WHO CAN I TURN TO?

Mapping social connections, trust and problem-solving among conflict-affected populations

Queen Margaret University
INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH
AND DEVELOPMENT

TEARFUND

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Cover photo: *Displaced family in Duhok Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq.*
Sarah Guy/Tearfund

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Advisory group

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Social connections are widely recognised as crucial to resilience and well-being in all populations. Families, friendships, community and business relationships are essential for support and protection both within and between communities. Yet these connections are often catastrophically disrupted when people flee from conflict. In addition to material destruction, families and communities are broken and scattered and identities challenged. Without the usual network of social relations people become insecure in multiple ways. Displaced people often struggle to access food or shelter and meet their material needs. In addition, without the relationships which enable participation and provide a sense of belonging, people can find themselves without personal and emotional support and can lack any of the familiar and trusted pathways to resolving conflict, within and beyond the family. Building resilience in the face of violence, loss and displacement requires drawing on reserves of strength and courage as well as all possible personal resources that can help sustain psychosocial well-being.

The population of northern Iraq has faced wave after wave of such violence, loss and displacement in a series of conflicts and repressive political regimes. Since 2014, conflict has led to massive displacement of people throughout the country. In particular religious minorities such as the Yezidi have experienced attacks including: the killing of large numbers of people; the kidnapping of women, many of whom report being kept as sex slaves; the coercion of boys and men into the military; and forced religious conversion to Islam.

Since 2014, Tearfund has responded to the physical and psychological needs of those whose lives have been devastated by the current crisis. Tearfund's recent work has focused on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects for the most vulnerable populations, that is people living outside formal camps in informal settlements or abandoned buildings, or who have been taken in by local communities and are therefore not eligible for the 'formal' services offered by local government and UN agencies.

This report aims to support the work of Tearfund and other agencies by providing improved baseline knowledge through the identification of social connections and levels of trust among displaced and settled communities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. It reports on research carried out by Tearfund and Queen Margaret University, supported by the University of Duhok and the American University of Kurdistan, in the Duhok Governorate, in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The research aimed to test a methodology which has been developed in other locations to enable the identification of social connections and levels of trust in settings of conflict and displacement (Strang and Quinn, 2014). The methodology was carried out by local researchers trained by the Queen Margaret University team. Participatory activities used three different scenarios: immediate basic needs such as cash for food, clothing or other essential items; resolving disputes; and gender-based violence.

Eight participatory workshops were carried out during the study, followed by 50 individual interviews consisting of a participatory card-sorting and ranking exercise and three semi-structured questions. A total of 103 individuals were involved in the data collection: 48 women and 55 men from displaced Yezidi and Muslim populations and a Yezidi settled population (referred to as 'host community' using common humanitarian terminology, but without implying these people have an obligation to look after those who have been displaced).[1]

Key findings

1 Connections

Participants identified the people and organisations that are valued as resources in this locality. Data was then collected with the displaced and host Yezidi groups[2] to measure the extent to which individuals are in contact with each of these valued connections. The figure below illustrates the range of connections valued by men and women and compares levels of connection of host and displaced participants with these people and organisations.

Figure 1a Levels of actual connection
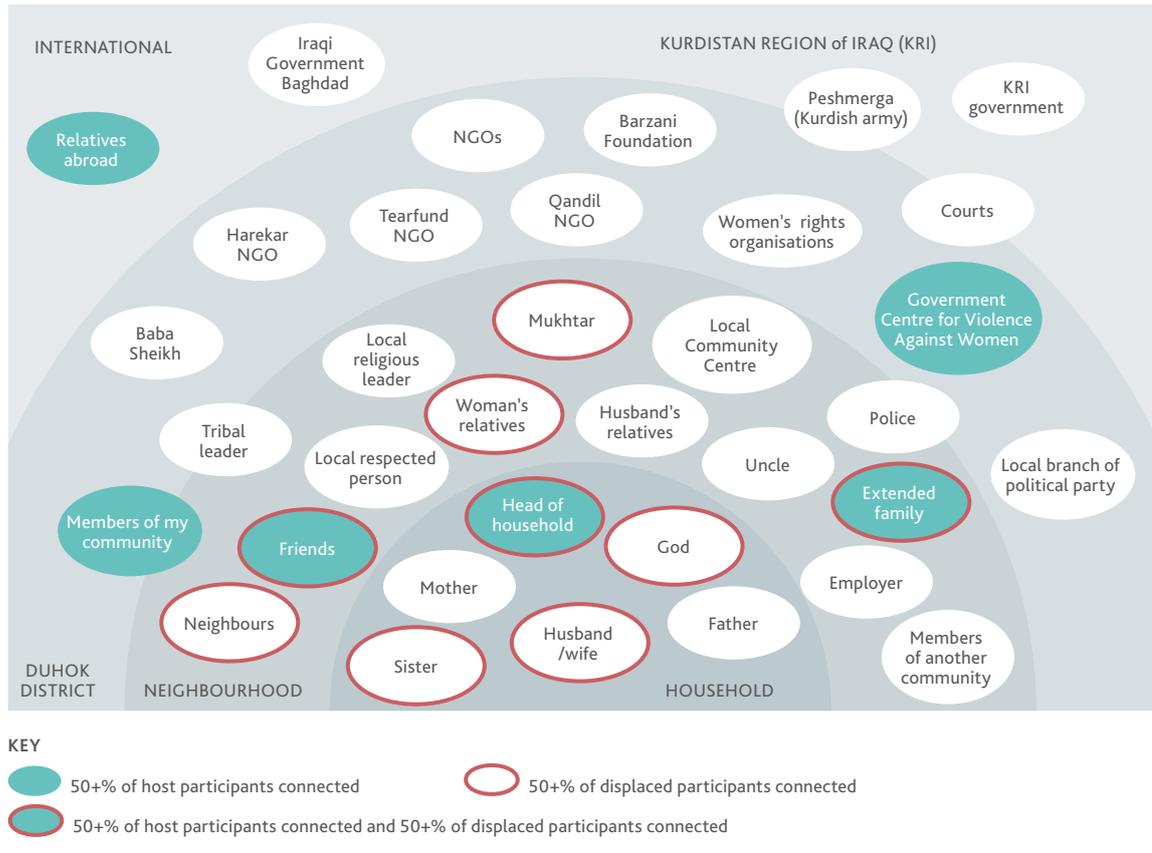
Figure 1a presents the range of people and organisations that participants identified as potential sources of help. These are plotted according to approximate geographic location, with people generally living together in a household plotted within the first arc, those located in the neighbourhood in the next concentric arc, followed by Duhok District and national and international. The coloured discs indicate people or organisations to which more than 50 per cent of either the host group (colour fill), or displaced group (line around the border) have reached out for help in the last six months.

■ Patterns of connections among women were very similar between displaced and host women. Women were most closely connected with people in their household and immediate neighbourhood. We observed especially strong bonds between neighbours in the displaced settlement where women were not with their own immediate family members.

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2   The displaced Muslim group did not participate in this part of the study.

- Men were generally more connected to people and organisations at the district and national level than were women. However, the connections of displaced men were much more limited than those of host men.

- Displaced men were the group most connected to NGOs.

- The displaced group in particular reported high levels of connection with God and talked about God as a personal source of support independent of religious leaders or organisations. However, it also seemed that the overall Yezidi religious leader, Baba Sheikh, was available to advise and help with problem-solving and a number of both displaced and host participants had sought his help.

2 Levels of trust

The study measured participants' trust in the people and organisations identified as valued resources. They were asked to rate general trust (without specifying a context) and then also levels of trust in relation to issues of gender-based violence. The figure below illustrates where higher levels of general trust were indicated and compares men's and women's responses.

Figure 1b Levels of general trust
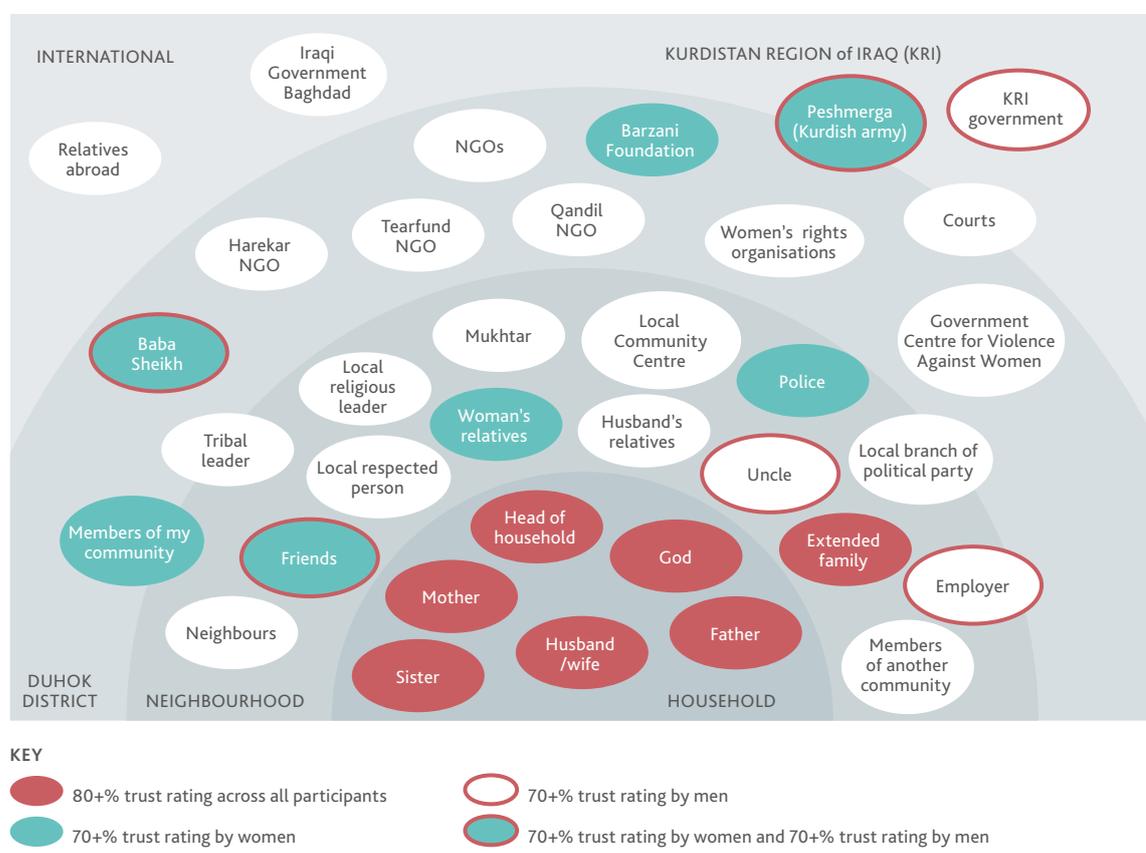
- In all four participant groups (men/women, host/displaced) the list of people ranked with the highest trust (over 80 per cent of total possible score) was the same – family members within the household, extended family and God.

- At the next level of ranking men and women also shared trust in friends, Baba Sheikh and the Peshmerga.[3]

- People in the host community generally reported higher levels of trust than the displaced group.

- Men reported higher levels of trust than women.

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3   Soldiers in the Kurdish army

- To a great extent, higher trust reflected higher connection. However, there were two notable exceptions to this. Men reported lower trust in NGOs than women and yet were more connected to them than women. Women reported higher trust than men in the police and the government-run Centre for Violence Against Women, but also reported lower levels of connection.

- In general participants reported high levels of trust in religious sources of support. For women, this was mainly in relation to God; the men showed higher levels of trust in religious leaders.

- Levels of trust with matters concerning gender-based violence revealed a different pattern:

Figure 1c Levels of trust with matters concerning gender-based violence
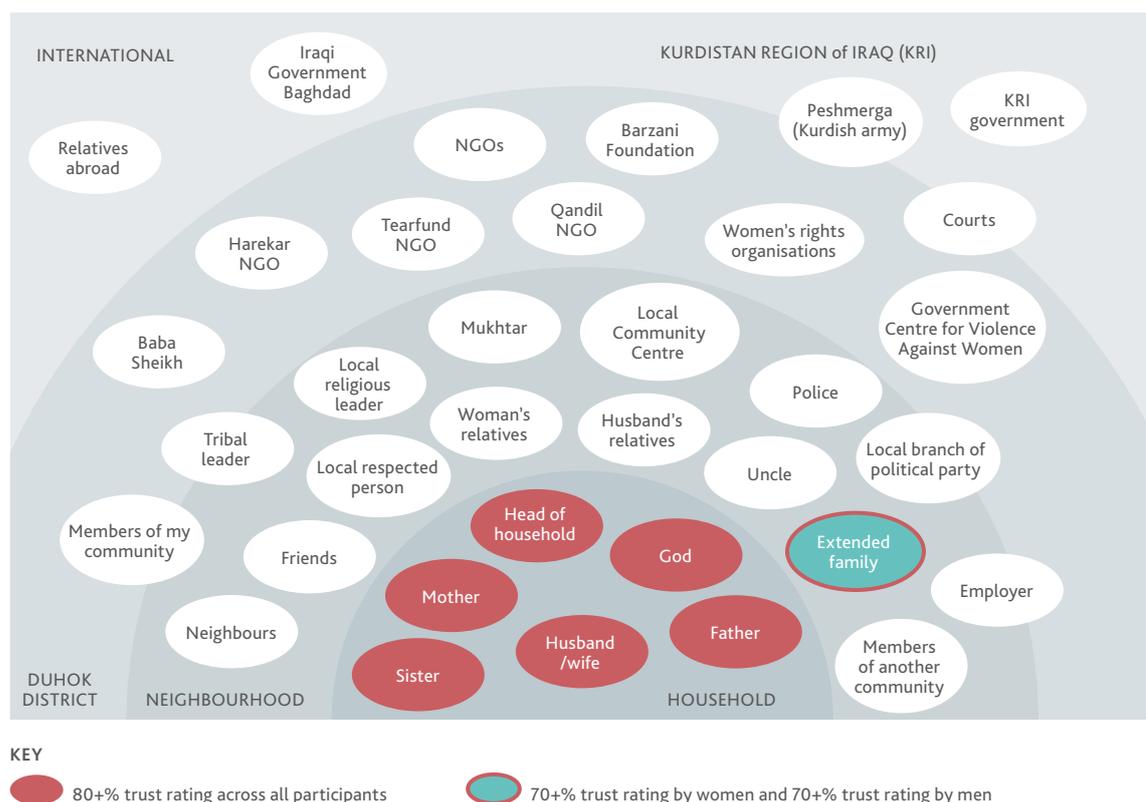
- Both men and women reserve the highest levels of trust (80+ per cent) exclusively for family members sharing the household and personal encounters with God.

- The next levels of trust (70+ per cent) include the extended family. At 60 per cent to 70 per cent levels men still limit their trust to family and 'tribal' members, whereas women include Baba Sheikh (66.7 per cent), the Police (64 per cent) and friends (62.5 per cent).

- Men consistently report lower levels of trust in people and organisations over matters concerning gender-based violence than women.

- Host communities are likely to trust local leaders and local organisations a little more than displaced people trust these same people and organisations.

3 Meeting basic needs

Figure 2 Basic needs resilience pathways

KEY

→ Potential help available to all   ···▶ Help only available to some

Figure 2 illustrates the various pathways that participants reported they used to resolve problems associated with meeting their own and their family's basic needs. These patterns and pathways were similar for host and displaced groups. The sources of help included their family and household, neighbours and friends and tribal leaders followed by, for the Yezidi, spiritual leaders including Baba Sheikh. Participants explained that sometimes they would ask people or organisations for direct help and sometimes those people or organisations would reach out to others on behalf of the person in need. They also mentioned people and organisations that they might have hoped to get help from (perhaps because these helped others), but that had not in fact provided help. In addition, displaced people were constrained in asking for help from some traditional sources of support because they could not reciprocate as they had nothing they could offer in exchange. They argued that they would lose their honour if they kept asking for help without repaying. Figure 2 uses a red dotted line to indicate sources of help perceived as unavailable.

- All the communities that we worked with had established social connections that supported their resilience.

- The most important source of help for nearly everyone we spoke to was God. We were told that people felt calmer about their problems and more reassured after talking to God: they felt they had an ally, someone on their side.

- All host community men and half of the host women participating in this study had had paid employment over the past 12 months. In contrast members of the displaced community reported being paid low wages for occasional work. Some displaced women were keen to work but reported that their husbands prevented them from doing so.

- When they found themselves in acute financial or material need people would go to their family for help first before asking for help outside the family.

- Women were more likely to go to friends and neighbours or the local community for help while men were more likely to go to male relatives, the local Mukhtar or external people such as employers, NGOs or government.

- The displaced communities had problems meeting basic needs and had experienced a dramatic reduction in their standard of living as well as loss of employment and stability.

- People would usually turn to wealthier people, landlords and shopkeepers to borrow money or ask for credit. However, displacement and a strong sense of honour meant that people were reluctant to borrow if they knew that they could not return the money or had to ask for help repeatedly/had nothing to offer in exchange.

- All communities reported a culture of community collections to support individuals with a specific financial need.

4 Resolving disputes

Figure 3 Dispute resolution pathways
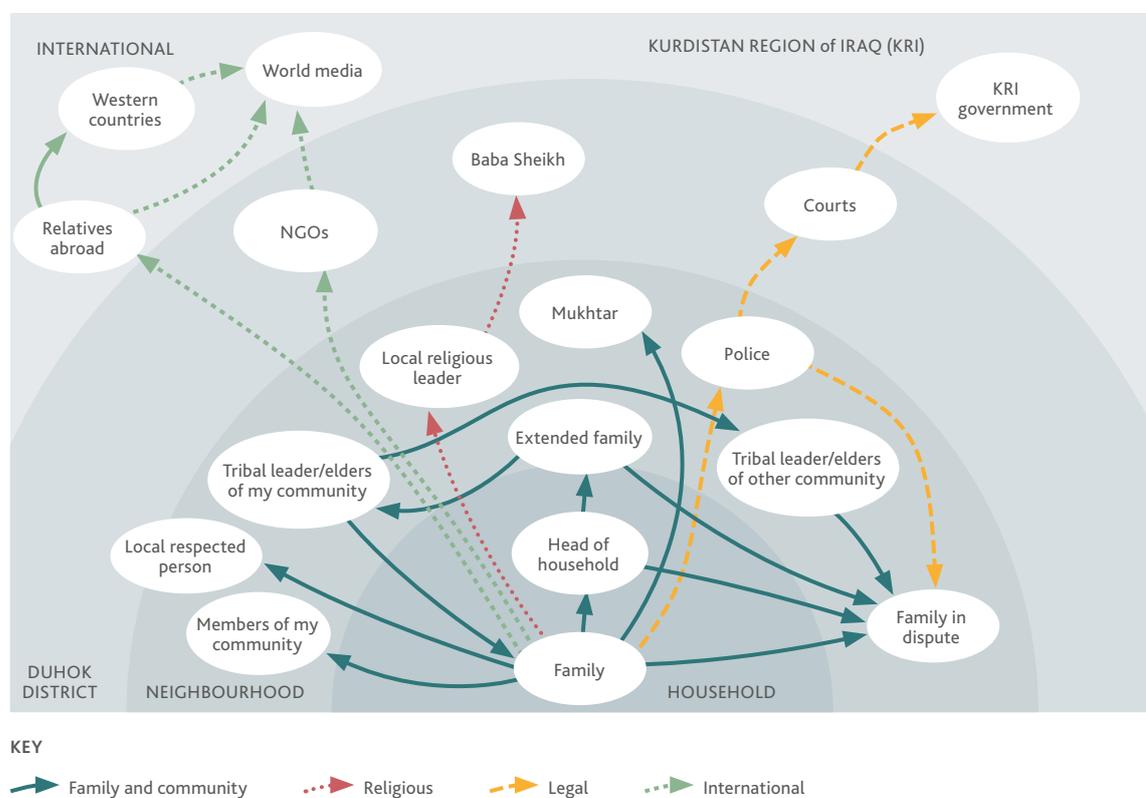
Figure 3 illustrates the different pathways to help with dispute resolution reported by participants. The different colours indicate different types of dispute resolution approaches including: through the family and community; through the support of religious leaders; employing local legal structures; and appealing to an international audience.

- The people we spoke to appeared to live with close family members who shared their religion. They did not set out to mix with other communities and presented this as their way of living peacefully and avoiding conflict.

- Both communities expressed the view that someone has a right to revenge for a serious offence, but may be persuaded not to exercise this right.

- Family and community structures played an important role in dispute resolution for both Yezidi and Muslim communities. In each context, the local Mukhtar was very active in seeking resolution and mediating with parties in dispute.

- Religious leaders and structures play an important role in resolving problems among the Yezidi. In Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the ultimate Yezidi authority is the spiritual council led by Baba Sheikh. Yezidi people consistently affirmed that all Yezidis will obey the instructions of the spiritual council.

- Community solutions mentioned included the payment of money in compensation and the physical removal of one of the parties from the area.

- When a dispute is with people from a different religion, external organisations such as the police and the courts have to step in.

5 Addressing gender-based violence

Figure 4 Displaced women's resilience pathways – gender-based violence

- Despite concerns about sensitivities, we found both men and women participants were ready to discuss gender-based violence.

- Although we did not ask women to disclose personal experiences of gender-based violence, a number of women (five out of 48 of the women respondents) did confide in us that they had experienced violence within the family, all of them with their husbands.

- People shared a range of examples of gender-based violence including intimate partner violence, harassment, arranged marriage, and forced marriage, polygamy, elopement and revenge and honour killings. No one volunteered information about GBV (gender-based violence) that had occurred through the conflict.

- Avoiding public shame emerged as a strong motivator for action for both women and men. It appeared that choices were based on who would have the power and influence to resolve the issues with minimum public knowledge. This appeared to be a stronger motivator than safety or justice.

- Women often suggested that violence in the home was a result of their own wrong-doing, and that solutions would come by their improving their own behaviour.

- Women reported that they would prefer not to tell anyone if they were experiencing violence, but would keep it to themselves, or confide in God.

- Women indicated that if they could not resolve domestic violence directly with their husband, their next action would, if possible, be to speak with their mother. The mother could then potentially speak with her husband and improve the situation without anyone in the wider family knowing.

- After their mother, women would generally turn to male relatives for resolution, and to female friends and relatives for comfort and support.

Figure 5 Displaced men resilience pathways – GBV
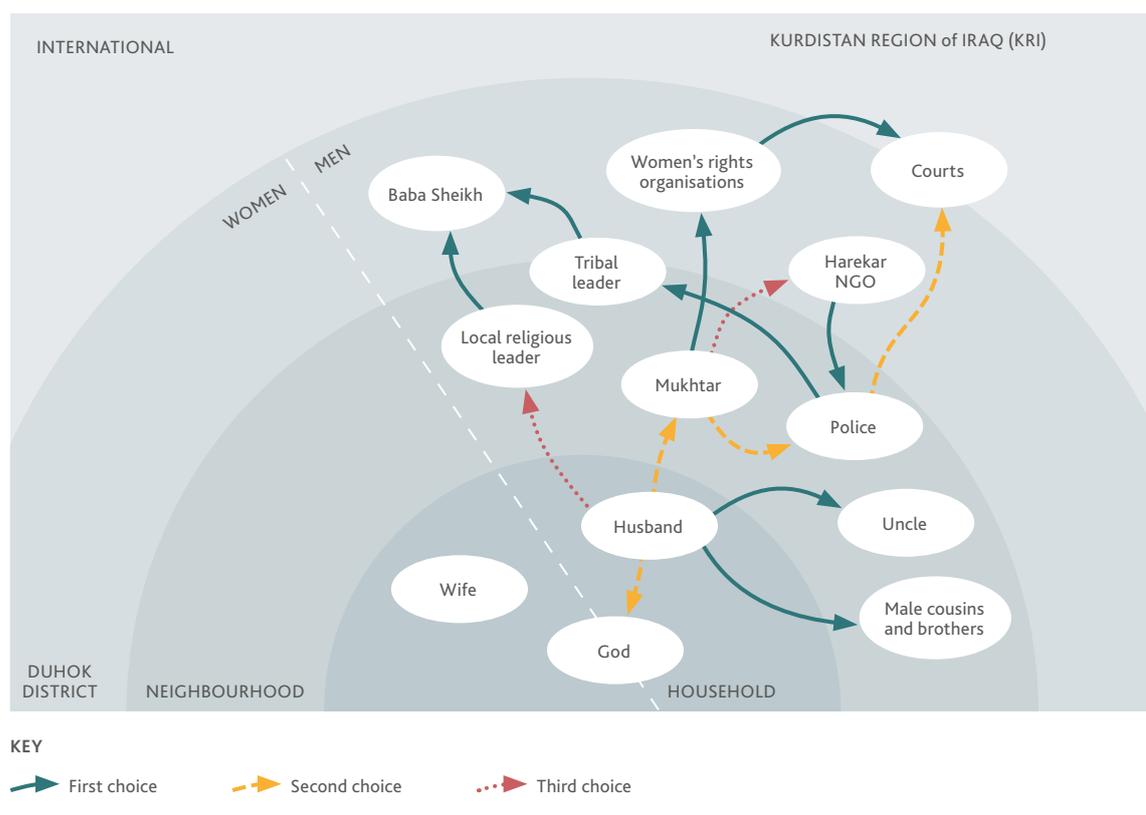
- Men spoke of having responsibility for solving many gender-based violence issues and it was clearly perceived as an important and often challenging task.

- Men did not identify women as having a role in resolving gender-based violence.

- Similar to community dispute resolution, for the Yezidi communities the spiritual council with Baba Sheikh was seen as the highest authority on disputes around gender issues.

- An undercurrent running through the workshops and the interviews was the threat of using violence to solve gender issues, especially in matters of honour. Researchers were told a number of times that violence is the ultimate solution when disputes cannot be solved in the other ways described.

Recommendations

It is critical for humanitarian actors and policymakers to understand the social norms and practices that drive participation, identity and coping mechanisms in conflict-affected contexts. Within the context of communities that have experienced trauma and have lost trust with each other, it is vital to:

- Know who the key influencers are – including religious leaders

- Understand their role, their potential and sphere of influence within their communities, so that strategies can build on community foundations, making the work more effective and sustainable

- Recognise that for sensitive issues such as gender-based violence and peacebuilding, this understanding becomes an essential first step.

Use and applicability of the participatory social mapping tool

We recommend the further use and refinement of the participatory social mapping tool in a range of different settings for policymakers, service providers, government, NGOs and other actors in order to:

- Improve baseline knowledge of sources of protection and resilience in humanitarian settings by using a culturally responsive approach to mapping social connections and levels of trust among displaced and host communities

- Use data on existing social connections and help-seeking pathways, whether still in use or unavailable due to displacement, to assist in identifying strategic interventions to strengthen existing pathways or identify replacement strategies

- Adapt mapping tools to incorporate a gender-sensitive approach.

Meeting basic needs

Through mapping social connections, a number of existing community mechanisms to support others with financial aid or other forms of assistance were identified. This included those which support displaced people or people facing emergencies and impoverishment, even among those who were themselves displaced. When working with basic needs we recommend that the following issues are taken into account:

- Support agencies should work with and strengthen community mechanisms for collecting donations and distributing money for urgent material needs. This could also extend to sharing non-monetary resources. It would be particularly important to pay attention to the need for people to have the opportunity for repayment and/or reciprocity in order to protect their sense of honour.

- Information on preferred help-seeking pathways could be used to identify people with little recourse to help. The needs of the most vulnerable should be considered and addressed through community-building interventions.

- In addressing women's exclusion or barriers to participating in the labour market, it will be vital to engage the support of men within communities, and work to address underlying gender norms, to avoid increasing risks and vulnerabilities.

- More information needs to be gathered on the role and expectations of respected and wealthy people in supporting others who face difficulties, to identify how this operates in practice and whether it is a system which can be supported or strengthened or whether it reinforces power imbalances including gender inequality, thereby creating obligation.

Resolving disputes between communities

- Provide services in settled, 'host' villages as well as among displaced people in order to avoid resentment building between these different groups.

- Create a setting in which religious leaders from the different faith communities can work together to help resolve disputes that cross religious divides.

- Support community leaders including Mukhtars, religious leaders, tribal leaders and other elders in mediation and dispute resolution.

- Train local police in mediation and dispute resolution skills.

Addressing violence against women: prevention

- A gender-sensitive approach should be developed in order to work with faith leaders, community leaders, men and women within communities to identify and address harmful social and gender norms, strengthen community resilience, improve protection and ensure the needs of the most vulnerable are met.

- Work with faith leaders within these communities, to address issues of stigma, and barriers within the 'honour' culture, to ensure that survivors of violence can safely access the services and support they need.

- Recognise and build on existing efforts by faith leaders such as Baba Sheikh, who have publicly established mechanisms for supporting and reintegrating Yezidi women and girls who have survived sexual violence and captivity.

- Engage with men and boys, particularly when addressing violence against women so that men can become agents of change and engage as allies at all stages of this process. This would include working at a community level so that men engage with this communally with their peers and, if relevant, have additional psychoeducation and anger-management support. This approach needs to be embedded into long-term goals for NGOs.

- Develop positive gender perspectives among boys and girls of various age groups through psychoeducation activities.

Responding to violence against women

- Work with communities to change attitudes towards social norms of honour and shame for both men and women to improve access to support organisations.

- Develop culturally acceptable ways of supporting childcare and domestic work to enable women to participate in activities, including economic opportunities, beyond the household if they so desire.

- Provide means of protection and emotional support for women that can be accessed without public knowledge, which might include:
  - Ensure full and meaningful confidentiality of all services.
  - Provide referral pathways that do not identify survivors, eg general health services, which can be accessed openly but which then include specialised GBV support.
  - Include specialist training for general health care workers on GBV.

- If a woman chooses to stay with her husband/family she should be supported with strategies for developing resilience.

- Mobilise women to get together and work out how they can protect each other more effectively within families/neighbours (eg by visiting regularly, being present in each other's houses at crucial times, mobilising other men in the community to protect someone).

- Support women who do not have access to a suitable relative and identify an alternative person or strategy for putting pressure on a husband to change his behaviour.

- Work with the Centre for Violence Against Women – build trust among women and men.

- Improve access to health care at community level so that injuries can be treated, and opportunities for support and referral provided safely. This would have to include specialist training for general health care workers on GBV.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social connections in the humanitarian context

Social connections are widely recognised as crucial to resilience and well-being in all populations. Families, friendships, community and business relationships are essential for support and protection both within and between communities. Yet these connections are often catastrophically disrupted when people flee from conflict. In addition to material destruction, families and communities are broken and scattered and identities challenged. Without the usual network of social relations people become insecure in multiple ways. Displaced people often struggle to access food or shelter and meet their material needs. In addition, without the relationships which enable participation and provide a sense of belonging, people can find themselves without personal and emotional support and can lack any of the familiar and trusted pathways to resolving conflict, within and beyond the family.

Humanitarian agencies seek to alleviate human suffering by providing material, personal and emotional resources that are in scarce supply and by supporting people affected by humanitarian crises to re-establish independent lives. *The Sphere Handbook* (2011), currently the most widely accepted humanitarian charter, sets out core principles for good humanitarian practice.

'The Sphere Handbook *puts the right of disaster-affected populations to life with dignity, and to protection and assistance at the centre of humanitarian action. It promotes the active participation of affected populations as well as of local and national authorities'.*

The first action under the first core standard establishes the primacy of community social relationships by specifying that good humanitarian practice should:

'Support local capacity by identifying community groups and social networks at the earliest opportunity and build on community-based and self-help initiatives.'

Following good practice, agencies seek to work with the affected populations to enable them to establish or re-establish social relations that foster/encourage appropriate distribution of resources, independence, self-governance and ultimately sustainability. Effectiveness in this approach depends on identifying existing local social structures, power dynamics and relationships of trust. However, networks of social relationships are very difficult to observe directly. Divisions of power, discrimination and self-interest can be hidden and those providing leadership may not be acting in the interest of everyone. Considerable investment is needed in order to build an understanding of social relationships within a group in order to perceive who is trusted and who is able to deliver certain outcomes among people whose lives have been disrupted by humanitarian crises.

There is a need for tools to provide quick and effective mapping of social connections among people affected by a humanitarian disaster. In line with good humanitarian practice, any tools used should not harm but rather strengthen local capacity as well as enabling humanitarian actors to understand the realities of social relationships in the groups with whom they work.

1.2 Rationale of the study

This report describes a study undertaken collaboratively by Tearfund and the Institute for Global Health and Development, Queen Margaret University. The purpose of this small-scale study was to adapt and apply a new approach to the mapping of social relationships in humanitarian contexts. The approach, developed by Queen Margaret University, builds on understandings of social capital by identifying social connections and trust within any particular context. Patterns of relationships can be mapped and related to particular challenges facing a group of people.

Tearfund identified the context of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) where it has established programmes as a suitable place to conduct the pilot study. An area near the city of Duhok was selected for the study. In this location some internally displaced people have set up informal settlements around the villages and others live within villages among the long-term residents. There are many pressures on both displaced communities and members of the settled population in this area. This study set out to pilot the use of a social mapping tool being developed by Queen Margaret University to gain an understanding of the social resources available to these people under pressure.[4] The methodology enables communities to participate in identifying levels of connection and trust among the people and organisations that can provide support within their own context. In addition to piloting the approach, the immediate aim of the study was to provide Tearfund, and other organisations working in this context, with improved baseline knowledge. The study aimed to contribute an understanding of existing social connections and resources within communities locally in order to support the design and implementation of programmes. There was particular interest in exploring social resources relevant to meeting basic needs, resolving disputes and addressing gender-based violence.

The design and implementation of the study was informed by principles of humanitarian practice along with the theoretical frameworks set out below.

Social capital

The term 'social capital' has been used to describe the benefits which accrue when people share and exchange their resources. Robert Putnam, the leading exponent of this theoretical framework (1993; 2000) argues that social relationships can be seen as a form of asset, or 'capital', because the existence and qualities of networks of relationships are crucial assets in enabling people to exchange and grow resources to meet their own needs. He suggests that strong social capital is built where there are dense networks of trust between people that are characterised by reciprocity of exchange of resources. These resources may include material assets, practical help or emotional support: the term covers all exchange that is pertinent to well-being. Furthermore, Putnam has suggested that different types of relationships can be observed that make a distinct contribution to well-being. He identifies social 'bonds' as relationships between people with shared identity who are likely to share values and a sense of solidarity. These relationships are seen as an important conduit for emotional support as well as practical or material help. In addition Putnam identifies social 'bridges' as relationships that enable exchange between communities. These relationships, although not so intimate, can function very effectively in facilitating the exchange of material and practical resources between groups. Finally others have suggested that a third type of relationship, social 'links', should be acknowledged (Woolcock, 1998). Social 'links' refer to the vertical relationships in a society that enable individuals to benefit from, and potentially participate in, governance infrastructure.

Social capital theory has been strongly critiqued for ignoring levels of economic resource and seeming to imply that well-being is only dependent on the nature of societal relationships, irrespective of levels of economic resource. Bourdieu points out that if none of the members of a densely connected network has access to material resources, then the existence of social connections alone will not be sufficient to ensure well-being but will serve to reproduce inequalities (2000). Closely connected groups with strong bonds but very weak bridges or links and poor access to material resource are a strong characteristic of ghettos or silos of deprivation.

The nuanced understanding of social relationships provided by social capital theory has been used to inform humanitarian practice. It provides insight into the mechanisms by which social disruption, including conflict and displacement, can of itself undermine well-being by disrupting the exchange of resources. Not only are people separated from those whom they already know, but also relationships of trust are often undermined. In this way, social capital is depleted.

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4   This tool has already been used in a variety of contexts including with refugees in Glasgow and in refugee camps in Darfur, Sudan (Strang and Quinn, 2014).

Gender

Understanding gender dynamics in complex and challenging environments such as conflict or displacement is central to understanding social connections. Gender is the term given to the deeply entrenched social norms which prescribe accepted ways of 'being male' or 'being female'. It influences how people interact in complex, multifaceted and context-specific ways, reflecting varying interests, values and power (Morgan et al, 2016; Bottorff et al, 2011) and therefore underpins the networks of bonds and bridges built up by individuals and communities. There is much evidence to demonstrate how gender intersects with economic inequality, racial or ethnic hierarchy, caste domination, differences based on sexual orientation, disability and a number of other social markers (Sen and Östlin, 2008 and 2012; Springer, 2012; Hankivsky, 2012). However, Sen and Östlin (2008) argue that gender relations of power are among the most influential of all the social determinants of health. Gender as a lived experience is rarely, if ever, a binary category lived as polar opposites, but instead is a fluid and interactive set of relationships lived with and between women, men, girls and boys.

This report describes some of the ways in which gender relations impact on the lives of people affected by conflict living in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, on their decision-making and approaches to seeking help. Gender norms are deeply embedded in social structures and working on gender relations can be sensitive and slow work. Challenging gender norms insensitively with no due regard for cultural values or with short-term goals can be damaging and cause a backlash with harmful impacts. In Section 5 we draw from the study to make recommendations about gender-sensitive interventions in humanitarian settings. However, while we believe the social connections tool we describe can be replicated and used in different settings to assess baseline information, responding to findings by developing gender-sensitive interventions requires time, skilled workers and community engagement and buy-in which can take some time to secure.

Gender-based violence in humanitarian settings

'Gender-based violence is among the greatest protection challenges that individuals, families and communities face during humanitarian emergencies. Accounts of horrific sexual violence in conflict situations—especially against women and girls—have captured public attention in recent years. These violations and less recognized forms of gender-based violence—intimate partner violence, child marriage and female genital mutilation—are also being committed with disturbing frequency. Natural disasters and other emergencies exacerbate the violence and diminish means of protection. And gender-based violence not only violates and traumatizes its survivors, it also undermines the resilience of their societies, making it harder to recover and rebuild.' (IASC, 2015: iii)

As the foreword to the IASC Guidelines quoted above makes clear, women in situations of war and displacement are at high risk of violence. Women's experiences in conflict include not only being targets and victims of violence perpetrated by armed groups, but also as combatants, in both fighting and domestic roles, and as sexual slaves and 'wives' (Annan and Brier, 2010). Recent research suggests that approximately one in five refugees or displaced women experience sexual violence (Vu et al, 2013), although establishing exact rates is challenging, given the multiple barriers associated with disclosure and methodological challenges.

Research in conflict-affected settings has traditionally focused on the sexual violence women experience by armed actors, giving less attention to the global reality that women are at far greater risk of physical or sexual violence by a partner than from violence by other people (Wachter et al, 2017; Garcia-Moreno et al, 2006; Stark and Ager, 2011). There is increasing evidence that intimate partner violence increases in times of conflict and war (Clark et al, 2010; Heise 2011; Hossain et al, 2014; Usta et al, 2008).

Previous work has documented women's experiences of gender-based violence in humanitarian settings (Horn, 2010 and 2016; Garcia-Moreno et al, 2006; IRC, 2015). These have identified the complex barriers to accessing support and help for such violence barriers which are embedded in cultural norms and complex codes of identity and family honour. Horn (2010) found that women in a refugee camp in Kenya were reluctant to seek help from agencies because to do so is seen to betray the community. The danger of rejection by the community means that a woman risks losing the supportive aspects of her community as well as the negative ones. Family values of honour and shame emerged strongly in the study as a framework for determining choices about help-seeking and decision-making around gender-based violence.

Rather than focusing specifically on women who say they have been affected directly by gender-based violence, the concern of this study has been to investigate the experience of gender-based violence as one of the three lenses used to focus on the resources that each community considers relevant to addressing their concerns. Additionally, the study set out to assess access to those resources by different groups within the community. This is the first time that the methodology for assessing social connections has included an integrated gender perspective.

Although gender-based violence consists overwhelmingly of violence against women, it is also of vital importance to engage with men and boys when dealing with the issue. The findings of this report demonstrate their influence and the role they play in managing and resolving gender-based violence in the community. Men, particularly community leaders, faith leaders and male heads of household, need to become agents of change and engaged as allies at all stages of this process. Other research has also identified the growing awareness of the number of men and boys who themselves experience gender-based violence in conflict, an issue which is receiving little attention (Touquet and Gorris, 2016).

In the Iraq Gender Analysis (2016) carried out by Oxfam in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the authors contend that there is still insufficient knowledge and evidence on how to programme in Iraq in a way that respects the 'do no harm' principles while also using the opportunity that conflict and displacement provide to challenge cultural beliefs, norms and practices. International ethical guidelines on gender-based violence (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005; IASC, 2015; WHO, 2001) emphasise the importance of all actors recognising the extreme vulnerabilities and sensitivities in engaging with these issues when in complex settings such as in Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and the risk to women and girls involved by identifying anyone subject to violence through research. Adhering to these international ethical guidelines is extremely important when carrying out work on gender-based violence in humanitarian settings.

1.3 Aims and objectives

The purpose of the study was twofold. It aimed to illuminate the formal and informal support available to displaced and host communities affected by conflict by mapping patterns of social connections and levels of trust in these potential resources. Particular attention was paid to resources for accessing material support, resolving disputes and addressing violence against women. In addition, the pilot study set out to test the applicability of a participatory methodology developed by the team at Institute for Global Health and Development, Queen Margaret University, and its potential value for guiding NGOs in developing appropriate support mechanisms for the populations studied.

Research questions

1 What are the social connections (people and organisations) that host community and displaced men and women living around Duhok identify as resources in addressing familiar local challenges including issues such as meeting basic needs, resolving neighbour disputes and addressing gender-based violence?

2 How much do people from these groups connect with the sources of help and support that they have identified?

3 How much do they trust in the individuals and/or organisations that they identify as potential supports?

4 What are the gender differences in identifying sources of help and support?

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Ethics

In a context as volatile as the Kurdistan Region of Iraq where so many people have experienced violence and displacement, ethical considerations to protect the safety and well-being of the participants are paramount. Approval for the research was granted by the Research Ethics Committee at Queen Margaret University. The Beneficiary and Accountability Officer at Tearfund negotiated with local community leaders to locate settings where we could carry out the research to ensure the presence of the research team was appropriate. Details of the ethical code of conduct, information sheets and methods of ensuring informed consent to take part can be found in the appendices.

The team of local researchers was trained to ensure that participants were able to make an informed decision about participation in the research. This involved sharing clear information about the study and asking for consent either with signature, thumb print or verbally.

Participants were treated with respect throughout the process. The Tearfund Protection Specialist was available throughout data collection to provide direct support and, if appropriate, referral to any participant who became distressed or disclosed a need for support.

2.2 Process

The research team

The research was led by Alison Strang and Oonagh O'Brien of Queen Margaret University (QMU) with Tricia Mazo, Protection Specialist, Tearfund Middle East Response. An advisory group was established comprising the Tearfund and QMU research team along with academic colleagues from the Department of Politics and Public Policy at the American University of Kurdistan and the Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies at Duhok University. Members of the advisory group helped to recruit a team of local researchers from among students and graduates of their respective universities. Five women and three men were trained as local researchers through two separate training sessions, one for each phase of the study, led by the QMU team. All local researchers were fluent in both Kurdish and English, and several also spoke Arabic. These local researchers conducted the research activities directly with the participants in Kurdish. Tearfund recruited one male and one female interpreter to provide Kurdish–English translation to enable the research team to supervise research activities for male and female participant groups respectively. The whole team, including local researchers and interpreters, helped to prepare materials in Kurdish as needed and to understand emerging data.

Training the research team

Eight researchers were trained to carry out the methodology. During the first training day the objectives and methodology were explained, the researchers were allocated to gender-specific teams, and they were trained in how to carry out a workshop in pairs or in threes. Practice role play exercises were conducted using local volunteers who were students at Duhok University. Role play was also used to identify good practice in ethical consent and generate discussion about what was appropriate behaviour and language in the local context. During the training the final wording of the questions was agreed with the local researchers to ensure appropriateness and respect for local sensitivity.

After the workshops were conducted in the field, a second training day introduced the researchers to the ranking and trust exercises used in the individual interviews. Once again researchers practised these

techniques through role play. The researchers had gained a lot of confidence from the workshops and were now familiar with the settings they would be working in and learnt this task quickly. The research benefited from the team of experienced, skilled and highly enthusiastic local researchers. They were very motivated to carry out the work and were excellent at establishing a supportive rapport with the participants.

Recruitment of participants

The study was conducted with adult women and men (over 18 years) living in or around a particular village south of Duhok, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, very close to the northern border with territory that came under ISIS control in 2014. Initially three target populations were identified. One group was living in a settled Yezidi village ('host') not far from the Mosul Dam on the Tigris river. The second group comprised Yezidi people who had been displaced from their homes in territory in and around Sinjar, which was taken over by ISIS, and were living in an informal settlement of tents and huts located just outside the village at the time of the study ('displaced'). The third group were Kurdish Muslims who had also been displaced and were living among other Kurdish Muslims in one area of the village ('displaced Muslim'). At the time of the study Tearfund was providing services to the displaced Yezidi people of the informal settlement. Tearfund had also begun to develop relationships with the Muslim group, but had not yet offered or provided any services.

Participants were recruited through the Tearfund Beneficiary and Accountability Officer in order to build on the trust already established in the areas where the study was to be undertaken. The purpose and nature of the research was explained to community leaders and community members. Community leaders helped to invite people to attend the research workshops. The purpose and nature of the research was then explained again at the beginning of each workshop. Participants were reminded that participation was voluntary and would not lead to direct benefits to individual participants (beyond the refreshments provided during the workshops); people were asked if they agreed and consent forms were either signed or a thumb print was given or the researcher signed for someone who gave verbal consent. Everyone was informed that the data would be anonymous and no names would be used, and that they were free to leave at any time during the process. There were limitations to the work with the displaced Muslim community which are detailed in the Section 3 findings.

Data collection

The study was conducted in two phases:

- Phase 1 participatory workshops
- Phase 2 individual interviews

Phase 1 participatory workshops

Eight workshops were conducted, four with women and four with men. These were held in the following settings: two with women only and two with men only with the Yezidi displaced groups and one with women only and one with men only respectively from both the Yezidi village (host) and from the displaced Muslim group. The workshops were held in spaces familiar to participants. In the informal displaced Yezidi settlement these were the living spaces of the local leader (Mukhtar) and his family which the family vacated for the duration of the workshops. Similarly, the workshops with the displaced Muslim group were held in homes. In the Yezidi village the workshops were conducted in the local community centre. The workshops were led by a team of two or three local researchers of the same gender as participants, and observed by a member of the research team supported by an interpreter.

One local researcher led the facilitation for each group, and the other two supported and took notes. The purpose and research activities were outlined and researchers explained that participation was voluntary and that anyone was free to leave at any time. Researchers then gathered information on each participant's age, first language, other languages, length of time living in the area, religion and months in paid work over the last 12 months.

Participants were presented with three problem scenarios chosen as familiar to their current lives:

- If you were struggling to meet the basic needs of your family…

- If there was a dispute with another community…

- If a woman in your community experiences violence…

For each scenario, the group were asked to think of all the people or organisations that someone in their community might talk to about such a problem, or go to and ask for help. Participants were then asked who each of these people (or organisations) might pass them on to if the problem could not be resolved. All the possible alternatives were explored (including people they might like to access, but are not available to them in their current lives). As discussions progressed, a researcher plotted responses on a large sheet of paper (in the middle of the floor in front of participants) showing each type of person or organisation mentioned in a circle with a line linking them to the problems for which they were accessed. Where participants mentioned connections that were no longer available to them (eg 'Back home I would have talked to my father about that, but he has been killed, so now I can't'), we included the person/organisation, but connected them with a dotted line. This process generally took about 30 to 40 minutes.

Once all the workshops were completed, a full list of all the people and organisations listed was compiled. The research team, supported by the local researchers, interpreters and advisory board, then rationalised and reduced the list to 35 people and organisations by streamlining terminology, combining very similar items and excluding items mentioned by only one person. Each item on the list was given a number and the local researchers made a set of 35 small cards – each card with one of the items written on it.
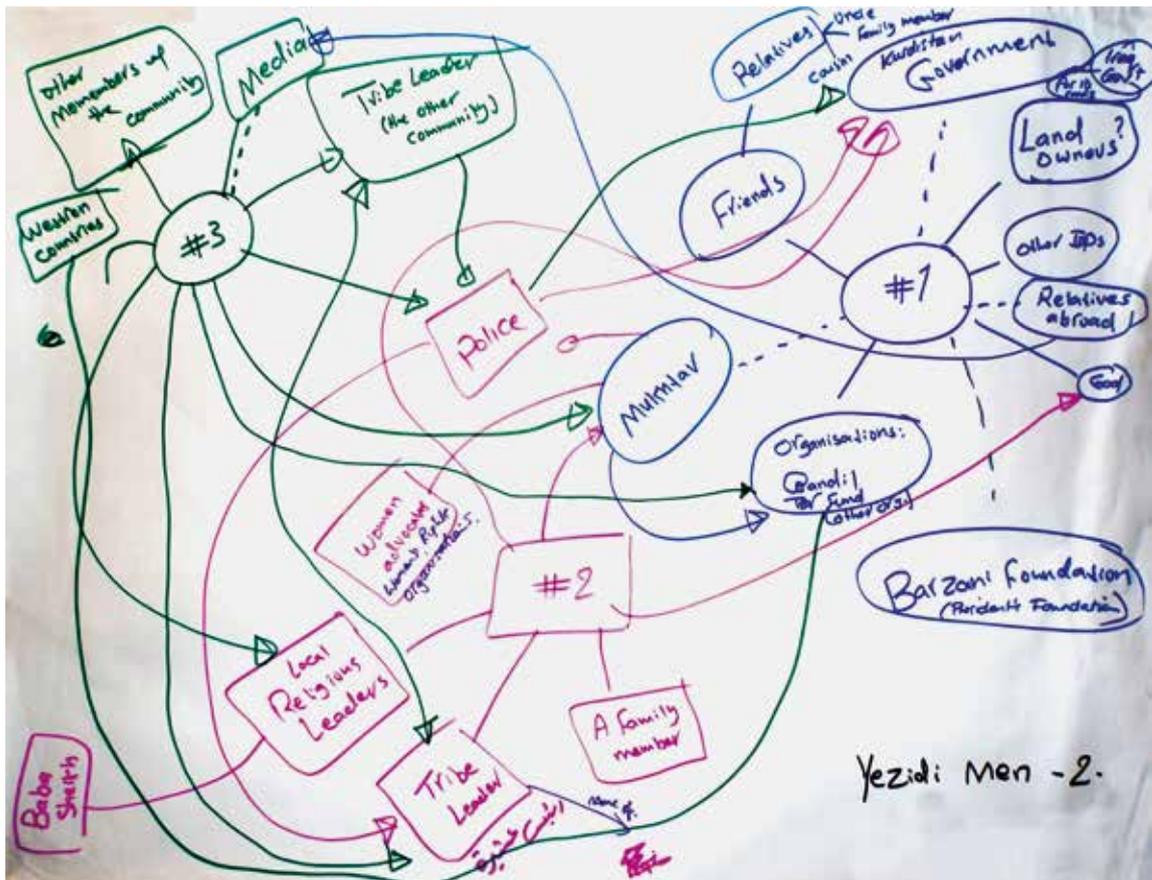
Workshop flipchart

Phase 2 individual interviews

A few days after conducting the workshops the research team returned to the Yezidi village and to the informal Yezidi displaced settlement to conduct individual interviews involving card-sorting tasks. The team did not return to interview members of the displaced Muslim group because it was clear that some members of this community were unhappy with any of their community participating. Once again the Tearfund Beneficiary and Accountability Officer was key in liaising with communities and inviting participants. Participation was voluntary and the interviews generally took between 20 to 40 minutes. Each interview was conducted in a confidential setting with one local researcher of the same gender as the participant and one observer from the research team who recorded responses. Participants were reminded that participation was voluntary, that they were free to stop the interview at any time, and asked to give verbal consent.

Firstly participants were asked to think about the past six months, and were helped to identify the six-month time period accurately by remembering a particular local event (in this case the event used was 'Red Wednesday' – Yezidi New Year – celebrated in April, approximately six months previous to the research). When the researcher was confident that the participant was clear about the time period they introduced the first card-sort task.

Question 1: Have you spoken to, or asked this person or organisation for help, in the last six months?

Participants were shown each card in turn. The name on the card was read out loud and the participant was asked to indicate their answer by putting the card on a pile for 'Yes' or 'No'.

Question 2: How much do you trust this person or organisation: A lot, a little, or not at all?

Participants were shown three cards with simple drawings of cups to represent the three responses: A lot – cup full; a little – cup half full; not at all – empty cup. They were then shown each card in turn again and the name on the card was read out loud. The participant was then asked which pile they would like each card to be put on. Where a participant felt they did not know enough about the item the card was put aside as 'not applicable'.

Question 3 for women: If you were experiencing violence at home, how much would you trust this person or organisation to try and help you?

Question 3 for men: If a woman in your family was experiencing violence at home, how much would you trust this person or organisation to try and help her?

Researchers followed the same procedure as with question 2.

Responses were recorded each time on a separate recording sheet for each participant.

3 FINDINGS

Description of participants

A total of 103 people participated in the research workshops and individual interviews as follows:

Description of participants	Women	Men	Total
Yezidi informal settlement ('displaced')	23	29	**52**
Muslim ('Muslim displaced')	10	9	**19**
Yezidi village residents ('host')	15	17	**32**
Total	**48**	**55**	**103**

Limitations

As stated above in Section 2.2 the research was carried out primarily with people from three different communities within the Duhok Governorate. Tearfund has an existing WASH programme for the displaced Yezidi community in the informal settlements. There are also formal camps for displaced people in the area. The study set out to map social connections and measures of trust with communities in different settings in order to present a broader picture of the issues. Three communities were chosen for the study, to highlight some of the differences in particular between host and settled groups. Two Yezidi groups were chosen including those displaced from their homes further south, and those who had lived in the village near Duhok for many years. In addition, a Muslim community who were also displaced and with whom Tearfund had carried out some work were chosen to present a different range of issues than the Yezidi. The Mukhtar for the displaced Muslim community was extremely helpful in setting up the workshops. The Muslim women participated in the women-only workshop very positively. However, the men in this community were not sure about signing the consent form or taking part in the research. In discussion with the research team, they made it clear that they were reluctant to participate in any research without some guarantee of direct material benefits to their community. Our research design deliberately chose to avoid paying individual participants, but rather to be conducted as part of the developing relationship of trust between Tearfund and particular communities. It would not have been appropriate for Tearfund to offer material interventions in the early stages of their relationship with the displaced Muslim group. After consultation with the Mukhtar it was agreed that the displaced Muslim community would not participate in the second phase of the research. The Muslim men, however, did end up taking part in the workshop and giving their consent for information to be used (alongside the women's workshop which proceeded with no such discussion). The study therefore includes data from the Muslim men and women's workshops. Due to the limitations of not being able to carry out individual interviews with the displaced Muslim community, we approached another settled community who were Yezidi, living in a settled village with whom the Tearfund Beneficiary and Accountability Officer was well acquainted. Workshops and interviews were conducted with members of this settled Yezidi community.

Data sources for all three communities come from the workshop flipcharts and recorded 'debriefs' with the researchers[5] after the workshops. Additionally, with the Yezidi host and displaced communities, data also comes from the individual interviews with notes which formed the second phase of data collection.

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5   After carrying out the workshops, a selection of the trained researchers were interviewed by the research team for their perceptions and observations as well as further detail around important points that emerged. These interviews were written up or recorded as audio interviews and then written up in note format.

In the findings we have specified where the information is coming from: either the Yezidi displaced community in the informal settlement, the Muslim displaced community, or the settled Yezidi host community. The term 'host' community has been used because of its wide usage in the humanitarian context. However, it is important to note that in this case it simply denotes the fact that these people are living in the same village that they occupied before the ISIS advance of 2014. By the term 'host' we do not mean to imply that this community has an obligation to look after those living in the informal settlement who have been displaced from the Sinjar region. It is also important to note that it became very clear through the course of the research that the lives of those living within the village have been hugely disrupted by the conflict. Many households are directly affected by displacement with family members who have sought refuge in other countries. In one workshop in the village a woman participant from the host community described fleeing the area because of her fear of the ISIS advance and recounted her experiences of a failed attempt to reach Europe on a boat that sank while crossing the Mediterranean Sea. In this report we use the phrase 'all displaced people' in order to refer to the Muslim and Yezidi population. We use the phrase 'all Yezidi' to refer to both the displaced Yezidi in the informal settlement and the settled Yezidi in the village.

3.1 Perceptions of local resources

During the workshops participants were asked who they felt they could speak to or ask for help in coping with three different problems. This data provides a picture of the range of people and organisations that are significant in the lives of the three different groups of people living in the area across the three problem scenarios presented. In Figure 1 we have plotted the significant people and organisations according to their geographic location in order to give a picture of the structure of relationships in the three communities.

Figure 1 People and organisations identified as significant resources by participants

Households and families

The general pattern was for people to be living in households comprising several generations. All participants were adults, many had their own children, and some were living with their own parents. The 'head of household' would be the oldest man in the household and could be the male participant himself, the husband of a female participant or a father or father-in-law. A single woman would live with her parents or another

household of the extended family with a male head of household. Many people living in the host community mentioned that they had extended family in the neighbourhood, and also often talked about relatives abroad. People from both the displaced group and those living in the host community mentioned relatives who had left Iraq to claim asylum as refugees in other countries.

Neighbourhoods

The informal camp had been built by the people themselves to create shelter when they fled across the battle front to escape the encroaching ISIS forces. Displaced Yezidi participants told us that they had settled in this area because it was already occupied by Yezidi people and there was a Yezidi temple nearby. Dwellings were made of a mixture of wooden supports with tarpaulins and blankets, along with some structures built with concrete blocks and lined with blankets. Most households tried to create a small private courtyard for cooking and privacy for the women.

In this setting people in the informal settlement were living very close to their neighbours. In the Yezidi host community houses were built close to each other, but within their own courtyard. These houses afforded a mixture of public and private spaces for men and women to meet separately. The displaced Muslim group were living in houses similar to those in the Yezidi host community although buildings were more cramped and conditions appeared to be less comfortable.

A number of community structures emerged. Each neighbourhood had a 'Mukhtar' who was a male leader appointed by the local government authorities as someone acceptable to the community to support liaison between community members and external agents. So, for example, the Tearfund community engager spoke first to the Mukhtar in each area to introduce the research and seek support and agreement for community participation. The position is unpaid.

Both the displaced Yezidi people and Yezidis living in the village made use of a local 'Cultural and Social Centre'. These buildings provided meeting rooms for community events, meetings and trainings and were funded by the Kurdistan Regional Government to promote Kurdish culture. The host research workshops were held in the village community centre. Originally the workshops with displaced Yezidi people were also due to be held at their local community centre, but a death in the community meant that this space was being used for a funeral during the research period. Workshops with the Muslim group were held in two separate homes – one for the women's group and another for the men's group.

Participants in all groups mentioned the existence of 'tribal' leaders. However, in the host community some people challenged the relevance of this role and suggested that it was no longer relevant to modern life. It seemed that there was some ambiguity or overlap between someone who might be described as a tribal leader and someone who was the elder of an extended family.

Religious practices

Yezidi workshop participants suggested that a local religious leader – someone who was part of their neighbourhood – might play a supportive role in the neighbourhood. However, it seemed that many of them, especially women, were not clear on either the existence of such a person, or what role they might play.

Overall it emerged that Yezidi religious practice is very personal. Women in particular reported that they would talk to God when faced with difficulties. On the whole this was a private activity. However, women also mentioned to us that if they were particularly anxious about something, they would go together to the temple – located on the top of a nearby hill – to pray.

Yezidi participants frequently mentioned that they could turn to the overall religious leader of the Yezidis, 'Baba Sheikh', for help to resolve problems. Baba Sheikh is the spiritual leader of the Yezidi and appears to be very accessible to Yezidi people who feel they can consult and meet him when required. He has a local base at Lalish (about 90 kms from the research location), in the hills between Duhok and Mosul. People are welcome to visit Baba Sheikh at Lalish for advice and spiritual guidance. He also travels around the Yezidi villages and settlements of northern Iraq meeting people and helping them to resolve disputes. Baba Sheikh was seen

as both an approachable 'comforter', but also the voice of complete authority. So, for example, participants often commented that once Baba Sheikh has advised on how a dispute should be resolved, then everyone will obey him – whether or not they like his solution. We were told of one occasion when a family who disagreed with Baba Sheikh's advice on a family dispute decided to move away from the area rather than stay and disobey his directions.

Muslim participants talked very little about personal religious practice in the workshops. However, they did tell us that collections and donations of money during Ramadan were an important source of support to meet basic needs for some.

Government-related organisations

Both host and displaced groups were aware of key state services that might provide support. Local police would be called upon in the case of violence, and some extreme cases would be taken through the court system. Participants mentioned that women who had experienced gender-based violence could seek help at the government-run Centre for Violence Against Women which could provide refuge for women and families in danger and counselling support. The general perception was that cases taken to this centre were likely to be taken to court.

Participants looked on the Kurdistan Regional Government as a source of financial support, either as employer or source of grants for displaced people. Some people in the area were receiving money from the Iraqi government in Baghdad because they had been employed by the Iraqi government before they fled in 2014. A number of organisations with political associations were a source of help for meeting basic needs including the Barzani Foundation (the personal charitable fund of President Barzani and his family) and the local branch of the KDP party which is currently in power. We understood that party political allegiances tend to have a strong geographical focus. In another area, the local branch of another political party would be likely to provide local people with material support.

The Kurdish armed forces, the Peshmerga, were also mentioned in the workshops as a source of support. Often this was as an employer providing material support, but also there was a suggestion that the Peshmerga would play a role in protecting women from violence.

Non-governmental organisations

Participants were generally aware of the presence of NGOs in the district, but perceived these to be mostly focused on meeting the needs of internally displaced people living in the formal refugee camps. The participants in this study lived either in a village or an informal settlement on the edge of a village. They mentioned particular NGOs of which they had experience: Harekar, Qandil and Tearfund. Harekar is an NGO focusing on gender-based violence and child protection. Tearfund has provided water, sanitation and hygiene programmes (WASH) and also provided some cash for summer school assistance in the area. Qandil has focused on the provision of cash and non-food items. Some participants suggested that women's rights organisations might be a source of help if a woman was suffering violence.

3.2 Connectedness

During the individual interviews we used the card-sorting tasks to gather information about how much each person actually did connect with these significant people. Through this data we are able to see how accessible the different people and organisations that might be sources of help actually are. The data enables us to compare patterns of connectedness between men and women, and displaced and host Yezidi participants. As explained above, no individual data was collected with displaced Muslim participants.

Table 1 provides a ranking of people and organisations according to how many participants had actually spoken to them or asked them for help in the past six months.

TABLE 1 Overall levels of connection with each person and organisation

Person/Organisation	Number of connections
God	35
Friends	29
Extended family	28
Head of household	27
Neighbours	26
Husband/wife	25
Woman's male relatives	25
My community	23
Sister	23
Mother	22
Mukhtar	22
Father	21
Barzani Foundation	18
KRI government	18
Relatives abroad	18
NGOs	17
Employer	16
Husband's relatives	16
Local religious leader	16
Local branch of political party	15
Local respected person	15
Government Centre for Violence Against Women	14
Other community	12
Qandil NGO	11
Local community centre	10
Peshmerga	10
Police	10
Court	8
Tearfund	8
Tribal leader	8
Uncle	8
Baba Sheikh	6
Iraq government	6
Harekar NGO	6
Women's rights organisations	5

Number of connections

We can see that participants most regularly told us that they would speak with God about their problems and look for help through their religious faith. Levels of contact with both local religious leaders, and the overall

Yezidi leader, Baba Sheikh, were much lower, suggesting that people do not need to seek a religious leader as an intermediary, but reach out to God directly.

As might be expected, the people and organisations ranked next in levels of contact across the whole cohort were family, friends and neighbours living close by. It is notable that the Mukhtar is ranked between Mother and Father, and is clearly a high-profile figure in both communities.

The people and organisations with the lowest ranking for personal connections include a mixture of government, NGOs and religious figures, either potentially remote or too specialist for widespread connection. In order to examine these patterns we have classified connections according to the type of organisation or relationship:

Table 2 Categories of people and organisations

Family	Community	Government
■ Mother	■ Tribal leader	■ Police
■ Father	■ Respected person	■ Court
■ Husband/wife	■ Other community	■ Iraq government
■ Sister	■ Neighbours	■ Kurdistan Regional Government
■ Uncle	■ My community	■ Local branch of political party
■ Woman's male relatives	■ Friends	■ Barzani Foundation
■ Husband's relatives	■ Mukhtar	■ Peshmerga
■ Relatives abroad	■ Employer	■ Government Centre for Violence Against Women
■ Head of household		
■ Extended family		

NGO	Religious
■ Tearfund	■ Local religious leader
■ NGOs	■ Baba Sheikh
■ Harekar	■ God
■ Qandil	
■ Women's rights organisations	

Tables 3 and 4 (using the classifications in table 2) show that both men and women are most connected to family and community. Almost half of women's connections (45 per cent) are with family members, whereas for men, family members comprise just under a third of their connections (31 per cent). Community connections are about the same for both men and women, but men have a lot more connections with organisations associated with government. This includes the police and the courts as well as political organisations such as the local party office, and also the president's family charity, the Barzani Foundation. Men report a slightly higher level of connection with NGOs than women do, although they do not frequently specify connection with particular NGOs.

Table 3 Connection reported by women

Table 4 Connection reported by men

KEY
- Family
- Community
- Government
- NGO
- Religious
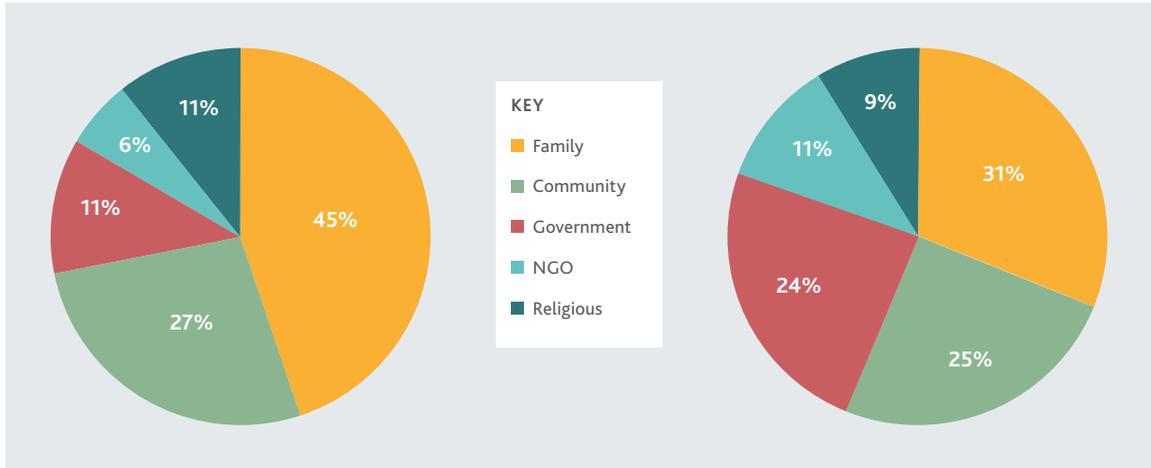
When comparing the responses of host participants with displaced participants, it is clear that the displaced men reported much higher levels of connection with religious sources of support and NGOs than men in the host community. This might reflect a greater need for support by displaced men, but is also consistent with the explanation that these displaced Yezidi people came from areas where traditional religious culture is stronger than in the villages around Duhok. Host men, on the other hand, consistently reported greater connection with government, community and family.

Table 5 Levels of connection – host men and displaced men

KEY
- Host
- Displaced
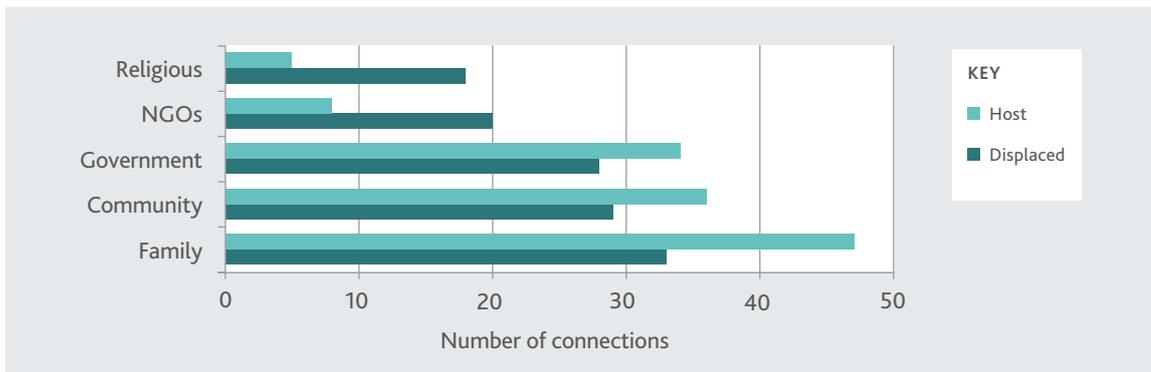
Displaced and host women reported very similar levels of connection across the categories. There were two unexpected findings in the data for women. Displaced women reported slightly higher levels of connection with family. This is likely to be a reflection of the fact that a large proportion of the host women participating in the study were unmarried while most displaced women were married.

Also women in the host community reported a slightly higher connection with NGOs than displaced women – demonstrating an opposite pattern to the men. Many of the host women participants were young unmarried women known to the community centre and the Tearfund organiser and a few mentioned that they had been employed by NGOs as can be seen in some of the qualitative data collected and recounted in Section 3.4.1.2 (Meeting basic needs: host community).

Table 6 Levels of connection – host women and displaced women
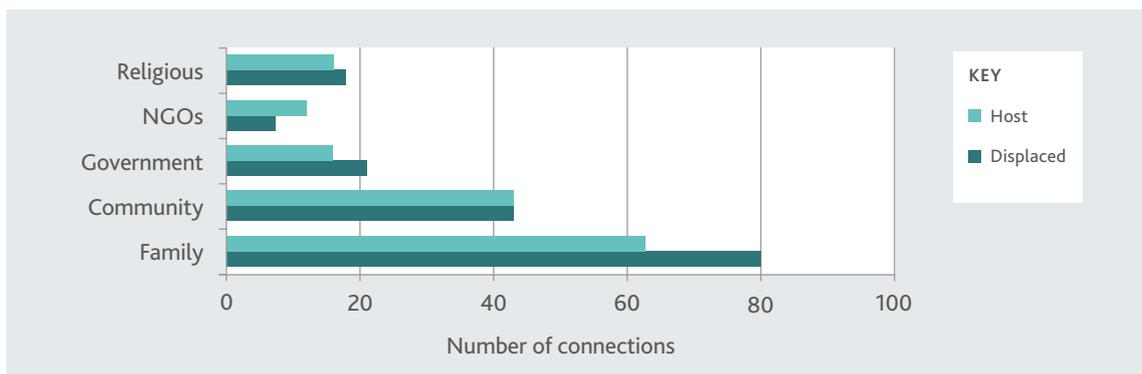
The data was also sorted into categories of geographic proximity. A clear pattern of greater connection with neighbourhood emerges, with connection gradually decreasing with distance from the household. The main exception to this is the level of international connection of host participants. This category represents relatives abroad and confirms the understanding that we gained from many host participants that in their own lives they were subject to major disruption and displacement. Several participants told us that they themselves had tried to flee abroad and claim asylum within the past two years. Others explained that members of their family and household were currently in Europe claiming asylum and hoping to bring the family left behind in Kurdistan Region of Iraq to join them. Members of the displaced group did not talk about family members abroad, and it seemed they had not had the opportunity to travel outside Iraq to seek asylum.

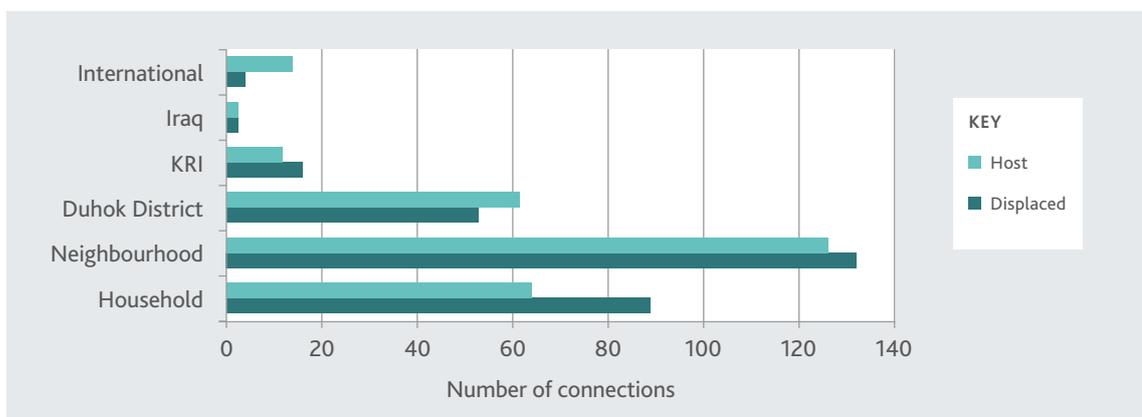**Table 7** Levels of women's and men's connection by proximity

Table 7 shows that the connections of the displaced group are generally more localised, at household and community level. In particular, they have fewer connections with the district than host participants, which may be because they have only been in the area for two years and have had less time to build up connections. However, it appears that they may feel more connected to Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the institutions of government as this is a primary source of protection.

Finally, we have compared patterns of connection for men and women according to geographic proximity. As expected, in both the host and displaced groups, women are much more connected locally, while men are more connected at district level.

We can see that in both groups women report higher levels of international connection. Interview and observational data suggested that men were more likely to have travelled abroad first, leaving female relatives in Kurdistan Region of Iraq to join them in the future – therefore they have connections with their male relatives who are living abroad.

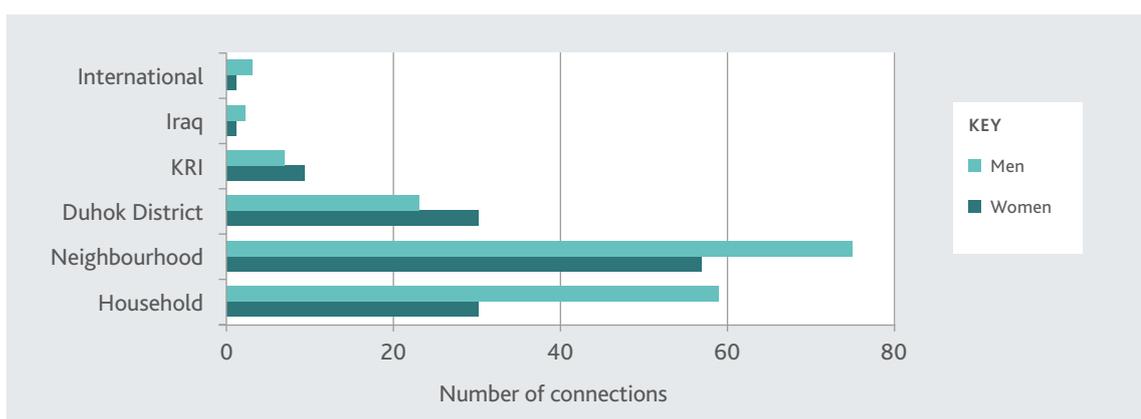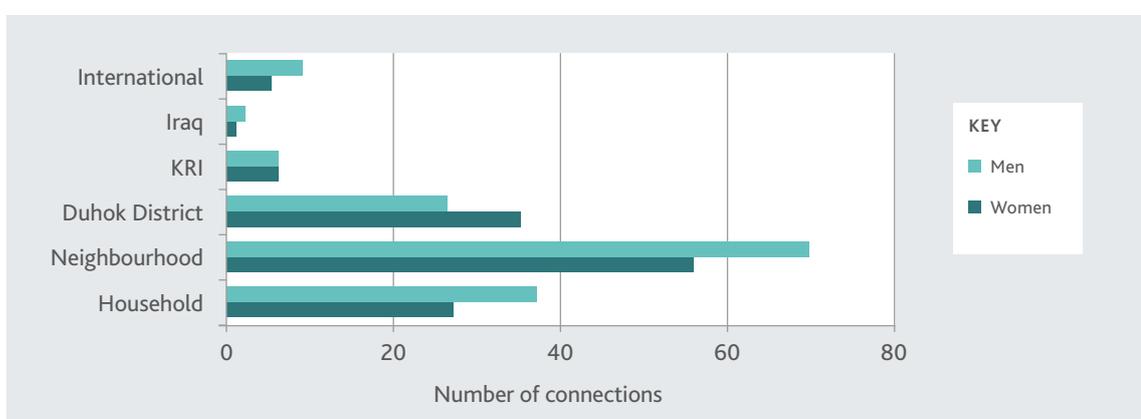**Table 8** Level of connection by proximity – displaced community

Table 9 Level of connection by proximity – host community

3.3 Levels of trust

In the individual interviews we collected data from participants to measure their general levels of trust in the people and organisations that they had identified as potential sources of help in the three different contexts. Table 10 is ranked according to the levels of trust[6] reported by the displaced Yezidi participants and compares this with levels of trust reported by Yezidi host community.

In Table 10 we can see that levels of general trust follow broadly the same pattern with the host and displaced groups. Members of the household are trusted the most by both groups. Displaced participants report slightly higher levels of trust in extended family and community beyond the household. Those from the host community were more likely to trust external authority figures and institutions. For example, the host group demonstrated higher trust in the Kurdish army, the Peshmerga. The village participating in this study was on the front line in 2014 and so high levels of trust may reflect host participants' recent experiences of being protected by the Peshmerga. On the whole, people from the host community also appeared to trust NGOs in general and some named NGOs in particular (Qandil, Harekar, women's rights organisations) more than the displaced group. The exception to this was Tearfund, for which the displaced group reported higher levels of trust than the host group. Tearfund facilitated the research and had relationships with members of both groups, but had only provided services to the displaced community.

Table 11 presents the same data disaggregated by gender and ranked in order of levels of trust reported by women.

6   Levels of trust are expressed as a percentage of the highest possible trust score available if all participants ranking the item had responded with the highest level of trust.

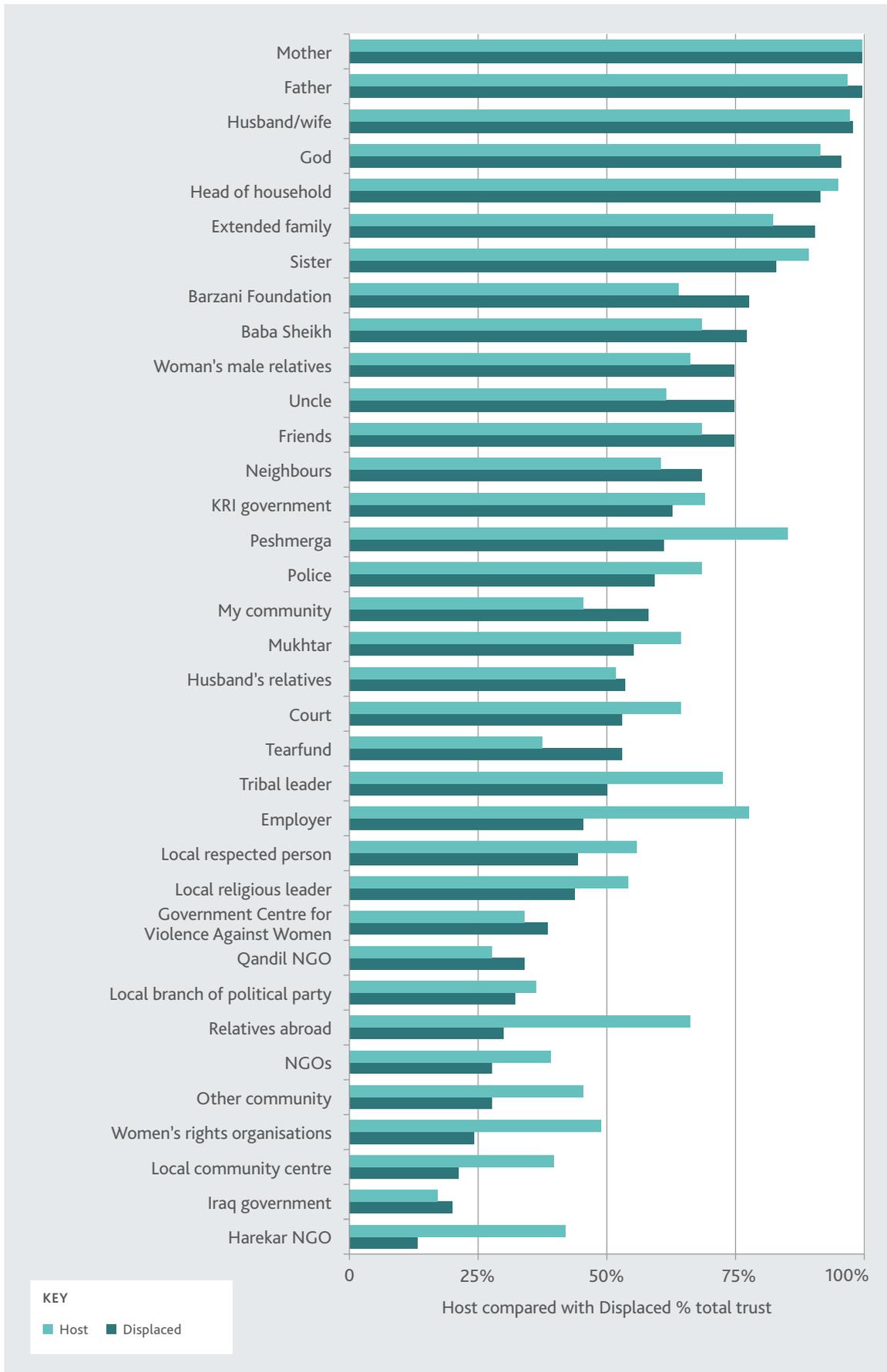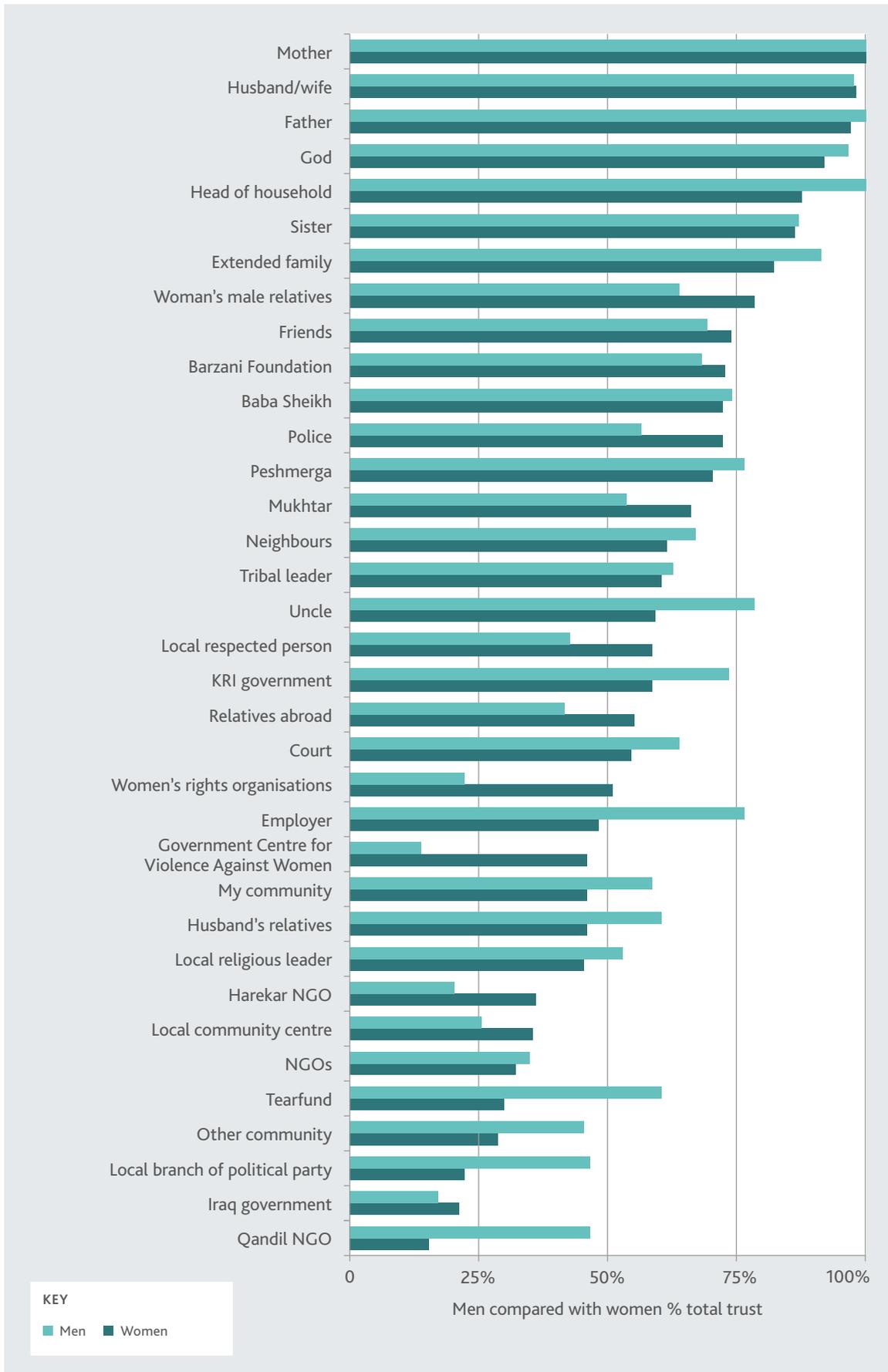**Table 10** General trust ratings for people and organisations by location

Host compared with Displaced % total trust

KEY
■ Host ■ Displaced

Table 11 General trust ratings for people and organisations by gender

Men compared with women % total trust

KEY

■ Men ■ Women

The data demonstrates that women trust their own male relatives to a similar level as the extended family in general. This contrasts with men who rated the extended family (their own relatives) well above their wives' relatives. The women also trust the Mukhtar, respected persons in the community and their relatives abroad more highly than the men. Additionally, the chart shows that women are likely to trust certain external institutions more than men. These include the police, women's rights organisations, the government-run Centre for Violence Against Women and the NGO Harekar. In contrast, men trust two NGOs – Qandil and Tearfund – above women. It seems that the differences in trust of NGOs may be linked to familiarity. For example, Tearfund observed that their connection with the displaced community has been mainly though the WASH programme which involves negotiations with the men, and their hygiene programme has predominantly been attended by children. This may explain why the women in the same displaced community were less familiar with Tearfund than the men are.

Table 12 shows men and women's levels of connection with these organisations.

Table 12 Levels of connection with selected organisations
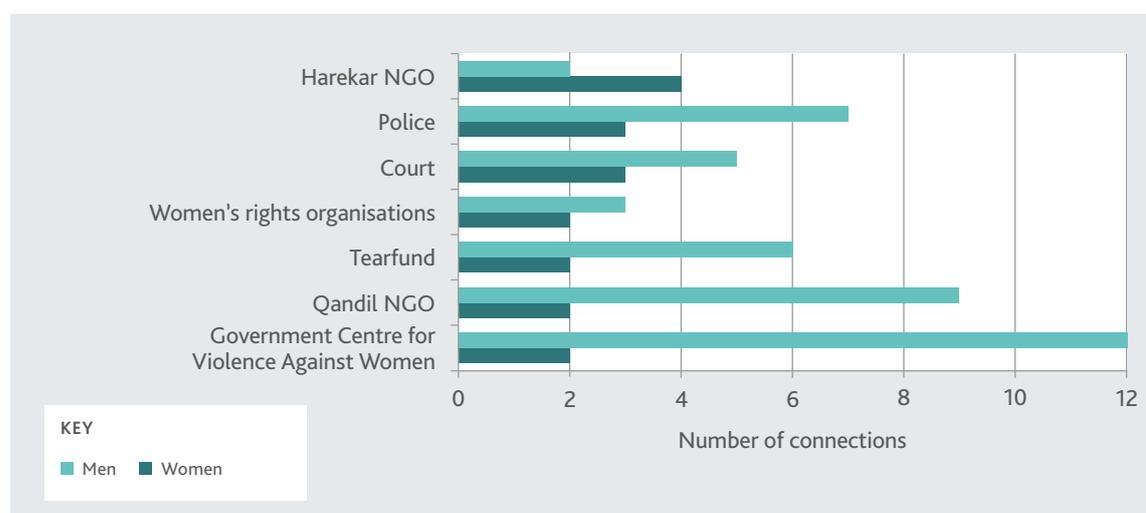
Women have much lower levels of connection with both Qandil and Tearfund, but higher connection with Harekar, than men. However, women also report little connection with the police, the government-run Centre for Violence Against Women and women's rights organisations, and yet indicate much higher levels of trust than men. Otherwise patterns of trust tend to reflect the degree of connection. For example, we have shown that men are more connected with neighbourhood and national institutions than women. In line with this, men report more trust than women in the extended family – especially uncles, employers and members of other communities. They also have more trust in the local branch of the ruling political party, the KDP, and in the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Table 13 General trust by proximity: men and women

Percent of general trust
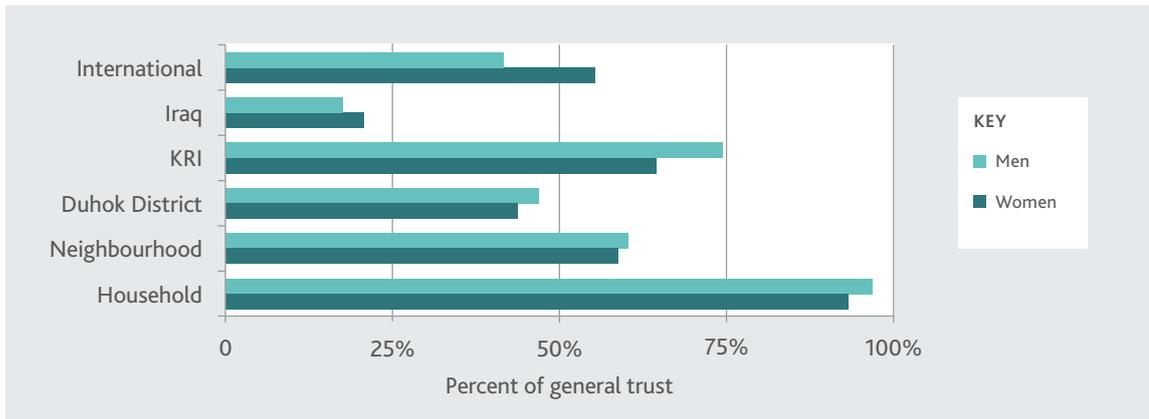
Women demonstrate more trust than men in people and organisations beyond the district level, including the Iraq government and family abroad.

Overall men reported higher levels of trust than women and this can be seen across all categories of connections.

Table 14 General trust by category of person/organisation: men and women

Percent of general trust by category of person/organisation
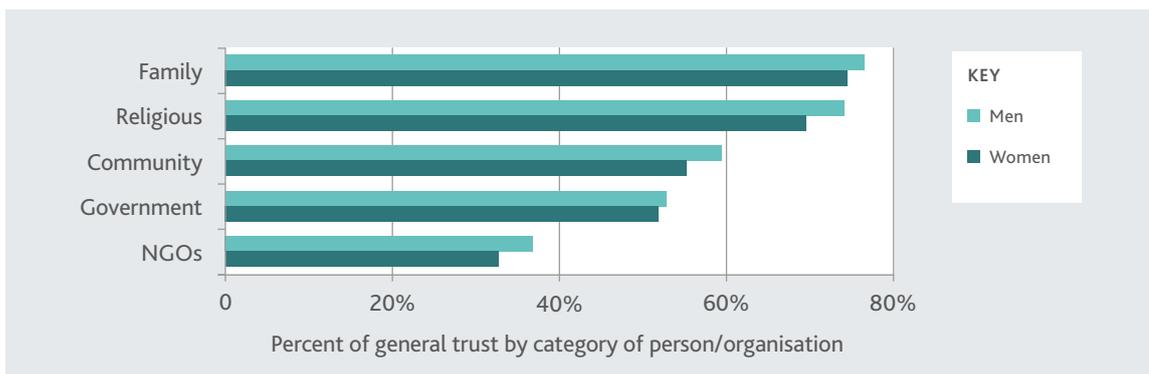
When the data is disaggregated to show differences between the displaced group and the host group it is clear that people in the host community demonstrated higher levels of trust than those who were displaced. The differences are largest with the community and with NGOs. Trust in religious sources of support was relatively high in both groups, with the displaced groups showing slightly higher trust in religious support than the host groups. When the data is further broken down to compare displaced men and women, it is apparent that it is the displaced men in particular who trust in religious sources of support.

Table 15 General trust by category of person/organisation: location
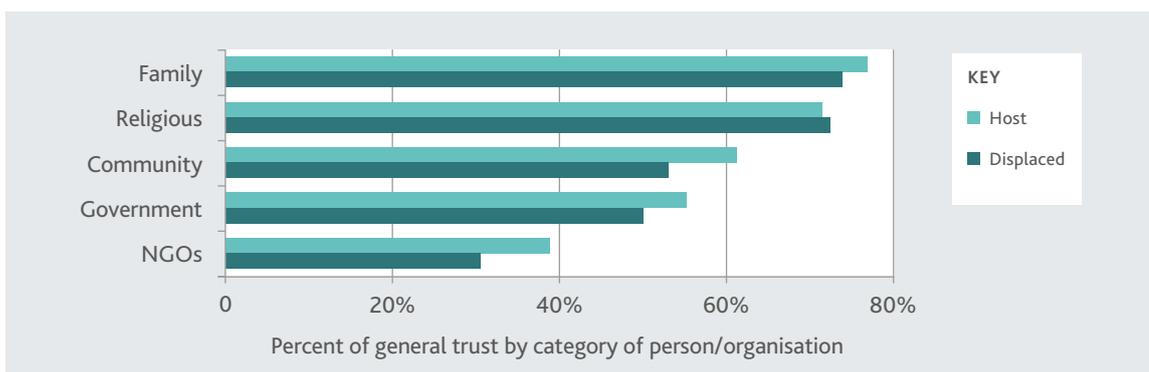

Percent of general trust by category of person/organisation

Table 16 General trust by category of person/organisation: displaced

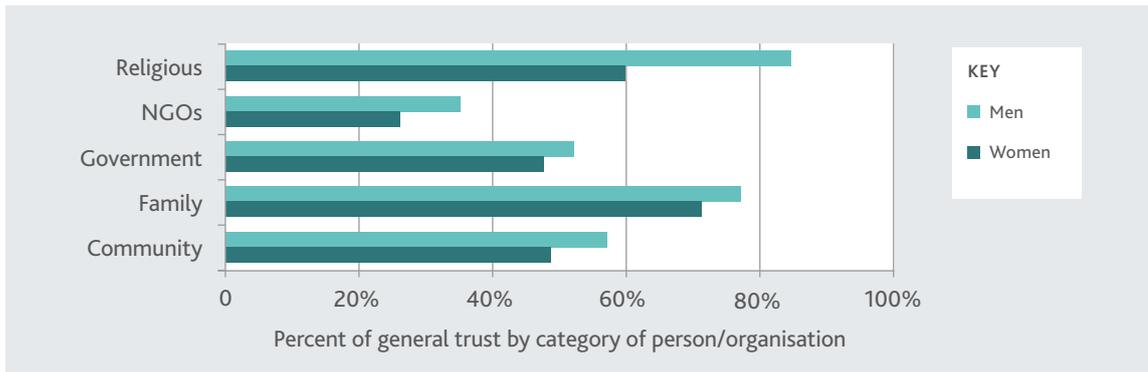Percent of general trust by category of person/organisation

Table 16 shows that displaced men consistently demonstrate higher levels of trust than displaced women. This is particularly apparent in their trust of religious sources of help. The women in this group indicated that their highest levels of trust were reserved for their family, followed by religious sources (including direct access to God), then government and community and finally NGOs. Data from the host women reveal a very similar pattern of trust. Moreover, the host women consistently reported higher levels of trust than those who had been displaced.

Table 17 Women's levels of general trust

Percent of general trust
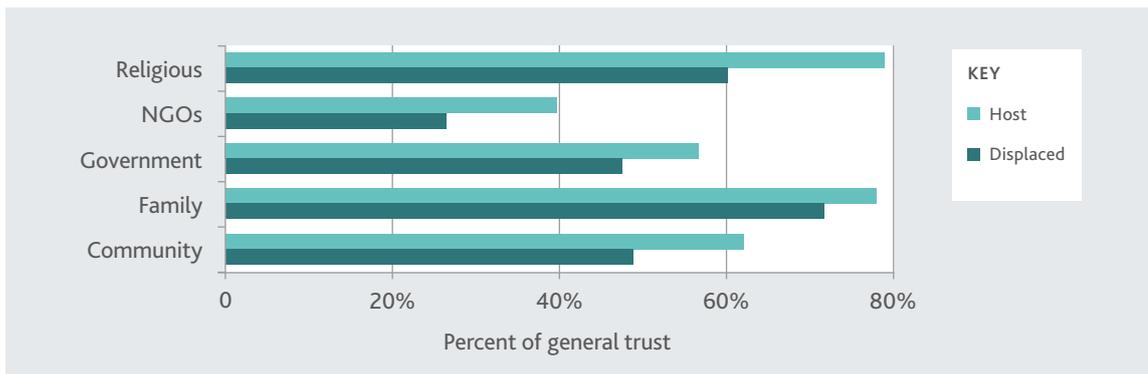
3.3.1 Trust regarding support in addressing gender-based violence

Participants were asked how much they would trust each person or organisation to try to offer support or help to a women experiencing violence. As might be expected, levels of trust for this specific context were generally lower than they were in response to the general question about trust. Table 18 shows that the biggest differences appear in men's responses. As noted earlier, men report higher levels of general trust than women in all categories. However, in contrast, when asked to think about gender violence, they report lower levels of trust than women in every category apart from family where the level of trust is the same for both men and women.

Table 18 Levels of trust in relation to gender-based violence by category

Percent of trust by category

KEY
- General trust – men
- General trust – women
- GBV trust – men
- GBV trust – women
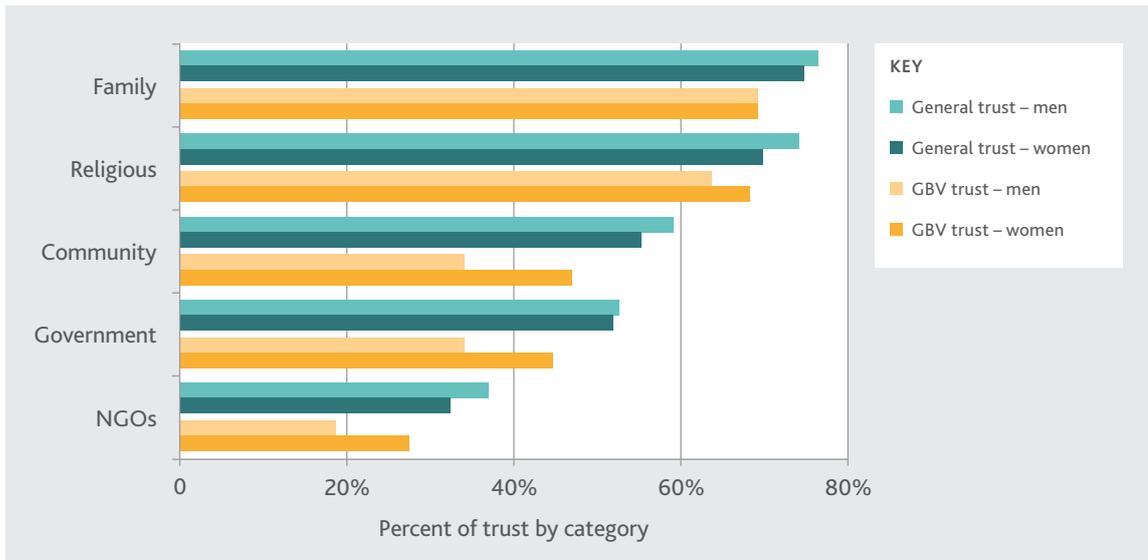
The contrast is particularly marked between men's general trust in people and organisations in their community and their trust in these same people and community organisations regarding experiences of gender violence. Similar patterns are apparent with institutions of government and NGOs, with trust dropping in relation to gender violence. It is clear that, for everyone, families are most trusted with gender violence issues. The next most trusted sources of support are religious including God, local religious leaders and Baba Sheikh.

Table 19 provides a breakdown of trust on gender violence issues for all the people and organisations in the data set according to the location of participants. From this table it can be seen that while the patterns of highest trust – in God and closest family – are very similar, there are a number of community resources that people from the host group trust more.

Host participants reported higher levels of trust in local leaders such as the Mukhtar, local religious leaders, tribal leaders and local respected people in comparison with displaced participants. They also reported more trust in organisations such as the police and the government-run Centre for Violence Against Women as well as NGOs in general. Of the three NGOs named in the study, it appears that host participants trust both Harekar and Tearfund in matters of gender violence, whereas displaced participants are more likely to trust Harekar but not Tearfund or Qandil. This is consistent with the fact that Harekar is an organisation focusing on protection issues including gender-based violence, while neither Tearfund nor Qandil has operated gender programmes in the area.

Table 19 Levels of trust in people and organisations in relation to gender-based violence

KEY

■ Host   ■ Displaced

% trust in people and organisations
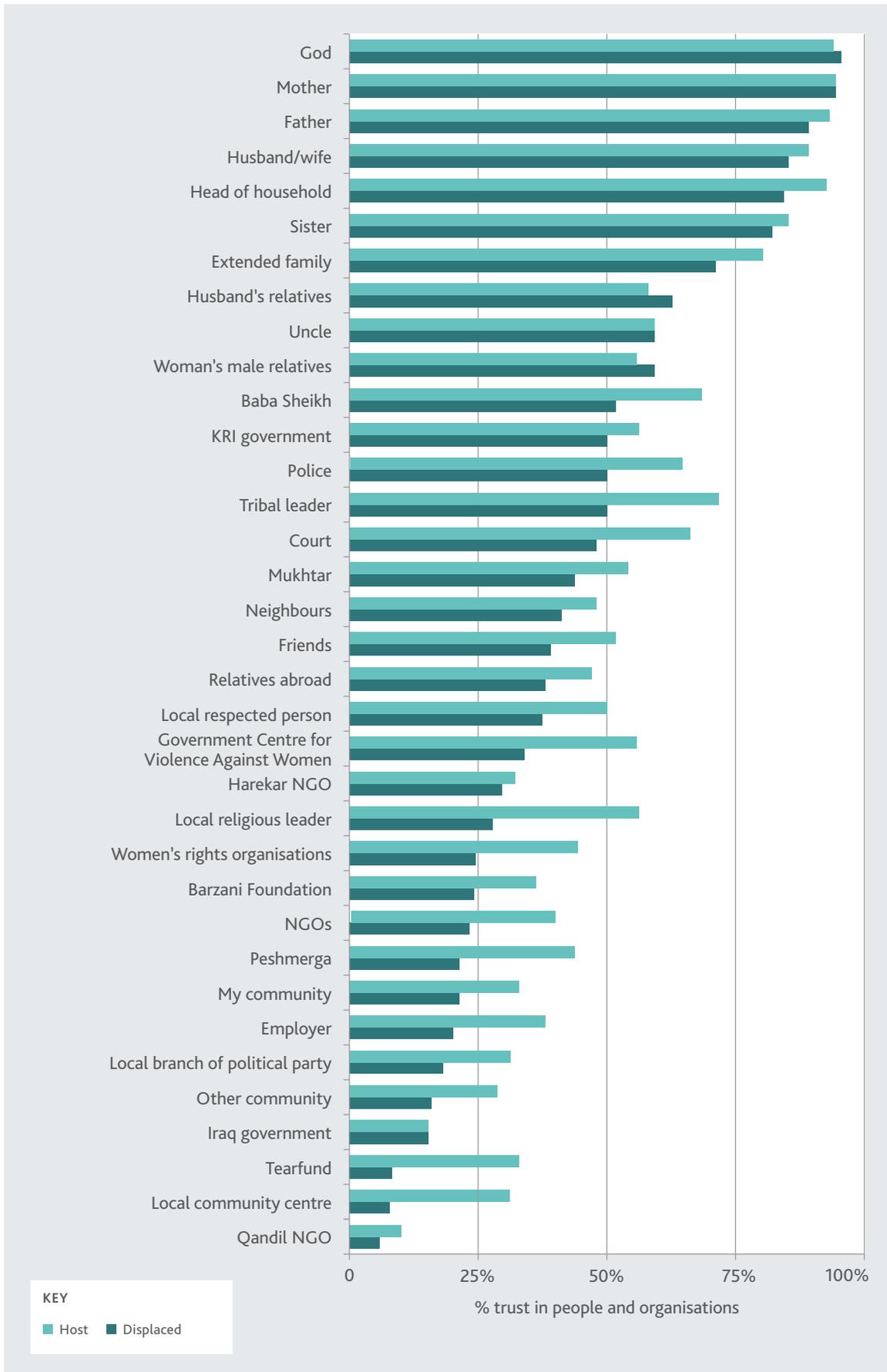
3.4 Who do people turn to?

In the following section we will draw on the narrative data[7] from the workshops, participant interviews, field observations and key informant interviews to explore responses to the three questions used in the study.

Who do people turn to for help and support?

1 If you were struggling to meet the basic needs of your family…

2 If there was a dispute with another community…

3 If a woman in your community experiences violence:
   • Who could she talk to about it?
   • Where could she ask for help?

3.4.1 Meeting basic needs

As demonstrated in the section above, all the communities in this study had established social connections and trust which contributed to their resilience. Nearly everyone reported that their most important source of help was God. When we explored in what ways God was helpful, we learnt that people felt calmer and more reassured after talking to God and felt they had an ally on their side. People told us that they prayed to God for help with all their problems. Examples included praying for kidnapped, missing or separated relatives; for pregnancies; for sick relatives and friends. It was clear that people ask their family for help first before they are ready to look outside the family for help. Women were more likely to ask for help from friends and neighbours or the local community. Men were more likely to ask for help from male relatives or non-family community members such as employers, NGOs and the government. In the following discussion we will draw on the qualitative data collected through discussion at workshops to explore these resilience pathways in more depth.

3.4.1.1 Displaced people

Borrowing and charitable giving

Family and neighbours were mentioned as an important source of help for resolving any lack of basic needs. In all the communities both men and women mentioned that they would turn to friends, neighbours or family for help first, particularly if they needed to borrow money. However, we saw how displacement can disrupt these traditional patterns. One man from the Yezidi displaced settlement pointed out that he can no longer help people because of his lack of assets.

'If I have money and you need money from me, you can come to my home and claim some money. I could sell something. I will sell my gold, my sheep, and I will collect money from people for you. Whatever I have for you, I can give you to help you, but now I can't do that.'
Yezidi displaced man

The Muslim men were also displaced but lived in a more settled community with solid houses and amenities such as water and electricity. We were told that many of the men had been employed by the central Baghdad government. Some of them were still being paid a salary from the central government[8] but collectively they had seen a sharp decline in their standard of living. Like the displaced Yezidi group, they talked about the problem they had in asking relatives to support them when it would be so hard to pay it back. Although

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7 This includes notes from debriefing carried out with researchers after the workshops and interviews, answers to semi-structured questions in the individual interviews and observational notes taken by the research team.

8 This group had been displaced from Mosul for at least three years and were still receiving their government salaries even though payment was often irregular. They talked about payments coming through a form of smart card system. However, people who are not displaced and work for the local Kurdish Regional Government were not receiving their salaries regularly during the period we were there due to the financial crisis in Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

their relatives would not really expect them to repay the money, they felt that borrowing without repaying compromised their honour:

'I can ask my uncles and my relatives but it will not be honourable to keep asking.'
Muslim displaced man

Women in both the Yezidi displaced settlement and the Muslim women's group said they would turn to close relatives (particularly male relatives) for help. Married women would first ask their husbands. Women often stated that they would then turn to their mothers for help, as their mothers would try to resolve the issues without involving the wider family which would result in much more public exposure of the problems. Other women would first turn to their fathers, parents-in-law, brothers-in-law or their sons. For example, one woman in the displaced community commented about her parents:

'I depend on them so much for everything. I talk to my father about everything, he never lets me down.'
Yezidi displaced woman

Women in the two displaced communities, who did not have male relatives, either because their husbands had died or they were unmarried, appeared to be particularly destitute and dependent on others for help:

'I am alone, my husband is dead and I live alone with no children. My father is an old man who cannot work so if there is a neighbour who brings us food, we eat: if not, we depend on God.'
Muslim displaced woman

Another woman from the same group was in a better situation as she received a pension from the central government of Baghdad because her dead husband had been a government employee. However, she said that this was usually paid late and when that happened she had to borrow from anyone she could and pay back when the pension arrived. If she could not borrow the money she too had to 'depend on God'.

Participants from all groups mentioned that wealthier people in the community might be willing to give money to people in need. The Muslim community mentioned the importance of Zakat, the Islamic obligation to give alms at all times to the poor and needy, an obligation which is increased during Ramadan. However, we heard from the Muslim women who lived in close proximity to the host community that they felt shy about asking for help from people they did not know.

Community collections are also carried out when required in order to assist people in need. For example, the displaced Yezidi group told us about a collection that was held to pay for a ransom for the daughter of a local Yezidi family held captive by ISIS. In another example, the displaced Muslim women mentioned a particular community collection that was made to pay for a sick woman to have an operation.

Earning money

At the beginning of the workshops, we asked people for some basic information including how many of the last 12 months they had worked. The men in the displaced Yezidi community laughed when we asked this question and responded: 'No one here works! We have nothing, we are outside the camp, we have no help.' In all the workshops with displaced people, participants consistently reported that no one, neither female nor male, had paid employment, although one or two people had undertaken some volunteering. Despite this information, we learnt about a number of strategies employed to overcome financial difficulties and some people did manage to earn some money. However, it seemed that they did not consider paid work as employment – unless it involved a salary with a contract.

The men complained that, when they did work, they could only earn very small sums. For example, one displaced Yezidi man talked about working all day for only three dollars. Some of the displaced Yezidi men worked on local farms. They were either paid for the hours worked, or worked the land and shared any profits with the landowner. Others bought vegetables and sold them on stalls at the roadside to displaced people both inside the camp and in the settlements around the camp , which was proving to be a thriving market. Some younger men had joined the Peshmerga (Kurdish army) as this was the only work they could get. Yezidi displaced participants talked about being dependent on salaries of young relatives who were in

the Peshmerga. The Mukhtar in the informal settlement had a business dealing in second-hand furniture. A local religious leader had helped him out by advancing some capital for him to purchase furniture from people leaving the region due to the financial crisis or the threat of conflict. This furniture was then sold in the settlement.

Among the 33 displaced women (both Yezidi and Muslim), only one woman said she had any work and that was for one month out of the previous 12. Women in all the communities reported that they had low rates of pay for their work. However, the displaced Yezidi women told us that they wanted work so that they could have money and some income. Some women described encountering resistance from husbands and family at their attempts to work. The Red Cross had set up courses in the area to teach the women sewing. Two women from the displaced community told us independently that they had signed up for these courses but not been able to do them. One woman told us, 'I want to work but my husband does not allow it.' She went on to explain that the work is far away so there would be problems looking after the children, but she also suggested that she thought the problem was that he might get jealous of her if she were able to work and earn money.

Both men and women mentioned that they would ask for credit from landlords and shop owners. The Muslim women said they found that their landlords were 'patient and give us some time to pay'. One woman in the same workshop said she had a husband who had irregular work. She had two children and told us that if there was no work for him she just goes to the shop and gets food on credit. Employers might help meet basic needs by providing a loan or advancing wages.

Education, health and identity cards

Displaced participants were particularly concerned about problems with schooling and health care. There were local schools that displaced children could attend that taught in Kurdish. This created a problem for displaced families because they came from Sinjar, an area subject to Saddam Hussein's Arabisation policy which enforced Arabic in schools and society at large. Similarly, although of ethnic Kurdish origin, the Muslim community from Mosul also spoke and were educated in Arabic. We learnt that there are schools teaching in Arabic but they were further away and harder for children in both displaced communities to get to. Some parents from the displaced Yezidi settlement informed us that the Arabic school was overcrowded so the children had to attend in different shifts (morning and afternoon) and in the winter they had a long walk to school in the cold.

Public health care was available through local hospitals. However, it appeared that the opening hours were limited and inconvenient and there was no 24-hour care for emergencies. The quality of care was said to be good but obtaining and paying for transport to the hospitals were a problem. People with chronic health conditions, or who had children with disabilities, seemed to have particular difficulties accessing care and support. One displaced Yezidi man who had a son with special needs said that he had had very little help and was finding the situation very difficult. Another displaced Muslim woman with two disabled children was finding the same.

One of the issues that came up a number of times is a problem obtaining identity (ID) cards. Clearly many people had had to flee their homes and leave documentation behind. Without ID cards it was impossible for internally displaced persons (IDPs) to receive some important basic help and services: for example, some cash handouts from the Barzani Foundation, or to attend school, or receive health care. The main reason given for not being able to get ID cards was money, However, when we asked some of our advisory group about this, we were told that some of the issues were linked to a highly bureaucratic system and there was a range of reasons why it would be difficult to obtain new ID cards. In addition, the Muslim men complained that, without documents stating their level of education and work experience, they could not prove their suitability for relevant posts. This group appeared to have had good jobs before displacement and expressed frustration with the poor work opportunities now available to them.

Formal support structures: government and NGOs

Participants frequently talked about the role of local community leaders in attempting to meet their basic needs. In the displaced Yezidi settlement the men said, 'The head of everything is the Mukhtar, everything we have is through him!' Although we heard some specific stories about the Mukhtar resolving differences, we also heard that he 'had no money'. In a supplementary interview with the Mukhtar we heard that the position is not a paid one. The Mukhtar in the displaced Yezidi settlement was himself displaced with his family and was responsible for 900 families. He was clearly the conduit for NGOs and other formal mechanisms but community members suggested that he was not a 'big man' who could distribute funds.

Many people talked about getting help from the Kurdistan Regional Government. There seemed to be trust and confidence in the government. We probed as to what people meant by 'government' and they talked about local administrators including camp administrators, the police, the courts and other people in the pay of the Kurdistan Regional Government. However, members of the displaced communities told us that there was not enough external help available for them. They complained that help was given to the people in the camp but not to the people in the informal settlements round it, such as their own.

3.4.1.2 Host community

The Yezidi people living in the village were treated as settled ('host community') in this research. In fact they had been moved in the 1980s when the original village was flooded as a result of the dam-building project carried out by Saddam Hussein. This village was on the front line of the conflict in 2014. Because of being so close to the front line and because of being Yezidi, people in the village expressed sympathy with those fleeing the conflict.

All ten men in the host community workshop said they had worked all of the previous 12 months. This is in stark contrast to the men and women from the displaced communities of whom nearly all said they had had no work for the previous 12 months. Four of the nine women from the host community reported that they had had paid employment in the last 12 months, and of these, two said they had worked for all of the previous year. The other two had worked for eight and two months respectively. We heard of some women in the host community working in local support organisations. For example, one woman said her daughter worked for Harekar, while another had worked as a translator for an NGO.

Members of the host community outlined the same range of people and organisations as the displaced people when describing potential sources of help. However, it was generally clear that they experienced fewer acute financial problems and difficulties in meeting basic needs. Members of the host community explained that someone in financial need in their community would expect to approach rich people in the village for help. In the workshops they mentioned a few individuals known to everyone who it was agreed would probably help.

'We go to the tribal leader or richest person.'

'There is one specific man [name given] who is very rich and he helps the people from the village or anyone who needs help.'
Yezidi host women workshop

They also had community solutions to problems. For example, the Mukhtar could draw on a council of community leaders to decide how to respond to a problem. One person said that anyone from the community who is asked for help, whether they are rich or poor, they will try to help. The group also mentioned that they had raised money together in the village for some of the displaced people.

'Me and my friend gathered $800 for an IDP family, then we raised the issue with an NGO but they still haven't done anything.'
Yezidi host men workshop

The host community talked about the early days in 2014 when people first fled to the area to escape ISIS. Inevitably people from the village were more involved in those first few days of the crisis when, as they said, the situation was very bad. People from the village provided food, shelter and blankets for the displaced people. Others also came from Duhok city (about 25 km away) to help. The Kurdistan Regional Government

and the Barzani Foundation gave a lot of help. Some of the villagers had relatives among those who arrived. We also heard from some displaced people that they chose this area because of having relatives in this particular village.

The village is approximately one kilometre away from the main formal camp for displaced people, which holds about 17,000. There are also many more people displaced in the informal settlements around the camp. Some of the host community complained that the NGOs did not help them but only the people in the camp:

'We are the host community but help is only given to the IDPs.'

'Two NGOs only help the refugees and not the host community even though we have poor people too.'
Yezidi host women workshop

In addition, the host women told us about a Facebook page just for Yezidi people where they can ask for help, particularly if someone needs money because they are ill. In subsequent conversations about this page and other websites, we understood that this is a way of keeping in contact with relatives, especially for those with relatives abroad, and is also a way of locating missing people.
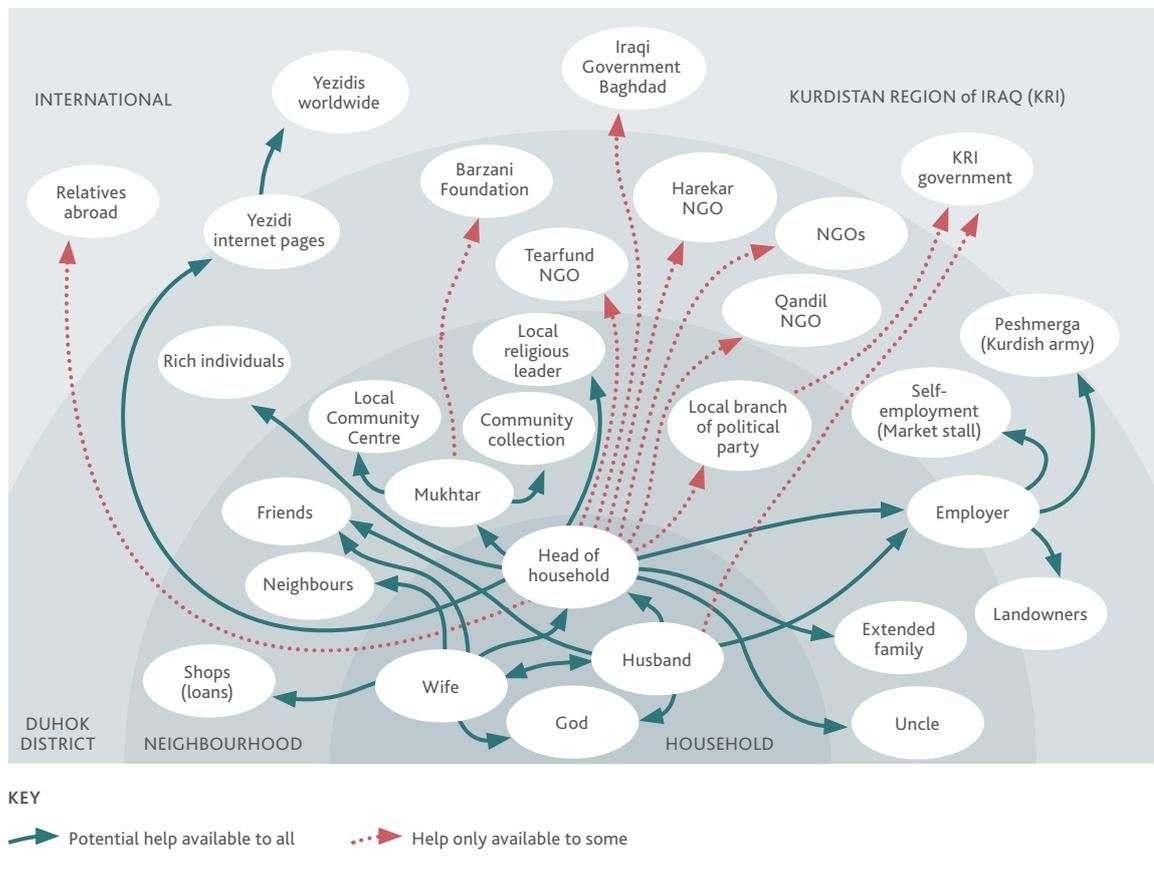
Figure 2 Basic needs resilience pathways

Figure 2 illustrates the various pathways that participants reported they used to resolve problems associated with meeting their own and their family's basic needs. These patterns and pathways were similar for host and displaced groups. The sources of help included their family and household, neighbours and friends and tribal leaders followed by, for the Yezidi, spiritual leaders including Baba Sheikh. Participants explained that sometimes they would ask people or organisations for direct help and sometimes those people or organisations would reach out to others on behalf of the person in need. They also mentioned people and organisations that they might have hoped to get help from (perhaps because these helped others), but explained that they themselves had failed to get help from this source. Additionally, as discussed above, displaced people were constrained in asking for help from some traditional sources of support because they

could not reciprocate as they had nothing they could offer in exchange. They argued that they would lose their honour if they kept asking for help without repaying. Figure 2 uses a red dotted line to indicate sources of help perceived as unavailable.

KEY FINDINGS
Meeting basic needs

- All the communities that we worked with had established social connections that supported their resilience.

- The most important source of help for nearly everyone we spoke to was God. We were told that people felt calmer about their problems and more reassured after talking to God; they felt they had an ally, someone on their side.

- All host community men and half of the host women participating in this study had had paid employment over the past 12 months. In contrast, members of the displaced community reported being paid low wages for occasional work. Some displaced women were keen to work but reported that their husbands prevented them from doing so.

- When they are in acute financial or material need, people go to their family for help first before asking for help outside the family.

- Women were more likely to go to friends and neighbours or the local community for help while men were more likely to go to male relatives, the local Mukhtar or external people such as employers, NGOs or government.

- The displaced communities had problems meeting basic needs and had experienced a dramatic reduction in their standard of living as well as loss of employment and stability.

- People would usually turn to wealthier people, landlords and shopkeepers to borrow money or ask for credit. However, displacement and a strong sense of honour meant that people were reluctant to borrow if they knew that they could not return the money, had to ask for help repeatedly, or had nothing to offer in exchange.

- All communities reported a culture of community collections to support individuals with a specific financial need.

3.4.2 Resolving disputes

When we asked people who they would go to if there was a dispute in their community, there was a marked difference between disputes within the community and disputes between communities and religions. The religious leaders and structures play such an important role in resolving problems among the Yezidi that, if they are not available to resolve issues with people from a different religion, external organisations have to step in. The people we spoke to appeared to live with people who were closely connected to them and did not set out to mix with other communities; they presented this as their way of living peacefully and avoiding conflict.

3.4.2.1 Disputes within communities

When there are disputes within communities, these are normally dealt with through traditional support mechanisms: family, communities, tribal and spiritual leaders. People described how at first they try to solve disputes or problems among themselves or by drawing in relatives to help. If that didn't work they might go to the extended family, such as the head of the family, respected neighbours or local community representatives such as the Mukhtar. The Mukhtar was mentioned by all groups as key to this process. When we carried out a supplementary interview with the Mukhtar in the informal settlement, he told us that people might start coming to him with problems at 6am and he was often up until late at night listening to and solving people's problems. If the problem or dispute could not be solved with the help of people in

the neighbourhood, they might go to a tribal leader or a higher religious leader or the spiritual council. We were told that for disputes within a community it was rare for anyone to seek help outside these traditional structures and call on the police or government representatives.

'If there is an argument that can't be solved between us, we go to the Mukhtar and tribal leaders to arrange a lunch for both sides in a neutral place and try to solve it peacefully.'

Displaced Muslim woman

Men from the Muslim community said they solved small disputes among themselves with the help of the community. However, they explained that, because they originated from different places in Mosul, it could be difficult when there was no one to go to who was known and respected by both parties. Although they all recognised the role of tribal leader, some of the men said that this was a traditional role that was very ancient and not something they would respect any longer. It depended on your 'level and education' as to whether the tribal leader might still resolve disputes. The implication was that the more 'educated' you are, the less likely you are to respect the authority of a tribal leader. However, there was some difference of opinion about this.

The Yezidi have strong spiritual leadership which came through in the workshops in both the host community and the informal settlement. The women said:

'If there are arguments they try to bring two families together to solve it. If not, they can go to the tribal leader or neighbours or anyone who is trustworthy and the person who seeks peace. All the people go to the older people and spiritual council; 99 per cent of problems are solved with the spiritual council. It has the highest place in our community and we cannot disobey their orders and whatever they say we have to obey them.'

Yezidi host women workshop

Men and women from the host community talked about 'respected people', 'peacemakers' and people with 'peace in their hearts'. People were easily able to identify someone to go to help resolve disputes within the community. The men said the tribe system was 'very strong' and 'keeps peace' here because they have know each other for a long time and have strong ties.

Displaced Yezidi men said that they would go to the family first for help to resolve any conflicts, then the tribal leader or the Mukhtar, and then Baba Sheikh. They would only involve the police or the courts if the problem could not be resolved by these means. Women in the displaced Yezidi community said they would try to solve problems between themselves; only then would they involve their husbands and if their husband couldn't resolve it himself, he would go to the Mukhtar or government.

There is clearly the potential for some friction between the displaced population who have arrived in such large numbers and the small pre-existing local host population. Participants did not spontaneously talk about such disputes. However, they did acknowledge that there had been occasional problems and attributed these to the different cultures the more traditional Yezidi have in Sinjar compared to those living in the Duhok Governorate. For example, one host man said that the displaced people came from somewhere where there were no laws, whereas 'here we have laws'. He suggested that there are differences in the way the Sinjar (displaced) Yezidis drive, in their customs and particularly in their laws. However, there was otherwise generally a great deal of empathy and sympathy for the displaced people.

On the whole, emphasis was put on the fact that they are a peaceful community who are not looking for conflict.

'After the displaced people came, life changed: there was less work and places became crowded. But the peace is the same because we are all Yezidi people so there is no problem.'

Yezidi host women workshop

3.4.2.2 Disputes between communities

The Yezidi host men felt that there were cultural differences between Yezidi from the Duhok Governorate area and those displaced from the Sinjar area. In the Muslim workshops both men and women spoke of the differences between their Kurdish identity and that of Arabs.

'We don't need Arab people to stay with us. We don't like Arab people […] Arabic people tend to fight more than Kurdish people because they love to fight. So they get into some kind of trouble here.'
Displaced Muslim men workshop

Participants were also keen to point out that they felt helpless with regard to the bigger dispute, the war in which they were caught up. They argued that the only way to resolve this was to appeal to the international community, and they asked the research team to help to publicise their situation. Some mentioned that they shared information with relatives abroad to encourage them to highlight the needs of displaced people in Iraq.

When there were disputes between communities living within the area, these were harder to resolve, particularly when there were different religions involved. The shared community mechanisms were not effective, which meant direct recourse to external agents such as police and the courts. Very serious problems – particularly problems involving violence or deaths – might also require outside intervention or recourse to the courts. For example, the Yezidi host men said:

'Problems between our community and the Muslim community are not solved unless the government solves them.'
Yezidi host men workshop

'If the argument is between two religious people from two different religions, they take it to the police station so the police will try to take both sides and talk to them and try to solve it peacefully. If they don't agree, they take it to the court.'
Yezidi host women workshop

It appeared that one strategy was to require a compensatory payment from the offending party. Yezidi host men related an example of a dispute between displaced people and the host community that became serious:

'One of the IDPs (displaced people) was by the dam and was drunk, and was being rude and cursing people. Some men (seven men) came and beat him to make him stop. He then sued them in court for 15 million Iraqi Dinar (IQD). They said they could not afford that so they went to Baba Sheik and he resolved the issue.'
Yezidi host men workshop

Another story involved a local (host) man who tried to kill a sheep to eat it:

'The sheep ran out of control and they tried to shoot it to stop it running away but by mistake shot a woman from the village who was nearby. She died and her family took 3 million IQDs for her death and after that they forgave him.'
Yezidi host men workshop

It appears that the police and courts get involved when problems cannot be solved within communities:

If the problem is big or serious, they go to the police.'

'If the police in the area couldn't help, then both sides go to court and the court decides.'
Displaced Muslim women's workshop

We were told that after a fight or serious argument, one of the parties might move away from the area. This effectively resolves the dispute because they never see each other again. For example, a Yezidi displaced woman from the informal settlement told us that once they had had problems with a Muslim family. There was conflict and the police came. No one got hurt, and in the end the Mukhtar attempted to solve the issue by moving around the tents. However, in the end the Muslim family had to leave the area.

Revenge and honour

Revenge and payment in exchange for death was a common theme among participants, particularly with cases regarding women's honour (see also Section 3.4.3.4). The stories of how people had tried to resolve disputes, either by taking revenge or by choosing not to seek vengeance, appeared to be part of a general narrative by which they presented themselves as a peaceful community who could solve their own problems. For example, one woman from the host community told a story of another woman whose three sons had been killed, and who felt that she had a right to revenge. Baba Sheikh came to see her and successfully persuaded her not to seek revenge. In another case a Muslim woman said, 'My son had an accident: the driver ran away. We didn't press charges. The police found the driver and only gave him three days' imprisonment. Now my son is disabled and we have no one to help.'
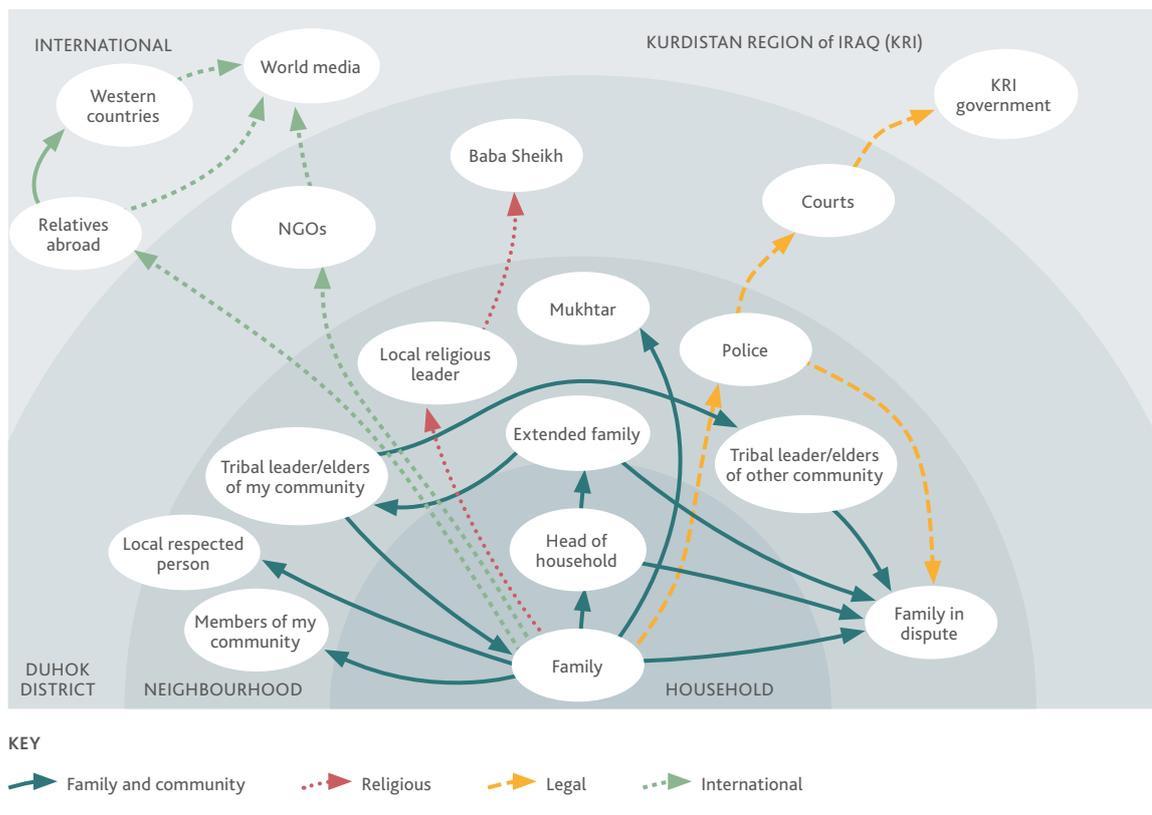
Figure 3 Dispute resolution pathways

Figure 3 illustrates the different pathways to help with dispute resolution reported by participants. The different colours indicate different types of dispute resolution approaches including: through the family and community; through the support of religious leaders; employing local legal structures; and appealing to an international audience.

KEY FINDINGS
Community disputes

- The people we spoke to appeared to live with close family members who shared their religion. They did not seek to mix with other communities and presented this as their way of living peacefully and avoiding conflict.

- Both communities expressed the view that someone has a right to revenge for a serious offence, but may be persuaded not to exercise this right.

- Family and community structures played an important role in dispute resolution for both Yezidi and Muslim communities. In each context, the local Mukhtar was very active in seeking resolution and mediating with parties in dispute.

- Religious leaders and structures play an important role in resolving problems among the Yezidi. In Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the ultimate Yezidi authority is the spiritual council led by Baba Sheikh. Yezidi people consistently affirmed that all Yezidis will obey the instructions of the spiritual council.

- Community solutions included the payment of money in compensation and the physical moving of one of the parties away from the area.

- When a dispute is between people from a different religion, external organisations such as the police and the courts have to step in.

3.4.3 Gender-based violence

There are extensive accounts of the appalling atrocities of sexual and gender-based violence experienced by women captured by ISIS. Indeed, we were warned that, due to press interest and a multitude of NGOs working on GBV in the area, there was substantial research fatigue on this issue. The focus of this study was not to catalogue experiences of GBV, but to explore the resources available to both men and women when seeking to address the problem of gender-based violence. The research sought to avoid a focus exclusively on externally inflicted GBV (such as by armed groups), but to enable participants to share their strategies for responding to experiences of GBV within the community.

Given the sensitivity of the topic, the study design included workshops with members of the communities who had not been selected or identified on the basis of experience of GBV. Participants were not asked about their own personal experiences, but were asked to talk about general coping strategies within their community:

If a woman in your community experiences violence: Who could she talk to about it? Where could she ask for help?

This question allowed people to talk about GBV either as a war crime or within the family. It did not force people to talk about issues that were too personally sensitive.

In the individual interviews we asked different questions of men and women, again not about actual personal experience, but as a hypothetical scenario, as follows:

Women: *If you were experiencing violence at home, how much would you trust this person or organisation to try and help you?*

Men: *If a woman in your family was experiencing violence at home, how much would you trust this person or organisation to try and help her?*

Despite the research team's concerns about sensitivities in asking this question, in particular the male researchers, we found that it was readily answered. People had clear pathways for who should be approached in the case of gender-based violence and discussed a range of issues and examples, including intimate partner violence, harassment, arranged marriage, forced marriage, polygamy, elopement and revenge and honour

killings. Discussions in groups all referred to current gender-based violence within the community, and not to experiences of people kidnapped by ISIS.

3.4.3.1 Women's experiences of gender-based violence

Experiences of intimate partner violence and other forms of gender-based violence were shared with us even though we did not specifically ask people to give personal revelations. Some women told us that they did not experience violence, and that there was little violence in their community. The Muslim women said that there had been more violence in Mosul but there was less here. They also suggested that, because they generally marry their relatives, they experience less violence. However, one woman in the Muslim women's workshop said that she was free, she didn't have any problem with violence because she had no husband or brother or sister or children, only a mother – implying that others who had men in their lives did suffer violence. In other cases women asked to speak to us after a public workshop or shared information during individual interviews and related stories of GBV, either about themselves or other people. In many of these stories there appeared to be an attempt to differentiate between what people felt was justified violence (due to something the woman had done so the violence was considered 'her fault') and what they saw as non-justified violence.

For example a woman in the displaced Yezidi community said:

'I was shouting at the children and my husband got cross with me – he loves the children. It was the treatment of the children; it was a few months ago. He was right to beat me for shouting at the kids. My brother told me to leave him and go to the police. He said the colour of my skin was the same as my t-shirt [blue].'
Displaced Yezidi woman

It was clear that some women felt trapped in abusive relationships. Several argued that they had to stay with their husband as the father of their children. One woman from the displaced informal settlement spoke with a researcher privately after the workshop and told us that her husband beat her. When asked why she did not go for help, she said she couldn't because he is the father of her children and 'hiding it is better'.[9] As another woman from the displaced community told us:

'It happened to me: my husband beat me, we solved it between us – we don't want to make problems bigger than they are. Between us we solved it – we don't want anyone to know our issues. In our tradition it is better not to share these things with strange people.'
Displaced Yezidi woman

Being an IDP appeared to make some women feel even more vulnerable:

'The violence is happening but I tell myself it is not worth it and I try to keep silent. He beats me but we are IDPs:, it would be better to keep silent than making the problem bigger than its normal size.'
Displaced Yezidi woman

A common feature of disputes between husbands and wives as recounted to us was the marrying of a second wife. We heard of husbands who threatened to marry a second woman if his first wife went to the police to complain about violence. Occasionally it appeared that women could also use threats. One displaced Yezidi woman pointed out that she had years of evidence of violence and if her husband asked her for a divorce she would go to police and try to put him in prison.

'I will tell them about all the years and everything he has done to me.'
Displaced Yezidi woman

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9   When a woman disclosed ongoing violence, we offered to help her to contact agencies that would provide support. Tearfund staff who are continuing to work in the area are ensuring that specific cases are followed up as appropriate.

One woman told us that her husband wanted to take a second wife. She was pregnant so was very upset about this. She has no father here who can help her so she spoke to her brother-in-law who convinced her husband not to take a second wife. The woman told us that she and her husband have arguments like every couple but her main complaint was that he won't let her go anywhere. She had wanted to go on a training course to learn how to sew, but her husband would not let her go. His reason was that he believed that for her to work would bring shame on the family and give her a bad reputation. The woman herself argued that she would be able to help the family if she could do the training and get a job. However, she told us that, as her brother-in-law agrees with her husband on this issue, there is nothing she can do. Nevertheless, she also told us that she is planning to ask the Mukhtar for help and ask him to make her husband change his mind.

3.4.3.2 Women's strategies: keeping it in the family

It was very clear that everybody who took part in the research, women and men, displaced and settled, wanted solutions to stop violence when it occurred. However, it seemed that generally their desire to avoid public shame was of even more importance than stopping the violence. People's choices reflected a series of options that would achieve maximum benefit while allowing minimum sharing of the problem. Many women told us that if they were experiencing violence in their home, they would not tell anyone but would keep it to themselves and perhaps confide in God. Some would try and sort out the problem between themselves and their husband without involving anyone else.

Women reported that if they could not resolve problems with their husband themselves, their next step would be to ask for help from their own parents. Some women said that they would speak to their own mother first as she might be able to resolve the problem by speaking to the violent husband without even their father knowing about it. Women preferred this because they argued that once the issue was shared with their father it would become known by the whole extended family. Many women felt that female relatives are not in a position of power to resolve these issues very easily. They would, however, speak to their mothers for comfort. For example, a Yezidi woman from the displaced community said:

'When I cannot stand my miserable life then I go to speak to my mother to feel comfortable. I feel safe and free when I speak with her.'

Displaced Yezidi woman

'My mother. In any situation possible I ask her for help. She is my friend. My mother helps me to feel confident about myself.'

Yezidi host woman

'My mother gave me advice: don't make the problem big, take it easy, be patient.'

Displaced Yezidi woman

In contrast, women reported that male relatives, particularly fathers, are able to intervene and might be able to have some influence with a husband and try to get him to change his behaviour and stop the violence, either through direct contact or through the husband's parents.

'The father would talk to the husband's relatives and ask them to talk to their son. The parents would talk to their son and that would resolve things.'

Yezidi host woman

Women also shared examples of intervention on their behalf by their own brother or husband's brother.

'My husband was beating me and my brother suddenly appeared – he told me to go to the police.'

Displaced Yezidi woman

When problems became more serious or more public, it became a dispute between two families. Wherever possible, the families would resolve it between themselves and would only call on outside help if they could not find a resolution:

'My aunt's daughter is married and she got abused after two months of marriage. She was pregnant. She asked for help from his parents but they said our son is not an abusive person. Then she called her parents and they threatened the boy's family: 'If you don't solve the problem and solve the issue with your son and our daughter, we will go to court!' The problem is a bit better but not yet solved. The problem has been solved a bit by relatives – they are trying to solve it before it goes to court.'

Yezidi host woman

A few women spoke about examples of gender-based violence outside the home. If this occurred, the woman would seek help from her husband, brother or other male relative. One of the host women married to a fisherman who was away from home a lot related:

'If a man is bothering me a lot and I can't stand it, I would go to my husband and he will sort it. Then my husband will go and fight him.'

Yezidi host woman

Another woman from the host community who was unmarried talked about being harassed by a man who wanted to marry her and was threatening to put pictures of her on the internet. Her brother was a Peshmerga and he contacted the police to say that a friend of the woman would be contacting them about the case. The friend went to the police and the man was arrested and kept in custody for some months. When we asked about the role of the brother, we were told that it would be hard for a woman to go directly to the police about such a case without a brother because it would be shameful.

Women without male relatives to intervene on their behalf and protect them had fewer options for support and felt more vulnerable. Many displaced women had relatives who had died in the conflict or were kidnapped by ISIS or their relatives were elderly and had had to be left behind so as not to hamper attempts to escape. One woman from the host community told us her neighbour was having problems with violence and would have wanted to go to her father but her family are not here: they are IDPs and are currently in Sinjar. Another said her brothers are still kidnapped and she prays her family will all be well and not encounter problems. A woman from the informal settlement said she had not spoken to her extended family for two years. These relatives were often listed as the first preferred point of contact and the most trusted for situations of GBV, but were not available to the displaced populations. Some of them were able to contact relatives on the phone. Also, a number of women from the host community explained that their male relatives had gone ahead of the family in fleeing to Europe.

3.4.3.3 Women's strategies: seeking help outside the family

There was consistency in people's accounts of their approach to addressing gender-based violence. Silence was the first choice, followed by asking close family members for help. Participants frequently explained that they would only ask for help outside the family if a problem could not be resolved within the family, particularly if there was serious violence. The next source of help might be friends and neighbours, the Mukhtar, tribal leaders and religious leaders. Secular agencies and authorities including the police, the courts and NGOs were the last resort. This is illustrated by this explanation from a woman from the displaced informal settlement:

'First I go to my daughter and try and resolve it with my husband, then we go to the head of household, if that doesn't work we go to Baba Sheikh and if there is no other way to solve it then we go to the police.'

Displaced Yezidi woman

Neighbours and friends

If women approached female relatives or friends about the issue, it was generally to seek comfort rather than expecting that other women could solve the problems. However, the role of comfort and emotional support was important. A woman from the host community told us that she always spoke to her friend:

'She is so near to me: when my family or anyone else beat me or even tell me bad words, I go to speak to her. I feel comfortable, I feel free after I tell her, I feel good that someone can listen to me. She speaks nicely and tries to calm me down, tells me not to be angry or sad.'
Yezidi host woman

Neighbours could also help. They are often there when problems happen. In the displaced settlement particularly, neighbours are physically very close together and can hear everything that is going on through the flimsy informal shelters. One woman reported:

'If my husband beats me, I will talk to the neighbours; they will talk to my husband and persuade him that I am not so bad and shouldn't be treated that way.'
Displaced Yezidi woman

Mukhtar

Both women and men in the displaced informal settlement reported that they would go to the Mukhtar for help. The Mukhtar lives very close to people and appeared to be an acceptable source of help before a situation escalates. We were told that the Mukhtar would get both sides together and try to talk to them. One woman explained:

'When I have big violence, I ask my father for help… only when my issue is big. My father will be angry but he will try to resolve the problem. He will advise us to live in a better way, far from violence. If he can't solve the problem, he asks the Mukhtar to help: he brings the three of us together, the wife, husband and father of the wife.'
Displaced Yezidi woman

Spiritual leaders

If problems can't be solved within the family or are too serious, people will approach the tribal leader or the local religious leader. In the case of Yezidi, the most serious problems would be taken to the spiritual council, which is a group of Yezidi religious leaders led by their spiritual leader, Baba Sheik. It was only if none of these preferred routes succeeded in resolving issues that outside agencies such as the police and courts were called in. A Yezidi woman from the host community explained:

'If it is just verbal and daily arguments it is fine, but if it is serious and my family can't solve it then we go to the religious people… If my husband wanted to divorce because he wanted another wife, I would go to the Sheikh and ask for help. He would collect the man and talk to relatives and parents. If this doesn't work, the Sheikh would lead them to court.'
Yezidi host woman

It was clear that Baba Sheikh and his spiritual council have great authority over these issues. As one woman said:

'He is old and respectful. We all respect him so 100 per cent he will solve the problems. He is the peacekeeper and he likes to keep peace among us. … He deals with problems such as divorce and runaway boys and girls.'

'He is the peacekeeper and he tries to solve all problems especially women's problems… He is not with violence at all against women so any problems regarding women can be solved by him.'
Yezidi host woman

Others confirmed that Baba Sheikh takes the approach of bringing disputing parties together and tries to find a solution through mediation. As a member of one of the women's workshops remarked, 'He is a well known and valued person.'

However, there were some examples where women would not seek help from Baba Sheikh. One Yezidi woman from the displaced settlement said she felt shy: 'I prefer not to tell the Sheikh about violence.' Another woman from the host community said:

'I would never go to a religious person: even if I need to, I won't. I don't like the way they think.'
Yezidi host woman

Also we learnt from an unmarried woman from the host community that people wouldn't go to Baba Sheikh if there were problems about young people being in love and refusing to marry. The implication was that Baba Sheikh would disapprove of sexual 'agreements' between young people before marriage, and if it became known that a couple had had sex, the girl might be killed by her relatives.

It was generally clear that members of the Yezidi communities had huge respect for, and would adhere to judgements made by, Baba Sheikh and the spiritual council. If people do not like the agreements made by Baba Sheikh, their solution is usually for them to leave and move away as they cannot defy Baba Sheikh.

NGOs, police and courts

After family, community and religious leaders, the main sources of external help are the police, NGOs and the courts. All of these organisations are linked in people's minds because they argued that when you get involved in one of them, the others are potentially involved. The majority of respondents said they would be reluctant to involve these organisations because this escalated the problem, and made it public and more shameful. For example, most women said they trusted the police, but they didn't want to contact them because 'they will make the problem bigger'. Trying to avoid public knowledge of the case and keeping the problem 'smaller' and private was of paramount importance because public shame would in itself lead to direct negative consequences for the woman. For example, participants expressed concerns about bringing a case to the government-run Centre for Violence Against Women or other women's rights NGOs such as Harekar.

'If a woman went there [Centre for Violence Against Women], she would lose her reputation in the wider family. If she is married, she might get divorced – her husband will divorce her. If it is a woman, unmarried, she will not get married.'
Yezidi host woman

For some the disadvantages were perceived to outweigh the benefits:

'I wouldn't go to the police at all: I disagree with that. I am shy and don't want to get a bad reputation. I love my family. I don't want them to hate me.'
Displaced Yezidi woman

However, many women did report that they would ask these external organisations for help in extreme cases, and demonstrated trust in their efficacy.

'If the husband beats so much that it is dangerous for the wife's life, then we would go to the police.'
Displaced Yezidi woman

In many cases we heard that the police play a mediating role and try to find solutions from within the community. One woman told us about her neighbour whose husband kept beating her. The case went to court and the husband was ordered to pay a monthly sum to the woman and children. He got divorced in a religious court in order to avoid paying this sum, but then discovered that he would still have to pay, so he decided to take her back.

A young unmarried woman in the host community argued that police were more likely to be involved in cases involving young people and marriage.

'If the parents force a woman to get married to a person she doesn't like, then she will go to the police for help.'

Yezidi host woman

Another participant shared a different perspective:

'If a boy sexually abused a woman (an unmarried one), I would never go to the police. They would force me to marry him and that would not solve the problem.'

Yezidi host woman

Figure 4 illustrates the generic range of choices that displaced women reported in addressing gender-based violence. Different shades of colour are used to indicate which were generally described to us as the first, second and third preferred options in seeking help and resolution.

Figure 4 Displaced women's resilience pathways – gender-based violence
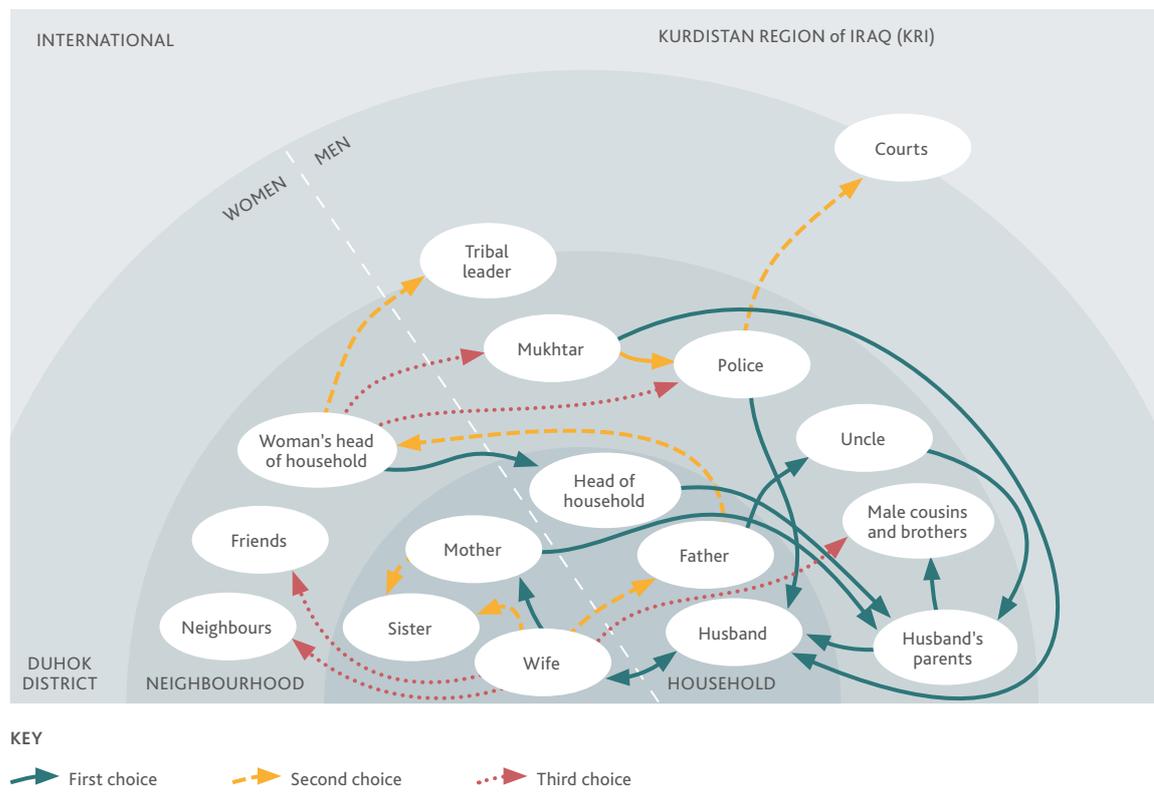
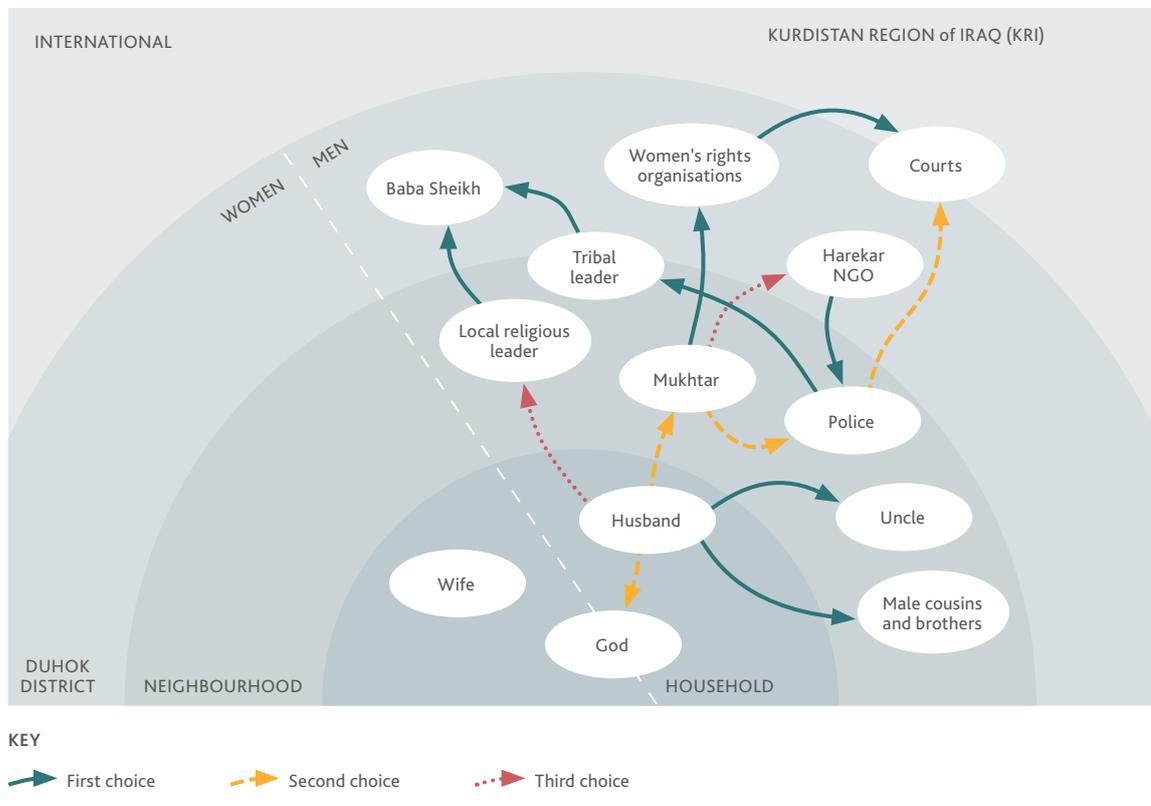### 3.4.3.4 Men and gender-based violence

We asked men what they would do if a woman in their family or their community experienced violence. It was clear from their answers that they are often in a position of having to solve these issues as well as conflicts around marriage partners, forced marriage and elopement. Traditionally, if a man approaches another man and requests that his son or daughter marries one of his children, there is an expectation that this should be agreed upon. If not, there will be no peace between the families. However, often the young people don't want to marry and this can cause ongoing problems and tension. The men, particularly the older men, had to resolve many of these issues. The tribal leaders provide a community system that normally keeps peace in the village, but forced marriage can create problems that are too difficult for tribal leaders to solve.

A Yezidi man from the displaced community told us that his son had eloped with a woman while they were still living in Sinjar. The father had to go to visit the woman's father who told him, 'Either you have to pay me money or give me a little girl from your family when she is grown up.' Our informant had no daughters whom he could give in exchange in his own family but his brother had a daughter he could give in exchange. This girl was exchanged for marriage into the other family. However, the marriage was unhappy and the couple had recently divorced. As the father related this story, he was very sad and sighed a lot as he showed us the divorce papers. He clearly had felt hugely burdened by the whole matter – a difficult task which he had endured during the time of conflict and displacement. He said his son was still married to the woman he had eloped with and now had children with her and that they were doing well.

We were told by others that it is a taboo to take money or exchange girls or women in these cases and that Baba Sheikh would not condone it, but clearly traditions still demand such responses.

Figure 5 shows the generic range of choices that displaced men reported in addressing gender-based violence. Again, different shades of colour are used to indicate which were generally described to us as the first, second and third preferred options in seeking help and resolution. The most striking difference between the pathways reported by the men in comparison to the women is that the men do not report that any women have a role in resolving gender-based violence. A similar figure can be drawn up for the pathways used by the host men. However, the men in the Yezidi host workshop explicitly told us that they would not, under any circumstances, reach out to the government-run Centre for Violence Against Women. Unfortunately, we were not able to elicit a clear explanation of this attitude.

Figure 5 Displaced men resilience pathways – GBV

Like the women, men's responses to issues of gender-based violence appeared to be strongly motivated by the avoidance of shame. They would try to deal with problems privately within their own immediate family wherever possible.

'If I had a problem with my wife, my father would be the best person to talk to. He's the person we would listen to whatever he says: he is the image of the family.'
Displaced Yezidi man

The men would ask the Mukhtar for help with more serious issues. The Mukhtar might try to mediate himself, or refer the problem for external help. The displaced men in the informal Yezidi settlement told us of one woman who wanted help from people because she was facing violence from her husband. The case was brought by her male relatives to the Mukhtar and he contacted the Harekar organisation. Both men and women from the displaced Yezidi community were aware of this incident. In general, everyone thought this had worked out well as Harekar had supported her and helped her to divorce her husband.

Like the women, the men were reluctant to go to the police over issues of gender-based violence:

'Violence against women is not police work. They can't solve it as we are a tribal community: we will solve it according to Yezidi Sharia.'
Displaced Yezidi man

'If I have a problem I would prefer our Yezidi spiritual council and Baba Sheikh over the police: I would not let myself speak to the police.'
Yezidi host man

The men appeared to share the women's ambivalence about the police. They acknowledged that the police are able to make a difference, but the cost of this is public shame. For this reason the police were seen as a last resort by most people.

'I will do my best not to go to the police: it causes shame. However, they can try to solve it in a peaceful way, and they try not to make it official. If girls go to the police in our community, it causes shame and no one will marry her.'
Yezidi host man

Clearly police try to find a resolution that avoids issues being addressed in the courts. The men from the displaced Yezidi community told us:

'The police say maybe you can solve the problems within your tribes. If you can do it among you, do that and if not come back to us.'
Displaced Yezidi men's workshop

Honour

An undercurrent running through the workshops and the interviews was the threat of violence in response to gender issues, particularly where honour is at stake. Men spoke very openly about violence as a solution, saying 'sexual violence ends with a killing'. In one men's workshop participants stated, 'There is no solution without violence,' and mimed holding a gun to make it clear what they meant. A man from the host community told us that:

'There is no way to solve these issues of honour but to kill the woman.'
Yezidi host man

However, an example was related during the host workshop that demonstrated that Baba Sheikh does not condone this approach. We were told that a boy and girl were in love in the village. The boy asked if he could marry the girl and the family refused so they ran away together. The girl's family found them and killed both of them. Baba Sheikh met with the family and tried to make peace between them to prevent revenge killings. There was peace but the boy's family remained scared so they left and went to Germany.

One of the findings emerging from the research is the importance of honour. The concept of honour, as presented to us, was the notion of a set of values and types of behaviour that, if transgressed, can cause a loss of respect and bring shame on yourself and others. When asked about who people could go to for help, many responses demonstrated people's concern about losing their honour or causing shame. The concepts

of honour and shame as a cultural code have been central to anthropological studies, particularly in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Traditional anthropological analysis presents honour as being accorded through local moral codes and perceived as determining status, both individually and collectively (Perstiany, 1968). Any transgression of the moral code causes loss of honour, ie shame, and requires retaliation. Honour has therefore to be defended by men on behalf of the family or lineage, and women's behaviour is perceived as having the capacity to lose that honour, and cause 'shame' for the whole family. As Weidmann (2003:509) writes in an anthropological account about a man whose wife has run away, he has to 'find out who is to blame for ruining her; her flight is viewed as an insult to his lineage'. The concept of honour and shame has been heavily critiqued within both anthropology and gender studies for being binary and overly deterministic. However, it emerges clearly here in a set of complex layers of family relationships for men and women, not necessarily only around marriage relationships but also male relationships with each other – such as between relatives or neighbours. For example, in the question about meeting basic needs, men are concerned about asking for help too often even if they know their relatives can help them as this will lead to a loss of honour. Similarly women did not want to go for help around issues of family violence in case it brought shame and sadness on the family.

KEY FINDINGS
Gender-based violence

- Despite concerns about sensitivities, we found both men and women participants were ready to discuss gender-based violence.

- Although we did not ask women to disclose personal experiences of gender-based violence, a number of women (five out of 48 women respondents) did confide in us that they had experienced violence within the family, all of them with their husbands.

- People shared a range of examples including intimate partner violence, harassment, arranged marriage, forced marriage, polygamy, elopement and revenge and honour killings. No one volunteered information about GBV that had occurred through the conflict.

- Avoiding public shame emerged as a strong motivator for action for both women and men. It appeared that choices were based on who would have the power and influence to resolve the issues with minimum public knowledge. This appeared to be a stronger motivator than safety or justice.

- Women often suggested that violence in the home was a result of their own wrong-doing, and that solutions would come by their improving their own behaviour.

- Women reported that they would prefer not tell anyone if they were experiencing violence, but would keep it to themselves, or confide in God.

- Women indicated that, if they could not resolve domestic violence directly with their husband, then their next action would, if possible, be to speak with their mother who could potentially speak with their husband and improve the situation without anyone in the wider family knowing.

- After their mother, women would generally turn to male relatives for resolution, and to female friends and relatives for comfort and support.

- Men spoke of having responsibility for solving many gender-based violence issues and it was clearly perceived as an important and often challenging task.

- Men did not identify women as having a role in resolving gender-based violence.

- Similar to community dispute resolution, for the Yezidi communities the spiritual council with Baba Sheikh was seen as the highest authority on disputes around gender issues.

- An undercurrent running through the workshops and the interviews was the threat of violence to solve gender issues, particularly in matters of honour. Researchers were told a number of times that violence is the ultimate solution when disputes cannot be solved in the other ways described.

4 REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In recent years, a number of sets of guidelines have established priorities and good practice for NGOs working with displaced communities in humanitarian settings (*Sphere Handbook*, 2011; IASC, 2015; IASC, 2007). These have stressed the importance of avoiding top-down interventions which focus on rapid emergency responses, with the associated danger of ignoring or exacerbating negative impacts on communities. There is increasing recognition that protection and resilience are built through strengthening community and family supports, as well as the provision of basic services (IASC, 2007). In addition, the guidelines emphasise the importance of community participation at all stages of the planning and delivery of interventions in order to avoid harm. NGOs and community organisations are in need of tools and methods to measure outcomes rather than process. This report describes the adaptation of a participatory tool to map and measure social connections and trust in relation to real problems faced by displaced and host communities living in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. This was the first time that the tool was tested to see if a gender-sensitive approach could be incorporated to examine the issue of gender-based violence. The growing recognition of the extent of gender-based violence, both as a weapon of war and within families and relationships in humanitarian settings, means suitable approaches to developing appropriate responses are urgently required. The findings of the pilot project carried out with Tearfund in Kurdistan Region of Iraq lead us to the following recommendations:

4.1 The approach: use and applicability of the participatory social mapping tool

It is critical for humanitarian actors and policymakers to understand the social norms and practices that drive participation, identity and coping mechanisms in conflict-affected contexts. Within the context of communities that have experienced trauma and have lost trust with each other, it is vital to:

■ Know who the key influencers are – including religious leaders

■ Understand their role, their potential and sphere of influence within their communities, so that strategies can build on community foundations, making the work more effective and sustainable

■ Recognise that for sensitive issues such as gender-based violence and peacebuilding, this understanding becomes an essential first step.

We recommend the further use and refinement of the tool in a range of different settings for policymakers, service providers, government, NGOs and other actors for the following reasons:

■ Improve baseline knowledge of protection and resilience in humanitarian settings by using a culturally responsive approach to mapping social connections and levels of trust among displaced and host communities

■ Use data on existing social connections and help-seeking pathways – whether still in use or unavailable due to displacement – to assist in identifying strategic interventions that strengthen existing pathways or identify replacement strategies

■ Adapt mapping tools to incorporate a gender-sensitive approach.

4.2 Meeting basic needs

Through the mapping of social connections, a number of existing community mechanisms to support others with financial aid or other forms of assistance were identified. This included those which support displaced people or people facing emergencies and impoverishment, even among those who were themselves displaced. When working with basic needs, we recommend that the following issues are taken into account:

■ Support agencies should work with and strengthen community mechanisms for collecting donations and distributing money for urgent material needs. This could also extend to sharing non-monetary resources.

It would be particularly important to pay attention to the need for people to have the opportunity for repayment and/or reciprocity in order to protect their sense of honour.

- Use information on preferred help-seeking pathways to identify people with little recourse to help. Ensure consideration of the needs of the most vulnerable are addressed through community-building interventions.

- In addressing women's exclusion or barriers to participating in the labour market, it will be vital to engage the support of men within communities, and work to address underlying gender norms, to avoid increasing risks and vulnerabilities.

- More information needs to be gathered on the role and expectations of respected and wealthy people in supporting others who face difficulties, to identify how this operates in practice and whether it is a system which can be supported or strengthened, or whether it reinforces power imbalances including gender inequality, thereby creating obligation.

4.3 Resolving disputes between communities

- Provide services in settled, 'host' villages as well as among displaced people in order to avoid resentment building between these different groups.

- Create a setting in which religious leaders from the different faith communities can work together to help resolve disputes that cross religious divides.

- Support community leaders including Mukhtars, religious leaders, tribal leaders and other elders, in mediation and dispute resolution.

- Train local police in mediation and dispute-resolution skills.

4.4 Addressing violence against women: prevention

- A gender-sensitive approach should be developed in order to work with faith leaders, community leaders and men and women within communities, to identify and address harmful social and gender norms, strengthen community resilience, improve protection and ensure the needs of the most vulnerable are met.

- Work with faith leaders within these communities to address issues of stigma, and barriers within the 'honour' culture, to ensure that survivors of violence can safely access the services and support they need.

- Recognise and build on existing efforts by faith leaders such as Baba Sheikh, who have publicly established mechanisms for supporting and reintegrating Yezidi women and girls who have survived sexual violence and ISIS captivity.

- Engage with men and boys, particularly when addressing violence against women, so that men can become agents of change and engage as allies at all stages of this process. This would include working at a community level so that men engage with this communally with their peers and, if relevant, have additional psychoeducation and anger-management support. This approach needs to be embedded into long-term goals for NGOs.

- Develop positive gender perspectives among boys and girls of various age groups through psychoeducation activities.

4.5 Responding to violence against women

- Work with communities to change attitudes towards social norms of honour and shame for both men and women, to improve access to support organisations.

- Develop culturally acceptable ways of supporting childcare and domestic work to enable women to participate in activities, including economic opportunities, beyond the household if they so desire.

- Provide means of protection and emotional support for women that can be accessed without public knowledge, which might include:
  - Ensure full and meaningful confidentiality of all services
  - Provide referral pathways that do not identify survivors, eg general health services, which can be accessed openly but then include specialised SGBV support
  - Include specialist training for general health care workers on GBV.

- If a woman chooses to stay with her husband/family, she should be supported with strategies for developing resilience.

- Mobilise women to get together and work out how they can protect each other more effectively within families/neighbours (eg by visiting regularly, being present in each other's houses at crucial times, mobilising other men in the community to protect someone).

- Support women who do not have access to a suitable relative and identify an alternative person or strategy for putting pressure on a husband to change his behaviour.

- Work with the Centre for Violence Against Women – build trust among women and men.

- Improve access to health care at community level so that injuries can be treated, and opportunities for support and referral provided safely. This would have to include specialist training for general health care workers on GBV.

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APPENDIX A: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESEARCHERS AND TRANSLATORS/INTERPRETERS

Pilot study of peacebuilding, gender and social connections in KRI

To maintain the highest standards of conduct and integrity in this research, we will adhere to the following code of conduct.

Introduction

Any code of conduct is built on a foundation of shared values. The values of this project include:

- All children and adults are of equal value
- Inclusiveness and social justice
- Respect for pluralism and diversity
- Transparency, integrity and honesty
- Responsible stewardship of resources
- Commitment to carrying out our responsibilities to the best of our ability.

These values have informed the development of the code of conduct. The code of conduct should help guide your behaviour while engaged on this research project. However, because it is not possible to set forth an all-inclusive or exhaustive code of conduct, you are expected to use your own good judgment to conform to the intent and spirit of the code in all matters not specifically addressed.

Personal conduct and professional integrity

Members of the research team must act with honesty, integrity and openness in all their dealings as representatives of the project. You should:

- treat colleagues and participants professionally and with courtesy and respect
- avoid any action which may be viewed as harassment, verbal or physical abuse
- avoid behaviour that may create an atmosphere of hostility or intimidation
- not engage in any illegal activity.

Confidentiality and disclosure of information

- Ensure that participants give informed consent to their involvement in the assessment.
- All information collected in the course of your work must be safeguarded, and must not be shared with anybody outside the project.
- Do not make copies of any of the data, or keep any record other than those required for the research project.
- Do not use confidential information to attempt to identify or make unauthorised contact with any individual, or provide information to another person for those purposes.
- Observe confidentiality procedures, including in casual conversation with others in the research team.

Signature and acknowledgment

I certify that I have read and understand the code of conduct and agree to comply with it.

Printed name: _____

Signature:_____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B: INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Information sheet: pilot study of peacebuilding, gender and social connections in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Information sheet for participants

You have been invited to be involved in this study. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with whomever you want. Please contact me if anything is unclear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

Background

In the Duhok Governorate of Kurdistan Region of Iraq there are currently many displaced people. The experience of displacement is very difficult for the people who have had to move and can also be difficult for the community living in the area where people move to. People who have moved often lose contact with the people and organisations (what we call the social connections) that support them in ordinary daily life.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to look at the different ways in which you solve your problems. We particularly want to ask you about all the different people and organisations that are most helpful to you when you have problems and how important you think they are in your life so that we can understand more about the social connections that support the people who have had to move to Duhok and specifically the area around xxx village. This will help organisations to plan new programmes.

Why have I been chosen?

We have asked you to be part of this study because you live in the areas that we are working in, in xxx village and xxx village. We want to talk to adult men and women in these areas.

What will participation involve?

We will ask you to take part in a workshop with other men or women in your community. These workshops will be only for men or only for women. We will ask you to come to the agreed location and we will provide refreshments for you. The workshop will last between two and three hours and we will ask you to do an exercise with us that will result in a list of names of organisations and people who are important to the community. The following week, if you agree, we will come and talk to you to ask more details about the list of organisations in a short interview where we will ask you to do some more activities. We might ask you if we can visit you in your home or ask for you to come to another place where you can talk to us on your own without your family or other people around you. This should take about 30 minutes.

Recording

We do not need to record any of the workshop or the interview. We might take some brief notes. After the workshop and the interview the researchers will report back their findings to the research team.

We do not need any names or personal stories in this research and no names will be used when we write up our findings.

Who is carrying out the research?

This work is collaboration between four organisations: The Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) at Queen Margaret University, the NGO Tearfund, the Center for Peace and Human Security at the American University of Kurdistan, and the Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies at the University of Duhok.

Withdrawal from the study

Please note that:

■ You can decide to stop taking part in the research at any point and we will not ask you why.

■ You need not answer questions that you do not wish to.

■ Your name will not be used in any of the writing and it should not be possible to identify anyone from the reports on this study.

■ It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw during the interview or any time and without giving a reason.

Consent process

If you have been given this form, this means that you have tentatively agreed to be part of this study and that you have been given this form to understand what it is about.

If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to agree to take part either by signing the form, with a signature or print, or if you do not want to sign any form, then it will be read to you and you will be able to give your consent verbally. The forms are stored in a secure place and are not linked with the information we collect. You can sign with a pseudonym if you want to. If you do not want to sign any form, then it will be read to you and you will be able to give your consent verbally.

Follow-up contact

If you wish to find out more about the research or if anything that has been raised in this research was upsetting for you, please contact Rangeen at Tearfund in Duhok who can make sure you get appropriate information and support. (Details of these phone numbers are on the local version.)

APPENDIX C: PROTOCOL FOR RESEARCH WORKSHOPS

Social connections in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Tearfund – QMU)

Setting things up

- Create a friendly, welcoming and private space.

- Pin up flipchart sheets asking for people to fill in information, around the room.

- Put a table in the room that is big enough for ten participants and two facilitators to sit round.

Welcome

- Welcome people as they enter the room and invite them to write on each sheet to answer the questions. Make sure that the researchers are looking out to help participants to understand what they need to do.

- Once everyone has completed these, invite participants to sit down around the table.

- Ask everyone to tell each other their names – also tell your name and say that you are working as a researcher for Tearfund.

Explain the purpose of the research

Use the information on the information sheet – printed below, but try to talk about it without reading out the text.

Background

In the Duhok Governorate of Kurdistan Region of Iraq, there are currently many displaced people. The experience of displacement is very difficult for the people who have had to move and can also be difficult for the community living in the area where people move to. People who have moved often lose contact with the people and organisations (what we call the social connections) that support them in ordinary daily life.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to look at the different ways in which you solve your problems. We particularly want to ask you about all the different people and organisations that are most helpful to you when you have problems and how important you think they are in your life so that we can understand more about the social connections that support the people who have had to move to Duhok and specifically the area around XXX (mention name) village. This will help organisations to plan new programmes.

Why have I been chosen?

We have asked you to be part of this study because you live in the areas that we are working in, in xxx village and xxx village (mention names). We want to talk to adult men and women in these areas.

What will participation involve?

We will ask you to take part in a workshop with other men or women in your community. These workshops will be only for men or only for women. We will ask you to come to the agreed location and we will provide refreshments for you. The workshop will last between two and three hours and we will ask you to do an exercise with us that will result in a list of names of organisations and people who are important to the

community. The following week, if you agree, we will come and talk to you to ask more details about the list of organisations in a short interview where we will ask you to do some more activities. We might ask you if we can visit you in your home or ask for you to come to another place where you can talk to us on your own without your family or other people around you. This should take about 30 minutes.

Hand out information sheet and consent form.

Informed consent: (invite questions to check understanding after roughly every paragraph)

- Thank everyone for coming to hear more about the research.
- Explain that the findings from the research will help local organisations to support communities around Duhok.
- We will not be able to help people with particular problems, but we will direct people to organisations that might help if we can.
- We will not be paying anyone to participate in this workshop, but we hope that you will find it interesting and enjoy your time with us.

Withdrawal from the study

- You can decide to stop taking part in the research at any point and we will not ask you why.
- You need not answer questions that you do not wish to.
- Your name will not be used in any of the writing and it should not be possible to identify anyone from the reports on this study.

It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw during the interview or any time and without giving a reason.

Consent process

We will now take a break and ask each of you if you are willing to stay and participate in the workshop.

If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to agree to take part either by signing the form, with a signature or print, or if you do not want to sign any form, then it will be read to you and you will be able to give your consent verbally. The forms are stored in a secure place and are not linked with the information we collect. You can sign with a pseudonym if you want to. If you do not want to sign any form, then it will be read to you and you will be able to give your consent verbally.

Follow-up contact

If you wish to find out more about the research or if anything that has been raised in this research was upsetting for you, please contact Rangeen at Tearfund in Duhok who can make sure you get appropriate information and support.

We will now take some time to ask if you are happy to participate.

- All three researchers help with this – speak quietly to each of the participants, check that they have understood, ask if they have any questions and when you are confident that they understand, ask them if they would like to write their name on the form/add a thumb print/or ask the researcher to sign for them.

Introduce the workshop again very briefly and explain that:

We particularly want to ask you about all the different people and organisations that are most helpful to people in your community when they have problems.

- Remind everyone that even though we might talk about particular people in our discussions, no details about any individual will be made public by the researchers.

- Ask participants to respect others' privacy and not talk about personal details outside the workshop.

Social connections mapping

Scenario 1: Basic needs

If you or someone like you had problems paying for basic needs such as food, medicine or baby supplies…

- **Who could they speak to about this?**
- **Who could they ask for help?**

Extra probe questions to explore extra information:

- Each time a person or organisation is suggested, write the name on the chart and draw a line from the problem to the person/organisation.
- Then ask how they would help, and whether they would contact someone else to help with the problem.
- After participants seem to have run out of ideas, ask what someone could do if none of these people or organisations could help.
- Ask if there are resources that they would like to use, but cannot – mark these with a dotted line on the chart, and ask why not.

Accept and welcome everyone's contributions.

Try to make sure that the quieter people get a chance to speak, and avoid the conversation being dominated by one or two participants.

While one researcher is facilitating the group, the two other researchers can sit quietly making notes. Try to do this in a way that does not allow participants to read what you are writing.

Move on to the next question when you feel that participants have nothing new to say about this question.

Scenario 2: Gender-based violence

If a woman in your community experiences violence, in an ideal world,

- **Who should she be able to talk to?**
- **Where should she be able to ask for help?**

Follow same prompts as above.

Note-writers note down examples that people give of the current situation as well as the ideal world.

Scenario 3: Local disputes

If someone from your community has an argument with someone in another community

- **Who can they speak to?**
- **Where can they go to for help?**

Follow same prompts as above.

APPENDIX D: PROTOCOL FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AND CARD-SORT TASKS

Social connections in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq – Tearfund – QMU

Interview schedule

Introduce yourself by name.

Thank you for coming.

Explain the purpose of the research

This study is being conducted by Tearfund.

We want to ask you about all the different people and organisations that are most helpful to you when you have problems.

We cannot help you with particular problems, but if we can, we will direct you to organisations that might help.

This will help organisations to plan new programmes to help people living in this area.

The interview should take about 30 minutes.

Voluntary participation

- You can decide to stop taking part in the research at any point and we will not ask you why.
- You need not answer questions that you do not wish to.
- Your name will not be used in any of the writing and it should not be possible to identify anyone from the reports on this study.

Check that participant is happy to continue.

Sign the consent form if they are new to the research.

Card-sort tasks

I have a set of cards each showing the name of a person or organisation that people in this area have told us can sometimes be helpful in solving problems.

I would like to ask you a few questions using the cards.

I would like you to think about what has happened (in the last six months/since xx?)

In the last six months, since the special Red Wednesday, have you spoken to this person/organisation or asked them for help? (Yezidi participants)

or

In the last six months, since the spring, have you spoken to this person/organisation or asked them for help? (Muslim participants)

Question 1: Since XX, have you spoken to this person/organisation or asked them for help?

Go through each card in turn reading out the name on the card and asking the questions.

Put the cards in two piles – yes/no – according to their answer.

Mark off responses on the data sheet.

Question 2: How much would you trust this person or organisation to try and help you?

Show them the response card with the cups and explain that you might trust 'a lot'/'a little'/'not at all'. Check that they understand.

Go through each card in turn reading out the name on the card and asking the questions.

Put the cards in three piles according to their answers. You may also need a 'not applicable' pile if they have never heard of the organisation.

Mark off responses on the data sheet.

Question 3 for women: If you were experiencing violence at home, how much would you trust this person or organisation to try and help you?

Question 3 for women: If a woman in your family was experiencing violence at home, how much would you trust this person or organisation to try and help her?

Go through each card in turn reading out the name on the card and asking the questions.

Put the cards in three piles according to their answers. You may also need a 'not applicable' pile if they have never heard of the organisation.

Mark off responses on the data sheet.

Ranking task

Take all the cards in the 'trust a lot' pile and ask the participant to choose the one they trust the most.

If they choose God as the most trusted contact, can you ask them: 'how does it help you to speak to God?' Then ask them to choose a second one.

Mark the most trusted with a number 1 in the list called ranking. If you have to ask a second, then put '1' by God and '2' by the second one.

Supplementary questions

1 Take the top card, or the second one if the top one was God (rated as trusted the most), and ask:
   • What might have happened to make you speak to this person about domestic violence?
   • How would they respond and what would they do?

2 Some people have told us that the Sheikh (local religious leader – not Baba Sheikh!) might be helpful when a woman is experiencing violence.
   • What would have happened to make you speak to the Sheikh about domestic violence?
   • How would they respond and what would they do?

3 Some people have told us that the police are helpful when a woman is experiencing violence.
   • What would have happened to make you speak to the police about domestic violence?
   • How would they respond and what would they do?

WHO CAN I TURN TO?

Mapping social connections, trust and problem-solving among conflict-affected populations

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www.tearfund.org/tilz

100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, United Kingdom

T +44 (0)20 8977 9144   **E** publications@tearfund.org