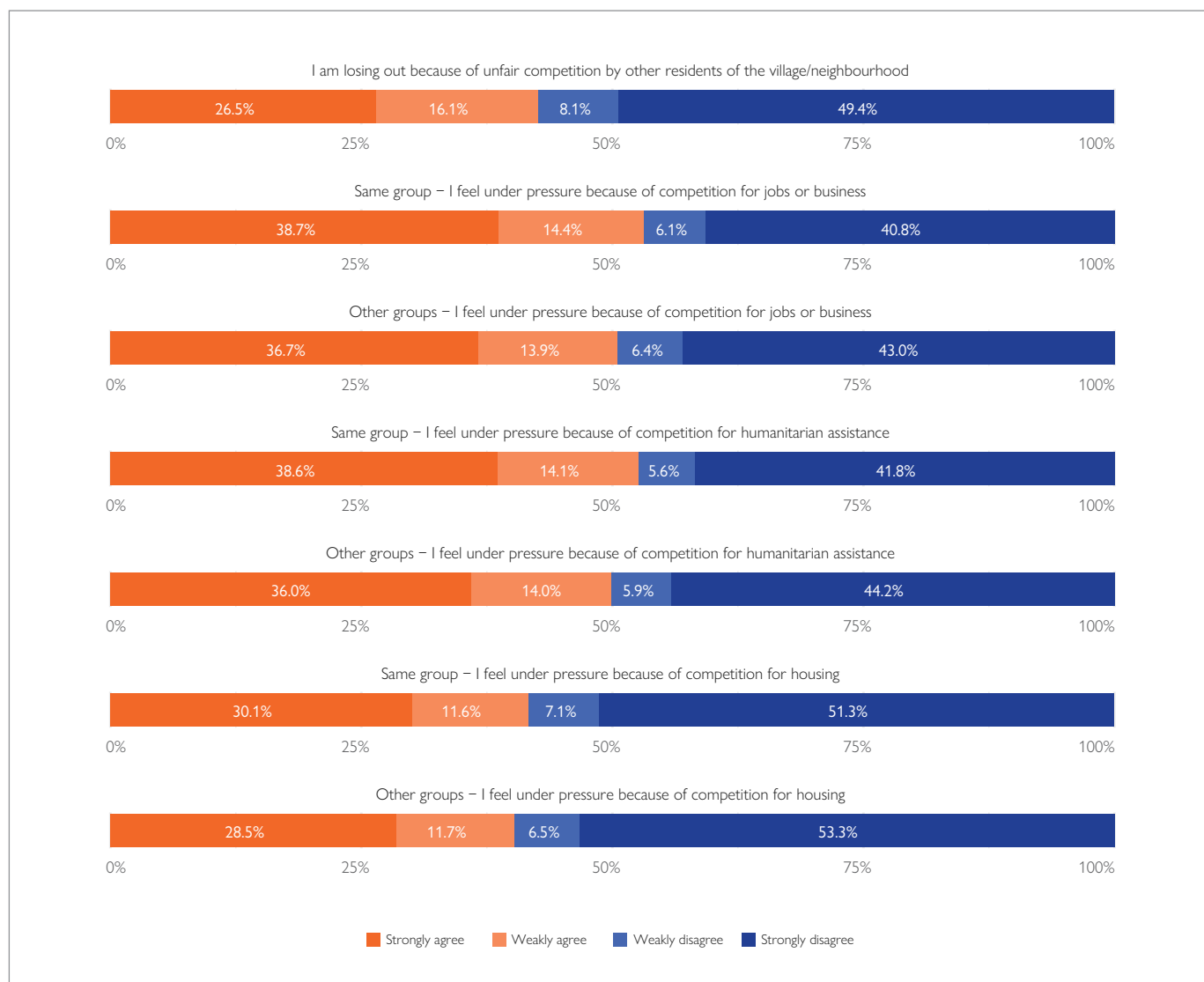
COMPETITION

Descriptive statistics

Around half of the respondents feel under pressure because of competition over housing, humanitarian assistance and employment opportunities. Among those experiencing competition, pressure because of competition for humanitarian assistance and for jobs or business opportunities are the most strongly felt. A similar proportion of respondents are concerned about unfair competition.

Reported levels of competition are similar towards community members of the same or different displacement history, and there are limited differences between the perceptions of IDPs, returnees, and stayees. However, men are 5–10 per cent more likely to report feelings of competition than women.

Figure 61. Competition



Note: The figure contains shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles. Reading: 30.1 per cent of respondents “strongly agree” that they “feel under pressure because of competition for housing” when referring to others with a similar displacement history as theirs.

Source: Authors’ calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants’ neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Figure 62. Competition by displacement status

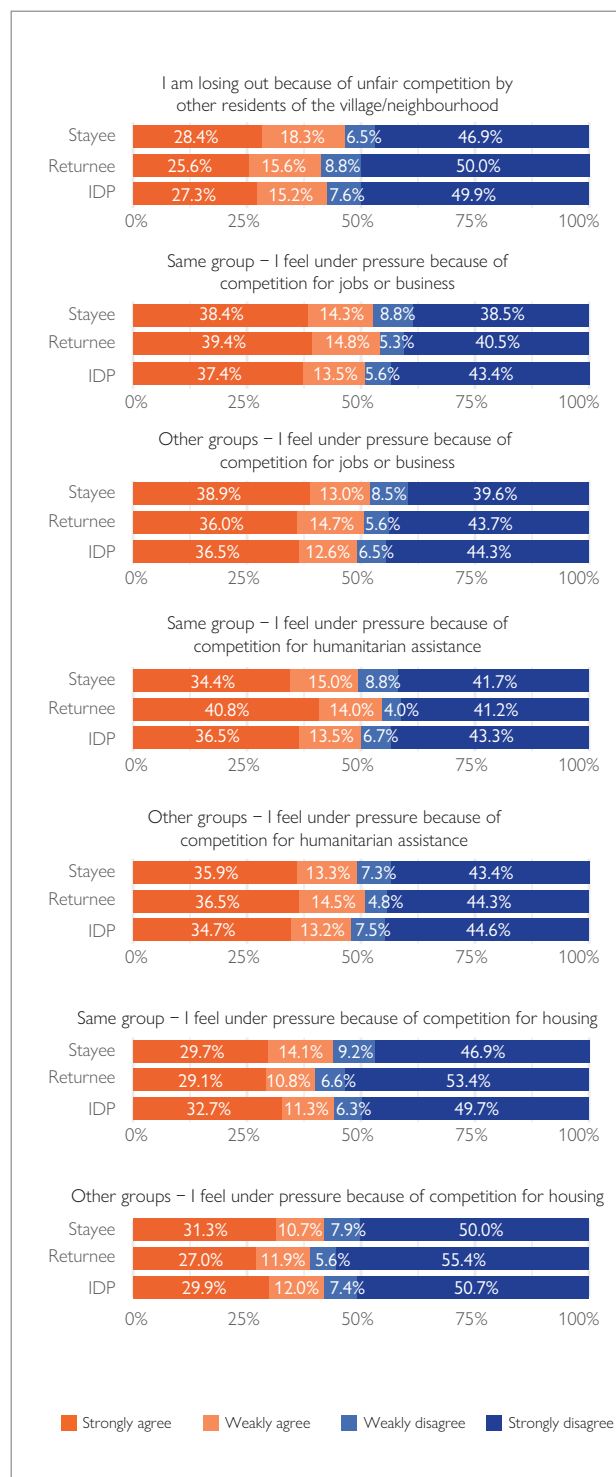
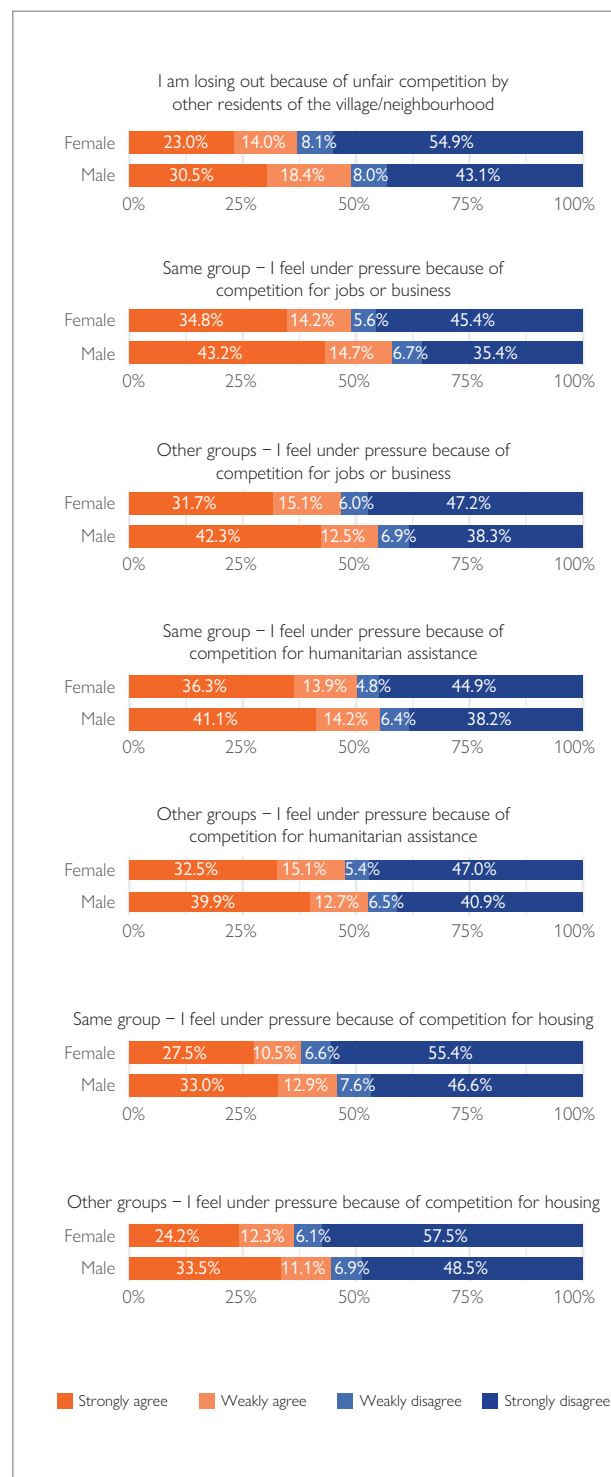


Figure 63. Competition by sex



Note: The figures contain shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles and displacement history and sex subsamples indicated in rows. Reading: 27.5 per cent of female respondents "strongly agree" that they "feel under pressure because of competition for housing" when referring to others with a similar displacement history as theirs.

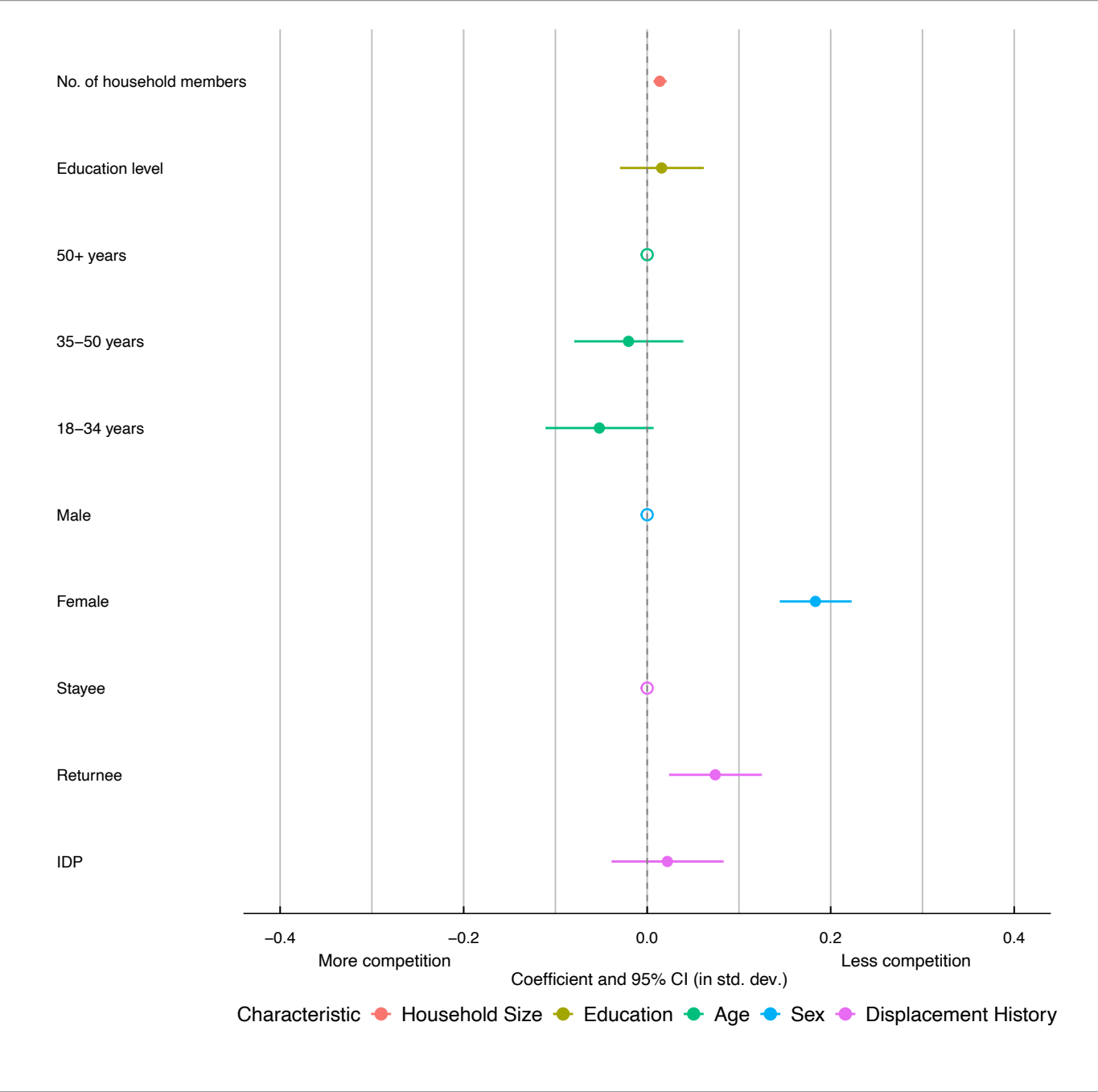
Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Regression

For consistency with the other dimensions, positive values in Figures 64 and 65 indicate low levels of perceived competition. Female respondents and returnees tend to perceive lower levels of competition in accessing resources than respondents with other demographic characteristics. Individuals who work and those in households with other working members both report lower

feelings of competition, as do respondents in households with higher income per capita. Expenditure levels, ostensibly expressing need, are associated with greater feelings of being under pressure because of competition for basic needs and other resources. However, being wealthier, which is measured through asset ownership, is associated with lower levels of feelings of competition.

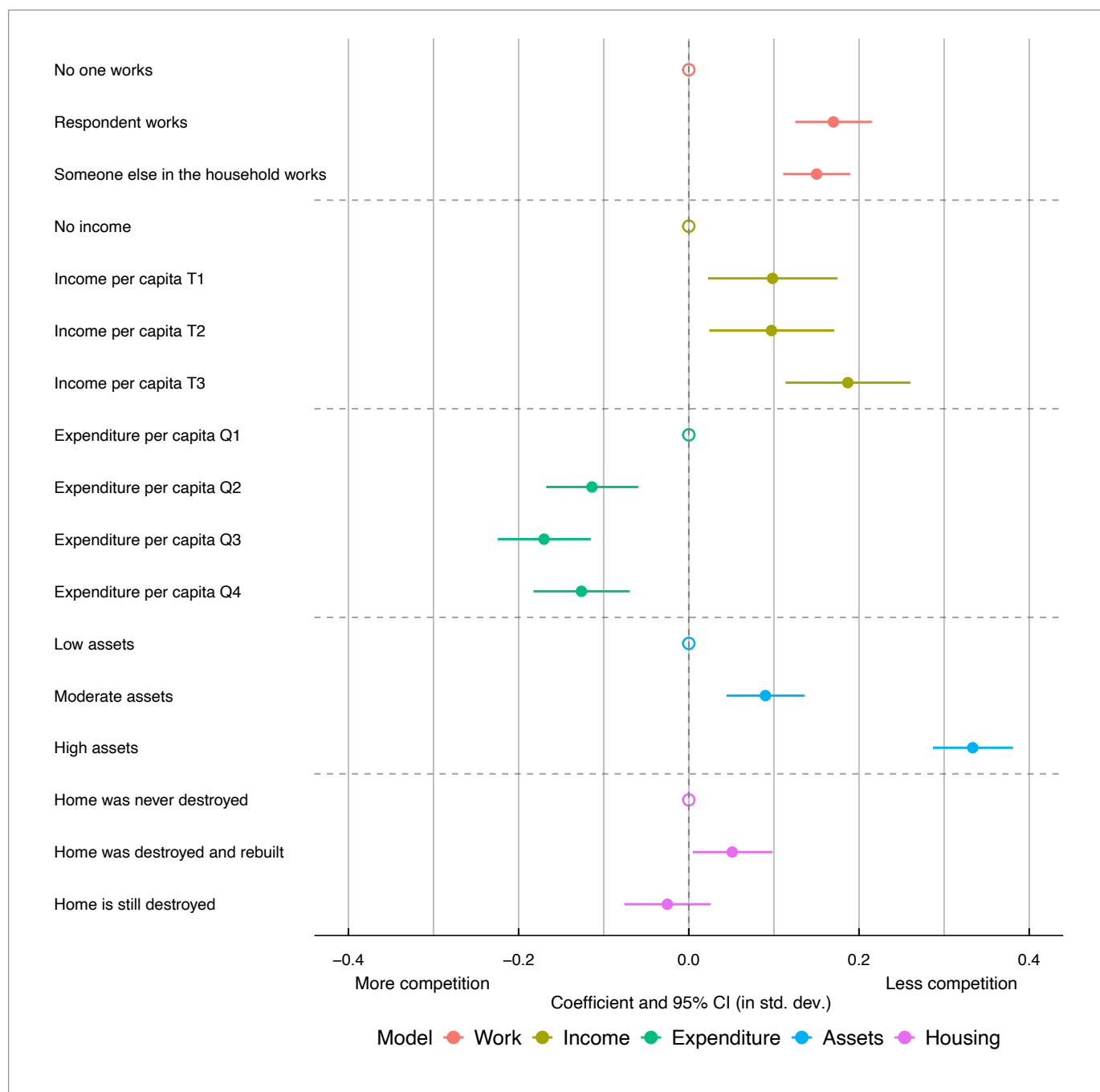
Figure 64. Correlation between demographic characteristics and reduced competition



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in a single model including all four characteristics. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent demographic characteristic on the y-axis and competition. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit lower levels of competition than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of competition, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, “Interpreting the Regression Analysis” for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors’ calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Figure 65. Correlation between background characteristics and reduced feelings of competition



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in five separate models, separated by horizontal gray dashed lines. Models are defined in the table legend. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent characteristic on the y-axis and competition. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. Each model controls for displacement history, age, sex, and education level. "T" refers to being in a given tercile of the distribution of income per capita and "Q" refers to being in the specified quartile of the distribution of expenditure per capita. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit lower levels of competition than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of competition, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, "Interpreting the Regression Analysis" for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

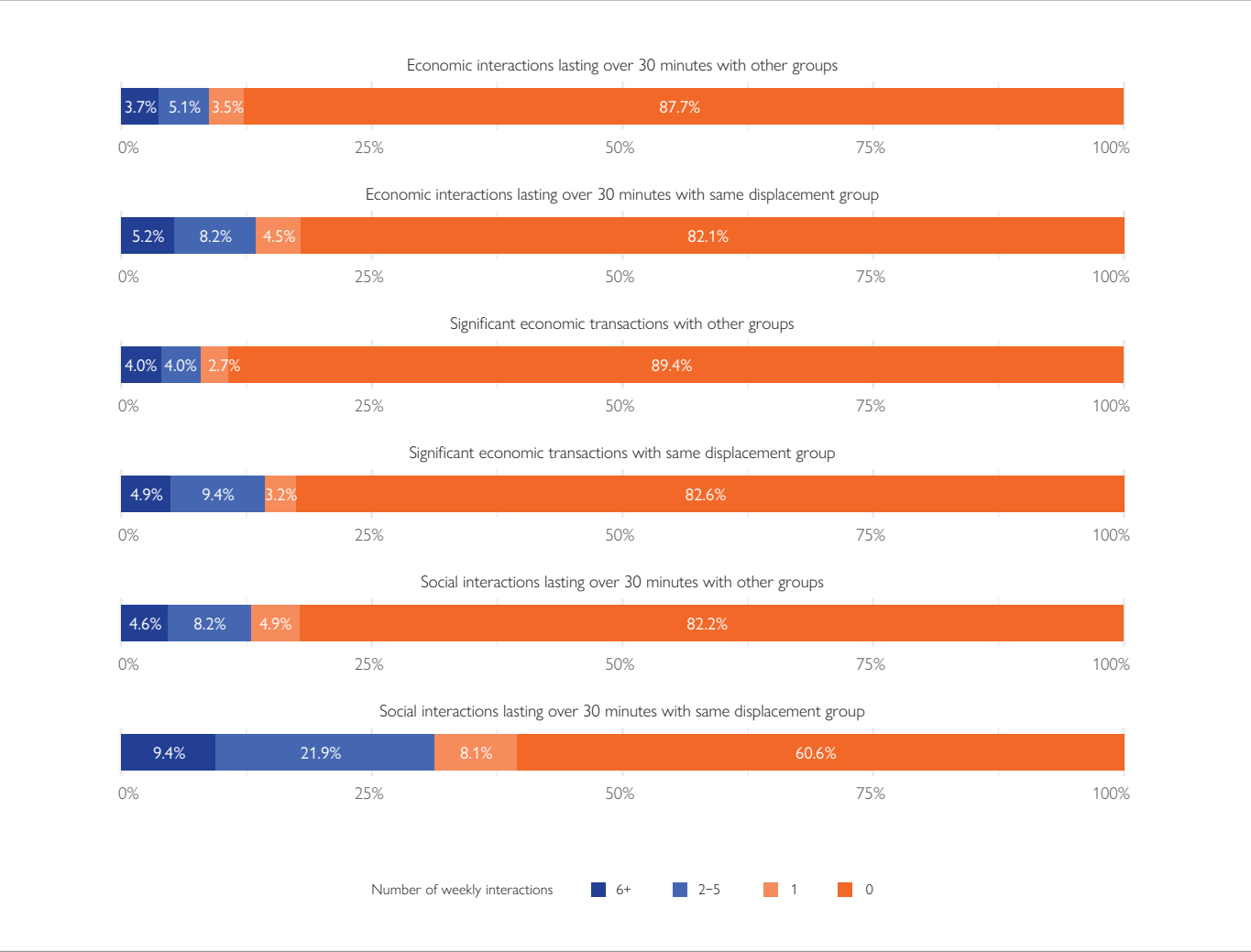
CONTACT AND SUBJECTIVE INTEGRATION

Descriptive analysis

When asked about the frequency of their weekly interactions with individuals with the same displacement history as them or another displacement group,

most respondents report few interactions. All respondents report having more frequent meaningful social interactions with individuals with the same displacement history as them. Women tend to report slightly fewer social and economic interactions than men.

Figure 66. Contact



Note: The figure contains shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles. The questions asked were as follows. Economic interactions: “Over the past week, how many times did you have meaningful and sustained (approximately 30 minutes or more) economic interactions, such discussing business or solving work-related tasks together, including volunteering or doing community activities?”. Economic transactions: “Over the past week, with how many people did you have economic transactions involving a significant money exchange (buying or selling goods and services)? Think of a day’s worth of your income as a significant money exchange.” Social interactions: “Over the past week, how many times did you have meaningful or sustained (approximately 30 minutes or more) social interactions spending time in a cafe, visiting each other’s house, playing sports, etc., with the following types of people: [same displacement group / other groups]”.

Source: Authors’ calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants’ neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Figure 67. Contact by displacement history

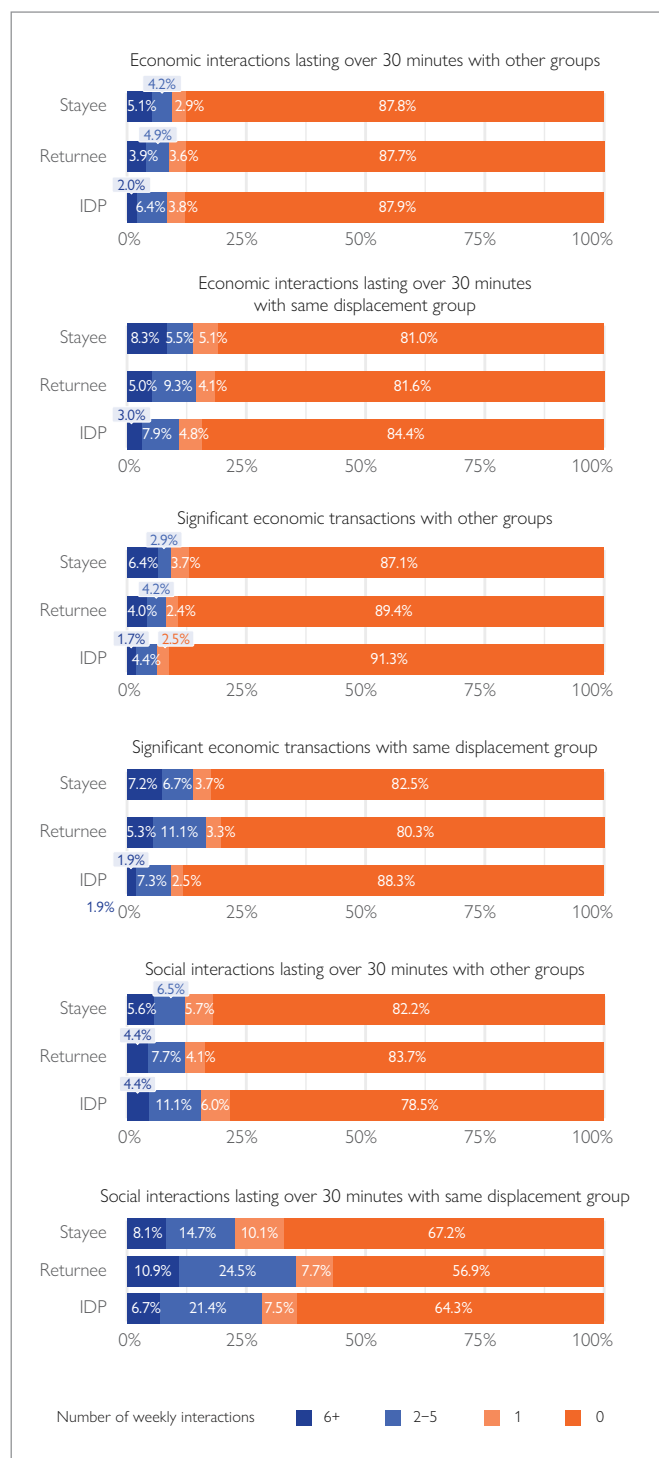
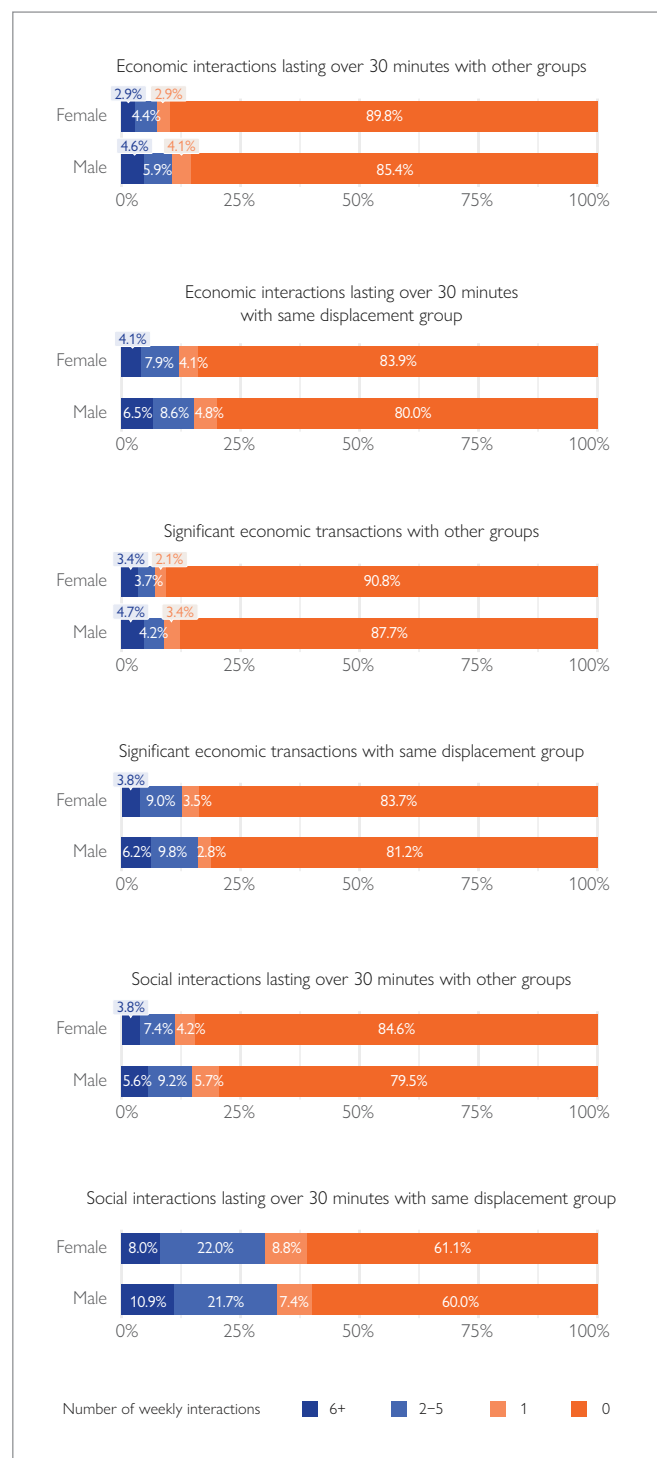


Figure 68. Contact by sex

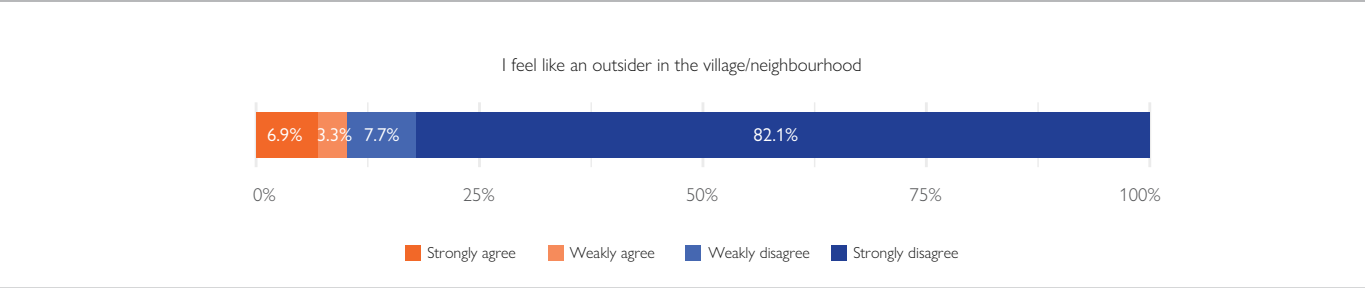


Note: The figures contain shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles and displacement history subsamples indicated in rows. The questions asked were as follows. Economic interactions: "Over the past week, how many times did you have meaningful and sustained (approximately 30 minutes or more) economic interactions, such as discussing business or solving work-related tasks together, including volunteering or doing community activities?". Economic transactions: "Over the past week, with how many people did you have economic transactions involving a significant money exchange (buying or selling goods and services)? Think of a day's worth of your income as a significant money exchange." Social interactions: "Over the past week, how many times did you have meaningful or sustained (approximately 30 minutes or more) social interactions spending time in a cafe, visiting each other's house, playing sports, etc., with the following types of people: [same displacement group / other groups]".

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Overall, most respondents feel well integrated in the local community, with nine respondents out of 10 stating that they do not feel like an outsider. Yet, IDPs are much more likely to report feeling like outsiders than other groups (22.3% for IDPs compared to 9.9% for stayees and 5.7% for returnees). Gender differences are limited.

Figure 69. Subjective integration



Note: The figure contains shares of response values to the question "I feel like an outsider in the [0]", where [0] was replaced by the name of their village or neighbourhood.
Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Figure 70. Subjective integration by displacement history

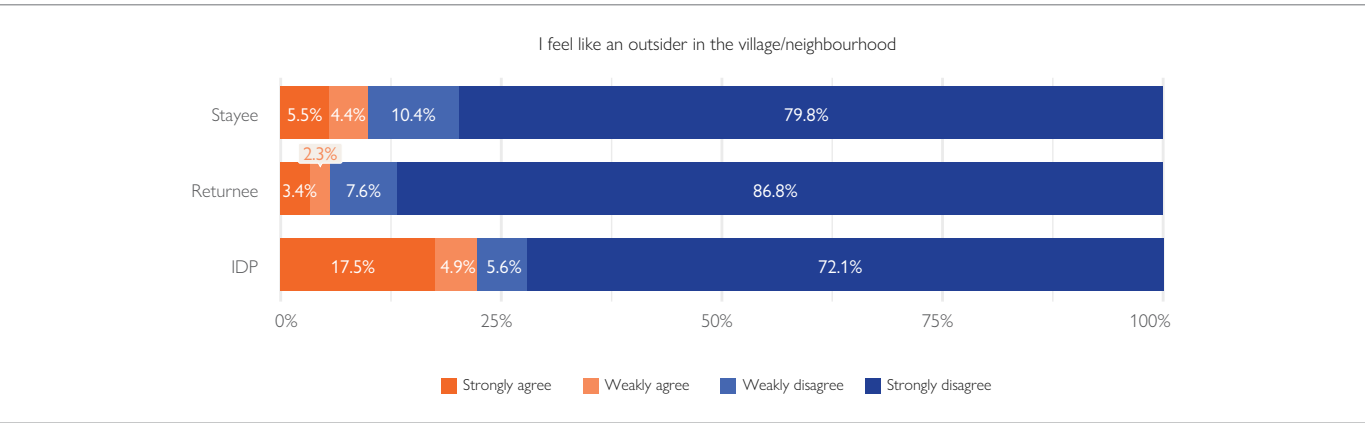
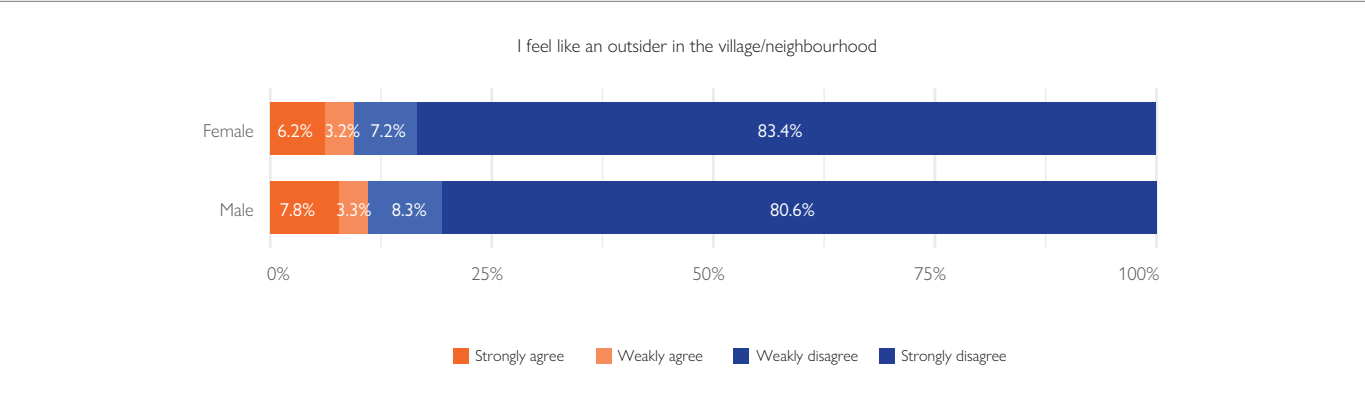


Figure 71. Subjective integration by sex



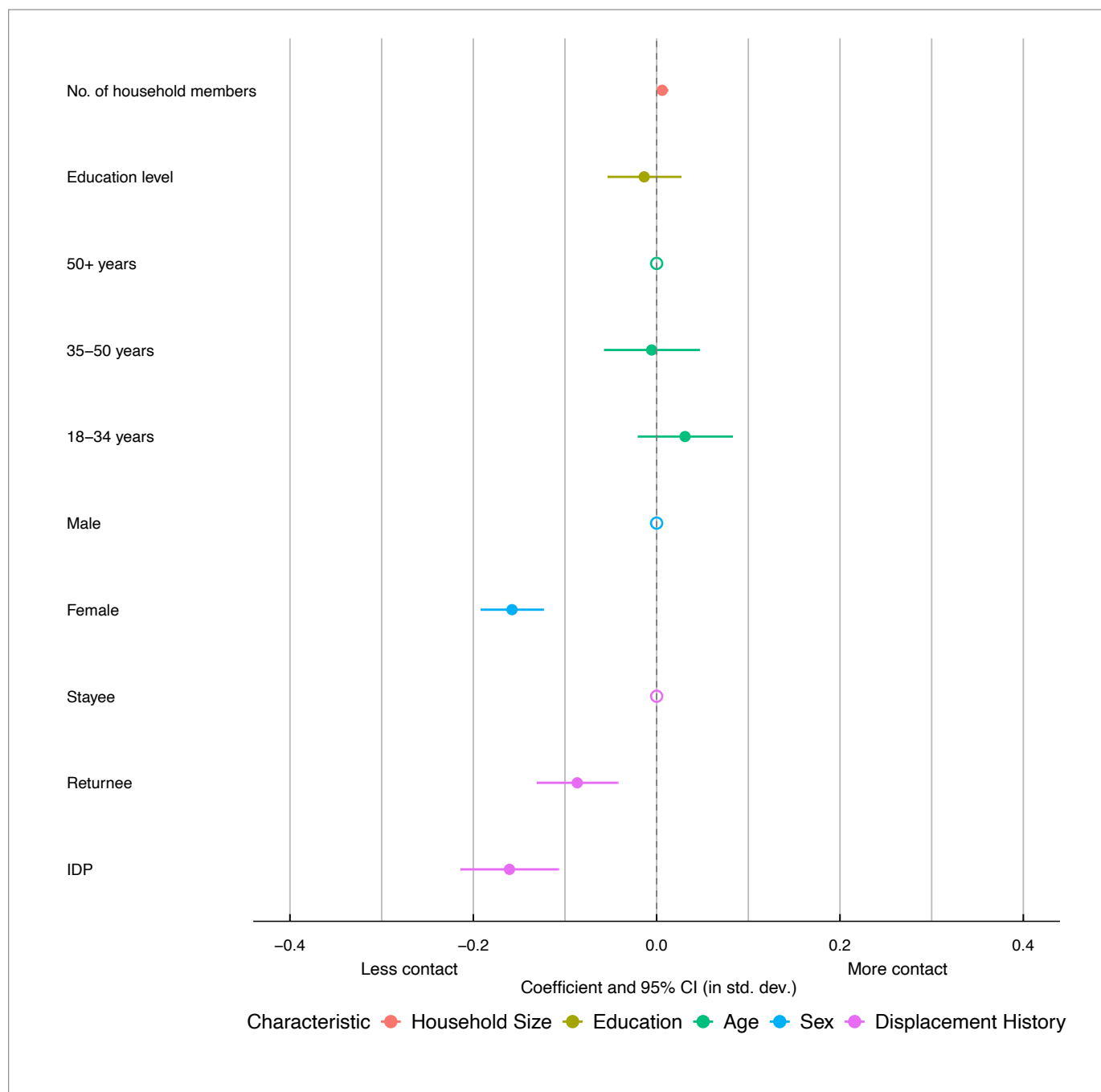
Note: The figures contain shares of response values to the question "I feel like an outsider in the village/neighbourhood" by displacement history and sex subsamples indicated in rows.
Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Regression analysis

IDPs and returnees tend to have lower levels of contact with their community than stayees. This is especially notable among IDPs, who report much lower contact than those with other displacement history. Female respondents also indicate lower levels of contact, while the age and level of education of the respondent are not correlated with changes in levels of contact. Working, and

having household members who work, are linked to higher levels of contact. Similarly, being in the highest income category is linked with higher reported contact. Having higher total monthly expenditure and a house that remains destroyed since the conflict are both associated with lower levels of contact among respondents.

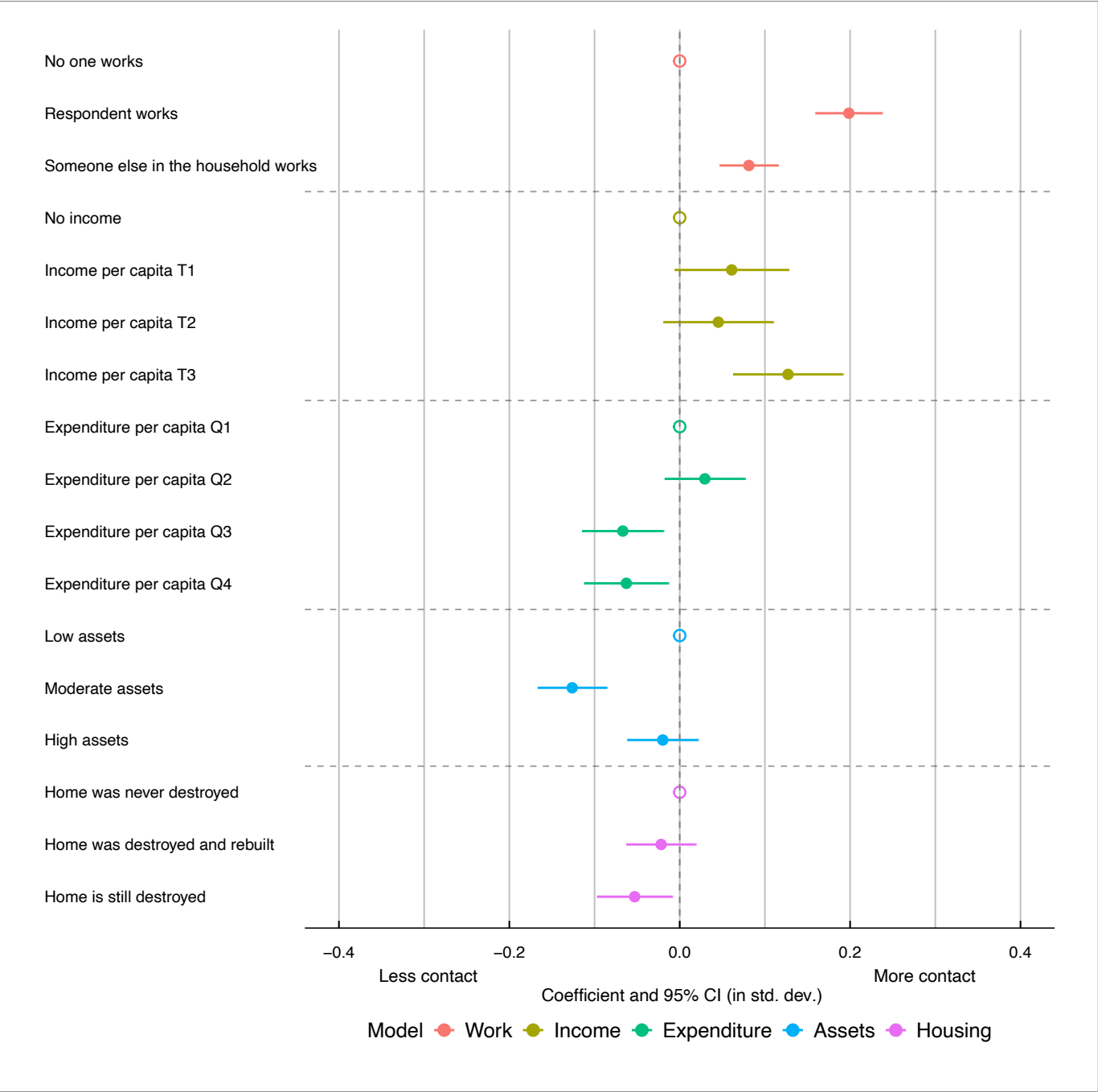
Figure 72. Correlation between demographic characteristics and contact



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in a single model including all four characteristics. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent demographic characteristic on the y-axis and contact. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit higher levels of contact than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of contact, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, "Interpreting the Regression Analysis" for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Figure 73. Correlation between background characteristics and contact



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in five separate models, separated by horizontal gray dashed lines. Models are defined in the table legend. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent characteristic on the y-axis and contact. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. Each model controls for displacement history, age, sex, and education level. "T" refers to being in a given tercile of the distribution of income per capita and "Q" refers to being in the specified quartile of the distribution of expenditure per capita. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit higher levels of contact than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of contact, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, "Interpreting the Regression Analysis" for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

GRIEVANCES

Descriptive statistics

Durable Solutions

Demographics A.3.1:

Population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed

9.7% of IDPs, 10.0% of returnees and 12.7% of stayees reported feeling discriminated against.²⁰

Durable Solutions

Participation in public affairs 7.1.4:

Population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive

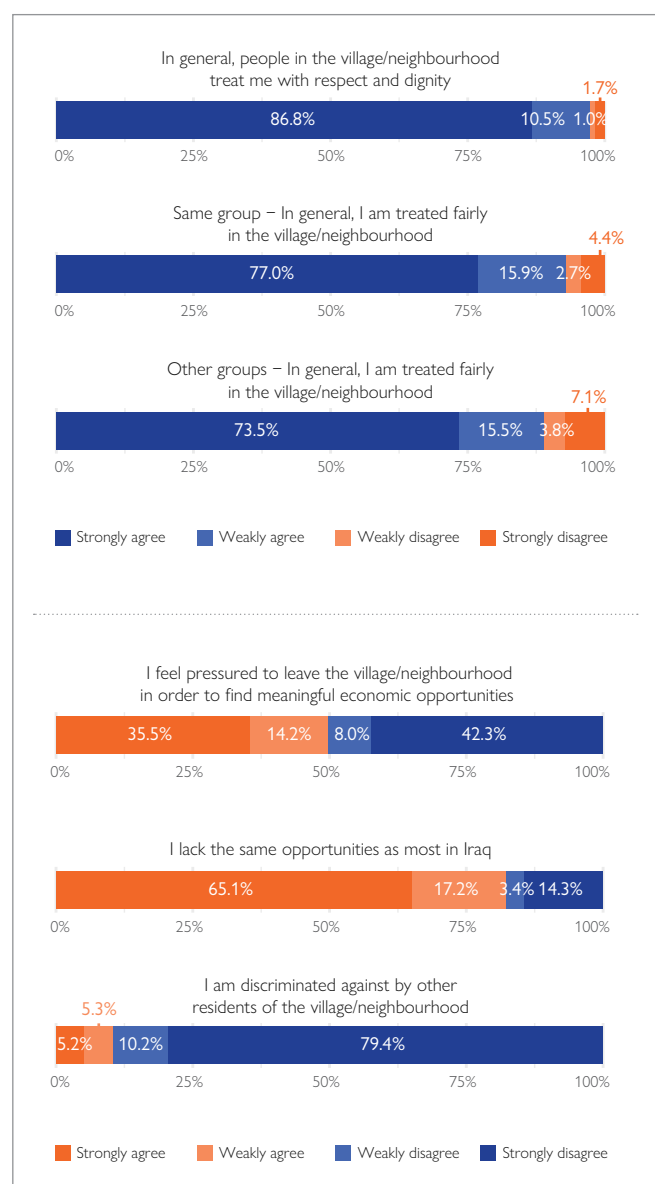
Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree that the [organization] makes fair and effective decisions.²¹

	% IDPs	% Returnees	% Stayees
Kurdistan Region of Iraq/ Federal government	68.3	72.1	77.5
Mukhtar	78.8	75.2	80.1
United Nations	76.1	73.2	74.4

Few respondents report grievances within their communities. Regardless of displacement history or sex, around nine in ten report that they are treated with respect by community members and do not feel discriminated against.

Instead, grievances are more pronounced when comparisons are made at the national level. Over four in five (82.3%) respondents feel that they lack the same opportunities as most in Iraq, and 50 per cent feel pressured to migrate to find economic opportunities elsewhere. Compared to women, men are more likely to report that they lack the same opportunities as most in Iraq (85.3% of men and 79.6% of women). Men are also more likely to report feeling pressured to migrate to find better economic opportunities elsewhere. IDPs are more likely to report feeling economically pressured to migrate (55.4%) compared to stayees (48.5%) and returnees (47.9%).

Figure 74. Grievances



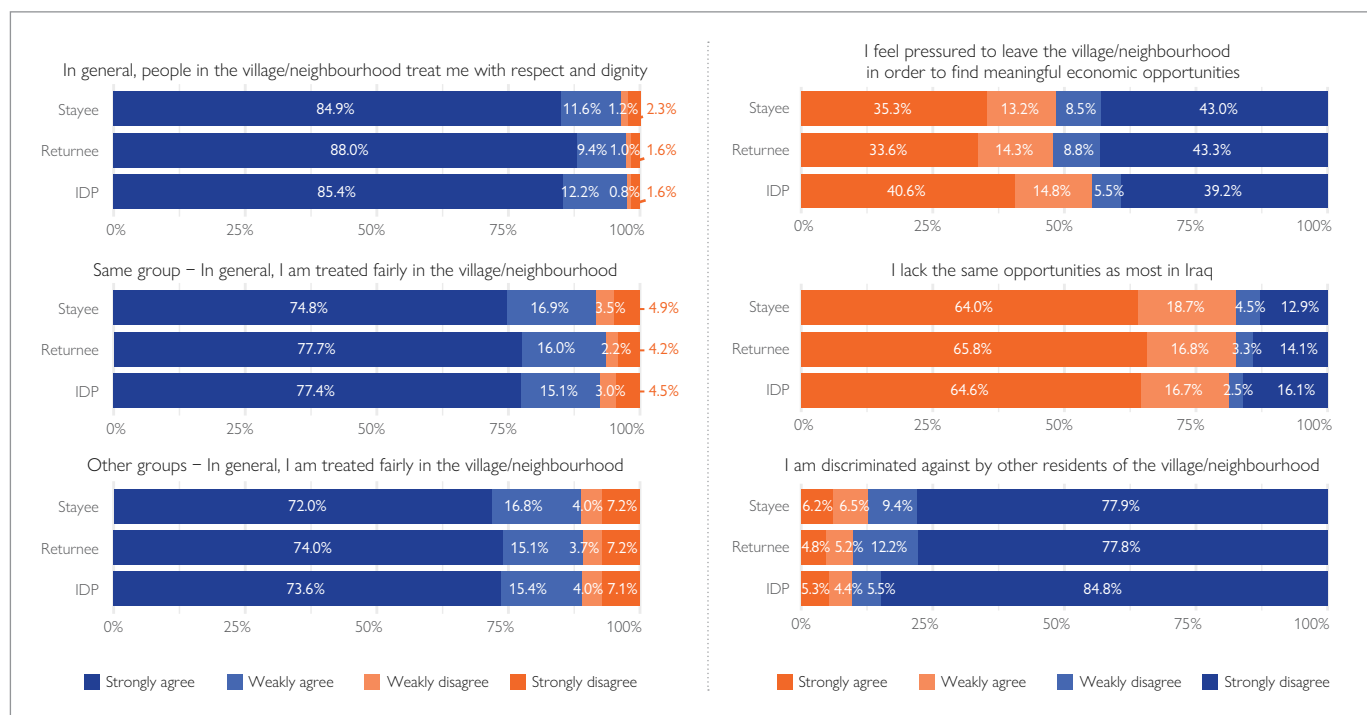
Note: The figure contains shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles. Reading: 77.0 per cent of respondents “strongly agree” that “in general [they are] treated fairly in the village/neighbourhood” when referring to others with a similar displacement history as theirs.

Source: Authors’ calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants’ neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

20 While the IACS Durable Solutions focus on harassment and discrimination on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law in the previous 12 months, the question asked in this study included all types of perceived discrimination with no specified time frame.

21 Respondents were asked if they find that the organization “generally makes effective decisions that are fair for people like them in their village or neighbourhood”.

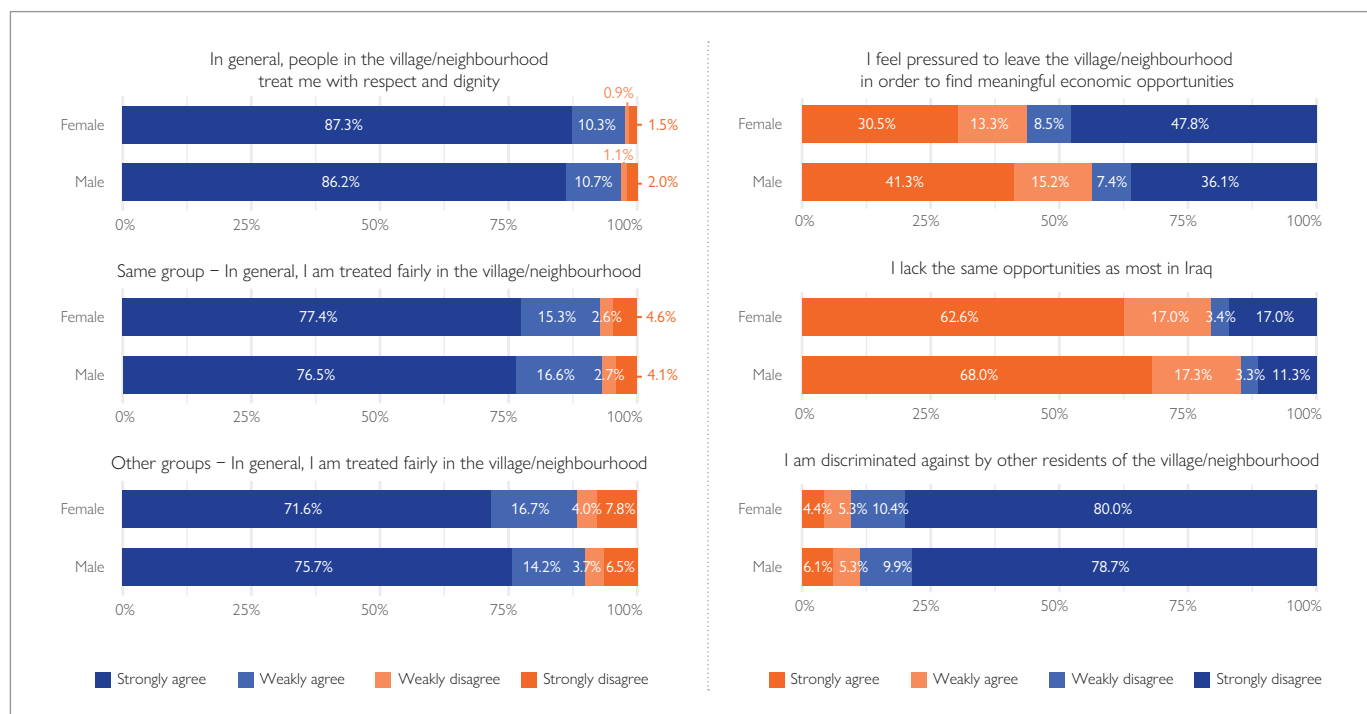
Figure 75. Grievances by displacement history



Note: The figure contains shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles and displacement history subsamples indicated in rows. Reading: 74.0 per cent of returnee respondents "strongly agree" that "in general, [they are] treated fairly in the village/neighbourhood" when referring to others with a similar displacement history as theirs.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Figure 76. Grievances by sex



Note: The figure contains shares of response values by baseline survey question indicated in panel titles and sex subsamples indicated in rows. Reading: 71.6 per cent of female respondents "strongly agree" that "in general, [they are] treated fairly in the village/neighbourhood" when referring to others with a similar displacement history as theirs.

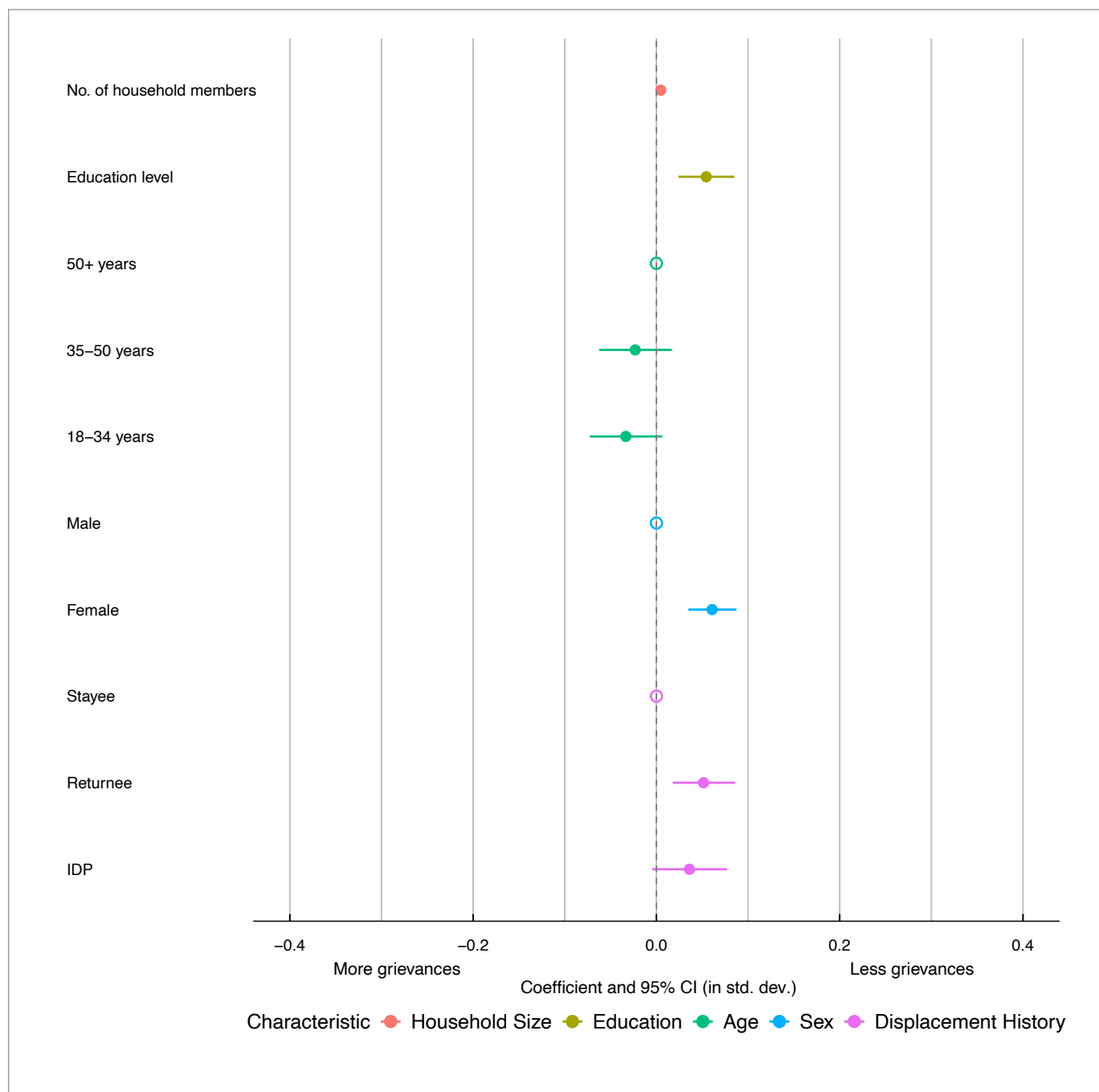
Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data from 18 communities in Iraq containing samples of programme applicants, their social and professional contacts, and an additional sample of applicants' neighbours in the same community. Total sample size is 6,159.

Regression analysis

Positive values in Figures 77 and 78 indicate low levels of perceived grievances, or a more positive outcome. Having a higher education level and being female are associated with lower grievances. Being an IDP or a returnee is associated

with lower grievances. Being wealthier, having worked in the past month or having a household member who worked, and having rebuilt or repossessed one's house are all associated with lower grievances.

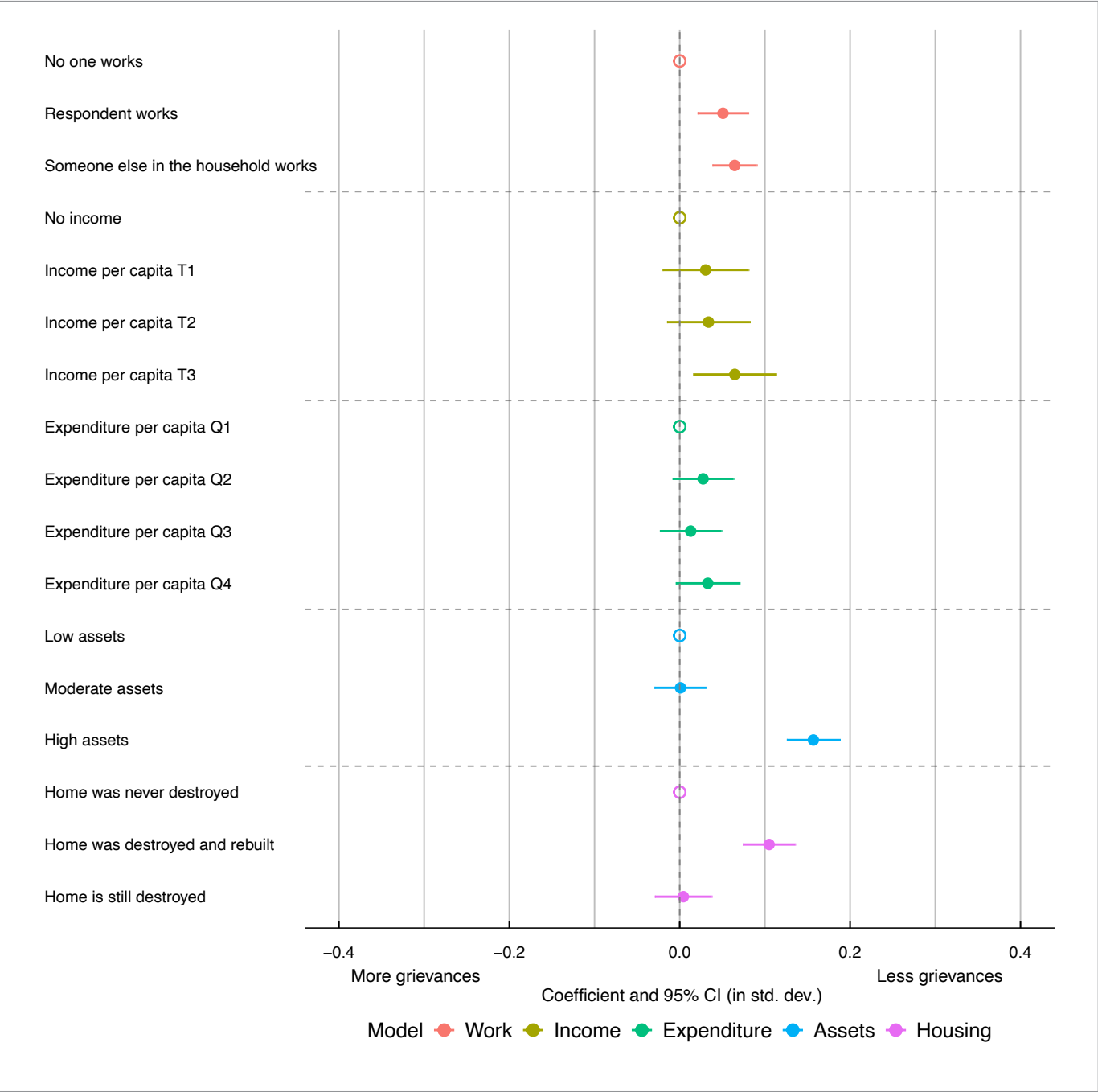
Figure 77. Correlation between demographic characteristics and reduced grievances



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in a single model including all four characteristics. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent demographic characteristic on the y-axis and grievances. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit lower levels of grievances than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of grievances, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, "Interpreting the Regression Analysis" for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

Figure 78. Correlation between background characteristics and reduced grievances



Note: Regression coefficients are estimated in five separate models, separated by horizontal gray dashed lines. Models are defined in the table legend. Each dot represents the estimated relationship between the corresponding respondent characteristic on the y-axis and grievances. Empty circles indicate reference categories in each model. Horizontal bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals. Each model controls for displacement history, age, sex, and education level. "T" refers to being in a given tercile of the distribution of income per capita and "Q" refers to being in the specified quartile of the distribution of expenditure per capita. The empirical specifications are presented in the Appendix. A positive estimate (dot to the right of the zero line) indicates that, controlling for background characteristics, respondents with the corresponding characteristic exhibit lower levels of grievances than respondents in the reference category. X-axis values are in standard deviations of an index of grievances, which was constructed with inverse covariance-weighting. Please refer to Section 3, "Interpreting the Regression Analysis" for more guidance in interpreting the regression results.

Source: Authors' calculations using 2024 study baseline survey data.

CONCLUSIONS

Displacement-affected communities targeted for ILA experience high levels of economic deprivation. A high proportion of adult household members lack any formal education, and only 81.0 per cent of school-age children are in education. The unemployment rate is 44.7 per cent, compared to 13.5 per cent across Iraq (CSO et al., 2022).²² In addition, many households face low budgets, spending on average 28 per cent of their monthly expenditure on food and 14 per cent on debt repayment. The high proportion spent on food reflects limited resilience and capacity to absorb negative shocks. Debt is a notable problem. A quarter of households are indebted, with an average debt for those households at IQD 4.716 million (USD 3,600), which is four times the average household monthly expenditure. The study also identified challenges with housing, as many respondents live in precarious shelters and are at risk of eviction. A total of 41.3 per cent of respondents report multiple simultaneous forms of precarity such as indebtedness, high risk of eviction, lack of savings, and/or owning few assets. These findings confirm that the community-level selection process effectively targeted villages and neighbourhoods with a high level of vulnerability and the need for livelihoods interventions to address material deprivation.

Respondents who have experienced displacement tend to face specific vulnerabilities, such as housing for IDPs and debt and low levels of employment for returnees,²³ but neighbouring host community members also experience high levels of economic deprivation. IDPs are most likely to be at risk of eviction (53.2% of IDPs) and to live in non-residential buildings or buildings in poor conditions (45.3% of IDPs) than the average across the studied communities. Many returnees also face challenges after they return to their area of origin, while others have made some progress towards durable solutions. Returnees have the highest average amount of debt per household and the highest rate of unemployment (49.1%). More positively, a high proportion was able to rebuild or recover their property, and many now live in residential buildings in good conditions. Significant heterogeneity exists among returnees, with some reporting relatively high savings and monthly expenditure. Stayees are slightly more homogenous than other groups, with lower proportions in extreme situations, whether positive or negative. Nevertheless, they were also exposed to the effects of conflict and show similar levels of deprivation to IDPs and returnees in several dimensions. For instance, 80.8 per cent of stayee households report having no savings, compared to 75.7 per cent of IDPs and 63.1 per cent of returnees. These findings reinforce the importance of need-based delivery of assistance that is accessible to all economically vulnerable households regardless of their displacement history.

Differences in economic vulnerability between eligible ILA applicants, members of their social networks and other neighbouring households are modest. For example, 25.4 per cent of ILA households are indebted, which is around 4 per cent above the proportion of network members' households (19.8%) and community members' households (21.9%). However, 57.8 per cent of ILA eligibles are below the national poverty line, compared to 59.4 per cent of network members and 59.9 per cent of neighbouring community members. Moreover, a similar proportion of ILA eligibles, network members and community members experience all four measures of precarity (debt, no savings, low asset ownership and high risk of eviction). These findings highlight that many people who do not qualify for aid are in similarly dire circumstances.

While most respondents were no longer concerned about threats to their

personal safety at the time of data collection, the study reveals widespread tenure and housing insecurity across the study communities. A total of 96.8 per cent of respondents felt safe walking alone in their village or neighbourhood, although 13.2 per cent were at least moderately concerned about intimidation, harassment and arbitrary detention by armed actors, and 15.6 per cent about theft, robbery and extortion during their daily activities. Women and returnees reported slightly higher perceptions of physical insecurity. In terms of tenure and housing insecurity, 28.0 per cent of respondents do not live in residential buildings in good condition and 34.3 per cent reported being at risk of eviction. These issues affect IDPs in particular and are likely to represent a barrier to their local integration. Close to half of IDPs (45.3%) do not live in residential buildings in good condition and 53.2 per cent of IDPs report being at risk of eviction. High levels of tenure insecurity can undermine investment incentives and distract individuals from engaging in productive activities.

Directly comparing indicators across different dimensions of social cohesion is challenging. However, across a range of indicators, respondents tend to show higher resource competition and material grievances relating to the lack of economic opportunities than other dimensions of social cohesion. Most respondents report low grievances among members of the local community and relatively high levels of trust, contact, civic engagement and inclusive attitudes. Yet, around half of the respondents feel under pressure due to competition in accessing humanitarian aid, employment opportunities and housing. In addition, four in five respondents feel that they lack the same opportunities as most in Iraq, regardless of displacement history and sex, and many feel pressured to leave their communities because of limited economic opportunities. These findings highlight the importance of addressing real and perceived geographic disparities, including between rural and urban areas, and material drivers of conflict at both national and local level. On the other hand, there appears to be a lower need for interventions strengthening interpersonal trust and civic engagement.

Experiences of forced displacement and dispossession during the conflict are associated with social dynamics at the time of the study, but the direction of this relationship varies across social cohesion metrics. IDPs are significantly more likely than other groups to report feeling like outsiders and that they are unable to access community support. Being an IDP or a returnee is associated with lower levels of contact and interpersonal trust, but it is associated with more inclusive attitudes. Losing one's land and property during the war is negatively associated with several dimensions of social cohesion, but the correlation becomes positive when looking at people who have successfully reclaimed their property. On the other hand, stayees experience higher levels of grievances and competition than returnees. These findings suggest the existence of specific social vulnerabilities linked to individual experiences of violence and displacement. Where present, material disparities risk compounding these differences and fuelling social divisions.

Better economic conditions, in particular access to employment and higher levels of wealth, are robustly correlated with improved social cohesion outcomes at the individual level. While it is not possible to attribute causality, this relationship holds across most dimensions of social cohesion. Specifically, employment is correlated with higher social cohesion across all dimensions except interdependence. In addition, owning more assets, having a higher

²² Unemployment is defined as (no. of people actively looking for work)/[(no. of people actively looking for work) + (no. of people currently employed)].

²³ Differences in these dimensions of vulnerability are robust to subsetting for the random sample of community members, excluding eligible ILA applicants and members of their social and economic networks. This confirms that the findings are not driven by programme targeting.

income and having a better housing situation are correlated with higher social cohesion across most dimensions.²⁴ These findings highlight the important relationship between material outcomes and social cohesion in communities recovering from the effects of conflict and mass displacement.

The findings in this report lead to a number of hypotheses about the impact of the livelihoods assistance in displacement-affected communities, which require further study and rigorous evaluation. The correlations between economic and social outcomes suggest that livelihoods interventions have the

potential to improve social cohesion by reducing material competition and grievances. Yet, livelihoods interventions providing high-value grants to a small number of recipients may also increase grievances and feeling of competition among non-beneficiaries, to the extent that they do not benefit directly or indirectly. Findings from the next stage of the study, which will compare ILA beneficiaries and a control group through a randomized field experiment, will provide robust evidence about the direct and indirect impact of ILA on both economic and social outcomes.



Gule lost her husband and was displaced from Sinjar during the conflict with Daesh. Thanks to IOM support, she started a small business rearing sheep and now uses her income to support the education of her three children. © IOM Iraq 2024/ Angela Wells

²⁴ When holding other variables constant, expenditure has a mixed relationship with social cohesion, being associated with better civic engagement but more issues of competition and lower contact levels. This pattern can be explained by the fact that higher expenditure may indicate higher needs or a larger household rather than a better economic status.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations fall into three categories. **The first is relevant for those involved in programmes that focus on improving economic well-being, addressing housing, land and property issues, and supporting human capital development.** These recommendations speak to findings from our data that suggest how programming in these areas can be complementary to microenterprise grants in promoting post-conflict recovery, economic resilience and durable solutions for internally displaced persons and returnees.

1. A high share of respondents report issues with housing and property rights security, with 62.1 per cent of respondents in our sample having had their house or business seized or damaged since 2014 (see Figure 36). This is particularly acute among IDPs and returnees, as 30.0 per cent of IDPs and 10.9 per cent of returnees still face their home being occupied or seized, and 53.2 per cent of IDPs are at risk of eviction (see Figure 30). Housing insecurity can reduce the capacity to invest in productive activities and burden individuals with additional sources of stress that take away from income-generating activities. **Continued support for interventions that reduce the risk of eviction and prevent or resolve housing, land, or property disputes will complement efforts to improve livelihoods and reduce disparities in economic and social well-being.**
2. Many households hold high debt balances: 22.1 per cent of households are indebted, with an average debt of IQD 4.716 million (USD 3,600) among indebted households (see Figure 10), with higher levels of debt among IDPs and returnees. High levels of debt constrain the capacity to make new investments and may specifically limit the portion of livelihoods grants that are put toward establishing or expanding a business. **Supporting households with high debt balances through financial literacy or digital financial inclusion interventions can improve households' investment capacity while ensuring creditors are appropriately repaid. Cash-flow based investments should be informed by systematic data collection on debt repayment burdens among target populations.**
3. Few households earn sufficient income to save money: in our sample, only 30.5 per cent of households save, and this figure is lower among IDPs and stayees (see Figure 16). Saving reduces vulnerability to poverty and the need for households to engage in crisis or emergency coping strategies due to income or expense volatility. From the perspective of complementarity to livelihoods interventions, households who face negative shocks will be less likely to liquidate business assets if they have some form of savings to rely on. **We therefore encourage programmes that address limited resilience to shocks by helping beneficiaries to save through financial inclusion efforts, including commitment-based savings programming and self-help group programming.**
4. Women have lower attainment of basic education: 24.6 per cent of adult women did not receive any formal education, compared to 11.6 per cent of men (see Figure 28). This may present additional barriers to the successful start and operation of a business. **Strengthening opportunities for female entrepreneurs to identify and build the skills they lack that would be beneficial for running a small business may help to address the impact of systemic gender gaps in educational attainment.**
5. A total of 23.7 per cent of school-age boys and 21.4 per cent of school-age girls are not in education (see Figure 20 and Figure 21). We have two recommendations related to children, schooling and work. First, the availability of work in household or small-scale family enterprises can have

counterbalancing effects: increases in household income may encourage schooling by improving families' capacity to cover basic needs and schooling costs, while the proximity of working opportunities can encourage some children to reallocate their time to work over study. **Implementers should therefore monitor and encourage school attendance of children among recipient households.** Second, household work or apprenticeships may be both individually and socially beneficial for otherwise idle youth who are unlikely to return to school. **Implementers could provide age-appropriate opportunities for further skill development among youth above the minimum working age and young adults via job placements or technical/vocational education programmes.**

The second set of recommendations is aimed at those developing or implementing livelihoods interventions in post-conflict settings, particularly – but not exclusively – when such interventions are designed to contribute to durable solutions or community stabilization objectives. These recommendations relate to the novel descriptive patterns and correlational associations with our survey measures of social cohesion found in this report, highlighting how livelihoods programmes may impact social cohesion. We provide guidance around the scope to increase the peacebuilding potential of livelihoods assistance and prevent heightened social tensions in targeted communities.

6. Over half of respondents report feeling under pressure because of competition for jobs or business (see Figure 61) and we see a consistently robust positive correlation between work/income and social cohesion (see Figure 44, Figure 49, Figure 55, Figure 65, Figure 73 and Figure 78). These findings suggest three dimensions of programmatic recommendations.
 - a. Although a causal link has not yet been established, livelihoods programming that increases access to work and income-earning opportunities may improve the material drivers of social cohesion. Therefore, we **recommend continuing to target livelihoods programmes to geographic areas and populations with low earning opportunities.** Community-based targeting for ILA in 2024–2025 effectively selected communities with a high level of deprivation, which may contribute to reducing actual and perceived interregional economic disparities that may lead to tensions felt between these communities and the rest of Iraq (see Figure 73). It is worth noting, as a caveat, that this may not happen if perceptions of inequality are too entrenched, if the economic effects of the grants are too small compared to existing disparities or if local communities lack accurate information about the allocation of aid.
 - b. In targeted communities, overall levels of vulnerability are high for host community members as well as for IDPs and returnees, even though IDPs and returnees fare worse in certain dimensions such as housing (for IDPs), debt and employment (for returnees). Where this is the case, **livelihoods programmes should continue to follow a need-based delivery of aid that benefits displaced populations as well as their host communities to prevent the emergence or intensifying of social divisions around displacement groups.** Eligibility for livelihoods assistance within targeted communities should be based on verifiable measures of vulnerability and skills, rather than displacement history, so as to prevent worsening of already high levels of perceived competition for aid (see Figure 61). **Livelihoods interventions**

that address economic scarcity among displaced persons, returnees and host communities alike have the potential to make an important contribution to durable solutions programming, promoting the economic and social inclusion of displaced persons and returnees while minimizing the risk of backlash from host communities.

7. Additionally, over half of the respondents report feeling under pressure because of competition for aid and humanitarian assistance (see Figure 61).

a. In order to reduce feelings of competition for aid and assistance, **recovery actors should consider community-stabilization approaches that combine individual-level assistance with programming that benefits the entire community.** On the one hand, livelihoods interventions have the potential to address material scarcity and lack of employment for economically vulnerable individuals, progressively reducing aid reliance. On the other hand, infrastructure rehabilitation and community-led initiatives provide public goods and distributed benefits for all members of the community. By combining multiple interventions operating at different levels in the same communities, such integrated programming can dampen perceptions of exclusion from aid and mitigate grievances that may result from the targeting of limited resources for livelihoods assistance.

b. **Communities should continue to be consulted to provide inputs that inform the mix of individual- and community-based programming.** Ideally, this input takes into account both community preferences and relative levels of deprivation across households, with a goal of avoiding disparities in access to livelihoods assistance that may have counterproductive effects on social cohesion. The more widespread and severe the level of deprivation in a community, the more susceptible

it may be to competition and grievances over the distribution of aid.

c. **Following a conflict-sensitive approach by continuously monitoring the impact of aid on social cohesion through community engagement mechanisms is recommended.** The possibility of backlash linked to competition over access to aid and grievances related to lack of economic opportunities highlight the importance of maintaining strong community engagement mechanisms to transparently communicate targeting criteria, quickly identify emerging tensions and efficiently respond to complaints.

Finally, remaining knowledge gaps that have high potential to support evidence-based programming are discussed.

8. The correlation between employment and socially cohesive attitudes is highly robust in the study, but evidence of this correlation as a causal relationship is rare in the literature. **Understanding the nature and strength of this relationship across different contexts has the potential to inform social protection programmes and labour market development strategies among populations with recent experience of conflict, displacement and/or that are otherwise affected by poor intergroup relations.**

9. Similarly, credible identification of spillover effects of livelihoods programmes onto non-assisted community members is scant. However, the possibility of such spillovers is important for understanding the effects of such interventions on community-level outcomes such as social cohesion. **The next stage of this study includes an experimental design for identifying such spillovers. Future reports with RCT results will share our findings on this question.**



Hevi's family, alongside many other displaced families, returned to Sinjar after years of displacement and had to live in tents while waiting for their damaged home to be rebuilt.
© IOM Iraq 2023/Aram HAKIM

REFERENCES*

- Acemoglu, D. and J.A. Robinson (2005). *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. In *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Adida, C.L. (2014). *Immigrant exclusion and insecurity in Africa: Coethnic strangers*. In *Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic Strangers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Adida, C.L., D.D. Laitin and M.A. Valfort (2014). *Muslims in France: Identifying a discriminatory equilibrium*. *Journal of Population Economics*, 27(4):1039–1086.
- Alesina, A. and P. Giuliano (2011). *Family ties and political participation*. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 9(5):817–839.
- Alesina, A. and E. La Ferrara (2002). *Who trusts others?* *Journal of Public Economics*, 85(2):207–234.
- Allport, G.W. (1954). *The Nature Of Prejudice*. Addison-Wesley, Massachusetts.
- Arowolo, O.O. (2000). *Return Migration and the Problem of Reintegration*. *International Migration*, 38(5):59–82.
- Bandiera, O., R. Burgess, N. Das, S. Gulesci, I. Rasul and M. Sulaiman (2017). *Labor Markets and Poverty in Village Economies*. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 132(2):811–870.
- Bascom, J. (2005). *The Long, 'Last Step'? Reintegration of Repatriates in Eritrea*. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 18(2):165–180.
- Baseler, T., T. Ginn, R. Hakiza, H. Ogude-Chambert and O. Woldemikael (2025). *Can Redistribution Change Policy Views? Aid and Attitudes Toward Refugees*. *Journal of Political Economy*, 133(9).
- Bazzi, S. and C. Blattman (2014). *Economic Shocks and Conflict: Evidence from Commodity Prices*. *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics*, 6(4):1–38.
- Blair, C.W. and A.L. Wright (2022). *Refugee Return and Conflict: Evidence from a Natural Experiment*. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
- Blattman, C. and J. Annan (2016). *Can Employment Reduce Lawlessness and Rebellion? A Field Experiment with High-Risk Men in a Fragile State*. *American Political Science Review*, 110(1):1–17.
- Blattman, C. and S. Dercon (2018). *The Impacts of Industrial and Entrepreneurial Work on Income and Health: Experimental Evidence from Ethiopia*. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 10(3):1–38.
- Blattman, C., N. Fiala and S. Martinez (2014). *Generating Skilled Self-Employment in Developing Countries: Experimental Evidence from Uganda*. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 129(2):697–752.
- Blattman, C., E.P. Green, J. Jamison, M. Christian Lehmann and J. Annan (2016). *The Returns to Microenterprise Support among the Ultrapoor: A Field Experiment in Postwar Uganda*. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 8(2):35–64.
- Blattman, C. and E. Miguel (2010). *Civil War*. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 48(1):3–57.
- Bobo, L. (1983). *'Whites' opposition to busing: Symbolic racism or realistic group conflict?* *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45(6):1196–1210.
- Bobo, L. and V.L. Hutchings (1996). *Perceptions of racial group competition: Extending Blumer's theory of group position to a multiracial social context*. *American Sociological Review*, 61(6):951–972.
- Brück, T., N.T.N. Ferguson, V. Izzi and W. Stojetz (2021). *Can Jobs Programs Build Peace?* *The World Bank Research Observer*, 36(2):234–259.
- Brückner, M., A. Chong and M. Gradstein (2021). *National income and trust*. *Review of Development Economics*, 25(1):293–314.
- Buhaug, H., L.-E. Cederman and K.S. Gleditsch (2014). *Square Pegs in Round Holes: Inequalities, Grievances, and Civil War*. *International Studies Quarterly*, 58(2):418–431.
- Burke, M., S.M. Hsiang and E. Miguel (2015). *Climate and Conflict*. *Annual Review of Economics*, 7(1):577–617.
- Cavaillé, C. and J. Ferwerda (2023). *How Distributional Conflict over In-Kind Benefits Generates Support for Far-Right Parties*. *The Journal of Politics*, 85(1):19–33.
- Cederman, L.E., K.S. Gleditsch, and H. Buhaug (2013). *Inequality, grievances, and civil war*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cederman, L.E., N.B. Weidmann and N.C. Bormann (2015). *Triangulating horizontal inequality*. *Journal of Peace Research*, 52(6):806–821.
- Cederman, L.E., N.B. Weidmann and K.S. Gleditsch (2011). *Horizontal inequalities and ethnonationalist civil war: A global comparison*. *American Political Science Review*, 105(3):478–495.
- Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO) and International Labour Organization (ILO) (2022). *Iraq Labour Force Survey 2021*. Baghdad.
- Choi, G.S. and V.H. Storr (2020). *Market interactions, trust and reciprocity*. *PLOS ONE*, 15(5):e0232704.
- Colletta, N.J., T.G. Lee and A. Kelles-Viitanen (1999). *Social cohesion and conflict prevention in Asia : managing diversity through development*. World Bank.

* All hyperlinks were working at the time of writing this report.

- Collier, P., L. Chauvet and H. Hegre (2008). *The Challenge of Conflicts*.
- Collier, P. and A. Hoeffler (1998). *On economic causes of civil war*. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 50(4):563–573.
- Collier, P. and A. Hoeffler (2004). *Greed and grievance in civil war*. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56(4):563–595.
- Dancygier, R.M. (2010). *Immigration and conflict in Europe*. Cambridge University Press.
- De la Cuesta, B., L. Martin, H.V. Milner and D.L. Nielson (2021). *Foreign aid, oil revenues, and political accountability: Evidence from six experiments in Ghana and Uganda*. *Review of International Organizations*, 16(3):521–548.
- De la Cuesta, B., L. Martin, H.V. Milner and D.L. Nielson (2022). *Owning It: Accountability and Citizens' Ownership over Oil, Aid, and Taxes*. *Journal of Politics*, 84(1):304–320.
- De La Cuesta, B., H.V. Milner, D.L. Nielson and S.F. Knack (2019). *Oil and aid revenue produce equal demands for accountability as taxes in Ghana and Uganda*. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 116(36):17717–17722.
- Deaton, A. (2015). *The great escape: health, wealth, and the origins of inequality*. Princeton University Press.
- De Mel, S., D.D. McKenzie and C. Woodruff (2013). *The Demand for, and Consequences of, Formalization among Informal Firms in Sri Lanka*. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 5(2):122–150.
- Domenella, Y., J.C. Jamison, A. Safir and B. Zia (2021). *Can Business Grants Mitigate a Crisis? Evidence from Youth Entrepreneurs in Kenya during COVID-19*. World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- Dube, O. and J.F. Vargas (2013). *Commodity Price Shocks and Civil Conflict: Evidence from Colombia*. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 80(4):1384–1421.
- Easterly, W. (2007). *Was Development Assistance a Mistake?* *American Economic Review*, 97(2):328–332.
- Egger, D., J. Haushofer, E. Miguel, P. Niehaus and M. Walker (2022). *General Equilibrium Effects of Cash Transfers: Experimental Evidence From Kenya*. *Econometrica*, 90(6):2603–2643.
- Fafchamps, M. (2003). *Market Institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa: Theory and Evidence*. In *Market Institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa*. The MIT Press.
- Fearon, J.D. and D.D. Laitin (2011). *Sons of the Soil, Migrants, and Civil War*. *World Development*, 39(2):199–211.
- Fransen, S. and K. Kuschminder (2012). *Back to the land: the long-term challenges of refugee return and reintegration in Burundi*. *New Issues in Refugee Research*. UNHCR.
- Gurr, T.R. (1970). *Why men rebel*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Harari, M. and E. La Ferrara (2018). *Conflict, Climate, and Cells: A Disaggregated Analysis*. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 100(4):594–608.
- Humphreys, M. and J.M. Weinstein (2008). *Who fights? the determinants of participation in civil war*. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(2):436–455.
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (2010). *Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons*. Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (ILO), Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO) (2022). *Iraq Labour Force Survey 2021*.
- International Labour Organization (ILO), UN Peacebuilding, World Bank and UNDP (2016). *Employment Programmes and Peace*.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2016). *Progressive Resolution of Displacement Situations Framework*. Geneva.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2023a). *Progress Towards Durable Solutions in Iraq: A Pilot Project in Ninewa Governorate*. Baghdad.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2023b). *Progress Towards Durable Solutions in Iraq: Salah al Din*. Geneva.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2024a). *Iraq Mission: Displacement Tracking Matrix*. Baghdad.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2024b). *Progress Towards Durable Solutions in Iraq: Anbar*. Baghdad.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2024c). *Progress Towards Durable Solutions in Iraq: Diyala*. Baghdad.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2024d). *Periodic Global Report on the State of Solutions to Internal Displacement (PROGRESS) 2024*. IOM and Georgetown University.
- Iraq (Government of) Ministry of Planning (2024). *National Development Plan (2024–2028)*. Baghdad.
- Jha, S. (2013). *Trade, Institutions, and Ethnic Tolerance: Evidence from South Asia*. *American Political Science Review*, 107(4):806–832.
- Jha, S. (2014). *'Unfinished business': Historic complementarities, political competition and ethnic violence in Gujarat*. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 104:18–36.
- Jha, S. (2018). *Trading for peace*. *Economic Policy*, 33(95):485–526.
- Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) (2020). *Durable Solutions, Measuring Progress Towards Solutions for IDPs: Indicator Library*. Geneva.

- Lehmann, M.C. and D.T.R. Masterson (2020). [Does Aid Reduce Anti-refugee Violence? Evidence from Syrian Refugees in Lebanon](#). *American Political Science Review*, 114(4):1335–1342.
- Lemmer, G. and U. Wagner (2015). [Can we really reduce ethnic prejudice outside the lab? A meta-analysis of direct and indirect contact interventions](#). *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 45(2):152–168.
- Lipset, S.M. (1959). [Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy](#). *American Political Science Review*, 53(1):69–105.
- Miguel, E., S. Satyanath and E. Sergenti (2004). [Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach](#). *Journal of Political Economy*, 112(4).
- Mousa, S. (2020). [Building social cohesion between Christians and Muslims through soccer in post-ISIS Iraq](#). *Science*, 369(6505):866–870.
- Østby, G. (2008). [Polarization, horizontal inequalities and violent civil conflict](#). *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(2):143–162.
- Pettigrew, T.F. (1998). [Intergroup Contact Theory](#). *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49:65–85.
- Pettigrew, T.F., L.R. Tropp, U. Wagner and O. Christ (2011). [Recent advances in intergroup contact theory](#). *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(3):271–280.
- Putnam, R.D. (2000). [Bowling alone : the collapse and revival of American community](#). Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.
- Putnam, R.D., R. Leonardi and R.Y. Nonetti (1993). [Making Democracy Work](#). Princeton University Press.
- Scacco, A. and S.S. Warren (2018). [Can Social Contact Reduce Prejudice and Discrimination? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Nigeria](#). *American Political Science Review*, 112(3):654–677.
- Schwartz, S. (2019). [Home, Again: Refugee Return and Post-Conflict Violence in Burundi](#). *International Security*, 44(2):110–145.
- Stewart, F. (2008). [Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies](#). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- United Nations (2015). [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). New York.
- United Nations (2024). [United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(UNSCDF\) for Iraq \(2025–2029\)](#). Baghdad.
- United Nations and World Bank (2018). [Pathways for Peace](#). Washington, D.C.
- Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., and H. E. Brady (1995). [Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics](#). Harvard University Press.
- World Bank, Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO) (2024). [Iraq Household Socioeconomic Survey \(IHSES\)](#).
- Zhou, Y.-Y. and J. Lyall (2023). [Prolonged Contact Does Not Reshape Locals' Attitudes toward Migrants in Wartime Settings](#). OSF Preprints.

APPENDIX: REGRESSION MODELS

This technical appendix provides the equations for all regression models run as part of the analysis.

Work

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 [\text{respondent worked}_i] + \beta_2 [\text{another household member worked}_i] \\ + \Lambda [\text{Displacement history}_i] + \Gamma [\text{Education level}_i] + \Pi [\text{Age group}_i] + \Phi [\text{Sex}_i] + u_i$$

Income

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 [\text{Income p.c. tercile 1}_i] + \beta_2 [\text{Income p.c. tercile 2}_i] + \beta_3 [\text{Income p.c. tercile 3}_i] \\ + \Lambda [\text{Displacement history}_i] + \Gamma [\text{Education level}_i] + \Pi [\text{Age group}_i] + \Phi [\text{Sex}_i] + u_i$$

Expenditure

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 [\text{Expenditure p.c. quartile 2}_i] + \beta_2 [\text{Expenditure p.c. quartile 3}_i] \\ + \beta_3 [\text{Expenditure p.c. quartile 4}_i] \\ + \Lambda [\text{Displacement history}_i] + \Gamma [\text{Education level}_i] + \Pi [\text{Age group}_i] + \Phi [\text{Sex}_i] + u_i$$

Assets

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 [\text{Moderate assets}_i] + \beta_2 [\text{High assets}_i] \\ + \Lambda [\text{Displacement history}_i] + \Gamma [\text{Education level}_i] + \Pi [\text{Age group}_i] + \Phi [\text{Sex}_i] + u_i$$

Housing

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 [\text{Home was destroyed and rebuilt}_i] + \beta_2 [\text{Home is still destroyed}_i] \\ + \Lambda [\text{Displacement history}_i] + \Gamma [\text{Education level}_i] + \Pi [\text{Age group}_i] + \Phi [\text{Sex}_i] + u_i$$

Displacement history and demographics

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \Lambda [\text{Displacement history}_i] + \Gamma [\text{Education level}_i] + \Pi [\text{Age group}_i] + \Phi [\text{Sex}_i] + u_i$$

In the above specifications, Y_i refers to inverse covariance weighted indices capturing each of the seven dimensions of social cohesion addressed in the study. Displacement history and demographic characteristics (education, age and sex) are included as controls in all regressions looking at the correlation between economic variables and the different dimensions of social cohesion. We run separate regressions for each economic variable to avoid introducing endogenous controls in the specification. For each independent variable and control, the excluded category acts as the reference group. For example, nobody working is the reference group for employment, no income is the reference group for income terciles, and so forth.

IOM IRAQ

 iraq.iom.int
 iomiraq@iom.int

UNAMI Compound (Diwan 2),
International Zone,
Baghdad/Iraq

   
@IOMIraq



UC SANTA BARBARA

IOM Iraq thanks the European Union and KfW for their continued support.



Engaged by

KfW