The Syrian Refugee Life Study

Emma Smith
with Samuel Leone, Edward Miguel and Sandra Rozo

Measuring Development: Crisis Preparedness and Response
March 27, 2019
Stay in Za’atari?
Go elsewhere in Jordan?
Go back to Syria?
Try to go to Europe?
Many open questions

- Who migrates where and why?
- How do forced migration decisions affect short and long-term welfare?
- Can we use this knowledge to better structure humanitarian programming?
We have aggregated data
We need panel data

- Track the same individuals over time and place.
- Collect data on economic outcomes, education, attitudes, and physical and mental health.
- Serve as a public good for researchers and development practitioners.
Tracking Methodology

- Leverage social media/messaging apps alongside traditional tracking approaches.
- Frequency and breadth of contact is key.
- Work with multiple stakeholders.
Social media/messaging apps

- Unprecedented ability to contact individuals across borders.
- Use multiple platforms (WhatsApp, Imo, Viber, Facebook, and email).
- Potentially locate participants through their activity.
Traditional approaches

- Establish rapport and maintain respondent trust and consent.
- Locate respondents through their personal networks.
- Utilize INGO and governmental secondary data where available.
Data sensitivity

- Layered consents give respondents control over what degree of information they share.
- Strong data protection.
- Respond dynamically to changing political contexts to put respondent safety first.
Panel data as a platform for RCTs
Urban Shelter Program Example

- NRC-Jordan’s Urban Shelter Program provides Syrian refugees with apartment renovations and rent subsidies.
- We will randomize access to the program (which is oversubscribed) among the households sampled for our panel dataset.
- We will measure the households’ welfare – and their socioeconomic integration into host communities – in our follow-up surveys.
THANK YOU!