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and
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The Potential of UNRWA Data
for Research on Palestinian Refugees

A Study of UNRWA Administrative Data

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Preface

At the plenary meeting of the Refugee Working Group (RWG) in Cairo in May 1994 it was suggested that FAFO conduct a study of UNRWA's data on Palestinian refugees. The purpose would be to evaluate the usefulness of UNRWA data for research on Palestinian refugees and to suggest ways of utilizing this information. We were delighted to take on the challenge, not least because we had come to appreciate UNRWA's important role through previous projects in the Middle East. UNRWA is in the possession of a vast body of information on Palestinian refugees that holds great potential, given its comprehensive scope with regard to time, geography and topics. A uniform system of data collection across the five UNRWA Fields of Operations, makes interesting comparisons possible. We should, however, point out at the outset that there are also many limitations. It should be kept in mind that most of UNRWA's data have not been produced for research purposes and that the Agency's mandate has not favoured production of statistical information.

Norway is in charge of the so-called data-base theme in the Refugee Working Group in the Middle East Peace Process. Against this background, FAFO has been asked to carry out several studies on Palestinian living conditions. In the past, FAFO has presented two reports to the RWG, the sample surveys "Palestinian Society" (1993) and "Responding to Change" (1994). The present study, which was first presented to RWG participants at the Intersessional Expert Seminar held in Oslo in October 1994, is not concerned with collecting original data. As indicated, the intention has been to provide an overview of relevant material and to assess how it might be utilized. For the latter purpose, some possible projects have been suggested at the end of the report. The study is based on a review of UNRWA material, discussions with UNRWA staff, visits to UNRWA's Headquarters in Vienna and Amman, as well as visits to UNRWA Field Office in Amman, a refugee camp, and UNRWA installations on the ground.

This study would not have been possible without the active assistance and support from UNRWA. We are especially indebted to Special Advisor to the Commissioner-General, Yves Besson and Assistant Chef de Cabinet, Rick Hooper. We are also grateful to Under-Secretary-General

Terje Rød Larsen and Commissioner-General Ilter Turkmen for their support to the project. Personnel at UNRWA Headquarters and Field Office in Amman should be commended for their invaluable help.

The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided full funding for the project and has shown a keen interest in the project. We are indebted to Deputy Minister Jan Egeland, Minister Counselor Hans Fredrik Lehne, Head of Division Kåre Eltervåg and Executive Officer Unni Kløvstad.

The two main authors of the report Lena C. Endresen and Geir Øvensen have managed to complete this report in a race against time. Endresen and Øvensen have worked with flair, vigour and enthusiasm. They have received support and comments from FAFO's Norwegian staff: Research Directors Jon Pedersen and Jon Hanssen-Bauer, Senior Researcher David Drury and Special Advisor Jan Dietz.

Geir O. Pedersen

Director

Centre for International Studies, FAFO

Oslo, November 1994

1. Introduction

Aim and Scope

UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) was established by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1949 to give assistance to Palestine refugees. It began its operations in May 1950 and has continued to carry out this function since. The Agency has programmes in relief and social services, health, and education, for registered refugees in five geographical “Fields” of operations. These are Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Fields, in turn, are divided into “Areas”.¹ As part of its work UNRWA has collected a large amount of information on Palestinian refugees. These contain a wide variety of data stored in several different ways. The aim of this study is to *evaluate the potential of UNRWA’s data for research on Palestine refugees and to suggest ways of utilizing this information.*

Before proceeding, we would like to emphasize that this study is *not* about data and information produced by UNRWA *in general*. It is a study neither of UNRWA’s work, nor of the Agency’s priorities. The focus of the study is to evaluate data on Palestine refugees. UNRWA’s material not focusing directly on the refugees, like financial statistics, information about its budgets, expenses and contributors, are outside the scope of this study and will not be addressed. Further, when we present the data on refugees our focus is on the value of the data *for research*. It should be kept in mind that most of UNRWA’s data have not been produced for research purposes and that the Agency’s mandate has not favoured production of statistical information.

UNRWA has operated in one of the most politically unstable and tense regions of the world for 45 years. To be able to operate it has had to balance between the interests of the refugees, the governments of the host countries, the Israeli Civil Administration governing the Fields of Gaza and the West Bank, and the international community. Caution

¹ The UNRWA Areas are: the four Areas of Amman South, Amman North, Irbed and Zarqa in Jordan, the five Areas of Jericho, Jerusalem, Hebron, Nablus and Ex-Gaza in the West Bank, the six Areas of Beirut, Mountain, Saida, Tyre, Tripoli and Beqaa in Lebanon, and the six Areas of Damascus, South, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, and Latakia in Syria. In Gaza there are no UNRWA Areas.

always had to be taken with regard to collection and publication of statistical material, in order not to jeopardize the Agency's ability to exercise its primary task, of serving the needs of refugees.

The progress made in the Middle East peace process has increased the need for accurate and reliable information at the grass roots level. UNRWA's data base is one of the most comprehensive on Palestinian refugees in the Middle East. Measures that can increase its use must thus be carefully considered.

The study has been conducted with invaluable assistance and support from UNRWA and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After preliminary investigations of UNRWA's publications, visits to UNRWA's Headquarters in Vienna and Amman have been carried out. The trip to Amman included visits to UNRWA Field Office, a refugee camp, and UNRWA facilities on the ground. During all these visits focus was put on UNRWA's collection and production of data about the refugees. The last stage of the study involved further investigation of UNRWA's data, based on experiences from the visits in Vienna and Amman, discussions with UNRWA staff, and reading of UNRWA material.

The Research Value of Data

It is important to note that data can take a number of forms. The terms "raw" or "primary" data refer to information available in the form in which it was originally recorded: for example, a registration record, a daily count of new hospital cases, or a list of secondary schools. In contrast, *statistics* are numbers produced to describe or summarize patterns of primary data: number of families registered in a given Field, average hospital admissions per month, percentage of districts containing secondary schools. Statistics are often easier than primary data to access and manipulate, but because they are essentially summaries, they always imply a loss of original information. This may limit their usefulness for some types of research.

Another important dimension is the *unit of analysis* or type of population that the data describe. Different units of analysis are appropriate for different types of data. For example, the implied unit of analysis for age or gender data is the individual; for measures of income, it may be the household or family; and for infrastructure or public health measures, the village. Units of analysis can of course be combined to different *levels of aggregation*, such as the Area, the Field, or various socio-economic groupings. The unit of analysis may also be relevant to technical

discussions about linking different data bases, such as individual birth records and family-level registration files.

As a general rule, primary data and statistics at low levels of aggregation offer the researcher a wider range of options for analysis. Medical data aggregated to the Field level, for example, cannot be used to compare urban versus rural patterns in the incidence of disease; however, data at the clinic or hospital level can in principle always be aggregated up to the Field. This assumes, of course, that units can be grouped reliably into higher levels: in the example above, all clinics must file disease reports consistently, using the same definitions and criteria. Concerns about confidentiality and personal privacy may also arise with disaggregated data. However, these can in principle be resolved with proper safeguards, because few surveys require names of individuals or exact addresses of households.

As we see in the sections to follow, the UNRWA data currently available vary in all these dimensions. Some data sources, such as the registration records and Special Hardship Cases data base, are maintained as primary data; others, particularly in the areas of health and education, are comprised of statistics at various levels of aggregation. Depending on the source and subject matter, underlying units of analysis may include the individual, the family, the clinic, or school.

With these basic principles in mind, we turn to a discussion of other attributes that affect the suitability of data for research. The research value of data can be said to be a product of four factors: the data's *relevance*, their *scope* or coverage, their *quality*, and their *accessibility*. A researcher will try to maximize both each factor and their product, although concessions will sometimes be necessary, for example if the quality of the data is high, the researcher may want to use relevant data even if it is of limited scope or of difficult access. If the coverage is good, the data may be used even if the quality is not perfect. In this case the researcher will try to assess possible errors introduced to the estimates. On the other hand, if there are serious problems with any one of the four factors, the research value of the data is limited.

By *relevance* we mean the interest of the data in terms of their potential for answering a research question.

The comprehensive geographical and thematic *scope* of UNRWA's data is their greatest advantage. The UNRWA data represent one of the few possibilities for comparison of the conditions for Palestinian refugees in different host countries. The fact that records were systematically collected over time creates opportunities for time series analysis, and further increases the value of the data.

Scope or coverage also relates to the populations or segments of a population the data cover. In UNRWA data, coverage has limitations in the areas of health and education, as information is only collected about those refugees who use UNRWA's services. In these areas, the question of coverage may imply severe constraints on the research potential of data. This problem is related to the ability to generalize to a larger population, and will be further discussed below.

The *quality* of data has two dimensions: *reliability* and *validity*. Data with little reliability have limited value for researchers. The reliability of data is determined by how data are produced, as the term refers to the accuracy of the various operations in this process. Here proper documentation of procedures for collection of information is of great importance. Data have high reliability if repeated measurements of the same phenomenon provide consistent results.

To provide an accurate representation, data must be valid as well as reliable. *Validity* means that the data actually measure the concept that they purport to measure. For example, "wage" or "salary" income alone is not always a valid measure of household income, as some families will supplement these earnings with income from home-based business. Data can have low reliability and high validity, or vice versa. Also, reliability and validity are not all-or-none properties; both are matters of degree. The validity and reliability of the various UNRWA data will be discussed in more detail in the following sections of this report.

By *accessibility* we mean the ease with which data can be obtained by a researcher and arrayed in a form suitable for research. Access to data thus has both legal and technical dimensions. Legally, access may be constrained by need to obtain permissions from the responsible authorities. To accomplish its mandate of providing services to refugees in a politically unstable landscape, UNRWA may have to place constraints on researchers, and *the* need for permissions may be duly justified. Introducing standardized procedures and forms for application for permissions may, however, improve access for approved researchers from outside the Agency.

Regarding the technical dimension of accessibility, central storage and computerization of UNRWA's data would substantially improve access for researchers. Computerized data bases can be accessible from anywhere through computer networks. An index of contents (such as lists of tables and variables), and documentation of data collection methods further improves access to data.

Three Categories of Data on Refugees

UNRWA's data on registered Palestinian refugees are of three categories, "family files," "registration records", and "service statistics." The family files are archives containing documents received and produced by UNRWA on the refugee families since UNRWA's inception. The registration records are UNRWA's files on registered refugees. The last category, service statistics, consists of data produced for administrative purposes. This information serves UNRWA's needs in its daily work and planning, and contains a variety of demographic, economic and social characteristics of the registered refugee population. A description of the data covered and a list of included variables are appended (Appendices 2, 3, 4, 6).

In the following sections we will present each of these three categories of data and discuss their potential for research. We will set forth suggestions for how the research value of the data might be enhanced, and outline examples of research projects that could be initiated using the UNRWA data.

2. The Family Files

UNRWA has stored and produced data on Palestine refugees since its inception in 1950. The archives comprising refugee “family files” (or “fact sheets”) contain original documents submitted by refugee families to UNRWA in order to support their application to become refugees, and new documents regarding their case since then. The archives consist of folders, one for each family.

The family files contain information about the refugee families such as:

- * Name, origin, religion, occupation (former and present)
- * Details of property (houses, fields, livestock, workshops, funds)
- * Brief family history
- * Brief description of appearance of family (housing, living conditions, clothing situation, physical conditions)
- * Assistance received
- * UNRWA’s recommendations and decisions regarding eligibility and registration
- * Among the documents are birth certificates, marriage certificates, and documents regarding property.

Using these documents and other available information, one may trace the history of refugee families, and also picture bits and pieces of their life before 1948. The relevance of the family files for historical research is high. Their scope is comprehensive: in the five UNRWA Fields of operations, the family files archive represent approximately 500 000 cases. It is not clear, however, whether each case contain consistent sets of documents or whether documents and information in each file is fragmentary.

At present the family files are located in each of UNRWA’s five Field Offices. The folders are organized serially according to the place the family registered with UNRWA. In most Fields storage conditions are unsuitable for organic material. It is thus impossible to prevent a slow destruction of the documents, let alone to allow access for outside users. Accessibility is restrained by the danger of harming the material, the concerns about confidentiality and personal privacy, the sensitivity of the documents, the lack of a central storage place and lack of computerized registers.

Recommendations

Relevance and scope:

The family files are of unique historical value and of high relevance for research on the history and background of Palestine refugees. Although the information each file contains may be fragmentary, the scope is comprehensive. A project should be launched to preserve the family files archives and to facilitate historical research based on this material.

Access:

At present, access to the family files is restrained. Preservation of the material and proper centralized storing would facilitate access. In that case standardized procedures and forms for applications for research permissions should be introduced.

Possible Research Projects

Preservation of, and historical research on the UNRWA family files

The peace process in the Middle East has put UNRWA's future into a new context. It is UNRWA's desire to make information related to the history of the Palestine refugees and UNRWA's programme activities fully available to the Palestinians. A research project based on the family files would require two stages:

1. preservation of the material; and
2. historical research.

With proper treatment, the family files could constitute the backbone of an historical archive whose main tasks would be to:

1. Receive, preserve and keep in order archive material from Palestinian institutions;
2. Facilitate for the public and the research community as far as possible the use of its material; and
3. Promote historical research.

The immense amount of information, partially as hand written documents in various languages, spread around in several countries, and of bad physical quality represent an extraordinary challenge for researchers. A pre-requisite for research on the family files would be establishing a centralized storage of the material at new premises. To make this unique historical data accessible for researchers and the public the files should be stored centrally and electronically.

Proper storing would allow the next stage of research which would be historical or other research about the background and history of Palestine refugees.

In any case work should start using small test samples of the material. It is not clear to what extent permissions have to be obtained from the host countries to work in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Due to the decentralized storage of the family files such a project require extensive field work to be conducted in several Middle East countries.

3. The Refugee Registration Records

Research on a population is dependent on vital statistics about its size and members. There has, however, never been a census of the Palestine refugee population in any of the Agency's areas of operations. As a non-governmental agency, UNRWA has neither control over the registration of births, deaths and movements, nor access to such information from the various authorities in the Agency's five Fields of operation. All vital statistics collected by UNRWA consequently stem from voluntarily reporting from the refugees themselves.

The registration records are the core of UNRWA's vital statistics. They consists of records and statistics and determine who is eligible for UNRWA's services in the fields of health, education and social relief. Registration has always been the task of UNRWA's Relief and Social Services Department which has distributed basic rations of foodstuff to all registered refugees as part of the Agency's relief services. The rations have been gradually reduced, and since 1982 UNRWA has distributed them only to refugees qualifying for "Special Hardship" assistance and to refugee and non-refugee communities in the areas affected by emergencies (war, extended curfews, etc.).²

Access to the records for research purposes has been constrained due to their political sensitivity, and their sensitivity in regard to confidentiality and personal privacy. UNRWA does, nevertheless, publish aggregated tables of the registered refugee population.³

The problem of assessing the number of Palestine refugees is controversial. Both the number of those who fled in 1947-48 and the question of who should be defined as a Palestine refugee have been disputed. For example whether persons who fled for the first time in 1967 should be included or not has been under discussion.

Because the registration records are the core of UNRWA statistics, erroneous reporting in this regard is important for any evaluation of use

² Admission to Special Hardship Case (SHC) status builds on the criteria of a particularly difficult situation, such as absence of a male adult medically fit to provide for the family and of any alternative source of income sufficient to meet basic needs.

³ As an example, does the UNRWA Statistical Yearbook for Education include a aggregated table of registered refugees by age and sex.

of UNRWA's statistics in social science research.⁴ It is important to distinguish between two main dimensions of the problem of determining the number of refugees accurately, namely problems of *registration* and problems of *classification*. Problems of registration refer to non-existing persons being counted as refugees, or persons who fulfil the classification criteria for being UNRWA refugees but who are not registered, (for example many newly born babies). In contrast, problems of classification refer to *which* criteria a person should fulfil to be defined as a "Palestine Refugee", and *whether* those persons who are registered actually fulfil these criteria.

The problem of classification is to a large extent a historical one. To present a thorough discussion of the problems of classification is far beyond the scope of this study. Throughout the report, we will use the term (Palestine) "refugee" about a person who is registered as such with UNRWA.

According to UNRWA, "Palestine Refugees" are persons:

- * whose normal residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948;
- * who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict;
- * who took refuge in one of the countries or areas where UNRWA provides relief; and
- * who are direct descendants through the male line of persons fulfilling 1. -3. above.

UNRWA has had to grapple with problems of incorrect registration since its earliest days. When UNRWA was established, it inherited refugee registration records from its predecessor organization, the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR), and from various voluntary agencies. For refugees living in the area of UNRWA operations, eligibility for Agency services has always been tied to registration with UNRWA, a fact which has generated incentives for erroneous registration

⁴ *The Demography of Palestinian Refugees: An Assessment of UNRWA Statistics* (1984, Centre for the Study of Population) examines UNRWA registration statistics for evidence of age-heaping and digit preference/avoidance for the years 1966, 1970, and 1972-1982. In addition, the authors apply indirect methods of estimating fertility and mortality levels from the age and sex composition of the registered population.

of persons.⁵ Acknowledging the problem of erroneous registration, UNRWA made several attempts to rectify the registration records from 1950 and onwards. During this work half a million names were deleted.⁶

In spite of persistent efforts by UNRWA to correct erroneous reporting of the number of refugees, UNRWA acknowledges that its registration figures are inaccurate. UNRWA works, and will continue to work, with approximate figures in its planning of services to the registered refugee communities. The report *UNRWA: A Brief History: 1950-1982* concludes its section on the number of refugees by noting:

It has to be borne in mind that UNRWA's registration figures do not necessarily reflect the actual population due to factors such as unreported births and deaths or false and duplicate registrations. It is presumed that the true number of registered persons present in the area of UNRWA operations is less than the registered population. (1986; 8)

What can be said about this problem as of 1994? It should be noted that an important incentive for erroneous registration of persons was removed when UNRWA ceased to distribute rations to all registered refugees. In the following we will discuss issues related to the research potential of data generated by the refugee registration system.

The Registration System

Registration of refugees is conducted on family basis using refugee family registration cards. The registration card is issued in the name of the Head of Family, and contains the family's eight digit UNRWA refugee registration number. This is supplemented by other numbers on the card which contain various information such as codes indicating from where in historical Palestine the family fled, and to which UNRWA Field of

⁵ In *UNRWA: A Brief History 1950-1982* (1986; 5) the problem of erroneous registration is clearly stated by the International Committee of the Red Cross in its final report to the United Nations: "Finally, thousands of individuals, destitute persons and others, have tried to evade the controls by registering themselves in more than one region, or under several names, by increasing the number of family members, or by registering false births and hiding deaths."

⁶ This was not an easy task, however: "Thus a degree of failure in this sector must be admitted. However, no organization in the Agency's position, without legal power, could ever fully succeed in an enterprise of this nature against the wishes of both the beneficiaries, the refugees themselves, and the Host Governments within whose territories the process was to be carried out. The failure has by no means been total, however. Over the years half a million names have been deleted from the registration records - mainly of persons deceased, or false or duplicate registrations..." (*UNRWA: A Brief History 1950-1982*: 1986; 73).

operation the family moved. The registration card contains the family's area of residence, but not its particular address.

Individual family members are recorded on the registration card with their name, gender, month and year of birth, and "rank"; a serial number of two digits. The family registration number followed by these two digits may thus constitute a 'personal identification number'. However, such numbers contain information about the Head of Family, not the individual. The family remains the unit of registration in UNRWA's system, cards are issued in the names of family heads.⁷

It is important to note that initial registration with UNRWA, reporting of "changes", such as marriage, births and moving, and utilization of UNRWA services are all voluntary. Because UNRWA registers descendants of refugees in the male line in addition to those who originally fled, information recorded on the registration cards may be rendered obsolete if changes in the family's situation are not reported.

One group of changes are those related to the "natural" *life cycle* of the family, such as births, marriages and deaths. In many cases the effort involved in reporting changes tends to outweigh the benefits. As a result, births and deaths both seems to be under-reported.

Assuming relatively stable fertility in the Fields of Gaza and the West Bank the total numbers of *births* among refugees recorded by UNRWA's health statistics for 1993 are much higher than the number of persons aged 0 to 1 recorded in the family registrations cards for 1992 (Figure 1, and Appendix 5, table 1). The under-registration seems to continue to a lesser degree up to the age of three or four years.⁸ Automatic transformation of the recorded event "birth" into a recorded "person" in the family registration card system would represent an improvement of the latter data base.⁹

It has been claimed that UNRWA registration statistics are inaccurate due to under-reporting of number of *deaths*. A possible indicator for this phenomenon would be the share of registered refugees aged 60 years and older.¹⁰ In 1992 this age group comprised 9.3% and 6.8% of the refugees

⁷ UNRWA announced in 1982 new registration cards which would be issued for every refugee individual, thus substituting the present family registration number with a personal identification number. This met resistance both from the refugees and from the Jordanian government, and UNRWA cancelled the plan (Viorst 1989; 49).

⁸ Source: UNRWA Statistical Yearbook for Education; 1992-1993, table 1. (Registration records for 1993 has not yet been available to us).

⁹ However, UNRWA registration system would then develop into a full scale vital registration system.

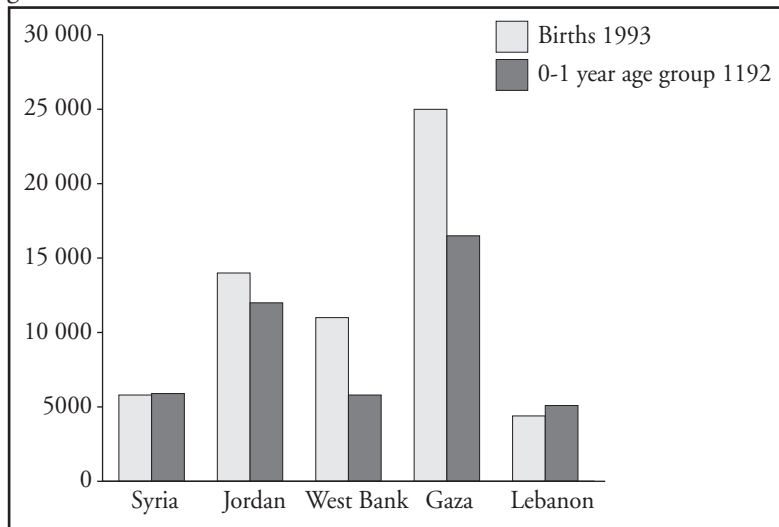
¹⁰ The validity of this indicator is weakened by the fact that people die at all ages, also before the age of 60.

registered by UNRWA in the West Bank and Gaza respectively. In FAFO's living conditions survey in the same area (Heiberg and Øvensen 1993) the corresponding percentages were 6.3% and 5.8% (Appendix 5, table 2). Using the share of refugees aged 60 years or older as an indicator, there is thus no clear support for this claim.

In principle, under-reporting of births and deaths, however, both contribute to an upward bias in the age of the registered refugee population. In the West Bank and Gaza, those aged 14 years or younger comprised respectively 32% and 41% of the refugees registered by UNRWA.¹¹ In FAFO's living conditions survey (Heiberg and Øvensen 1993) the corresponding percentages were 39% and 49%. The difference mainly seems to be caused by under-reporting of births. (Appendix 5, table 3)

Upon the marriage of a child the refugee cardholder himself must come to UNRWA at camp or Area level to register and announce the "splitting" of his family. UNRWA's family size statistics show remarkable differences in family size varying with host country, Jordan having the largest families. This phenomenon can be explained with cases where the Head of Family does not report the marriage of his (or her) children, but keep them on his registration card, adding his grandchildren to it as well.

Figure 1 Comparison of Reported Refugee Births and Registered Refugees 0-1 Year 1992



Sources: UNRWA: 1993 Annual Report of the Department of Health, table 7. UNRWA Registration Statistical Bulletin for the fourth quarter 1992, table 1.0.

¹¹ "West Bank" includes UNRWA refugees in Arab Jerusalem.

Marriage frequently also trigger off *moving* which is another source of population registration errors. The least problematic, and possibly most common, type of moving is movement within one of UNRWA's Fields of operation. More problematic are movements between Fields, but in case UNRWA's services are utilized by the families at their new Field of residence, the movement will be recorded by the registration system.

If a family moves outside UNRWA's areas of operation, however, it has no incentive to notify UNRWA, and substantial registration errors may occur. Movements from UNRWA's five Fields to the Gulf Countries and Western Countries are the most common example. When the net migration balance was negative in the 1970s and 1980s, the registered refugee population probably exceeded the number of refugees actually living in the respective Field, possibly with the exception of Syria.

During and after the 1991 Gulf War a large number of UNRWA refugees left the Gulf Countries and returned to UNRWA Fields. If their original move to the Gulf Countries was not reported and registered, neither did their return show up in the registration records. Is it so that as a result neither their original moving, nor their return did show in the UNRWA refugee registration system?

The Jordan Field provides one example. Before the Gulf War, in September 1990, the population of UNRWA registered refugees in Jordan was 936 000.¹² After the return of Palestinian refugees from Kuwait in September 1992, the number of registered refugees in Jordan was 1 025 000.¹³ If we subtract an 3% annual natural increase in the refugee population in Jordan at that time, the net increase caused by moving to Jordan during this two year period was merely 30 000 persons, far below the number stated by field reports.¹⁴

The discussion above shows that lack of reporting of births, deaths and movements renders the number of *registered* UNRWA refugees less valid as an indicator for the number of UNRWA refugees actually living in an area. It is not clear whether the resulting effect is an over- or underestimation of the number of UNRWA refugees actually living in each Field. To the extent under-reporting of births and deaths occur, however, they both yield an upward bias of the average age of the registered refugee population.

The problem of registration errors could, in principle, be reduced if appropriate systems for assessing biases were introduced, for example by

¹² Source: UNRWA Statistical Yearbook for Education 1990-1991, table 1.

¹³ Source: UNRWA Statistical Yearbook for Education 1992-1993, table 1.

¹⁴ Source: *Guide To UNRWA*, April 1993; 6.

household interviews for checking family size in a random sample of registered refugee families. Checking up registration records in the field would, however, be controversial, and would imply a change of the UNRWA policy of voluntarily reporting among refugees. There is however one important exception to the UNRWA policy of voluntarily reporting among refugees, namely the practice used for “Special Hardship Cases”, (SHC).

In Syria UNRWA has recently introduced the so-called Unified Registration System (URS). In the URS changes in the family status like for example births are entered on the computer in the field. This system eliminates or shortens the period from changes are reported in the field till they appear in the records and allows for immediate overview of all transactions that have taken place for a given family name. The system in itself does not routinely capture changes, though, as reporting of changes remain voluntary.

Special Hardship Cases

The category of Special Hardship Cases (SHC) was created by UNRWA in 1978. The intent of UNRWA’s SHC programme is to provide support to households who are unable to earn their living because of a particularly difficult situation. The Agency has continued to distribute rations to SHC after it cancelled rations to all registered refugees in 1982.¹⁵

As of present, the SHC comprise approximately 6% of all UNRWA registered refugees. Status as a SHC may be granted a family upon application. New cases or reopening of inactive cases require a desk study and a field enquiry. The desk study involves checking the details of the application against the registration card and a preliminary interview with the applicant. The field enquiry involves completion of the Social Study Report, a visit to the family household and, if required, discussions with local community leaders.

¹⁵ Assistance to SHC consists of some or all of the following services: (i) bimonthly rations (consisting of: flour, rice, sugar, oils/fats, corned beef, tomato paste, burghol and skimmed milk), (ii) winter/summer clothing for school children, (iii) grants for establishing self-support income-generating projects, (iv) shelter repair or construction. The rations are provided to all SHC. Shelter rehabilitation assistance and Cash assistance is given selectively on the basis of specific needs which are approved or identified by the UNRWA social workers. The value of the aid under the SHC Programme is estimated by UNRWA to about \$ 175 per person annually. Special Hardship Cases may live either inside or outside refugee camps.

Social Study Report

The Social Study Report is an investigation form with which the social worker compile information about the SHC.¹⁶ The report is executed and updated annually in order to plan the Agency's activities in relation to the individual Special Hardship Case. The form itself consists of one sheet for information on the family, one sheet for information on each individual of the family, and a form containing recommendations for assistance by the social workers and recommending and approving officers.

The *family* sheet of the Social Study Report contains the following data about the registered refugee:

- * Name of Head of Family, his registration numbers, and address
- * Total family income
- * Type of accommodation
- * Furniture
- * Home equipment
- * Assistance received from UNRWA during last two years, etc.

In total there are approximately 50 variables, including UNRWA classifications.

The *individual* sheet of the Social Study Report is filled for each individual in a SHC family, and contains the following data:

- * First name, gender, date of birth, rank, family status, registration numbers
- * Health
- * Education
- * Economic status and potentials, etc.

In total there are approximately 40 variables for each individual.

For the first time within the UNRWA records, the Social Study Report joins data concerning population registration, social relief, health and education. In the future UNRWA intends to computerize all information about SHCs collected by the Social Study Reports. At present this scheme has been implemented in the Fields of Syria and Jordan.

A general goal of the Agency is to shift from a relief-oriented toward a more development-oriented policy. The Social Study Reports are thus particularly concerned with data regarding the economic potential of the individual SHC. Due to its uniform system for data collection, the So-

¹⁶ See list of questions in Appendix 6

cial Study Report provides an unique possibility for direct comparison of the situation for SHCs in UNRWA's five Fields of operation.

The Social Study Report questionnaire does not, however, always adhere to unambiguous categories. "Are you employed?" is for example posed as a question with a yes/no alternative left to the *respondent* to classify him or herself. This question has low reliability because two persons actually in the same situation of employment may answer it differently.

One may also ask whether the same family would be classified as a SHC by two different sets of UNRWA staff or in two different UNRWA Fields? UNRWA's guidelines for the SHC programme are unambiguous and comprehensive, but to our knowledge, there is no system for checking the reliability of the data generated by the Social Study Report.

If the reliability problem was solved by explicitly defining "employment" as for example five hours of paid work last week, the question may still have problems of validity. If the purpose of the question is to measure the person's ability to provide for himself and/or his family, another definition of "employed" and additional questions may be more appropriate.

If the researcher aims to study poverty another question he may pose regarding the validity of the Social Study Report data is whether the criteria for enrolment as a SHC are valid as indicators of poverty?

The data generated by the Social Study Report nevertheless constitute a high quality, comprehensive, integrated and, conditioned on necessary permissions, technically easily accessible data base on the most economically deprived segment of the refugee population.

Recommendations

Scope and relevance:

The registration records are the basis of UNRWA's operations and form an important base for many types of research. The Unified Registration System (URS) makes it possible to join economic, demographic, and other data about individual UNRWA refugees. It is recommended that UNRWA implement efforts to link its registration records to its data about health and education. Such an effort would increase the research value of UNRWA data significantly, as it would improve both their relevance, scope and access. The Social Study Report represent one promising prototype for how such a link-up may be made. An expansion of this

system to cover all the registered refugees would enhance the opportunities for research on the Palestine refugees.

Quality:

The validity of the registration records is related to the problem of classification, i.e. which criteria a person should fulfil to be defined as a “Palestine Refugee”. A discussion of these criteria is beyond this study, and validity of the registration records are thus not discussed. The reliability of the records is related to the registration system and has been discussed here. There is reason to believe that the reliability has improved since UNRWA ceased to distribute rations to all registered refugees, but it may be improved further if a system for routine capture of “changes” such as births, deaths, and moving is implemented. Regarding the Special Hardship Cases, questions on the Social Study Report regrettably do not seem to adhere to international standards for economic activity¹⁷. Coherence with international standards would improve the research value of the data.

Access:

Access to the registration records is limited to aggregated tables by age and sex on the Field level. The research value would be improved if computerized tables of registered refugees on an Area and camp level were accessible. Intimidating the integrity of refugees and/or host countries could be avoided by anonymization procedures and by requiring permissions to access these data. In that case standardized procedures and forms for application for research permissions should be introduced.

Possible Research Projects

The Special Hardship Cases: A Poverty Analysis

In the future UNRWA intends to computerize all information about Special Hardship Cases (SHC) collected by the Social Study Reports. At present this scheme has been implemented in the Fields of Syria and Jordan. Due to its uniform system for data collection, the Social Study Report provides an unique possibility for direct comparison of the situation for SHCs in UNRWA's Fields of operation. According to progress in computerization of the Social Study Report, one could, in Syria and Jordan:

¹⁷ International Labour Office (1990) *Survey of Economically Active Population, Employment and Underemployment* Geneva:ILO

- * Investigate living conditions of “Special Hardship Cases” (SHC) and/or
- * Evaluate effects of policy for self-reliance of these households

A study of (SHC) based on the Social Study Report could answer questions related to SHC living conditions over time, and differences in living conditions for various groups of SHC at a point in time. The study could improve understanding of basic problem which lead to poverty by revealing the main causes for becoming a SHC, as well as reasons for loss of status as a SHC. Research could examine the degree of applicability of the SHC programme and evaluate its usefulness so far. Do the SHC programme preserve social differences, or is it successful in reducing these? The study could provide recommendations for the improvement of the programme.

SHC constitute 6% of the UNRWA registered refugee population. The population is well defined and (to our knowledge) a computerized population lists exist or will soon exist with UNRWA. Using information collected by the Social Study Report, quantitative analysis of UNRWA’s Social Study data base could either be conducted on basis of all UNRWA SHC, or through selecting a random sample from this population of families. With the necessary permissions from UNRWA, such a project would not require local field work.

4. Health Data

UNRWA's Department of Health provides health services free of charge to registered refugees. The Agency's medical care services comprise out-patient and in-patient¹⁸ medical care, dental care, rehabilitation of physically disabled persons, essential diagnostic and support services such as laboratory and radiological services, specialist and special care services and provision of medical supplies. UNRWA's health programme concentrates on provision of primary health care delivered through Health Centres, Health Points, or Mother and Child Health (MCH) clinics.¹⁹ Registered refugees have no obligation to use UNRWA's health services, nor are they obliged to notify the Agency of health-related events such as births, deaths or diseases.

What possibilities do UNRWA's health data offer for research on the health of Palestine refugees? First, it should be noted that UNRWA's health statistics primarily deal with information on UNRWA's *own* system, and does therefore not provide an *exhaustive* picture of the health situation for Palestine refugees. This is due to self-selection mechanisms with regard to utilization of health services in general, which results in a limitation of the data's coverage.

Health information collected from health institutions only covers those individuals who choose to visit such places. The 1993 FAFO report *Palestinian Society* found that 90% of the population in the Occupied Territories consulted a doctor during illness.²⁰ Information recorded at *any* (not only UNRWA) health clinic in this area is hence representative for 90% of those persons who *perceive* themselves as ill, *and* choose to consult a doctor.

Measures of morbidity are determined both by the underlying diseases and by perceptions of illness. Because types of diseases and perceptions of illness vary between individuals and socio-economic groups, a systematic bias between the self-perceived and the "true" morbidity in the (refugee) population is likely to occur. Rates of self-perceived illness may even

¹⁸ UNRWA itself operates only one hospital (in the West Bank). In addition, UNRWA helps refugees cover hospital expenses.

¹⁹ Health Centres provide full range of preventive, curative and community health care, Health Points provide the same services on a part-time basis, and MCH clinics provide preventive care only.

²⁰ Source: Heiberg and Øvensen 1993; 112, table 4.9.

be inversely correlated to clinically diagnosed morbidity. This has been found in several studies where poor people with high prevalence of clinically diagnosed diseases report less illness than rich people, who may tend to categorize a wider range of conditions as illnesses (Feachem et. al. 1992).

The second type of bias due to self-selection has to do with utilization of health services and the mechanisms that determine *where* a person (refugee) seek health services. Such mechanisms may include the type and quality of the health services being offered by various clinics, their physical proximity to the person (refugee), and the fees charged for various services.

In the Occupied Territories the FAFO living conditions survey (Heiberg and Øvensen 1993) found a much higher use of UNRWA's health institutions among camp refugees than among refugees outside camps. Because most refugee camps are small in size, and most of them have their own health clinic, this observation may in part be due to the physical proximity of UNRWA clinics to camp dwellers.

A related and perhaps more plausible reason is economic deprivation. Because households in refugee camps are on the average economically worse off than those outside the camps²¹, the fact that UNRWA's services are free of charge may compensate for the long hours that must sometimes be spent in the waiting room. Due to limited budgets, UNRWA health personnel must often operate in overcrowded clinics, and doctors have short time for consultation with each patient.

Use of UNRWA health clinics may also vary among individuals in the same household. The household's willingness to pay for private or governmental health services may vary between adult men, adult women and children. Many male refugees may further have special access to non-UNRWA health services through their employers²².

Finally, regardless of socio-economic status and gender, the fact that UNRWA's health clinics do not offer adequate treatment (such as hospitalization) for particular types of illnesses may lead to a general under-reporting of such illnesses within the UNRWA disease registration system.

UNRWA's data on refugees and health are therefore representative of those refugees who *chose to use UNRWA's health services*, and not for the group of UNRWA refugees as such²³. To be recorded in UNRWA's health statistics a person must: 1) Perceive him (her) self as ill. 2) Choose to visit a physician; 3) Choose to visit a physician at an UNRWA clinic.

²¹ Source: Heiberg and Øvensen 1993; 161, figure 6. 4.

²² Source: *Report of the Director-General: Appendices* (Vol. 2), pg. 99. International Labour Office, Geneva, 1992.

This generalization problem could to some extent be solved if information could be obtained about how the group using UNRWA's health services differs from the refugee population as a whole with regard to other socio-economic factors.

Due to the incompleteness of demographic data, it is at present difficult to estimate crude birth rates, child mortality rates, vaccination coverage, etc. in the refugee population. In spite of these limitations UNRWA health data offer extensive statistical information about those who visit their clinics (see list of health data in Appendix 3). The Health Department has conducted several evaluative and research studies based on clinic records and statistics either independently or in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO).

UNRWA's health data provide an epidemiological basis for comparative trend-analysis of health status of the population, disease prevalence, as well as assessment of the effectiveness of services, etc. Before proceeding we will present a brief overview of UNRWA's system of collecting health data.

Health Data Produced through Routine Reports

There are five levels in the routine reporting of UNRWA's Health Department. The reporting site is where the refugee consults with the health staff, usually at a Health Centre (but also at Health Points and Mother and Child Health (MCH) clinics). Information is passed on from the reporting site to the Area Health Office, the Field Health Office, the Headquarters, and, at international level, WHO.

UNRWA operates at present a total of 120 Health Centres in the five Fields. Information produced on this level concerns the condition or diagnosis of the individual patient, as well as the treatment prescribed or given to him/her by the physician.

The amount of time available for consultation with each patient is limited at UNRWA's clinics. The heavy workload on the physicians caused by limited resources within UNRWA health system result in short time left for each consultation. Short consultation time might thus affect the reliability of the medical diagnosis.

²³ The generalization problem is more severe for refugees outside camps, than for camp refugees. Still, the FAFO report *Responding to Change* (Øvensen 1994) found that in 1992 only 60 % of camp refugees in the Occupied Territories used UNRWA's health system during illness.

The information produced in the consultation is written by the physician on individual cards prepared on the basis of the family's Registration Card. There is no use of computers on this level. These individual cards are kept in the Health Centre, and information produced during the consultation is reported to the Area Health Office only in the form of standardized summary reports. Reports are submitted to the Area Office and Field Office on weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual basis, according to the diagnosis in question. (The routine reports from the reporting sites are listed in Appendix 3.) With a few exceptions, the data contained in these reports consist of numbers of new cases. The Field Office in turn passes the reports on to the Headquarters. Based on these data the Headquarters use the *Epi Info*²⁴ data entry and statistics system for epidemiology to provide outputs describing the numbers of cases for each Health Centre as well as totals for the Fields.

Surveillance of Infectious Diseases

For the surveillance of infectious diseases the UNRWA Health Department has developed an *Epi Info* based surveillance system. The system builds on the routine weekly reports from the Health Centres as well as "outbreak reports" and "case investigation reports"²⁵. The physician at the Health Centre uses a daily tally sheet to record cases of infectious diseases. These are forwarded to the Area and Field Health Office weekly.

The routine weekly report from the Health Centres thus consists of the following information:

- * date, week and year
- * name of Field
- * name of Area

²⁴ *Epi Info* is a data entry, data base and statistics system for epidemiology which is widely used.

²⁵ Cases of highly infectious diseases must be reported within 24 hours to the Area and Field Health Office, but these are also reported on the weekly report form. These diseases are: Acute Flaccid Paralysis, suspected and laboratory confirmed Cholera, Poliomyelitis, Meningococcal Meningitis, and Tetanus Neonatorum. There are however diseases for which a case investigation form is also forwarded. This form includes name and sex, place of birth, address, residency in camp, occupation, and travelling the last two months. These diseases are: Acute Flaccid Paralysis, suspected and laboratory confirmed Cholera, Poliomyelitis, Mening. Meningitis, Tetanus Neonatorum, HIV-AIDS (Serologically confirmed), Meningitis, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and Pulmonary Tuberculosis. In cases of food poisoning the information is extended to include data on symptoms and food and drink history.

- * name and code of Health Centre
- * name and code of disease
- * number of cases

As a rule the weekly reports do not contain names or registration numbers of the patients²⁶.

At the Area and Field Health Office these data are fed into the *Epi Info* in order to be assembled and compared, and to enable the Health Department to apply measures of prevention and control of infectious diseases where necessary. The Department intends to expand this reporting system structure to all parts of their programme including MCH and non-communicable diseases.

At present, the Health Department is in the process of decentralizing data handling to exploit the possibilities for using *Epi Info* on the Field level. Field Offices are encouraged to use *Epi Info* for routine infectious disease reporting. The Headquarters receives only a monthly diskette copy of the data in order to do comparative analysis of infectious diseases across all Fields. On the Health Centre level though, there are no plans to computerize data handling.

In order to improve the quality of the data and the surveillance system, the Health Department has created standardized definitions of the reportable infectious diseases. This ensures a 'common language' and thus improves the reliability of the data obtained. Another quality control mechanism employed by the Health Department is routines for controlling the timeliness of the return of data from the field.

Epi Info allows for the rapid processing and analysis of data, and can provide statistical calculations based on data collected from the reporting sites. These are collected in a unified manner for the five Fields of UNRWA operations and thus offers opportunities for comparisons. The reliability and validity of UNRWA routine health data seem high. With the *Epi Info* access to the data is good and possibilities of crossing data fed into the computer is in principle endless. The basic question, then, is which data, at what level of aggregation, are fed into the computer? If, for example, information about the type of treatment and health-service is linked to the type of disease, it is possible to study the success of certain types of treatment. Such research would need data with a unit of analysis on an individual level as well as on a village or UNRWA Area level. Although data on an individual level are not computerized, the Agency

²⁶ An exemption are those diseases for which a "case investigation form" is forwarded.

has conducted research based on sample survey of individual medical records by designing appropriate research protocols.

Recommendations

Relevance:

The relevance of the UNRWA health data is high for any research which aims at studying the health condition of the Palestine refugees who use UNRWA health services. Health data based on the routine reporting of medical diagnosis have high relevance for studies of health and morbidity. A uniform reporting system across the five UNRWA Fields of operations provides opportunities for comparisons. Health data have been produced by the Department of Health since the inception of UNRWA and thus provide opportunities for studies of trends in the health situation of Palestine refugees over the last 45 years.

Scope:

The scope would improve if health information were linked up with reliable demographic data, preferably in a computerized system. Such a link would improve research possibilities by manifesting which segments of the refugee population the data cover. Such a link would also provide opportunities for studying relations between health related conditions and socio-economic factors. At Health Centre level, clinical data are recorded in files prepared on the basis of the family's registration card. If these primary data are kept and stored (i.e. not destroyed), the quality of the data is higher.

Quality:

The reliability of the medical diagnosis may be affected by short time for consultations for each patient. Additional resources to increase the time per consultation would probably increase the reliability of the data. (Diagnosis are in some cases based on laboratory standards-as opposed to clinically based standards-and rely on available laboratory equipment. To evaluate whether UNRWA Health Department has sufficient such equipment is outside the scope of this study.)

Access:

Access to health data is limited to statistics (number of cases) on a Field level of aggregation. Access to primary data on a lower level of aggregation, such as individual, clinic and Area level would increase the research

value of the data. Again this depend on whether the Agency's Health Centres store the primary data which they produce and collect. Protection of the refugees' right to privacy is particularly important and could be safeguarded by anonymization procedures and by requiring research permissions to access the data.

Possible Research Projects

Evaluative Study of Efforts to Reduce Children Injury

A study of the effects of preventive measures against refugee children's accidents in their local environment and training of families in first aid could be carried out, possibly as part of a broader programme for preventive health. The aim would be to evaluate the effect of concentrated efforts in reducing the prevalence and severity of accidents among refugee children.

One section of FAFO's living conditions survey (Heiberg and Øvensen 1993) dealt with children and injury. Respondents were asked if any of the children in the household 12 years of age or younger had been seriously injured during the previous two months. Some 17% of households state that they have children who had been so injured. *The overwhelming majority of these children had been injured inside the home.*

In those cases where the reason for the injury was *known*, falling and burns were the most common type causes.

How can the relatively high number of injuries among refugee children be reduced? Analysis of data from FAFO's living conditions survey gives an indication:

Instead of overcrowding *per se*, children's accidents inside the home seem much more closely related to poverty. In general, the poorest third of Palestinian households is twice as likely as the richest third to have children who had been injured either inside or outside the home. Controlling for this factor, indoor accident rates are some 70% higher among the poorest third of Palestinian households compared to the richest third. (Heiberg and Øvensen 1993; 95)

It seems reasonable that scarce knowledge about preventive measures against children's accidents and basic first aid among poor families may be one of the factors explaining the findings above. Other surveys have revealed that there is a strong need for increased knowledge about first aid treatment of injuries like burns, fractions and wounds. Correct treatment

of injuries before the child can be brought to professional health care facilities would reduce the severity of injuries and in many cases remove the need for hospitalization.

The vast majority of refugee children's injuries are treated by UNRWA clinics, in particular so children living in the camps. If a comprehensive programme for reducing the prevalence and severity of children's accidents is implemented in a given camp, the effects would most likely be documented by comparing UNRWA's health statistics for that camp over time, and with other camps. The programme could for example consist of visits in the homes to give advice about preventive measures, and basic training of family members in first aid.

Both survey methods and a programme for reducing the prevalence and severity of refugee children's accidents at home would have to be elaborated by medical personnel. The lack of recording of accidents within the family registration system should not make such a project unsurmountable if the assumption that the vast majority of serious injuries among refugee children are treated by local UNRWA health clinics holds.

The project would require field work by skilled medical personnel. If a test project is implemented in one camp, it should be manageable for one person with some regional and statistical experience.

5. Education Data

Since 1966 when UNRWA's expenditure on education outstripped that on food rations, education has become the most important activity of the Agency as measured in monetary expenses.

UNRWA operates at present 640 elementary and preparatory schools in the five Fields of operations. Registered Palestine refugee children are accepted into the first grade of UNRWA elementary schools at the age of six. UNRWA offers six years of elementary education and three years of preparatory education in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Arab Republic. In Lebanon and Jordan, the Agency offers four years of preparatory education for all pupils who have successfully completed the six year elementary cycle. UNRWA elementary and preparatory schools follow the curricula of the host countries.

At the upper secondary level, UNRWA does not operate its own schools except in Lebanon where one secondary school was opened in October 1993 in Beirut Area. In other Fields and other Areas of Lebanon, refugee students, at this level, attend private or government schools, in the latter case free of charge. In Lebanon, however, UNRWA used to provide financial assistance to refugee students enrolled in private and in government schools, but due to financial difficulties facing the Agency, this practice has been stopped effective 1992/1993 school year.

At the higher education level, UNRWA awards a limited number of scholarships to academically outstanding students to study in Middle Eastern universities²⁷. It also operates its own:

- a) pre-service teacher training programme which has been upgraded effective September 1993 from two-year post-secondary programme to four-year programme leading to first university degree;
- b) in-service teacher training programme for any unqualified or under-qualified education staff in UNRWA schools and training centres;
- c) post-preparatory and post-secondary vocational and technical education programme for students of both sexes and the eight training centres in the five Fields.

Some refugee students also attend non-UNRWA vocational institutions in the Middle East under Agency sponsorship.

²⁷ Universities in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, West Bank, Gaza, Iraq, Libya, Turkey, Yemen, Sudan, Algeria and Tunisia.

What opportunities do UNRWA's educational data offer for research on the education of Palestine refugees? Publicly available statistics about UNRWA's educational system are summarized in the 140 pages Statistical Yearbook produced by UNRWA's Department of Education. The Yearbook also contains a description of UNRWA's educational services and structure.

Parallel to UNRWA's health statistics, the coverage of UNRWA's educational statistics is limited to information on UNRWA's *own* educational programmes. At the elementary and preparatory levels, where UNRWA maintains its own educational system, roughly 80% of refugee pupils in the five Fields attend UNRWA schools.²⁸ UNRWA statistics thus provide educational information about the majority of the refugee population. The main limitation is that we do not know who this majority is.

Attendance to private and governmental schools is in principle based on the choice of refugee families themselves. It is thus reasonable to speculate whether the group of refugee pupils attending private and governmental schools differ systematically from other refugee pupils with regard to their families' socio-economic status. The main factor determining their choice is nevertheless the availability of an UNRWA school in the locality or not. If no UNRWA school is available, then the refugees try to join a government school. Few pupils join private schools except in Lebanon and the West Bank where 9% of the pupils at the elementary level are enrolled in private schools.²⁹ In Lebanon there are restrictions on the enrolment of Palestine refugee children in government schools.

Even though UNRWA possesses some information about refugee pupils in private and governmental schools, this information is characterized by under-reporting of the number of students.³⁰ In spite of its broad coverage, UNRWA's educational statistics thus do not provide an *exhaustive* picture of the educational situation of Palestine refugees in the five Fields. This fact may pose problems for research within each Field as well as for comparison between the Fields.

The numerical tables of the Yearbook provides a wide range of statistics for different units (see Appendix 4 for a comprehensive list of units and variables). Both the type of information, which include very few

²⁸ Source: UNRWA Statistical Yearbook for Education; 1992-1993, table 4.

²⁹ Source: UNRWA Statistical Yearbook for Education 1992-1993, table 4.

³⁰ UNRWA ceased to give assistance to refugee pupils in government and private schools in the school year of 1992-1993. This has resulted in a lack of interest and incentive for these schools to report refugee pupils enrolment to UNRWA. Private schools under-report or do not report the attendance of refugee pupils in their schools and the figures with respect to refugees in government schools are also believed to be incomplete (UNRWA Statistical Yearbook for Education; 1992-1993).

problematic concepts and definitions, as well as the procedure for collection, (where incentives for incorrect reporting are small) give little reason to doubt the reliability of the data.

Information within the Department of Education is forwarded from the schools to the respective Field Offices and subsequently to the UNRWA Headquarters. The units of analysis in this information are mainly schools, classes, teachers, and pupils. One may therefore assume that educational information on a school and Area level exists within the Department of Education. This information would, if made publicly available, enhance the research potential of UNRWA educational statistics. The principal problem in using UNRWA statistics for research on education of refugees is the high level of aggregation in the publicly accessible material (the Statistical Yearbook). If confined to the tables of the Yearbook, the units of analysis will have to be the five Fields. ³¹

Recommendations

Relevance:

The relevance of the UNRWA education data is high for any research which aims at studying education among the Palestine refugees.

Scope:

A link-up of educational information with the registration records, preferably on a computerized system, would be of extraordinary value for research purposes. Studies of relations between education and other social or economic factors, on individual or larger levels, could then be carried out.

Access:

Access to educational data on a lower level of aggregation, such as individual, school and Area level would increase the research value of the data. To our knowledge such information is easily obtainable upon request. Access to information about interruptions of education in the Agency's schools due to the Intifada and the civil war in Lebanon, would enable research projects aiming at measuring the effect of loss of school days on the learning process.

³¹To our knowledge UNRWA has collected data about interruptions of education in the Agency's schools due to the Intifada and the civil war in Lebanon. Interruptions of education have a severe impact on learning. It is estimated that children living in Gaza and the West Bank have lost between 35-50% of the school days because of school closures and curfews in the four years between 1988 and 1992 (Cultivating Palestinian Education 1992; 6).

Possible Research Projects

1) Attitudes of UNRWA Sponsored Students in University Education

UNRWA awards university scholarships to refugees who obtain high averages in the upper secondary school examinations. The scholarships are for use in Middle East universities. In 1992-93, 746 refugee students were awarded scholarships for various subjects of study.

A survey of work aspirations and attitudes in this group could be carried out with considerations regarding subjects of study and political attitudes. Students, in general, have already broken many ties to their home environment, and are as a rule unmarried. With university degrees, one assumption may be that these persons have a relative wide choice of where to live. A study of their family obligations, work aspirations, and what they regard as optimal living conditions may outline the aspirations and attitudes of this resourceful group.

Such a survey can be carried out as a mail survey, granted necessary permissions from UNRWA to access their lists of university scholarship holders. It would not require local field work.

2) Attitudes of UNRWA Teachers in Elementary and Preparatory Schools

A stated aim of the Department of Education is to provide, within the framework of the curricula prescribed by the host countries, education for Palestine refugees in accordance with their educational needs, identity and cultural heritage.

The present political upheavals and the new choices that present themselves in the wake of the Declaration of Principles underscore the importance of willingness and ability to adapt among Palestinians of all generations. The schools have a particularly significant role to play in enabling the young generations to respond to current challenges.

UNRWA teachers providing elementary and preparatory education can be seen as key agents in the process of empowering Palestinian children and youth. Against this background, the attitudes of UNRWA teachers is of central concern. How do teachers view their mission in Palestinian society, now and in the future? From which normative basis will they proceed - and is this basis likely to change?

A study of teachers' attitudes can be conducted as a mail survey, granted necessary permissions from UNRWA to access their lists of teachers.

3) Study of UNRWA Vocational Training Programme

UNRWA's programme for vocational training offers courses in metal trades, electrical trades, building trades, technicians, commercial, para-medical, and more.

The study should aim at assessing whether UNRWA's current system for vocational training meets the needs in the labour market. Considering the labour market and the question of how to integrate youth into productive wage or self-employment, an assessment of UNRWA vocational training programme's effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance could be carried out. Relevance being the relationship between training objectives and the labour market, it is necessary to chart what is the likely size and shape of future demands for skills, both qualitatively (i. e. general knowledge, skills and attitudes) and in orders of magnitude.

Basic questions guiding such a project, and major sources for investigation would be: do policies and training programmes prepare people for technological change? What happens to the graduated students of typical training institutions? Do they get jobs? Doing what? What is the distribution of student contact hours between theory and practice (laboratory/ workshop)? What linkages exist between institutions and the business and industry, labour unions, commerce and other groups involved in the development of instructional programmes?

A study of UNRWA's vocational training programme would require access to UNRWA's educational data as well as local field work.

6. Conclusion

UNRWA was established to provide assistance to Palestine refugees. Over the years the Agency has collected and processed data to serve its needs in daily work and planning, and to document the Agency's work for its financial contributors. Its mandate has never been to give priority to provision of data for social science research. Nevertheless UNRWA's data contain a host of information about the situation of Palestine refugees in UNRWA's five Fields of operations. The data represent a potential for research on Palestine refugees. Their major advantage is the comprehensive scope with regard to time, geography, and topics.

UNRWA data consist of the family files, the service statistics covering health and education, and the registration records. The data have been produced since the inception of UNRWA, they have been produced by a uniform system of data collection, and they cover all the Agency's five Fields of operations.

At present most of the UNRWA data are only available to the general public and researchers in the form of printed statistics, at the Field level of aggregation. It is not clear to what extent the various UNRWA installations at the service delivery level, such as Health Centres and schools, store the primary data which they collect.

The research value of the data can, however, still be improved. This study has given several concrete suggestions for how to facilitate and encourage their use. A major disadvantage of the UNRWA data is that the data are not integrated into one single data base. Linking registration records, health data, and education data together would multiply their potential for answering research questions and thus increase their relevance significantly.

The Unified Registration System (URS) and the Social Study Report which is currently introduced to record information about UNRWA's "Special Hardship Case" families are particularly promising for use in social science research. The URS may be used to join economic, educational and health information for individuals and families in one integrated, computerized data base. The Social Study Report represents a prototype for how to organize data also about the remaining (95%) UNRWA registered Palestine refugees. This would tremendously improve the research value of UNRWA data.

With regard to statistics in education and health, UNRWA mainly records information about the use of its own services. We do not know if users of UNRWA services are representative of all registered refugees. This limits the ability to generalize findings to the registered refugee population as a whole.

Some statistics are based on self-reported information even though incentives for systematic erroneous reporting exists, thus presenting a problem of low reliability. In these cases systematic check-up procedures for limiting errors could be carried out. Continuous updating of information is likewise needed to ensure that data have current interest.

Access to computerized, disaggregated data will enhance the research value of the UNRWA data. In the case of the family files inadequate storing facilities are a major obstacle for access. Additional funding is urgently needed to halt the continuing physical deterioration of the archives.

A reduction of costs to access UNRWA data would greatly benefit researchers. Such efforts are particularly important for Palestinian research institutions with small budgets. Access costs could for example be reduced by introducing standardized application procedures for research permits. Centralization and computerization of data will further reduce costs and substantially facilitate access for those who obtain research permits.

The refugees' right to privacy must however be respected. Most research projects using individuals and families as investigation units do not require names and addresses of persons. Sensitive information about individuals and families can be misused, and trust that confidentiality is upheld by the Agency's staff is of outmost importance. Where there is a risk that sensitive information about individuals and families may be misused, appropriate measures to guarantee anonymity can be put in place.

One obstacle to enhance the research value of UNRWA's data is the Agency's need to balance between the interests of the various parties in its environment. Yet it is also certain that the Middle East Peace Process will have a great impact on both the perceptions and interests of all parties involved. The safeguards and concerns that have played such a central role in the past may thus become less important in the future.

Appendix 1

Publications by UNRWA Public Information Office

UNRWA Public Information Office in Vienna produces a catalogue of their publications, under the headings of “Regular”, “Specialist”, and “Occasional” publications. These different documents describe UNRWA and its work from a variety of perspectives, and are available from UNRWA Public Information Office. Several of the publications come in languages other than English as well. They publications are the following:

Regular Publications:

Annual:

- * “UNRWA”: an edited and illustrated version of the UNRWA Commissioner General’s Annual Report to the United Nations General Assembly.
- * “UNRWA Accounts - a Summary”
- * “Guide to UNRWA”: a booklet describing UNRWA’s organization and its Field operations.
- * “UNRWA in Figures”: a Consolidated fact sheet on UNRWA.
- * “Field Fact Sheets”: five sheets which contain basic statistical and financial data about the Field and UNRWA’s operations.
- * “Map”: which shows UNRWA’s Area of operations with refugee location data.

Semiannual:

- * “Palestine Refugees Today”: Illustrated magazine covering developments in the refugee community. Contains human-interest stories and photo essays from the area of UNRWA operations.

Fortnightly:

- * “UNRWA news”: regular newsletter on current events in the area of operations, including UNRWA activities and staff news.

Specialist Publications:

Annual:

- * “Annual Report of the Commissioner-General to the General Assembly”
- * “Financial Addendum to the Annual Report of the Commissioner-General”

- * “Statistical Yearbook UNRWA Department of Education”
- * “Annual Report of the Department of Health”

Occasional Publications:

- * “UNRWA: an Investment in People”: a booklet describing UNRWA’s main programmes, including a brief historical background and photographs.
- * “Update”: Update of UNRWA activities in context of wider political background affecting Palestine refugees.
- * “UNRWA’s 40 years”: a paperback embodying extracts from published materials, charts on UNRWA finance and its special programmes in Lebanon and the Occupied Territory of the West bank and Gaza, altogether presenting an account of the origin of UNRWA and the development of its services over the four decades.
- * “UNRWA and NGOs”: an account of UNRWA ‘s co-operation with non-governmental organizations in all five Fields of operation in education, health, relief and social services, on family and environmental issues and in special projects for women³².

The two Annual Reports and the Education Statistical Yearbook are particularly informative (See Appendices 2, 3, and 4). The UNRWA General Fact Sheet³³ contains information on the following for each of the five Fields:

- * Country area in square kilometres
- * Country population (CP)
- * Registered refugees (RR)
- * RR average annual growth (%)
- * RR as % of CP
- * RR as % of total RR
- * Existing camps
- * RR in camps (RRCs)
- * RRCs as % of RR

³² Also available are posters that depict themes about Palestine refugees and UNRWA. Two leaflets, one called “Leaflet on Palestinian Dresses” on Palestinian dresses and their origin, and one called “Palestine refugees and UNRWA”. Further; “Basic facts about UNRWA” and the forthcoming “UNRWA and the Environment” and “UNRWA’s Peace Implementation Programme”, as well as “Press Releases” issued on matters of significance as they occur.

³³ The General Fact Sheet is published by the Programme Planning Office. It lists its sources of information for each topic.

- * Schools
- * Teaching staff
- * Pupils enrolment
- * Female pupils (%)
- * Cost per elementary pupil (in \$)
- * Cost per preparatory pupil (in \$)
- * Training centres
- * Vocational training places
- * Teacher training places
- * In-service teacher training
- * University scholarships
- * Health Centres/Units
- * Dental Clinics
- * Family planning clinics
- * Diabetes care clinics
- * Laboratories
- * Annual patients visits
- * In-door water supply in camps
- * Sewered shelters in camps
- * Special Hardship Cases (SHC)
- * SHCs as % of RR
- * Women's programme centres
- * Community rehabilitation centres (CRCs)
- * Self-support projects
- * Income-generation loans (No.)
- * Income-generation loans (\$)
- * Area staff (posts)
- * International staff (posts)
- * Regular budget (\$000)
- * Education
- * Health
- * Relief and Social Services
- * Operational services

- * Common services
- * Total regular budget
- * Extraordinary Measures in Lebanon and the Occupied Territory (EM-LOT) budget
- * GNP per capita (\$)
- * Unemployment % (estimates)
- * Illiteracy %: 15 years+ (separate estimates for men and women)
- * Infant mortality/1.000 (estimates)

UNRWA has also prepared “Camp Presentations”: overviews of each of its refugee camps, obtainable upon request. These present:

- * short history of the camp, such as when it was established
- * geographical background and number of its original inhabitants
- * location and area of camp (in square meters)
- * population
- * number of shelters
- * number of Special Hardship Cases
- * number of UNRWA installations, such as schools, health centres, women’s programme centres, youth activities centre
- * number of UNRWA staff
- * number of pupils in schools
- * provision of public facilities such as water, electricity, sewage network, telephone

At Field level, UNRWA also produces the “West Bank and Gaza Strip Field Report” which is published in Gaza. In addition, the various departments within UNRWA produces several statistical and other bulletins for internal use.

Appendix 2

The Annual Reports of the Commissioner General

UNRWA's Annual Report is of approximately 50 pages. It gives records of the Agency's policy, as well as general developments in the Agency and the Agency programmes, financial matters, and statistical material, with the following tables:

- * Number of registered persons
- * Distribution of registered population
- * Number and distribution of Special Hardship Cases
- * Social service programme
- * Distribution of refugee pupils receiving education in UNRWA schools
- * Training places in UNRWA training centres
- * University scholarship-holders by faculty and country of study
- * Medical care services
- * Trends in utilization of out-patient clinics
- * Incidence trends of selected communicable diseases
- * Staff members arrested and detained
- * Casualties in the occupied territory
- * Contributions in cash and in kind by Governments and by the European Community
- * UNRWA in figures³⁴

The Annual Report also accounts for personnel, the number of staff in the various departments and positions, and the number of internationals and Palestinians among these.

Since the first Annual Report in 1951, the amount of data presented in these reports have increased. The early reports describe the Agency's historical background and the inauguration of programmes, as well as background information about the refugees, such as the definition of the term refugee, the living conditions of the refugees, their morale, and so forth. The first Annual Reports also contain occupational information of the refugees derived from a survey the Agency carried out.

³⁴ Table basically identical to the "UNRWA General Fact Sheet" described in Appendix 1, but without the following information; cost per elementary pupil, cost per preparatory pupil, family planning clinics, diabetes care clinics.

In the early reports, the Relief Programme is accounted for in some detail. The Agency's concern regarding its inherited refugee records and its efforts to cut ration distribution are discussed in this section. Tables show number of refugees on ration lists, of claimants for each host country, and numbers of rations provided in each of these. Other programmes such as Works Programme are also described both in terms of policy, and in tables presenting numbers of refugees engaged in various specified works projects. Information implicit in these data may be of historical interest: Work projects include road construction, afforestation, and bilharzia control to mention but a few, projects which inaugurations give indications of concerns of that particular time. Here is fascinating material for the interested reader.

Appendix 3 Health Statistics

The Annual Reports of the Department of Health

List of health information and variables. (Excluding statistical data on diabetes care)

Budgeted expenditure in US \$
1990-1995

Field

Jordan, West Bank, Gaza, Syria Lebanon

Programmes

Regular, Extraordinary Measures in Lebanon and the Occupied Territories (EMLOT), Expanded Programme of Assistance (EPA), Gaza hospital project, Peace Implementation Programme (PIP)

Area staff

Doctors, Dentists, Pharmacists, Nurses, Para-medical staff, Administrative/clerical/secretarial, Health education, Other

Health care facilities

Health units, Dental clinics, Laboratories, Specialist clinics, Special care clinics (Diabetes/hypertension)

Services provided and utilization of these (out-patient services)

Number of:

- * First visits
- * Repeat visit
- * Injections
- * Dressings
- * Dental consultations

Services provided and utilization of these (in-patient services)

Number of:

- * Contracted hospitals
- * General hospital beds
- * Patients admitted

- * Patient days
- * Average daily bed occupancy
- * Average stay in days
- * UNRWA maternity units
- * Women admitted
- * Bed days utilized
- * Average daily bed occupancy
- * Average stay in days
- * Patients assisted through reimbursement schemes

Maternal and child health (MCH) and family planning

- * Utilization rates

Maternal health care:

Number of:

- * Pregnant women under supervision
- * Total deliveries reported
- * Proportion of deliveries according to place (at home, camp maternity, private clinics, in hospital)

Child health care:

Number of:

- * infants/children under supervision
- * % regular attendance
- * Leading causes of infant mortality
- * Prevalence of growth retardation

Family planning services:

Number of:

- * Family planning clinics
- * Family planning acceptors

Distribution of acceptors according to contraceptive methods used

Communicable diseases

Incidence rates of 22 communicable diseases

Expanded programme on immunization

- * Infants vaccinated with the OPV, DPT, BCG, and measles vaccine.
- * Tetanus immunization of pregnant women

Environmental health services

Water supply:

- * Percentage of shelters served by indoor connections

Liquid waste disposal:

- * Number of camps partially or fully connected to sewerage systems
- * Percentage of shelters connected to sewerage systems

Refuse disposal:

Number of camps served by:

- * UNRWA mechanized equipment
- * Contractual agreements
- * Local disposal

Health Routine Reports

The routine reports from the Health Department reporting sites are the following:

Weekly reports:

- * Report on infectious diseases

Monthly reports:

- * In-Patient Medical Care Services
- * Out-Patient Medical Care Services

Quarterly reports:

- * Family Planning Services
- * Mother and Child Health Care Services
- * Expanded Program me of Immunization
- * Under Weight Children Below Three Years
- * Infant Mortality below One Year
- * Child Mortality 1-5 Years

- * Epidemiological Report in Relation to Immunization
- * School Health Service
- * Tuberculosis Control

Six Monthly Report:

- * Environmental Health
- * Laboratory Services

Annual Report:

- * Management of Iron Deficiency Anaemia
- * Diabetes Mellitus

Appendix 4 Education Statistics

The Annual Reports of the Department of Education

Index of tables:

Section I(a)

- * Registered population of Palestine refugees: table of registered refugee population by age, sex and country of residence.

Section I(b)

- * General summary statistics of Palestine refugee pupils

Section II

- * Elementary cycle statistics of UNRWA schools
 - a. schools
 - b. class sections
 - c. enrolment
 - d. teachers

Section III

- * Preparatory cycle statistics of UNRWA schools
 - a. schools
 - b. class sections
 - c. enrolment
 - d. teachers

Section IV(a)

- * Pre-service teacher training statistics of UNRWA institutes

Section IV(b)

- * In-service teacher training courses conducted by the UNRWA institute of education

Section V(a)

- * UNRWA university scholarship holders

Section V(b)

- * UNRWA fellowship awards

Section VI(a)

- * UNRWA vocational and technical education centres

Section VI(b)

- * Sponsored students in non-UNRWA vocational and technical education centres

Appendices³⁵

1. Enrolment of Palestine refugee pupils in government and private elementary schools
2. Enrolment of Palestine refugee pupils in government and private preparatory schools
3. Enrolment of Palestine refugee pupils in government and private secondary schools
4. Secondary cycle statistics of UNRWA schools
5. Vocational and technical education UNRWA centres

List of education information and variables:

(Section I-III and V(a) only)

SCHOOL YEAR

1950-1993

FIELD

Jordan, West Bank, Gaza, Syria Lebanon

SCHOOL

SCHOOL AUTHORITY

UNRWA, Government, Private

TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION (UNRWA schools)

Agency built, Pre-fab. Rented, Donated, ownership of premises

SHIFT

Single, Partial double, Double, Two school in building

Average occupancy of class sections

CLASS

CLASS COMPOSITION

Male, Female, Mixed

³⁵ All tables in appendices 1-3 are believed to be incomplete due to lack of incentive for non-UNRWA schools to report refugee pupil enrolment to UNRWA.

PUPIL

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Elementary, Preparatory, Secondary, Vocational, Teachers training

GRADE

1-6th Elementary, I-III(IV) Preparatory, I-III Secondary

PUPIL'S BIRTH YEAR

1994 ->Downwards

PUPIL'S GENDER

Male, Female

PUPIL'S REGISTRATION STATUS

New pupil, repeater, promoted

PUPILS DROP OUT

Yes, No

PASS EXAMINATION

Yes, No

TEACHER

TEACHERS POSITION

Head, Assistant Head, Elementary, Preparatory

TEACHERS GENDER

Male, Female

TEACHERS ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION

Second university degree, First university degree, In process of obtaining university degree, Secondary certificate, Below second, but above preparatory, Preparatory Certificate and below

NUMBER OF:

- * Pupils
- * Teachers
- * Class sections
- * Schools
- * Classrooms
- * Scholarships
- * Fellowships
- * Persons in 1 year age groups

- * Drop-outs
- * Repeaters
- * Passing/ not passing examinations

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS

(Section V(a))

- * Holders of scholarship
- * Graduates
- * School year
- * Field
- * Student's country of origin
- * Country of study
- * Subject of study
- * Gender of students

Appendix 5

Tables: Some Vital Data

Table 1, Comparison of Reported Births and Registered Persons 0-1 year

	Syria	Jordan	West Bank	Gaza	Lebano
Deliveries registered in 1993 (UNRWA health statistics)	5501	13973	1069	24815	4235
Registered in 0-1 age group end of 1992 (UNRWA registration records)	5659	11881	5450	16680	4930

Source: UNRWA: 1993 Annual Report of the Department of Health, table 7. UNRWA Registration Statistical Bulletin for the fourth quarter 1992, table 1.0.

Table 2, Refugees above 60 Years. Percentage of Total Population

	UNRWA	FALCOT 92
Gaza	6,8	5,8
West Bank and Arab Jerusalem	9,3	6,3

Source: UNRWA Statistical Yearbook for Education; 1990-1991, table 1; 1992-1993, table 1. Heiberg and Øvnsen 1993, table A.2.2, A2.5; 360, 363.

Table 3, Refugees below 15 Years. Percentage of Total Population

	UNRWA	FALCOT 92
Gaza	41	49
West Bank and Arab Jerusalem	32	39

Source: UNRWA Registration Statistical Bulletin for the Fourth Quarter 1992, table 6.0. Heiberg and Øvnsen, 1993, table A.2.2, A2.5; 360, 363.

Appendix 6

Socio-Economic Data Base: Special Hardship Cases

The Social Study Report questionnaire contains the following questions regarding the *family*:

Registration:

- * Registration No:
- * Name of Head of Family:
- * Address:
- * Date of visit:
- * Total family income:
- * Local currency:

Accommodation:

- * In camp/outside camp
- * Tent/Camp Shelter/Apartment/House/Room/Others
- * Owned/Rented/Free of charge/Shared/Squatters/Others
- * No. of rooms
- * Kitchen
- * Bathroom
- * WC
- * Electricity Available/Not available/Yes/No
- * Water Available/Not available/Yes/No
- * Underground sewage Available/Not available/Yes/No
- * Garbage collection Available/Not available/Yes/No

Accommodation is:

- * Damp Yes/No
- * Ventilated Yes/No
- * Built area m²
- * Yard area m²

Does accommodation need rehabilitation?

- Reconstruction Yes/No
- Repair Yes/No

Furniture:

Condition is

Adequate/Inadequate

Equipment:

* Primus stove	Yes/No
* Table top stove	Yes/No
* Oven	Yes/No
* Refrigerator	Yes/No
* Washing machine	Yes/No
* Heating stove	Yes/No
* Water heater	Yes/No
* Sewing machine	Yes/No
* Radio	Yes/No
* TV B&W	Yes/No
* Colour TV	Yes/No
* Video	Yes/No

Assistance received during last two years:

* Cash	\$
* Shelter rehabilitation	Yes/No
* Grants	Yes/No
* Loans	Yes/No
* Soft loans	Yes/No

The Social Study Report questionnaire contains the following questions regarding all the *individuals* in a SHC family:

- * Date of birth:
- * Sex:
- * Family status:

Registration no:

- * Rank:
- * First name:
- * Died:
- * Married:
- * Moved away:

Imprisoned (all charges):

Missing:

Health

- * No. of visits to doctor last year 0³/₄5/6³/₄10/10 & over
- * Inter-family marriage? Yes/No
- * Any disability? Yes/No
 - * Mental (table)
 - * Physical (table)

Education

- * Formal education Yes/No
- * Child in kindergarten Yes/No
- * Age: Years, months
- * Elementary In/Completed/Drop out
- * Preparatory In/Completed/Drop out
- * Secondary In/Completed/Drop out
- * University In/Completed/Drop out
- * UNRWA Vocational Training Centre/Teacher Training Centre (table)
- * Other than UNRWA Vocational Training Centre/Teacher Training Centre (table)
- * Counselling Yes/No/Not available
- * Special education class Yes/No/Not available
- * Literacy training Yes/No/Not available

Economic status/potentials

- * Employed Yes/No
- * Present occupation (table)
- * Occupation (table)
- * *Has* a small business? Yes/No
- * Economic activity (table)
- * Income per month Currency
- * *Had* a small business? Yes/No
- * Economic activity (table)

* Discontinued/closed	Month, year
* Reason (given by respondent)	No demand for goods or services in the market/No profits/No capital/ Others
* Skills	(table)
* acquired through:	Informal training/Women's Programme Centres/Others/By experience/Learnt from mother/Father/ Others (Specify)
Interests	(table)

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The Potential of UNRWA Data for Research on Palestinian Refugees

This study evaluates the potential of UNRWA administrative data for social science research on Palestinian refugees. The UNRWA data cover the original “refugee family files”, current refugee registration records, relief and social services, health and education for registered refugees in the five geographical UNRWA “Fields” of operations (Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon). The research potential of UNRWA’s data is found to be very promising even though data were not originally collected for research purposes.

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