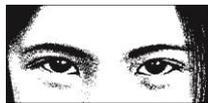# Education needs assessment

Tal Afar district – Iraq

Terre des hommes Lausanne, December 2018

Al Furkan primary school (Tal Afar), October 2018, Tdh community event to celebrate the rehabilitation of the school

Objective

During its presence in Tal Afar district, Tdh has carried out location and sector-specific assessments throughout the identification, development and implementation phases of programming. Tdh undertook a comprehensive Education Needs Assessment in semi-urban and rural areas of Tal Afar district the 24th, 25th and 26th of December 2018. The assessment was carried out by Tdh CP and Education team composed of well-qualified and experienced CP and Education Monitors.

To understand a population's education needs in a humanitarian or recovery setting, we must continuously ask relevant questions, both within and outside of the formal school system, to support or re-establish learning systems. Gathering regularly information will ensure that we hear the voices of all those involved in education, including non-formal learning and vocational training. More robust and reliable education data can also support affected communities and international actors to address gaps in education services of Tal Afar district. Quality data can provide insights into how education provision can be more resilient to situations of conflict or disaster sensitive.

An Education needs assessment should investigate all types and levels of education, including those that emphasize both informal and non-formal approaches to learning. Particular attention should be given to ensure that the learning needs of the most vulnerable are assessed.

In this view, and in line with the 2019 HRP's Strategic Objectives and the Education Cluster's Objectives, the Education Needs Assessment conducted has several objectives:

- Understand how the conflict has impacted on education for children, youth and families more than a year after the liberation of the district from IS occupation;
- Determine which locations, groups and communities have been most severely affected and need to be prioritized for Tdh 2019 response;
- Update mapping about existing resources and capacities of affected communities and the education system;
- Identify persisting gaps and educational priorities that require Tdh assistance.

Methodology

After revision of collected secondary data - coordinated with Education actors (NGOs, Cluster, DoE), Tdh designed a comprehensive Key Informant Interview (KII) based on previous assessment surveys developed (e.g.: Child Protection and Education Needs Assessment conducted in February 2018) and in line with INEE guidance on needs assessment. Specific interviews with relevant authorities (DoE, sub-district councils, etc.) have been done to assess key actions and recommendations to design and implement a relevant and meaningful Education response in the district as well as to confirm priority areas. Areas assessed have been selected through a consultative process with CP and Education local staff and based on their knowledge of the

context and related gaps and needs. Rural, remote, and IDP/minority settlement areas have been prioritized as well as those with recent movements of return.

The two assessment teams deployed comprised of experienced and trained female and male CP and Education Monitors experienced in conducting similar exercises. An in-depth training session on the tool has been done by CP and Education management staff to ensure consistency on its understanding, the assessment methodology and the approach to adopt. The presence of at least one woman per assessment team was essential to target women key informants.

The needs assessment was divided in several sections aiming at assessing access, inclusion and quality. Child protection and social cohesion concerns were mainstreamed across the assessment and a specific section was dedicated to children' psychosocial needs and well-being.

Finally, a range of different types of stakeholders have been reached in line with the different rings of the child's socio-ecological model (family, community, state and international levels). Tdh also ensured inclusion of different ethnic and religious groups in view to mainstream protection across its Education response, to base it on needs and to avoid causing harm in a context characterized by stretched inter-community relationships.

A total of 27 key informants' interviews were conducted in 9 different locations (3 KIs per location) in Tal Afar and Al-Ayadiyah sub-districts (Al Salam, Kifah Al Janoubi, Al Sada, Malah, Al Ayadiyah, Al Askary, Qadisiya, Al Ashiq, Tawa Bash).

The present report aims at analyzing and summarizing key findings from the needs assessment.

Contextual information

Humanitarian crisis overview

Tal Afar sub district is located in the Nineveh Governorate of northwestern Iraq. Tal Afar City is located approximately 50 km west of Mosul and 60 km east of the Iraqi-Syrian border. ISIS captured Tal Afar on June 16, 2014, after a two-day battle, forcing much of the population to displacement. On 20 August 2017, the Iraqi Army announced it had launched a new offensive to retake Tal Afar from ISIS. The city was recaptured by Iraqi forces on August 27, 2017. The remaining of ISIS-held area in Tal Afar district were then fully captured on August 31, 2017. Yet, the area has been deeply affected by the time spent under ISIS occupation. Infrastructures have been destroyed, including damage to public services such as the city water network, looting of buildings and materials.

Tal Afar is the district with the highest rate of multi-sectoral need among its population compared to the rest of the country (25% against 2% nationwide). Returns started in Tal Afar in August 2017 when the GoI re-established control and after the district was partially cleared of explosive hazards. As of May 2018, 311,394 people have returned to Tal Afar district. Fear of attacks by armed actors, disruption of social cohesion, explosive hazard contamination and the loss of civil documentation represent major protection issues in the area. Most of returnee households have

lost a major part of their belongings and found their house destroyed and looted. The conflict has also severely impacted the already strained relationship between Sunni and Shia communities and Turkmen and other ethnic minorities (Kurdish, Christian and Sunni Arab communities). It appears also that some Sunni residents are not returning to Tal Afar city due to fear of reprisals from other members of the community.
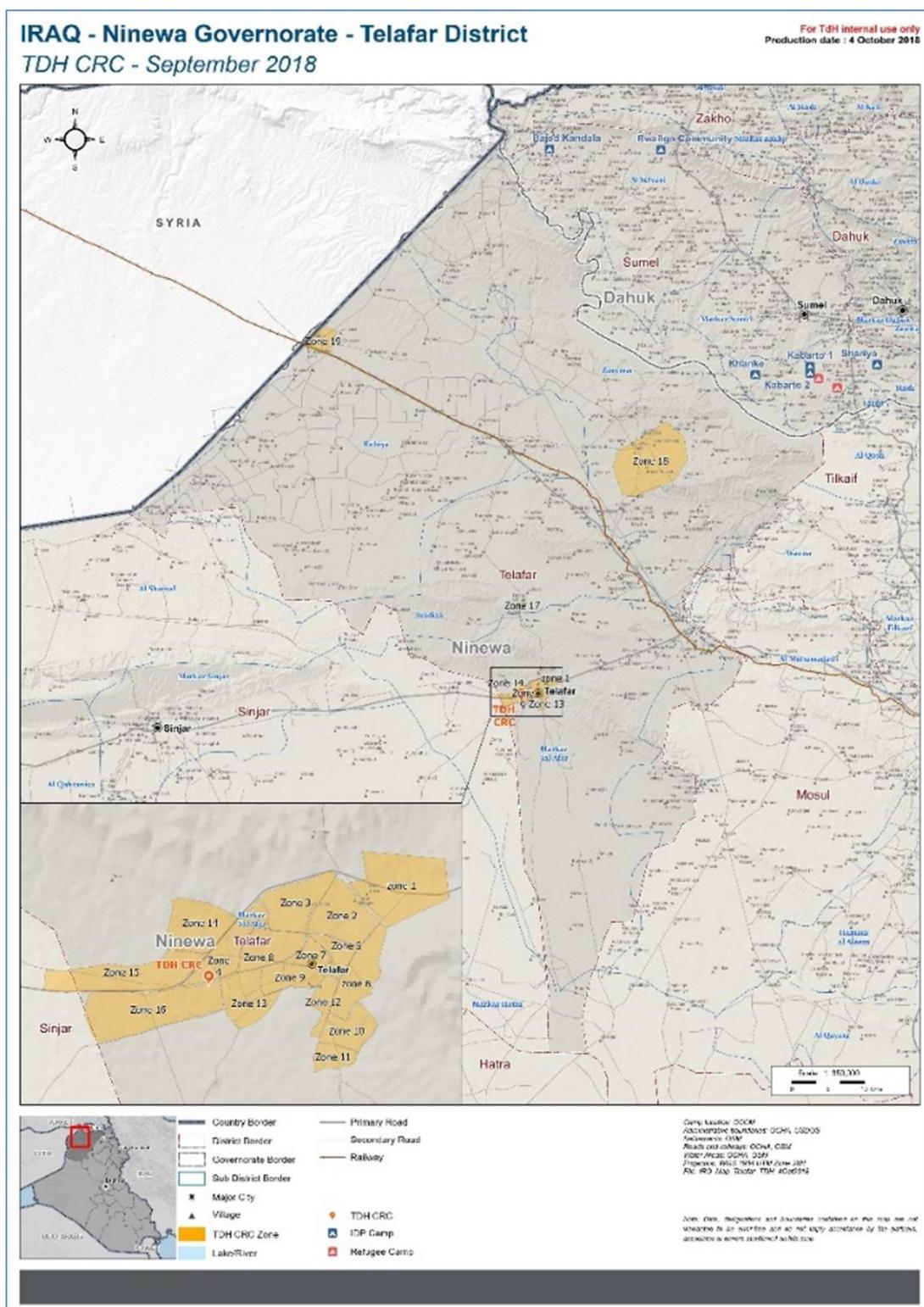
Profile of the assessed population

Location assessed	Type	Population profile	Total # estimated	# of boys	# of girls	# CwD
Al Salam	urban	Returnees IDPs	2000	500	550	20
Kifah Al Janoubi	urban	returnees	3000	600	620	15
Al Sada	urban	Returnees IPDs	2000	400	350	20
Malah	rural	Returnees IDPs	1200	400	300	10
Al Ayadiyah	rural	Returnees IDPs	3000	700	750	20
Al Askary	urban	Returnees IDPs	3250	400	400	25
Qadisiya	urban	Returnees IDPs	4000	700	650	20
Al Ashiq	urban	returnees	3400	500	700	50
Tawa Bash	rural	Returnees IDPs	1080	300	300	5

Key Findings

Displacement and returns

According to REACH "Rapid Overview of Areas of Return" (May 2018) key findings, the main reason given by returnee informants for coming back to Tal Afar was a perceived improvement in safety and security as well as a desire to return to land and property. This information has been confirmed by key findings from Tdh Education needs assessment. In this regard, the majority of locations assessed welcomed movements of return from September until late December 2018. In Qadisiya neighborhood it seems that movements of return are on-going. Tal Afar is not hosting an important population of IDPs (90% of the population is returnee or local); although internally displaced households are present all 80% of assessed locations. None of those areas experience movements of departure; except Al Askary neighborhood due to damaged, destroyed or stolen properties, insufficient services and livelihood opportunities.

School and learning spaces

Among the 19 schools identified by key informants in the assessed locations, 17 have been damaged during the conflict and 11 are not functional anymore. The schools that reopened show concerning safety and security risks for children and school personnel (e.g.: broken windows and glasses, debris, broken fences and gates) and do not offer an appropriate and quality learning environment for students. 11 schools are overcrowded and 12 are running on two or more shifts

(such as Qadisiya school which has 1000 boys and 825 girls). Teachers used to handle classes that exceed 45 children which strongly affects quality of class management and learning.

Access to formal and non-formal education opportunities and services

Key informants from Al Ayadiyah, Al Askari and Qadisiya reported a high rate of school drop-out during 2017-2018 school year (up to 50%) and in all locations assessed there is an acute gap in the provision of non-formal education services for school-aged children and vocational opportunities for youths of the community. All key informants reported children not enrolled in formal schools; this figure reaches 70% of school-aged girls in Al Ashiq neighborhood.

Girls but also children living with a disability, those working outside home, coming from poor households and the ones missing civil documentation have been identified as the least likely to have access to formal and non-formal education services. Key informants agreed to say that fees related to school enrollment and attendance, distance between home and learning sites, child marriage and pregnancy, household chores as well as violence and discrimination at school and lack of safety of learning facilities represent major barriers for girls to access education. As for boys, child labor, poor quality of teaching, disability and/or illness as well as years of unenrollment have been outlined as significant obstacles. Fees related to school enrollment and attendance, distance between home and learning sites as well as a lack of safety on the way to and within the schools are barriers faced by both groups. In this regards, key informants from seven different locations mentioned the presence of landmines and UXO on pathways leading to schools. In the absence of a safe and affordable transportation way, some parents and caregivers are not willing to send their children to school and indirectly expose them to protection risks.

Psychosocial well-being of school-aged boys and girls

All key informants from the 9 locations assessed noticed important change in children' behavior induced by the conflict and long-lasting displacements. Increased violence against younger/other children, unwillingness to go to school, disrespectful and aggressive behaviors, sadness and decreased support to family members have been identified as main psychosocial reactions. Key informants of Tawa Bash, Al Ayadiyah and Kifah Al Janoubi also outlined an increase in risky sexual behavior and substance abuse as well as willingness of some out of school children and adolescents to join armed groups and forces.

Teaching personnel

All key informants interviewed reported an acute shortage of available and qualified teaching personnel. In Kifah Al Janoubi, Al Sada, Malah, Al Ayadiyah and Tawa Bash less than 25% of teachers are currently working in the schools compared to pre-crisis time. In the other locations assessed this rate doesn't exceed 50%. Shortage of women teachers is particularly acute. The latest as well as teachers certified from the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the ones mastering

specific subjects (such as mathematics) have been identified by key informants as the most needed currently to improve quality of learning environment and increase access of children to education. In Al Askary, Malah, Al Ayadiyah and Tawa Bash less than 25% of teachers have received a salary from the MoE in the past three months.

Support for transportation, payment of salary or incentive, provision of teaching and learning resources, training and capacity-building (especially on pedagogy, positive discipline and class management) and psychosocial support have been selected as key activities to support teaching and personnel.

Available services and assistance

Among all locations assessed, only 4 have been assisted by DoE authorities during the 2017-2018 schooli year. Key informants mentioned rehabilitation of schools' buildings, distribution of learning and teaching material as the only support received. More than 50% of key informants interviewed reported that there is currently no active organizations (whether CBOs, LNGOs or INGOs) present in assessed locations providing education services. Parent and Teacher Associations have been mentioned as the only source of support in Al Sada, Al Askary and Qadisiya but they are either insufficiently active either not active anymore. Key informants were asked to identify and prioritize - among a list of 13 propositions - key activities to strengthen access of children to quality learning opportunities and capacitate the education system. The following actions are the ones considered by them as the most crucial:

- recruitment of and financial support to teaching personnel;
- support transportation of children to school;
- distribution of teaching and learning material;
- provision of non-formal education services (especially catch-up classes) and vocational trainings for adolescents and youths;
- conduction of awareness-raising activities on the importance of education;
- rehabilitation of schools' infrastructures;
- capacity-building and training of teaching personnel and;
- provision of psychosocial support for conflict-affected children.

Social cohesion

As a result of the conflict, an increased ethnic and religious segregation has been observed in Tal Afar district. Among all assessed areas, 6 host both Shia and Sunni communities and only Al Ashiq presents an equal demography between Turkmen and Arab groups. Three of the assessed communities are in majority Arab while the rest are Turkmen. None of the key informants reported tensions and/or conflicts between communities; except those interviewed in Kifah Al Janoubi who noticed tensions between teaching personnel from different ethnic and/or religious groups at school.

Conclusion and recommendations

1. Areas assessed desperately lack child protection and education services, and more so the rural and remote ones. As an example, people coming from villages of Al Ayadiyah sub-district did not come back yet due to the lack of essential services; especially education ones. Tdh intervention in Tal Afar will continue to focus on neglected and hard-to-reach areas to ensuring a need-based response.

2. Schools facilities currently do not have the capacity to offer a safe, inclusive and quality learning environment for children. Meanwhile, humanitarian assistance should not replace the local authorities' mandate and maintaining ownership over education services and overall sustainability. . Light rehabilitation of formal learning spaces and provision of essential school supplies should be prioritized in coordination with the DoE.

3. Through this needs assessment, the review of secondary data and Tdh experience in the district, serious child protection concerns are persisting such as recruitment of children into armed groups and forces, child marriage, SGBV, child labor and exploitation as well as physical and emotional violence on children. Conflict and long-lasting displacements strongly impacted the psychosocial well-being of children who show disruptive behavioral changes. Access to formal and non-formal education services and protective environments as well as awareness-raising of key actors of the child's socio-ecological environment greatly lower the exposure of the most vulnerable children to those risks. It also confirms the relevance of Tdh CP and Education integrated approach and the necessity to mainstream CP and PSS across the education system.

4. Adolescents and youth are the most excluded groups from accessing learning and economic/vocational opportunities and are particularly likely to develop negative coping strategies and to be exposed to protection risks. The provision of age-relevant life skills, learning and vocational courses seem key to strengthen their psychosocial and economic resilience and to regain sense of value in the community.

5. Support to teaching personnel is a priority to ensure access to quality and protective learning environments. Teachers appear not well-equipped to deal with the current crisis and to fulfill their responsibilities.

6. A conflict-sensitive education program is essential in this context to avoid exacerbating inter-community tensions and/or conflicts, causing harm as well as to provide a response to the most vulnerable groups of children.

To conclude, Tal Afar district has been selected as a priority area by the Education Cluster in October 2018 for the 2019 humanitarian response due to persisting and acute education needs. Several months passed and it seems that international actors remain hesitant to provide support to the affected population in this strategic and highly conflict-impacted area. A holistic approach and response is necessary to durably strengthen access of conflict-affected children to quality, protective and responsive learning environments. Tdh will use key findings from this needs assessment as well as its expertise of the local context and its experience in implementing

integrated Child Protection and Education programming to pursue this mandate; strongly emphasizing on strengthening the nexus between emergency education and education in development.