INCLUSION OF REFUGEES FROM BASSIKOUNOU IN MAURITANIA'S NATIONAL SOCIAL REGISTRY

Key Results from the Socio-economic Survey

*For a background note on this initiative, please see this link

December 2021

Context and justification

- **Mauritania has been hosting Malian refugees since 2012**, following the security crisis, with a massive influx leading to a continuous increase in the number of refugees over time

- **Joint UNHCR-WFP targeting was carried out in 2019 to prioritize humanitarian assistance** for the most vulnerable in order to cope with the drop in funding and support

- The **Mauritanian government** requested the support of the **World Bank** and the **UNHCR-WFP targeting hub** to **update and revise the targeting for the inclusion of refugees in the national social protection program, Tekavoul**

- **Mauritania's Social Registry, with the support of UNHCR and WFP, included refugees in the national census** through a socio-economic survey to revise the targeting and identify the most vulnerable households

Introduction

OBJECTIVES

- Collect socio-economic information on **all refugees in Bassikounou** to **understand needs** at household level

- Categorize refugee households based on their **degree of vulnerability** to inform **programmatic decisions** and **joint targeting** approaches

- Include **all refugees** in the **national Social Registry**

- Identify and include the **most vulnerable refugees** in the **national social protection scheme, Tekavoul**

DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

Data type: Census, completed from April 27 to June 16, 2021

Data collection method: Computer assisted interview

Vulnerability assessment: through combining data on **household demographics, employment, asset ownership and shelter, food consumption, livelihood coping, expenditure, community participation**

Leading institution: SOCIAL REGISTRY With support from UNHCR & WFP

Region surveyed

Geographical coverage:
Mbera refugee camp (98.5%),
Bassikounou (0.4%), El Megve (1.1%)

14,012 refugee households
surveyed total

MAURITANIE

District (Moughataa)
- Other districts
- Bassikounou (survey district)

Out-of-camp, never registered in the camp — 288

Out-of-camp, registered in the camp — 422

In the camp — 13302

0   5000   10000   15000

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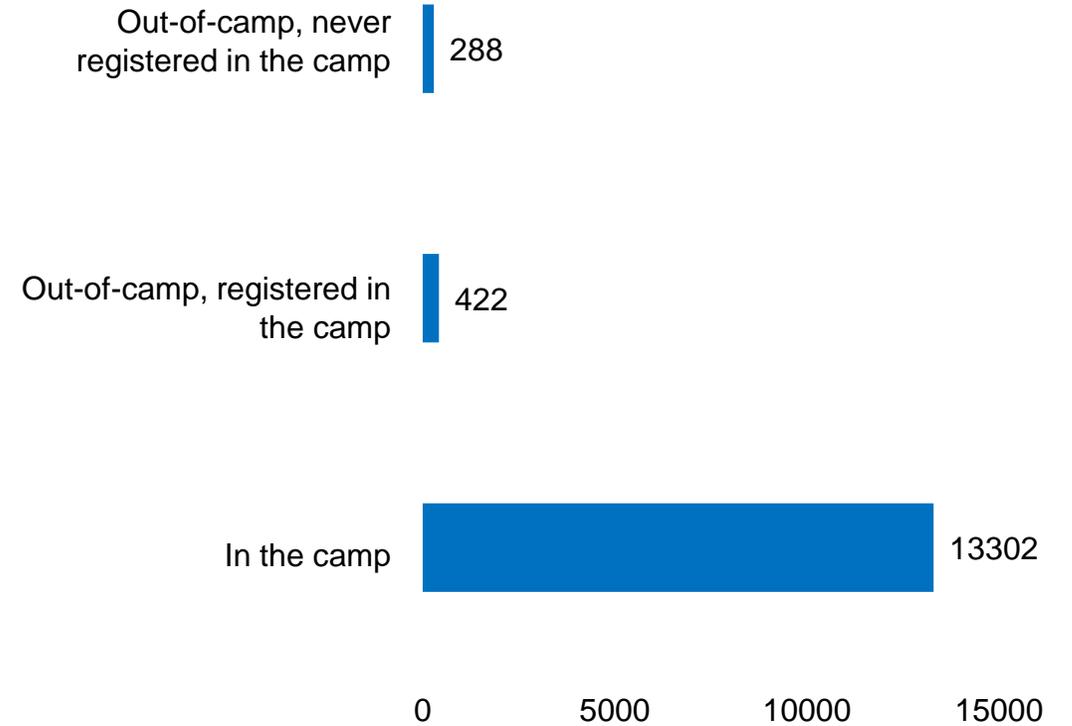
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Household demographics
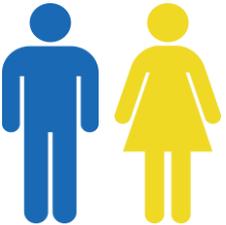
55% of the population are **female**

56% of **household heads are female,** with a high share of **unmarried household heads**

**12%** of households have a member with a **disability or chronic illness**

59% of the population are **children, ages 0-17**

**Average household size** is less than **5 persons**
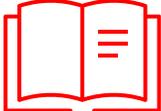
69% of **household heads have no education**

Shelter

Type of home

M'bar	80.4%
Hut	11.1%
Barracks	6.0%
Tent	1.7%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
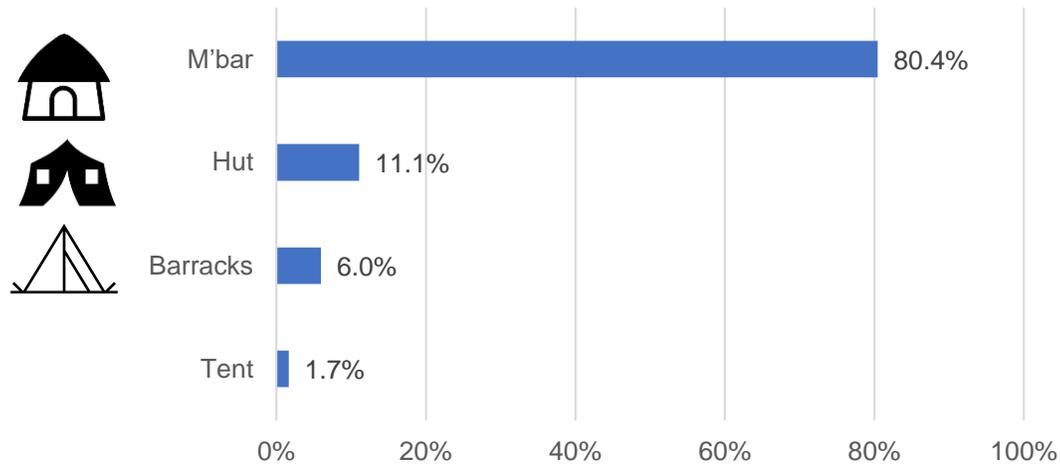
**80%**

of households live in **m'bar shelters** constructed by plastic material provided by UNHCR with **roofs made of cloth**

Barracks made of wood and zinc are found in the urban periphery

Roof material of the shelters

Fabric	80.4%
Wood	11.9%
Straw	3.3%
Zinc	2.1%
Other	1.4%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

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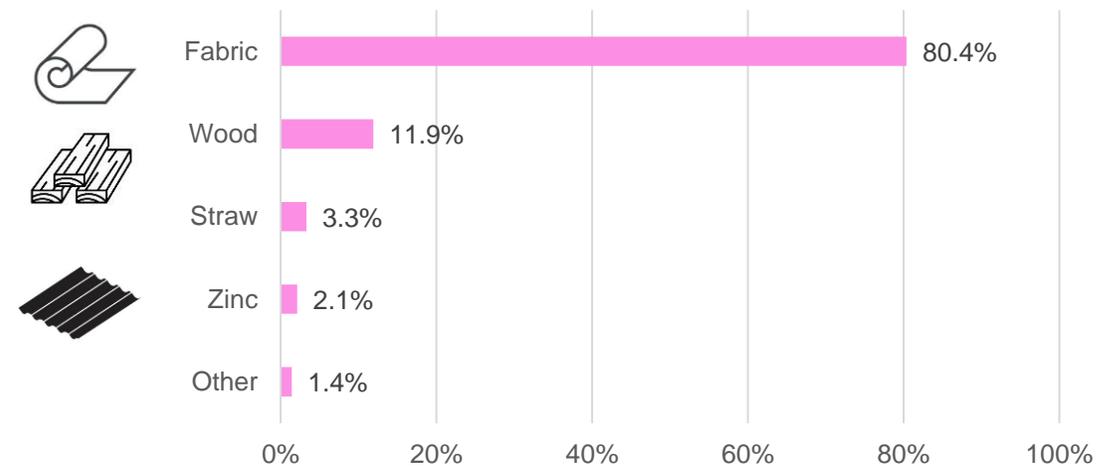
Water & energy

98% of households have **access to drinking water**

89% of households **use a public, shared toilet**
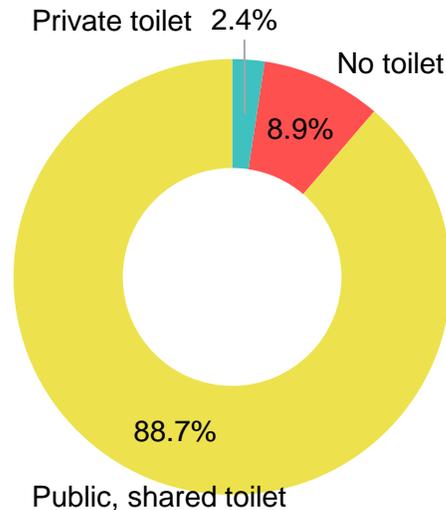
91% of households use a **torch for lighting**

Most households use **charcoal (50%) or firewood for cooking**

Energy source for cooking

Source	%
Charcoal	49.5%
Wood	48.0%
Gas	1.4%
Other	1.0%
Electricity	0.1%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Private toilet 2.4%
No toilet 8.9%
Public, shared toilet 88.7%
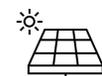
Energy source for lighting

Source	%
Torch	91.3%
Solar energy	3.9%
Candles	2.5%
Other	1.9%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%
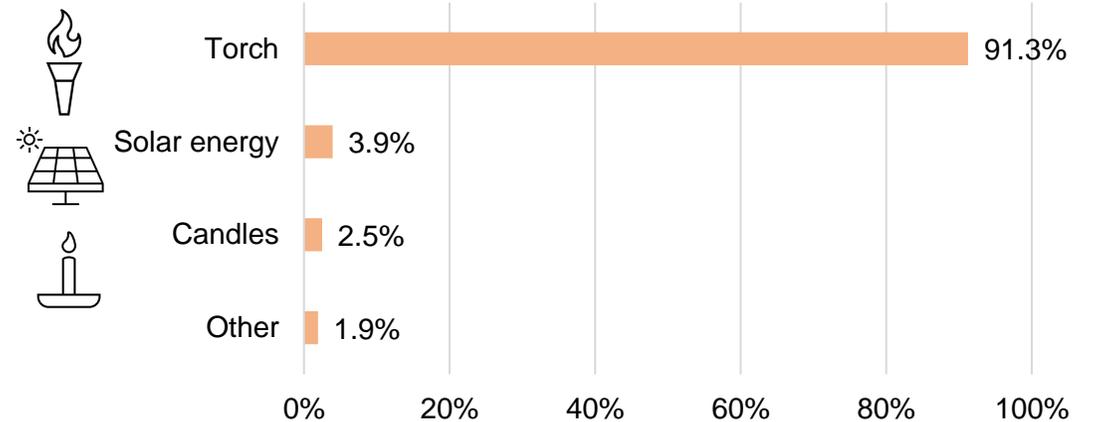
Asset ownership

Households owning various assets

Basic (TV, mobile phone, bed/mattress): **38.7%**

Productive (washing machine, wheelbarrow, cart): **6.2%**

Luxury (modern stove, satellite dish, refrigerator, air conditioner, computer): **2.4%**

Mobility (car/motorbike): **1.9%**

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%
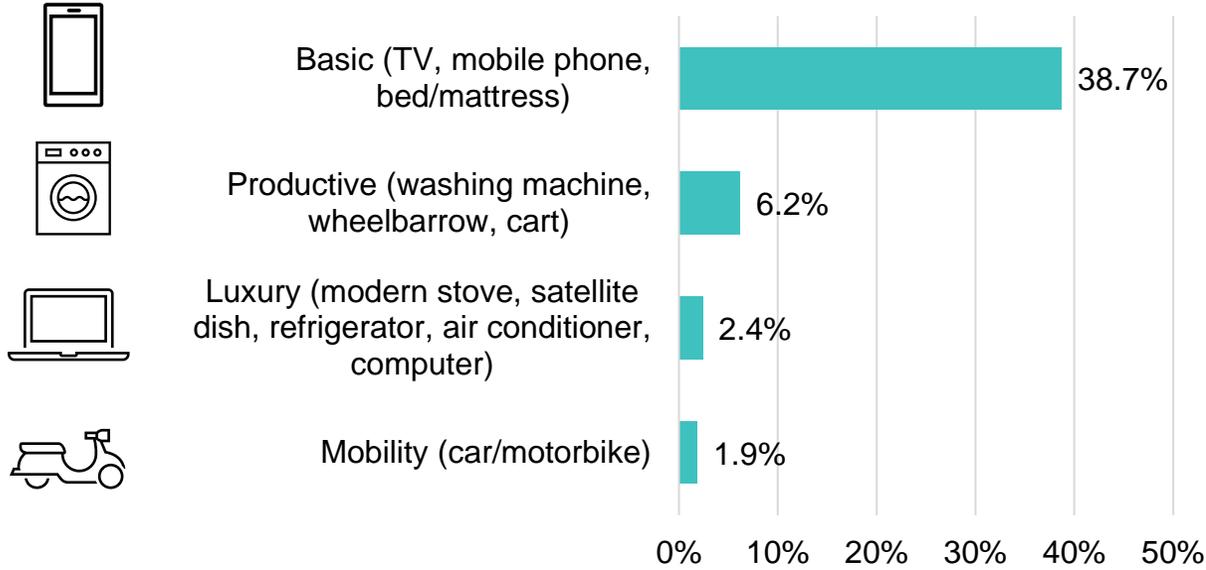
Households owning livestock

Sheep & goats: **18.0%**

Donkeys & horses: **7.5%**

Poultry: **4.8%**

Cattle & camels: **2.7%**

0% 10% 20%
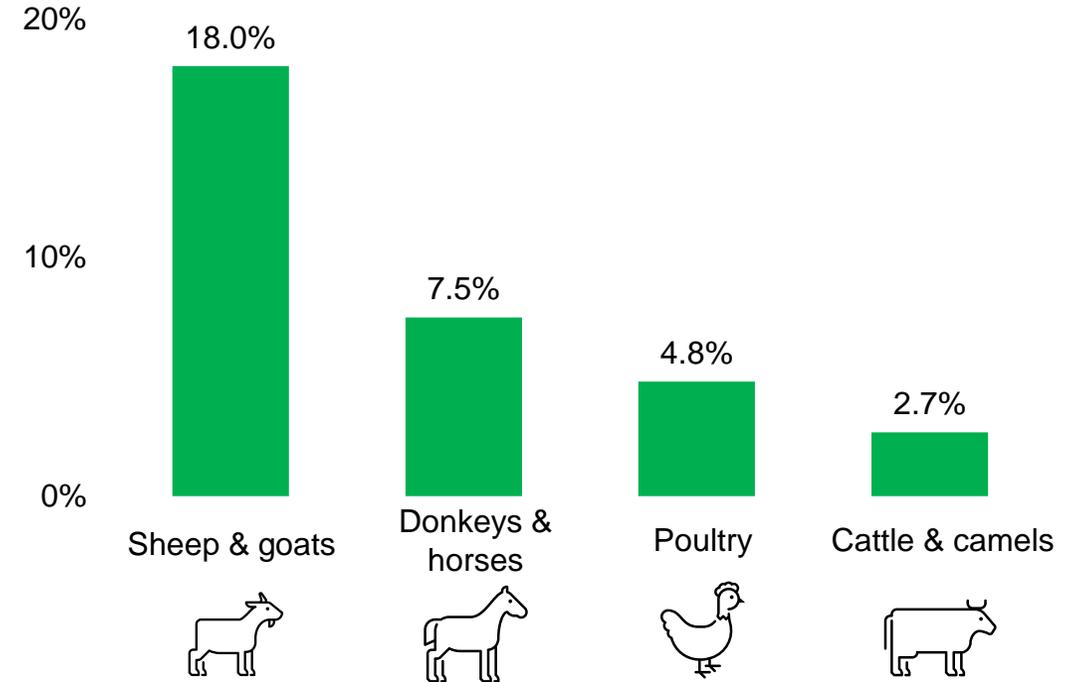
33% of households have a cellphone

But digital connectivity remains limited with only **0.8%** of households having internet access

0.1% of households have access to land for agriculture

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Food security

Household level food consumption scores

	Poor	Borderline	Acceptable
Overall	62%	19%	19%
Camp	63%	18%	19%
Out of camp	28%	52%	20%

■ Overall ■ Camp ■ Out of camp
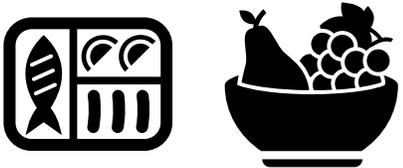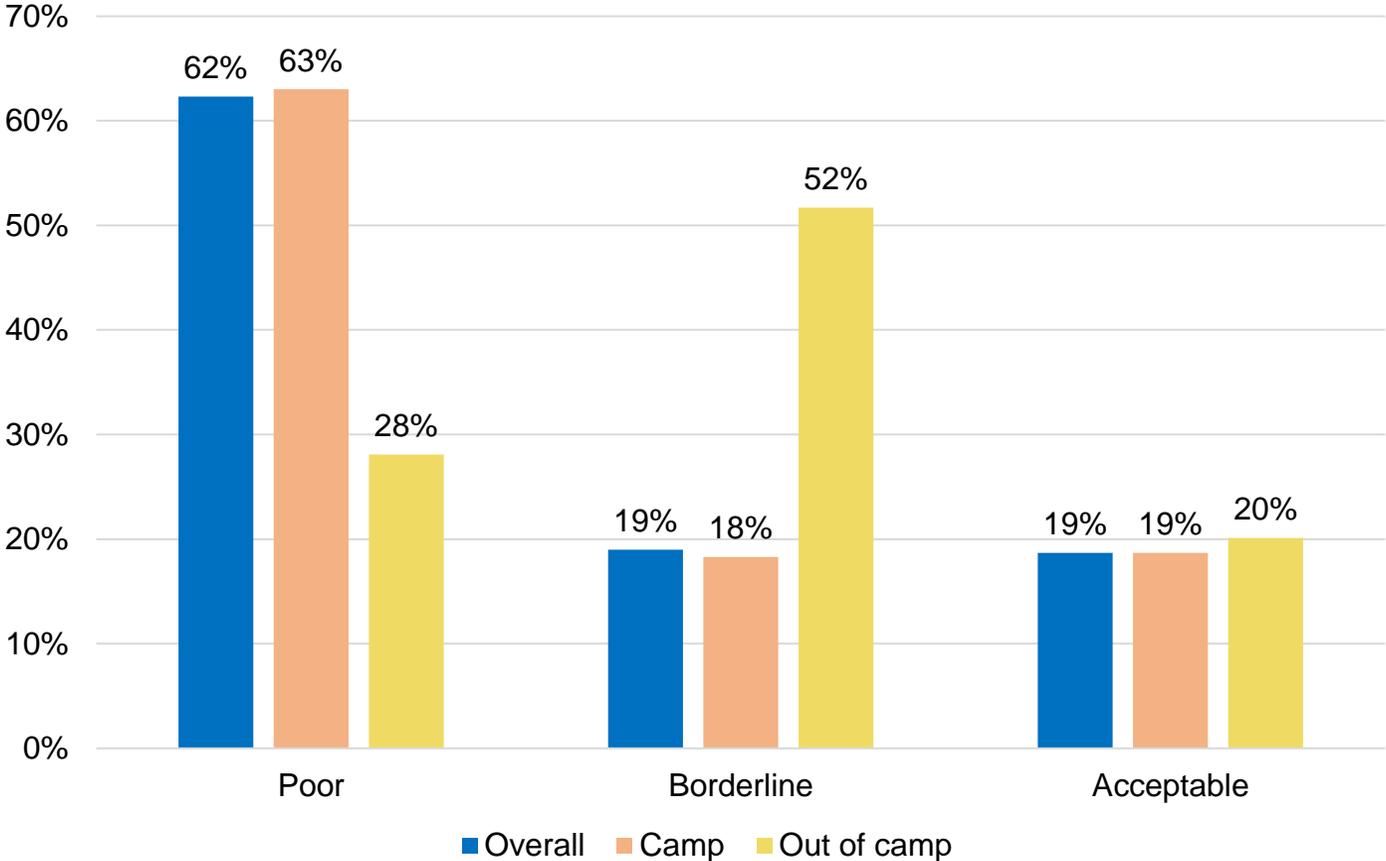
81%
of households reported **inadequate or borderline levels of food consumption**

out-of-camp situation slightly better than **in the camp**

Education

UNHCR 2018

An average of

36%

of children aged 7-12 years attend **primary school**

An average of

8%

of children aged 13-18 years attend **secondary school**

UNHCR 2018

35.1%

36.8%
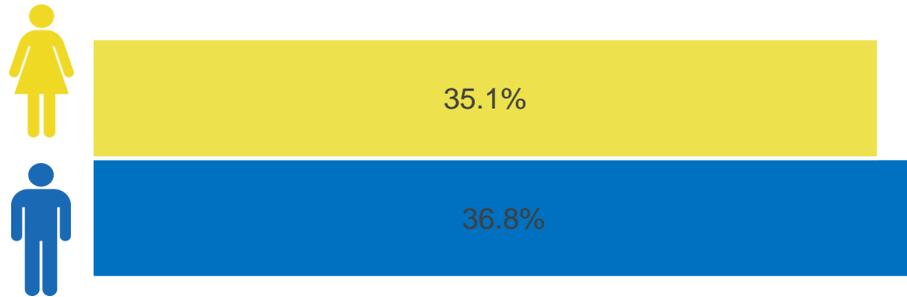
with a **slightly higher rate for boys (37%)** than **girls (35%)**

5.8%

9.9%
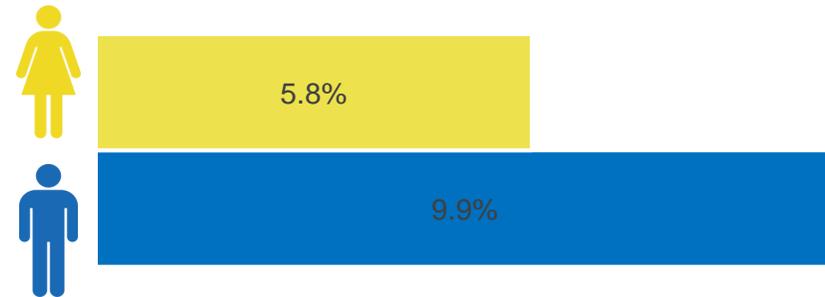
with nearly **4% more boys than girls**

Employment

Employment status in the past 7 days

Status	%
Inactive - other	4.5%
Disabled	1.6%
Retired	0.1%
Homemaker	41.3%
Student	6.2%
Unemployed	34.0%
Employed	12.2%
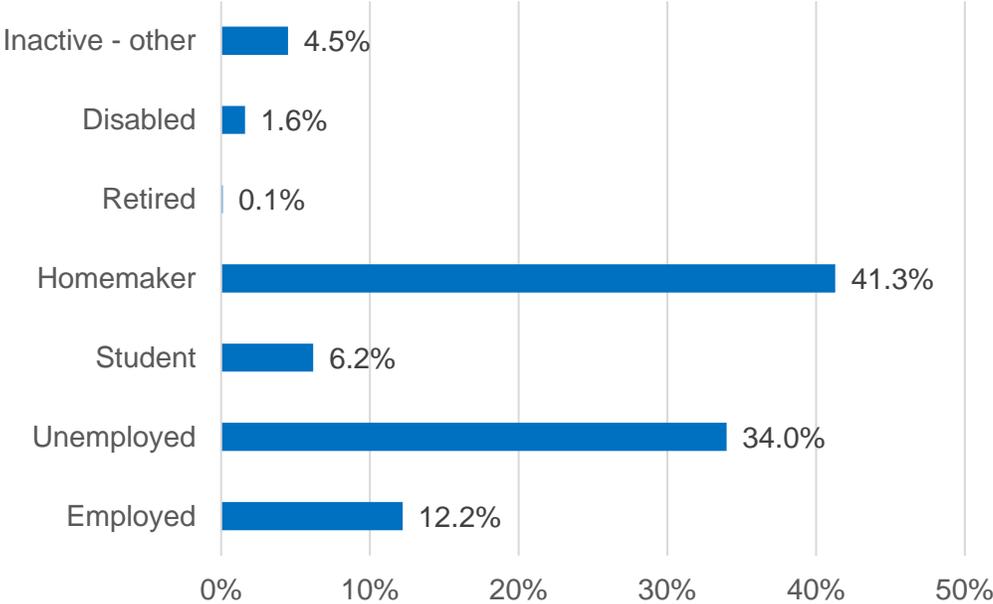
12.2%

of refugees ages 18-59 employed in the past 7 days, with the main sectors of employment being **livestock (32%), artisanal or commercial selling (19%)** or **service (19%)**

Sectors of employment

Sector	%
Farming, agriculture & fishing	32.3%
Service - diverse	19.4%
Artisanal activities, trading/selling	18.9%
Other	11.2%
Professional, technical (admin, comms, education, health)	7.2%
Construction & public works	5.6%
Transportation, mining & extraction	4.1%

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Perceptions of refugee households

**47%** of households self-report having **very low capacity to meet their needs**

- High capacity (can meet at least half of needs) — 11.0%
- Low capacity (can meet small part of needs) — 41.6%
- Very low capacity (cannot meet any needs) — 47.4%

92% of households **report feeling integrated in the Mauritanian community**

28% of households **believe their point of view is transmitted by their leaders**

	Always	Often	Rarely	Never	Don't know
	27.5%	17.1%	10.0%	18.9%	26.5%

Defining vulnerability

Refugee vulnerability is identified as a **combination of several socio-economic dimensions**, captured in the RS database for each household and validated with community consultations with refugees.

Each household has its own level of vulnerability based on **5 dimensions**:

1

Education

- *Level of education*
- *Schooling for children*

2

Dependency

- *Number of children, elderly, sick and disabled, vs. Number of economically active adults*

3

Health and specific needs

- *Presence of disabled or chronically ill*

4

Capacity to work

- *Labour force participation*
- *Differences between sexes*

5

Food security

- *Food consumption and nutrition*
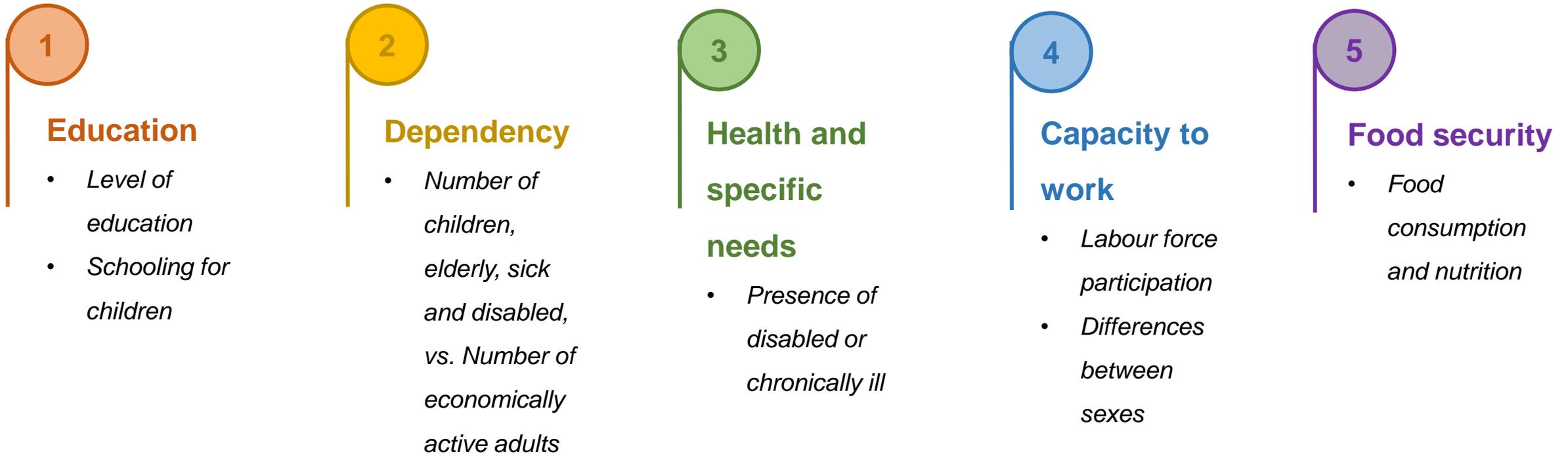
Categories of vulnerability and assistance

Vulnerability categories (after reclamations)	# Households	Type of assistance
Extremely vulnerable	7409 **53%**	• WFP food assistance • Cash + in-kind – 500 MRU provided by Tekavoul • Complete coverage of basic food needs
Moderately vulnerable	6039 **43%**	• Only cash • Partial coverage of basic food needs
Less vulnerable	564 **4%**	• No WFP food assistance • Cash for livelihoods and other development programmes
Total	14,012	

Note: Other types of complementary assistance will be provided at the beginning of the implementation of the targeting categories (e.g. livelihoods assistance) or will remain unchanged (e.g. UNHCR assistance to people with specific needs, WFP assistance for the prevention of malnutrition, etc.).

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Conclusions

- **From emergency to poverty targeting:** UNHCR-WFP completed the transition from emergency to poverty-based assistance; the percentage of households receiving full assistance has decreased from 79% (2019) to 53% (2021), although the percentage of households assisted (i.e. highly and moderately vulnerable) still represents 96% of the population

- **Refugee inclusion in national programmes:** Based on the results of the socio-economic survey in Bassikounou, more than 7,400 refugee households will be included in Mauritania's national social protection program, Tekavoul, which will help the most vulnerable meet their basic needs

- **Several uses of the data:** The results of this survey will be used for programming, advocacy, and will constitute a reference situation for monitoring & evaluation

Next steps

- **Ongoing development and monitoring of targeting methodology:** develop targeting approach to determine update of vulnerability data, procedures for newcomers, partnerships, roles and responsibilities, monitoring, etc.

- **Comparative studies:** Design and implementation of comparative studies between refugees and host populations in terms of living conditions

- **Monitoring & evaluation feeding into programme, policy & advocacy:** the survey will be repeated at a frequency to be determined, which will track changes over time in the lives and well-being of refugees and allow comparison with host populations

- **Expansion to urban areas:** the survey is being conducted in urban areas including with refugee households, with discussions of how to integrate new arrivals