VASyR 2023
Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon · UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency · WFP World Food Programme · unicef for every child

VASyR 2023

Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

Acknowledgements

UNICEF is a leading humanitarian and development agency working globally for the rights of every child.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organisation dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide.

Cover photo credit:
© Medair

The VASyR hub

In our effort to make the VASyR more accessible, a website was launched in 2019. It includes a wide range of resources such as hundreds of data tabulations not published in this report, additional tools to support humanitarian actors to develop similar assessments, and more.

https://ialebanon.unhcr.org/vasyr

VASyR microdata is published on the UNHCR microdata library.

https://microdata.unhcr.org/

Contents

List of figures

List of tables

List of annexes

Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to affected populations
A-NAR	Adjusted net attendance rate
CARI	Consolidated approach for reporting indicators
CPI	Consumer price index
EDL	Electricité du Liban
FCS	Food consumption score
FHH	Female-headed households
GBV	Gender-based violence
GSO	General Security Office
HDADD	Household daily average diet diversity
HoH	Head of household
HWDD	Household weekly diet diversity
IYCF	Infant and young child feeding
ITS	Informal tented settlement
LBP	Lebanese pound
MEB	Minimum expenditure basket
MHH	Male-headed households
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PHC	Primary health care
rCSI	Reduced Coping Strategy Index
SHC	Secondary health care
SMEB	Survival minimum expenditure basket
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees
VASyR	Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

The Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) analyses a representative sample of Syrian refugee households in Lebanon to provide a multisectoral update on the situation of this population. Conducted annually, 2023 marks the eleventh year of this assessment. The contents of this report, jointly issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

Methodology

From May 24 to June 22 2023, survey teams visited over 5,000 randomly selected Syrian refugee households in all districts across Lebanon. The household questionnaire was based on that of the previous year to ensure comparability and face-to-face interviews took 45–60 minutes to complete. The analysis plan was developed with input from the sector working groups and with reference to global indicators.

Key findings

Protection

In addition to the overall socio-economic challenges in Lebanon for vulnerable households in 2023, several indicators reflect the tightening of the protection space and the worsening of the security situation for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, significantly impacting the psychosocial well-being of refugees. The number of restrictive measures applied across the country increased significantly in 2023, resulting in limitations of movements, feelings of insecurity and lack of stability impacting the well-being of refugees in the country. This is observed through several indicators of the VASyR 2023, including an increase of 8% in households reporting curfews imposed specifically on Syrians in the area where they live between 2022 (4%) and 2023 (12%).

Though legal residency rates of Syrians have increased by 3.3% since 2021 (2021: 16.4%, 2022: 17.3% and 2023: 19.7%), the overall percentage of Syrians with valid legal residency remains low, with only 20% of all Syrians holding legal residency and 80% lack valid residency which exposes them to significant risks of detention, deportation and other security measures or risks, including exploitation. VASyR data also shows that there has been a gradual decrease in the number of households with all members within the family holding legal residency. In addition, there is a growing gender disparity in rates of legal residency, with the difference between men and women growing over the past years. Residency rates for women have remained around 14% from 2021 to 2023, while residency rates for men increased from 18.7% in 2022 to 24.5% in 2023. In 2023, 41% of all surveyed families indicated that their children born in Lebanon have completed birth registration to the level of Foreigner's Registry. However, an uptick in boys and girls engaged in harmful coping mechanisms is observed through indicators of child labour and child marriage. Child labour rates increased from 2% in 2019 to 7% in 2023, with boys having been more exposed to child labour compared to girls. However, field partner reports increasingly highlight a progressive exposure to hazardous work for girls and street-connected children. Similar to previous years, approximately 23% of adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 were ever married (including divorced or separated) at the time of the survey (22% currently married). Breaking this down by gender shows 24% of early marriage in girls, as compared to 3% in boys. Though gender-based violence is not captured comprehensively in the VASyR, data indicates that half of the surveyed population (58%) would be able to guide survivors of GBV to relevant health, psychosocial or security services. Furthermore, more specialised assessments, such as the interagency safety audit, will be rolled out in 2024 to shed more light on GBV-related risks and perceptions.

Across indicators, women and persons living with disability, as well as those living in non-permanent shelter types, demonstrate higher risks and limitations in accessing rights, including legal residency, lower birth registration and higher exposure to safety concerns. Geographical disparities show that particularly southern areas and El Nabatieh show high levels of restrictive measures, limited access to national legal services, risk of eviction, higher rates of mental health symptoms, heightened exposure to safety and security risks of children and women, including child/forced marriage and children working in hazardous labour conditions. Data also indicates a strong focus on accountability to affected people, with an increase from 74% in 2022 to 79% of HHS, indicating knowledge on how to file a complaint against a member of staff or feedback on humanitarian aid.

Those findings confirm the need for maintaining a comprehensive protection response that combines risk mitigation, prevention, and quality service delivery, focusing on those at heightened risk and specific risk locations. Cross-sectoral work in the protection sector, including health, education and shelter, should be prioritised to ensure that protection is mainstreamed and impact is maximised despite limited available resources.

Health

In the last three months, about 17% of individuals had a health problem that required access to healthcare compared to 18% in 2022 and 82% of these individuals were able to access the needed health care compared to 73% in 2022. Among individuals requiring health care, 88% needed primary health care (PHC), 10% needed secondary health care (SHC) and 2% needed both PHC and SHC. The percentage of individuals in need of health care who were able to access PHC was 82% and those who were able to access SHC were 76.9%. The predominant obstacle to accessing necessary care was the cost, encompassing both direct expenses such as consultation fees and indirect costs such as transportation. Moreover, long waiting times for the service were also mentioned as a main barrier. The percentage of refugee children under the age of two who suffered from at least one disease in the two weeks prior to the survey was 32%, which showed an increase over the past three years when the percentage was around 24%.

Shelter

The majority of the displaced Syrian households in Lebanon (71%) continue to reside in residential structures, while 20% are in non-permanent shelters and 9% in non-residential structures. The cost of living and services has skyrocketed, with monthly rental costs in Lebanese pounds (LL) nearly quintupling since 2022, now averaging over LL5.6 million nationally. A substantial increase in dollarised rent was noted, reaching 78% by June 2023, a significant shift from the 4% recorded during the same period in 2022. This is coupled with the doubling of rent in US dollars for Syrian households across all shelter types. Geographical trends persist, with Beirut reporting the highest rental costs and Baalbek-El Hermel the lowest. Factors influencing residence selection include rent cost and proximity to relatives. Over half of refugee households live in overcrowded or physically inadequate shelters, with 15% in danger of collapse and 30% with substandard conditions. Despite a slight decrease, 16% still endure overcrowded conditions. The threat of eviction looms for 3% of households, with most expected to leave within a month. Additionally, more than half of households struggle with unpaid rent, averaging around $14. Despite these hardships, the percentage of households moving within the past year remains unchanged at 11%.

Energy

In 2023, there were slight improvements in access to electricity for households in Lebanon. The percentage of households without any connection to electricity decreased from 12% in 2022 to 9% in 2023. Baalbek-El Hermel had the highest rate at 15%, with little difference between female and male-headed households.

However, access to the national grid declined by 10%, reaching 27% in 2023. Private generators also decreased by 3%, while the use of other sources of electricity dropped to 7% from 13% in 2022. Notably, there was an increase in the usage of solar panels, rising from 1.2% in 2022 to 6% in 2023.

Although there were slight improvements in the number of hours of electricity, with 91% of households experiencing some power outage, the average daily outage reduced to 10 hours from 15 hours in 2022. The national grid provided only 6 hours of electricity per day, while private generators supplied an average of 13 hours.

Expenditure on electricity significantly increased, with national spending averaging over LL440,000 per family per month in 2022 and rising to over LL2.7 million per month in 2023. Beirut had the highest expenditure, at LL3.9 million, followed by Mount Lebanon, at LL3.3 million. These findings illustrate both improvements and ongoing challenges for households in Lebanon in the electricity sector.

Economic vulnerability

In June 2023, the Survival Monthly Expenditure Basket (SMEB) value increased to LL28,315,000 (US$304) per household, compared to LL8,156,858 ($285) per household in June 2022. This rise was attributed to inflation and the depreciation of the Lebanese pound, where the exchange rate increased from $1 = LL28,608 in June 2022 to $1 = LL93,593 in June 2023. In 2023, 63% of refugee households were living below the SMEB, a decrease from 67% in 2022 and 76% were below the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) following the new ECMEN methodology. Excluding assistance, 75% of households were below the SMEB and 83% were below the MEB. Expenditure proportions revealed that households allocated 52% of their total expenditure to food, 9% to rent, 6% on each electricity and medication and 3% to health. Beirut and El Nabatieh had the highest expenditures, while Akkar and North Lebanon reported the lowest. Notably, 12% of Syrian refugee households were debt-free in 2023, a significant increase from 6% in 2022. Food and rent remained the primary reasons for borrowing money, with rates of 90% and 52%, respectively, and friends residing in Lebanon continued to be the main source of borrowing at 86%.

Food security

This year witnessed an improvement in the levels of food security among Syrian refugees, with data indicating that 42% of households experienced food insecurity, marking a significant reduction from the 56% reported in 2022. Despite regional variations, all governorates showed improved food security rates in 2023 compared to the previous year. The data also reveals disparities between female-headed and male-headed households, with the former experiencing higher rates of both moderate and severe food insecurity compared to the latter. Furthermore, households facing food insecurity heavily relied on e-cards from WFP food shops (36%) and informal credit/debt (29%) as their primary sources of income. Looking at the food consumption score, it is observed that in 2023, nearly half of refugee households, constituting 49%, demonstrated acceptable food consumption, showing an increase from the previous year's 43%. Similarly, the proportion of households with poor food consumption scores decreased from 18% in 2022 to 14% in 2023. The percentage of households allocating more than 75% of their monthly expenses to food also saw a decline, dropping from 12% in 2022 to 8% in 2023. Additionally, there was a rise in the percentage of households spending less than 50% of their total expenditure on food, increasing from 27% in 2022 to 46% in 2023. This comprehensive overview underscores the intricate dynamics influencing food security among Syrian refugees, highlighting both progress and challenges across different regions.

Coping strategies

The mean rCSI score for Syrian refugee households in Lebanon in 2023 showed a positive trend with a 3-point decrease to reach 16 points compared to the previous year (19 points). Furthermore, the percentage of households scoring high in the rCSI (over 19+ points), indicating high food insecurity and reliance on coping strategies, decreased from 44% in 2022 to 35% in 2023. For the asset depletion coping strategies, there was a slight improvement in the percentage of households not adopting any asset depletion coping strategy, rising from 8% in 2022 to 11% in 2023. Similarly, the use of emergency asset depletion coping strategies decreased from 7% in the previous year to 5% in 2023, indicating an overall improvement. Additionally, it was noted that all severely food-insecure households adopted at least one asset depletion coping strategy, with almost half of them resorting to emergency coping strategies.

Livelihoods and source of iIncome

In 2023, there was a notable improvement in employment rates among Syrian refugees, increasing from 33% to 39%, with a simultaneous decrease in unemployment rates from 13% to 7% compared to the previous year, with no change in the overall labour force participation. The labour force participation for male refugees reached 75%, while female participation remained at 19%. Moreover, 2023 saw a significant rise in the percentage of households with at least one working member, reaching 75%, a marked increase from 69% in 2022. Despite these improvements in income, households faced financial challenges as they could cover only 28% of the monthly food and non-food SMEB value. Monthly income from employment for households with at least one working member witnessed an increase from $80 in 2022 to $101 in 2023. The main reported primary source of income across refugee households was ATM cards from UN or humanitarian organisations, 17%, followed by food e-cards used in WFP-contracted food shops, 14% and informal credits/debts and agricultural work, 12% each.

WaSH

In Lebanon, households living in non-permanent shelters face the most significant challenges in accessing clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) services. Reliance on bottled water has decreased slightly, dropping from 38% in 2021 to 29% in 2023, likely due to rising costs and limited availability. However, nearly a third of households still struggle with an insufficient water supply for basic needs.

Syrian refugees residing in non-permanent shelters are particularly vulnerable. They often rely on water trucking provided by humanitarian organisations, raising concerns about potential funding shortfalls and programme closures that could force them to seek unsafe water sources. This risk is further amplified by the lack of proper sanitation facilities, with 25% of toilets in these locations being shared amongst multiple households, disproportionately impacting female-headed households.

These concerns are exacerbated by the inadequate handwashing facilities observed in temporary shelters and other non-residential spaces. A quarter of households in non-permanent locations lack basic handwashing supplies such as soap or detergent and 5% even lack access to water in the designated handwashing area. Similar deficiencies exist in non-residential locations, highlighting the urgent need for improved WaSH infrastructure across vulnerable communities.

This situation not only threatens basic hygiene and sanitation but also increases the risk of waterborne diseases, which can have devastating consequences, particularly for children and the elderly. It is crucial to address these challenges through sustained funding for humanitarian water trucking programmes, investment in water

infrastructure development and the promotion of proper hygiene practices within vulnerable communities. Only then equitable access to WaSH services and safeguarding the health and well-being of Syrian refugees in Lebanon can be ensured.

Child protection

VASyR reveals a worrying trend of increasing child labour, hazardous working conditions, early marriage and violent discipline. Compared to the previous year, there was a 3% increase in children aged 5–17 engaged in labour, reaching 7% this year and 11% for boys specifically. This highlights a growing risk of exploitation and missed educational opportunities for children. Furthermore, 6% of children are exposed to hazardous working conditions, putting their physical and mental health at risk.

Disparities within households compound the issue. Children in female-headed households show a significantly higher rate of child labour (11%) compared to those in male-headed households (7%). This suggests complex socioeconomic factors at play, including poverty and limited access to resources.

Beyond labour, the report finds that 23% of adolescent girls aged 15–19 are already married, often facing limited autonomy and increased vulnerability to domestic violence. Additionally, a shocking 60% of children aged 1–14 experience violent discipline by caregivers, highlighting the prevalence of harmful practices that hinder healthy development.

These findings paint a worrying picture of the vulnerabilities faced by many children. Addressing these issues requires a multi-pronged approach, including targeted support for female-headed households, access to quality education, stricter legal frameworks against child labour and child marriage, and promoting positive parenting practices.

Child nutrition

Though breastfeeding boasts promising statistics – 75% of infants ever initiated, 55% continuing and 35% of young infants exclusively breastfed – concerns linger when examining overall infant and young child feeding practices. While 54% of 6–8 month-olds receive complementary foods alongside breast milk as recommended, a concerning gender disparity exists. The most critical issue lies in dietary diversity: only 17% of 6–23 month-olds consume a varied diet exceeding four food groups, with most receiving just one or two. This, coupled with a decline in children meeting minimum meal frequency recommendations (from 11% in 2022 to 7% in 2023), paints a worrying picture.

Continued education and lactation support can empower mothers to overcome challenges and sustain breastfeeding. Investigating and addressing the gender disparity in complementary feeding through targeted outreach or cultural awareness campaigns is crucial. Educational programmes emphasising the importance of diverse food groups, cooking demonstrations and recipe sharing can encourage dietary variety. Furthermore, educating caregivers about minimum meal frequency requirements and providing age-appropriate portion sizes and feeding schedules is essential. Finally, collaborating with local health care providers, community leaders and educators to develop culturally relevant and sustainable interventions holds the key to lasting change. Implementing these multifaceted solutions will ensure optimal nutrition and well-being for all young children, remembering that healthy early feeding practices lay the foundation for lifelong health and development.

Education

The results show that the literacy rate amongst individuals above the age of 6 reached 70%. In addition, early childhood education programmes witnessed a noteworthy increase in enrolment, with 19% of children aged 3 to 5 participating in kindergarten or nursery, a 5% jump from 2022. This upward trend signifies a growing recognition of the critical role early childhood education plays in laying the groundwork for future learning success.

At the primary level, the net attendance ratio climbed to 57%, representing a 5% rise compared to the previous year. This improvement is encouraging, particularly considering that children with disabilities exhibited similar enrolment rates, implying an effort towards inclusive education. However, the secondary education picture remains less optimistic. The adjusted net attendance for children aged 12–17 years stands at 18%, revealing significant disparities based on both gender and location. Girls lag behind their male counterparts by 5%, showcasing a concerning gender gap in secondary education access. Additionally, geographical inequalities are evident, with Beirut boasting the highest enrolment rate (30%) while El Nabatieh holds the lowest (14%). These discrepancies emphasise the need for targeted interventions to ensure equal opportunities for all children across Lebanon.

Cost continues to be a major barrier to education for many households. Transportation fees pose a significant challenge for 30% of individuals, while the cost of educational materials remains a burden for 27%. These financial constraints act as hurdles, preventing children from enrolling or fully engaging in their education. Furthermore, the Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) ratio stood at 51% in 2023 and gender disparity persists, with young women exhibiting a NEET rate nearly double that of men (70% versus 32%). This highlights the need for specific programmes and initiatives designed to empower young women and equip them with the skills and opportunities necessary to enter the workforce or further their education.

Moving forward, it is crucial to build upon the achieved progress while addressing the remaining challenges. The expansion of early childhood education programmes, particularly by improving accessibility and affordability, can ensure that more children benefit from this critical stage of development. Moreover, targeted financial assistance programmes addressing transportation and educational material costs should be implemented to remove barriers to primary education, especially for underprivileged families. Bridging the gender gap in secondary education requires a thorough investigation into the underlying factors hindering female enrolment and completion rates, followed by strategic interventions designed to address these specific issues. Furthermore, targeted programmes supporting vocational training, skills development and entrepreneurial opportunities for NEET youth, with a specific focus on young women, can significantly improve their employment prospects.

Regular monitoring and evaluation are essential to assessing the effectiveness of implemented strategies, identifying emerging challenges and adapting approaches as needed. By addressing these issues through focused interventions and continued monitoring, Lebanon can ensure equitable access to quality education for all its citizens, ultimately leading to a brighter future for its youth and the nation as a whole.

Introduction

Background

Twelve years into the Syrian conflict, Lebanon ranks the highest in per capita population of refugees in the world, with over 1.5 million registered Syrian refugees within its borders. Specifically, the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon remains one of the largest concentrations of refugees per capita in the world. A series of overlapping political, economic and social crises in Lebanon has underpinned the vastly growing level of need across populations in the country.

On the macroeconomic front, at the beginning of July 2022 the World Bank downgraded Lebanon to a lower-middle-income country for the first time in 27 years, after Lebanon's GDP had decreased from $55 billion in 2018 to $20.5 billion in 2021.[1] The Lebanese pound has continued to lose value in 2022, reaching exchange rates close to LL40,000 to the United States dollar in the informal market in October 2022. The country depends heavily on imports, paid for in dollars; fluctuations in exchange rates thus have significant impacts on the prices of goods and services in the country. Inflation is still on the rise: between October 2019 and the time of data collection in June 2023 the Consumer Price Index, which measures the average change of prices over time, rose by 1,066%.

In addition to these factors, the COVID-19 have stretched the country's health sector and resources to breaking point. As a result, Lebanon's financial and humanitarian situation ranks among the most severe crises in the world today.

Purpose

The 2023 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) is the eleventh annual representative survey assessing the situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, with the aim of identifying changes and trends in their vulnerabilities.

Since its first round of data collection and assessment in 2013, VASyR has become an essential tool for planning, shaping decision-making and the design of needs-based programmes. The results of VASyR are used by the 12 sectors in partnership under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), in order to understand the situational changes in Lebanon and advocate for funding. VASyR has also been used to build targeting models, for instance to predict socioeconomic vulnerability and allocate assistance accordingly. Furthermore, the results of VASyR reveal the geographical differences in vulnerabilities at governorate and district levels, which then feed into the situation analysis.

The key objectives of VASyR are:

1. To provide a multisectoral overview/update of the vulnerability situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon through an annual household survey. This assessment offers an understanding of the economic situation, food security, coping strategies, shelter conditions, energy access, access to services, the situation of women and children, accountability to affected people and more. The information feeds into the situational analysis of the LCRP and informs the planning processes of local government agencies, donor countries and non-governmental organizations.

2. To enhance targeting for the provision of assistance. VASyR is used to build or revise targeting models, such as the formula to predict socioeconomic vulnerability, which in turn are used for targeting for cash and food assistance. The results of VASyR also inform other targeting approaches, for instance on protection risks or shelter vulnerability, and help identify the most vulnerable areas.

3. To contribute to the LCRP monitoring and evaluation framework. The VASyR results are used to measure whether sector objectives and outcomes have been achieved. VASyR is also used in the formulas to calculate LCRP impact indicators such as protection risks.

4. Provide an overview of the additional needs of Syrian refugees impacted by the ongoing crisis. VASyR 2023 aims to provide new insights on how Syrian refugees have most recently been impacted by the overlapping crises affecting Lebanon.

Assessment organisation and scope

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP) are the VASyR leading technical agencies and together form the VASyR steering committee, along with the inter-agency coordination unit. The members of the VASyR core group agencies were responsible for implementing the assessment, providing technical insights and ensuring quality control. The inter-agency coordination unit coordinates the VASyR process among the core group members, ensuring linkages between VASyR and the LCRP, as well as communication and feedback from the different sectors.

The development of the analysis plan and questionnaire began in early 2023, with rounds of feedback with the core group and sector experts. Data collection took place from 7 June to 7 July 2023. The analysis for this report was conducted by the three above-mentioned United Nations agencies, with support and coordination from the inter-agency unit. UNHCR was the lead for demographics, protection, shelter, health, energy and assistance; UNICEF was the lead for water, sanitation and hygiene, energy, youth, education, child protection, child health, child nutrition and children with disabilities; and WFP was the lead for economic vulnerability, livelihoods, food consumption, coping strategies and food security. UN Women conducted a gender-specific results write-up based on data analysis by the lead agencies. Humanity and Inclusion trained enumerators on the questions on disability in the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning. Coordinators from the three agencies provided the requested analysis and oversaw the relevant chapters in VASyR.

The figure below reflects the scope and contents of VASyR. For additional details on the implementation of the survey, see the methodology chapter.

[1] World Bank Group, "Lebanon economic monitor: Lebanon sinking (to the top 3)" (2021). Washington, D.C. **https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lebanon/publication/lebanon-economic-monitor-spring-2021-lebanon-sinking-to-the-top-3.**

Figure 1: Visual plan of VASyR
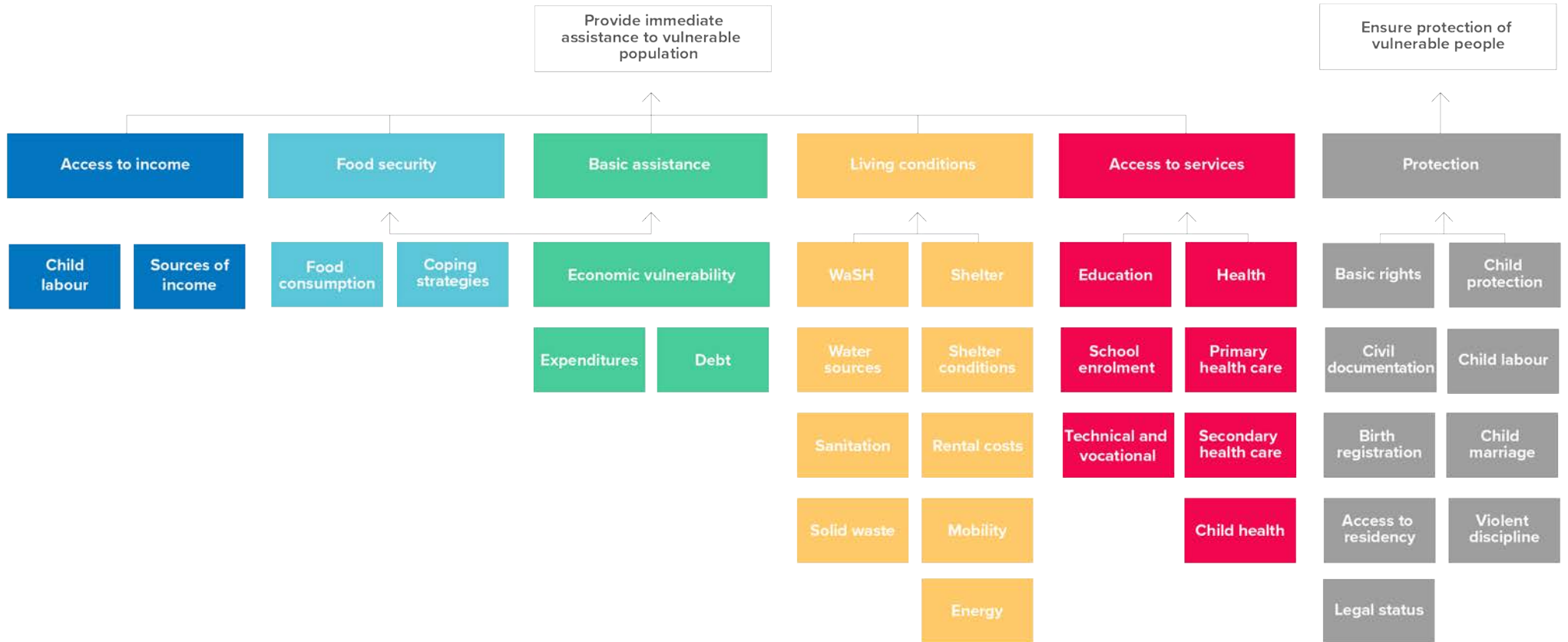
Methodology

Sampling

Sampling for VASyR followed a two-stage cluster approach that was in keeping with the methodology of previous years. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) database of known Syrian refugees as of April 2023 served as the sample frame. Households with missing addresses were excluded. Sampling was based on a "30 x 7" two-stage cluster scheme initially developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). This method outlines a sample size of 30 clusters per geographical area and seven households per cluster, which provides a precision of +/- 10%. Districts were considered as the geographical level within which 30 clusters were selected. There are 26 districts in Lebanon, including Beirut and Akkar, which each represent both a district and a governorate. As such, to ensure similar representativeness with other governorates, an additional two strata samples were considered for each of these, yielding 90 cluster selections apiece. The governorate of Baalbek-El Hermel is made up of only two districts, and thus, to ensure an adequate sample in that governorate, one additional cluster sample was considered.

The primary sampling unit was defined as the village level (i.e. cluster) and UNHCR cases served as the secondary sampling unit. A case was defined as a group of people who are identified together as one unit (usually immediate family/household) under UNHCR databases. Using the Emergency Nutrition Assessment software, villages were selected with a probability proportionate to size, meaning villages with a larger concentration of refugees were more likely to be selected. Thirty clusters/villages were selected, with four replacement clusters per district.

To determine the sample size needed to generate results representative at district, governorate and national levels, the following assumptions were used:
- 50% estimated prevalence
- 10% precision
- 1.5 design effect
- 5% margin of error

Using the above parameters, 165 cases per district/cluster selection were required, leading to a target of 5,115 cases nationally. Due to the Syrian refugee population's known high level of mobility and based on experience in previous rounds of VASyR and other household-level surveys, a 40% non-response rate was considered. In the final sample, 8,337 cases were targeted across all districts, of which 5,078 households were visited.

Training and fieldwork

Enumerator training was carried out in person from 8 to 12 May 2023. Separate enumerator training was carried out in person for each operational region (Bekaa, Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North and South Lebanon), covering the data-collection tool, contextual background, methodology and ethical considerations. The bulk of the training was administered by UNHCR, World Food Programme and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) staff. Training on the questions concerning disability in the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning was provided by Humanity and Inclusion. Data was collected and entered on electronic tablets by the enumerators during the interviews using KoBo toolbox software. The data was then sent to the UNHCR Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS) platform.

Data collection takes place at the household level. A household is defined as a group of people who live under the same roof, share the same expenses and eat from the same pot. Between 24 May and 22 June 2023, one of four partners conducted face-to-face interviews at refugee homes in each region, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Partners that conducted interviews for the VASyR

Akkar	Caritas
Baalbek-El Hermel	MEDAIR
Beirut	Makhzoumi Foundation
Bekaa	MEDAIR
Mount Lebanon	Makhzoumi Foundation
El Nabatieh	SHEILD
North Lebanon	Caritas
South Lebanon	SHEILD

Questionnaire

The 2023 VASyR questionnaire consisted of around 762 conditional and unconditional questions that collected data at the household and individual levels, including demographics, legal documentation, safety and security, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, energy, health, food security, livelihoods, expenditures, food consumption, debt, coping strategies and assistance, as well as questions specifically relating to women, children and people with disabilities.

The VASyR questionnaire is a household survey administered with either the head of the household or any other adult household member.

The full questionnaire can be downloaded via the following link: **https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/106579**

Data quality assurance

The following steps were taken to monitor the quality of the collected data.

1. Using a harmonised checklist, each VASyR core agency conducted frequent spot checks on each of the data-collection teams across Lebanon.[1] Feedback was provided to enumerators directly after the interview was completed and reports were drafted and shared with the respective area coordinator and core group members. No interviews were interrupted unless crucial intervention was needed, such as in cases of ethical regulation violations. Important feedback was shared with all enumerators via WhatsApp groups through field coordinators.

2. Agencies conducted follow-up phone calls for randomly selected households each week to verify a few questions from the interview and get feedback on the enumerator's performance.
3. At the end of each week, a data-collection summary report was shared with all agencies to check on the progress of data collection.
4. A WhatsApp group was created among the enumerators and general feedback was shared daily.
5. A dynamic dashboard was created to monitor the progress of data collection in real-time. The dashboard included tools to monitor the accuracy of the data collected and identify outliers during data collection.

[1] For a detailed description of the spot checks procedure and tools used, see **http://ialebanon.unhcr.org/vasyr.**

Data processing

Data weighting was necessary to ensure that the geographical distribution of the population was reflected in the analysis and to compensate for the unequal probabilities of a household being included in the sample. The normalised weight was calculated for each district using the following formula:

$$w_n = \frac{(N_s/N)}{(n_s/n)}$$

Where w_n is the normalised weight, N_s is the total sample frame of the district, N is the total national sample frame, n_s is the number of households visited in the district and n is the total visited households.

The data was cleaned of any significant outliers and consistency checks were applied to spot any data errors. Results were disaggregated by district, governorate, gender of the head of household, shelter type, food security and economic vulnerability when deemed necessary. Data was analysed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software.

Limitations and constraints

As in any survey, limitations were expected. Key limitations of the VASyR were as follows:

1. The VASyR relies primarily on self-reported data, which may give rise to bias. To minimise the impact of this bias, enumerators were trained to provide survey participants with a comprehensive explanation of the purpose, risks and benefits of participating in the VASyR survey and reassure them of the confidentiality of their answers so that their comprehensive informed consent could be given.
2. The VASyR sampling frame excluded Syrian refugees who had never approached UNHCR (unless they were within a targeted household). It is worth noting that this population is a consistent gap in data on Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

3. The VASyR questionnaire and respective indicators were subjected to adjustments and changes to ensure that the most accurate definitions or calculations were being used. This caused some results not to be directly comparable with previous years.
4. The VASyR is a household survey and the interview was usually conducted with the head of the household or any other adult household member. As such, individual interviews were not carried out with each family member and obtaining accurate information on particularly sensitive topics such as child labour or harassment may be a challenge.

Demographics

VASyR tracks key demographic indicators over time to better understand the population of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. This includes household composition, profile of the head of household, dependency, prevalence of disabilities and other specific needs. A household is defined as a group of people that live under the same roof, share the same expenses and eat from the same food resources. The head of the household is the main decision-maker in household affairs.

Key findings

- Household size slightly decreased from five individuals to 4.7 individuals at the national level.
- The share of female-headed households was 16.7%, showing a slight decrease from the last year (17.5%).
- There were no major shifts noted in the overall population composition, with an even split between males and females. More than half of the population was under the age of 18.
- Among the population, 13% of individuals were found to have a disability. At the household level, 37.6% had at least one member with a disability.

Important note: The VASyR survey is based on a representative sample of the refugee population. Due to methodological and definitional approaches specific to VASyR's purpose, a few of its demographic findings may slightly differ from statistics available for the total refugee population, however, remain within the acceptable margin of difference.

Population profile

Figure 1: Age distribution of Syrian refugees by sex

■ Female   ■ Male

70+ years old	
65–69 years old	
60–64 years old	
55–59 years old	
50–54 years old	
45–49 years old	
40–44 years old	
35–39 years old	
30–34 years old	
25–29 years old	
20–24 years old	
15–19 years old	
10–14 years old	
5–9 years old	
0–4 years old	

20%   15%   10%   5%   0%   5%   10%   15%   20%
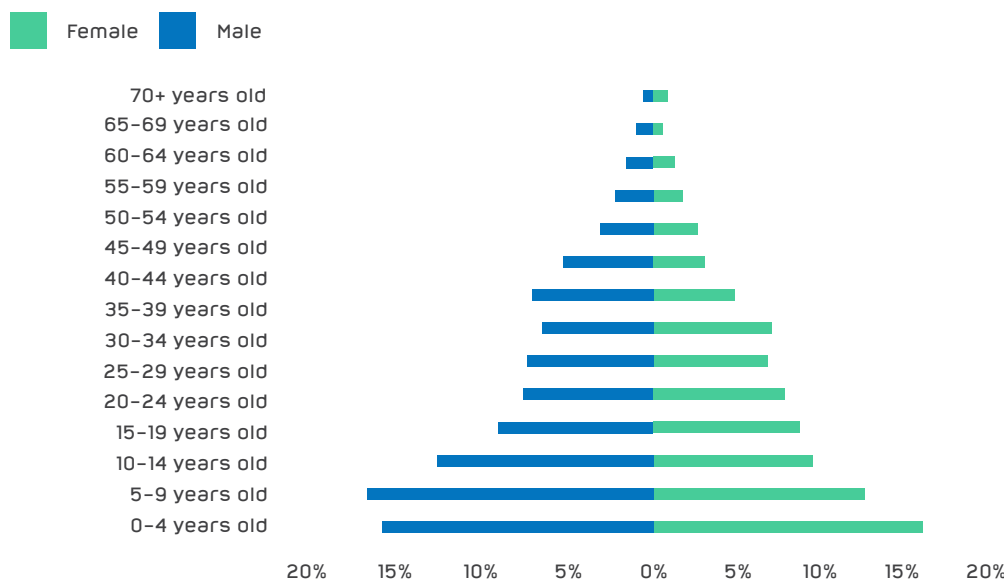
Examining the distribution of the population by age and sex, there was an overall even division between males and females. The exceptions were in the age group of 0–9 years old, with 1% more boys than girls and the age group of 20–24 year olds, where the percentage of men was 1% higher than that of women. Over half (51.7%) of the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon was below the age of 18.

Refugee households

The average size of Syrian refugee households decreased slightly from five members in the previous years to 4.7. On average, households were composed of 2.19 adults (18–65 years), 1.37 children aged 6–17, and 0.8 children aged 5 or younger. The average household size was higher among male-headed households (five individuals) compared to female-headed households (3.5 individuals).[1]

Most commonly, households had between one and four members (48%), 34% had five or six members and 18% had seven household members or more. 84% of households had at least one member under the age of 18 and 56% had at least one child under the age of 5. A total of 10% of households had an elderly member aged 60 or above.

The share of female-headed households has slightly decreased from 17.5% in 2022 to 16.7%. Mount Lebanon had the lowest share at 11.5%, while Akkar and Baalbek-El Hermel had the highest rates, with 28% of households and 22.4% of households being headed by a woman, respectively.

Figure 2: Share of female-headed households by governorate

Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
17%	28%	22%	13%	18%	12%	12%	15%	15%
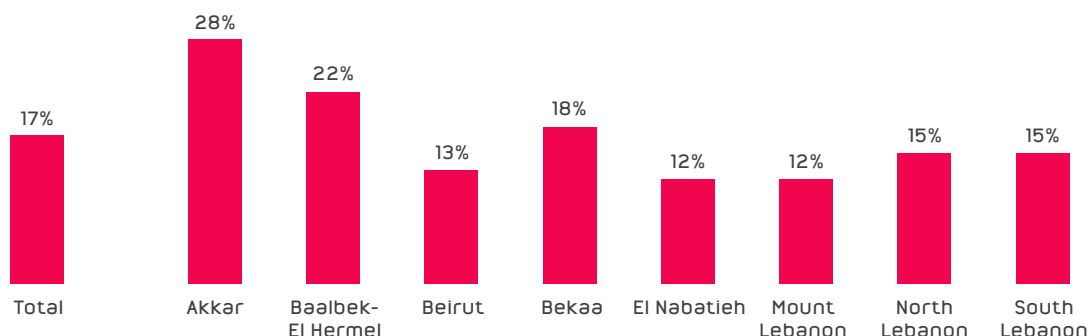
The percentage of elderly heads of households was 6% and child-headed households was 0.2%. Around 78% of heads of households were literate and had a primary education of higher.

[1] Female-headed households are households where a woman is the main decision-maker.

Dependency

Dependents: household members aged 14 or younger or 60 years or above.
Dependency ratio: n Number of dependents in the household divided by the number of non-dependents in the household.

The average dependency ratio in Syrian refugee households was 0.9 in 2023, compared to 0.94 in 2022, 0.96 in 2021 and 1 in 2020, indicating an almost even distribution of dependents and non-dependents within a household. The dependency ratio was lower among female-headed households (0.76) than male-headed households (0.93), which reflects a higher proportion of dependents among male-headed households.

Figure 3: Dependency ratio by governorate
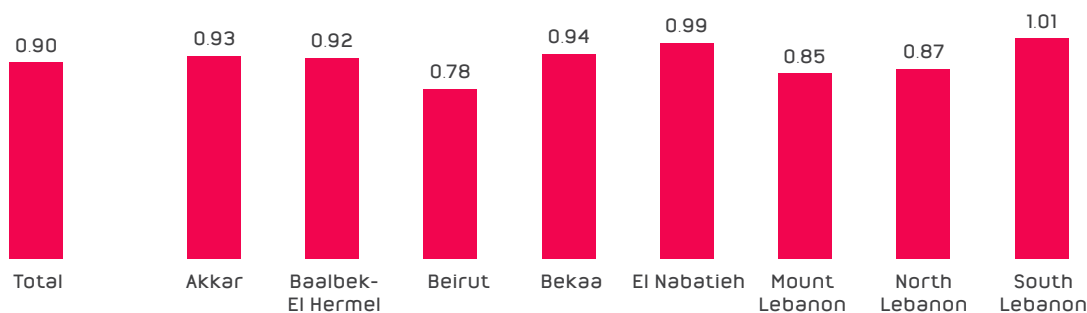
A total of 39.8% of households had at least three dependents, 23.5% had two, 20.3% had one and 16.4% had no dependents at all.

Figure 4: Average number of dependents within households
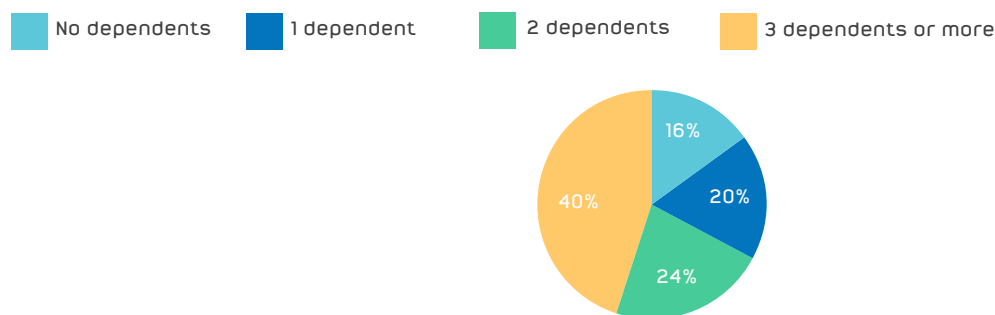
Disability

The World Health Organization defines disability as the interaction between individuals with a health condition (for example, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome or depression) and personal and environmental factors (for example, negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings and limited social support).[2] Disability was measured using an adapted version of the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning – Enhanced for adults and children aged 5 and above[3] and the Washington Group/ UNICEF Child-Functioning Module for children aged 2–4. The Washington Group Short Set focuses on measuring ten domains (vision, hearing, mobility, communication, remembering, self-care, upper body function, fine motor skills, anxiety and depression) and the Child-Functioning Module seven domains (vision, hearing, mobility, understanding, cognition, learning and upper body fine motor skills) by looking into difficulties in functional limitations to determine the presence of a disability.

Disability among individuals

Around 13% of the Syrian refugee population were found to have difficulties which indicate a disability, compared to 14% in 2022. The percentage of people with a disability was higher among male individuals (13.8%) than female individuals (12.1%). The disability prevalence was the lowest among individuals aged 2–4 (4.9%) and the highest among individuals aged 60 and above (45.9%).

The prevalence of disability varied from one Lebanese governorate to another. El Nabatieh governorate had the highest disability prevalence at 20.2%, while North Lebanon had the lowest prevalence at 9.3% of refugees.

---

[2] World Health Organization, "Disability" (2022). Available from www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health.
[3] Available from www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-enhanced-wg-ss-enhanced/.

Figure 5: Disability prevalence per governorate

Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
13%	14%	15%	12%	13%	20%	12%	9%	15%
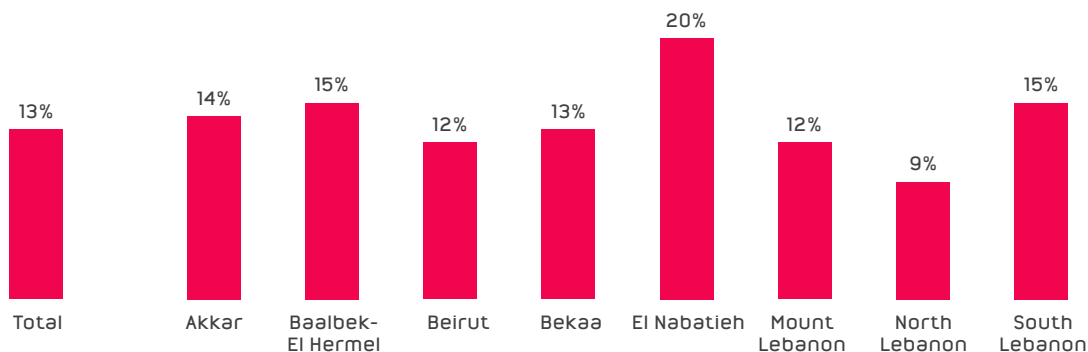
Figure 6 shows the different types of disabilities by age group, including children and adults. Examining specific domains of difficulty among individuals aged 18 and above, the most commonly reported physical disability types are the following: 7.9% reported that they had significant difficulty walking or climbing stairs or were unable to do so at all; 3.9% reported an inability or a high level of difficulty in seeing and 1.9% reported an inability or a high level of difficulty in hearing.

Among those aged 18 and above, 5.9% reported having high anxiety levels daily, while 4.9% reported being highly depressed on a daily basis. About 1% reported an inability or a high level of difficulty in communicating, 1.4% reported an inability or a high level of difficulty in concentrating and 1.6% reported an inability or a high level of difficulty in caring for themselves. Among children and youths aged 5–17, the highest disability was anxiety (2.5%), while among children between 2–4 years old, the highest was communication (2.1%).

Figure 6: Proportion of individuals reporting disabilities in different domains, as per the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning – Enhanced by age group
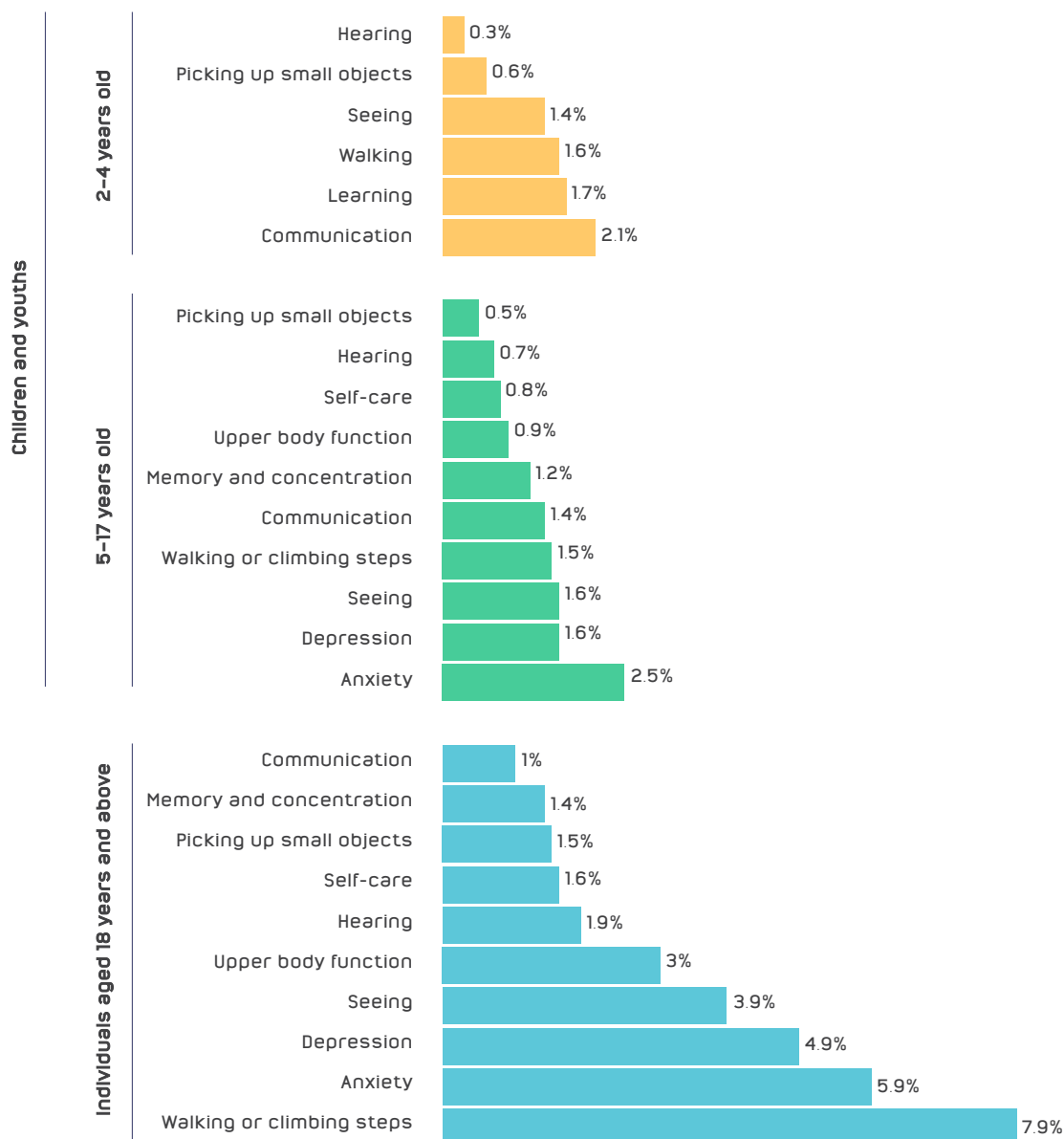
Disability within households

Concerning the heads of household, 21.9% had disabilities themselves. The proportion of female heads of households with disabilities (30.1%) was higher than among the male heads of households (20.2%).

Around 37.6% of households had at least one member with a disability. The average household size for families, including members with a disability (5.1 individuals), was higher than for families without members having a disability (4.5).

Additional specific needs

Around 11% of Syrian refugees have a chronic illness. 38% of households reported having at least one household member who had a chronic illness, with the highest level in the south at 43.2%.

About 20.6% of elderly individuals reported being unable to take care of themselves (of which 39% had a disability) and 2.2% of households had at least one older person unable to care for themselves.

Meanwhile, 26.5% of women of menstruating age reported being pregnant or lactating within the last two years. A total of 25.2% of households had at least one member who was pregnant or lactating within the last two years, with the highest proportion of households (29.7%) in El Nabatieh.

A total of 8.1% of households had at least one single parent,[4] and 12.6% of households had at least one single caregiver,[5] while 0.5% had at least one member aged 60 years or above as the sole caregiver for children.

Figure 7: Proportion of households with at least one member with an identified specific need by governorate

---
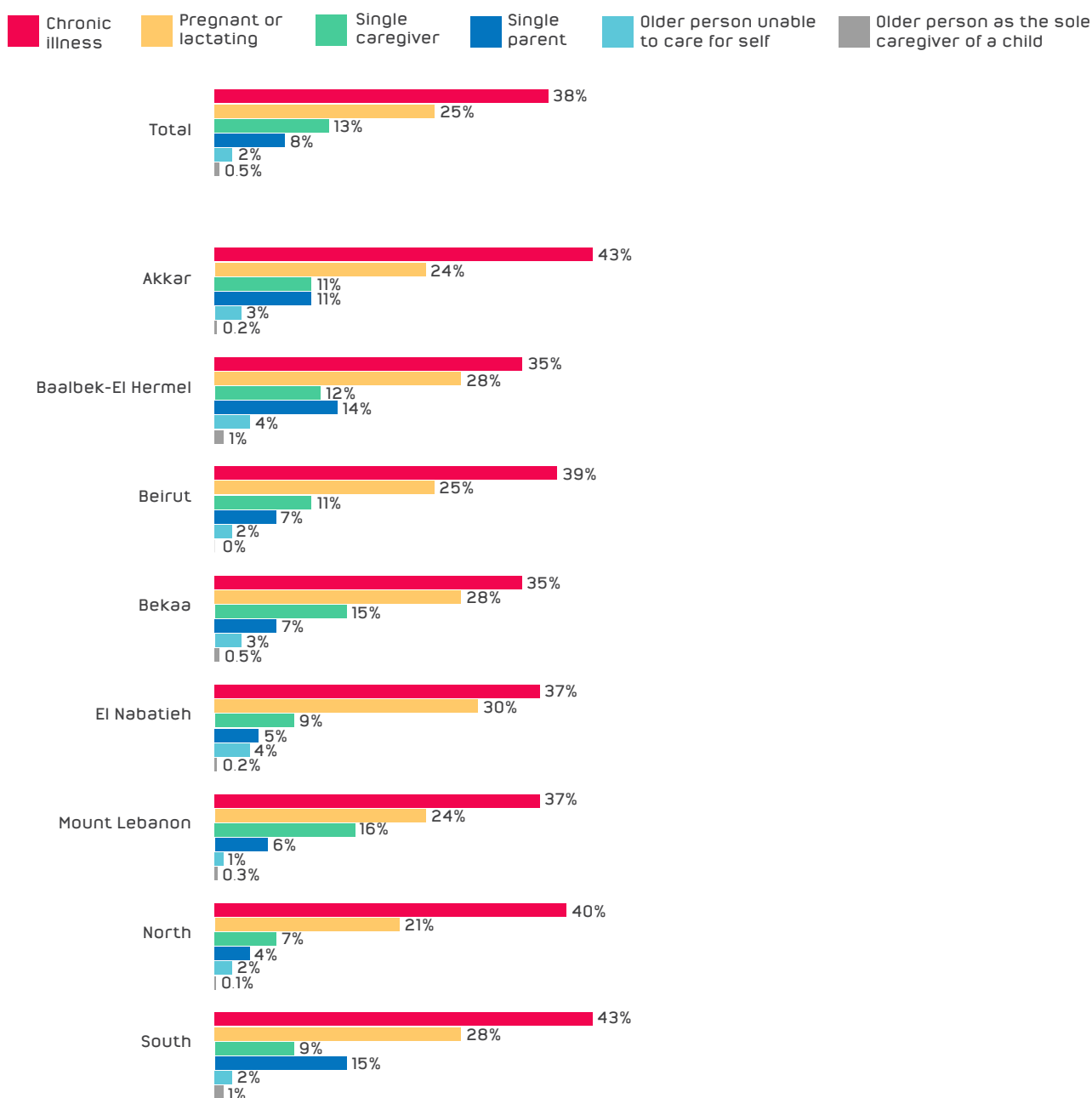
[4] Single-parent (male or female) households with one or more children all under the age of 18. The single parent is the biological and/or legal caregiver of the child/children.
[5] Single caregiver (male or female) households with one or more dependents other than biological children. These could be non-biological children, siblings or older parents requiring protection and care.

Annex 1: Gender and share of household members

	Gender		Gender of head of household		Share of household by number of members				Other			
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Average household size**	**4 or less members**	**5–6 members**	**7 or more members**	**No dependents**	**1 dependent**	**2 dependents**	**3 or more dependents**
Total	50%	50%	83%	17%	4.71	48%	34%	18%	16%	20%	24%	40%
Governorate												
Akkar	49%	51%	72%	28%	4.48	50%	35%	14%	20%	18%	22%	40%
Baalbek-El Hermel	48%	52%	78%	22%	4.83	46%	34%	20%	16%	21%	23%	40%
Beirut	52%	48%	87%	13%	4.33	55%	32%	13%	25%	18%	24%	33%
Bekaa	49%	51%	82%	18%	4.77	49%	33%	19%	14%	20%	26%	41%
El Nabatieh	50%	50%	89%	11%	5.37	39%	33%	28%	10%	17%	27%	47%
Mount Lebanon	50%	50%	88%	12%	4.48	50%	36%	14%	18%	22%	23%	37%
North	50%	50%	85%	15%	4.67	49%	35%	16%	16%	23%	23%	37%
South	50%	50%	85%	15%	5.45	39%	34%	27%	12%	16%	21%	51%
Gender of the head of household												
Male					4.96	43%	37%	20%	14%	18%	24%	44%
Female					3.47	74%	20%	6%	28%	32%	21%	19%
Shelter type												
Residential	50%	50%	85%	15%	4.66	49%	35%	16%	16%	22%	24%	38%
Non-residential	51%	49%	86%	14%	4.63	48%	34%	18%	20%	14%	22%	44%
Non-permanent	47%	53%	77%	23%	4.91	45%	32%	23%	17%	18%	21%	43%

Protection and Gender-Based Violence

Key findings

- In 2023, several indicators reflect the tightening of the protection space and the worsening of the security situation for Syrian refugees in Lebanon significantly impacting on the psychosocial wellbeing of refugees. The 2023 VASyR data shows that, Women, persons with disabilities, and those living in non-permanent shelter types faced higher risks and limitations in accessing rights. Geographical disparities, particularly in southern areas like Al-Nabatiyeh, highlight higher levels of restrictive measures, limited access to legal services, and increased risk of eviction and safety concerns for women and children.

- The number of restrictive measures applied across the country increased significantly from 4% in 2022 to 12% in 2023 resulting in limitations of movements, feeling of insecurity and lack of stability impacting on the well-being of refugees in the country. Those mainly include curfews implemented, being stopped at checkpoints as well as confiscation of items such as routers, motorbikes, solar panels, etc.

- Though legal residency rates of Syrians have increased by 3.3% since 2021 (2021: 16.4%, 2022: 17.3%, 2023: 19.7%), the overall percentage of Syrians with a valid legal residency remains low with only 20% of all Syrians holding a legal residency and 80% lack a valid residency which exposes them to significant risks of detention, deportation and other security measures or risks, including exploitation. The limited access to legal residency has negatively impacted displaced Syrians' freedom of movement as well as their feeling of safety and security. Women and girls show a lower rate of access to legal residencies than men.

- In 2023, 41% out of all surveyed families, indicate that their children born in Lebanon have completed birth registration to the level of Foreigner's Registry.

- GBV remains an ongoing concern requiring dedicated action including ensuring knowledge of affected people of available services. The main safety and security risks for women and girls include verbal, physical or sexual harassment and fear of kidnapping. At national level, 15% of all households have reported that it is not safe for women and girls to walk at night, especially in Mount Lebanon (23%). In addition, related questions on unsafe locations indicate that women and girls face safety concerns across the different governorates noting that the highest decrease in feeling safe when walking at night (7%) is reported in Akkar where women and men have both indicated a reduced feeling of safety. Data on knowledge on available services indicates that half of the surveyed population (58%) would be able guide survivors of GBV to relevant health, psychosocial or security services. In 2024, a comprehensive inter-agency safety audit will be undertaken by the GBV WG to shed more light on GBV related risks and perceptions.

Summary of the protection situation in 2023

The below is a summary of the findings of protection related data derived from the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugee compiled between May and June 2023 and is therefore to be understood as a snapshot of the protection situation at that specific time. The quantitative findings have been discussed and were substantiated through discussions with key legal, protection, child protection and gender-based violence partners. In addition, findings and developments were corroborated with other data and analysis at cross-sectoral level relevant for the contextualization of the findings.

In 2023, the socio- economic situation in Lebanon continued to worsen with a stabilization in the parallel market since February 2023, as the LBP currency has lost more than 98% of its value since the economy began unravelling in 2019. This resulted in the widespread adoption of dollarization for rent and other essential expenses and caused additional pressure on community resources and exacerbated the already rising costs of fuel and telecommunications. In addition, the persistent incapacitation of public institutions has resulted in ongoing impediments in provision of essential national services, such as electricity, telecommunication, infrastructure and security and administrative services including legal and judicial services. This convergence of factors continued to heighten pre-existing vulnerabilities, particularly among the most at-risk groups, including children from impoverished families, persons living with disabilities, older persons without sufficient family and community support as well as female-headed households and single parents, disempowered communities and individuals with existing critical medical conditions.

Coupled with the socio-economic situation, 2023 saw a significant increase of anti-refugee rhetoric and sentiments. These statements followed a set of municipal restrictions, encompassing the registration of Syrian refugees in accordance with the MoIM circulars released in May and September 2023 have collectively made it exceedingly difficult for individuals to acquire or renew their legal residency. The lack of residency has been a driving factor of (self-imposed) movement restrictions given the frequent searches and checkpoints with men being perceived at a higher risk of detention and deportation if found without legal residency. Women, on the other hand, were reportedly at higher risk of harassment at check points or when in public. Accordingly, legal actors faced higher demands for counseling and support to obtain legal residency. The refugee file and its impact on Lebanon, the situation in informal settlements and the repercussions of refugees being in the country have been a continuous debate in the public and discourse and subject of several media campaigns.

Protection risks continued to be propelled by socio-economic constraints, in particular, threats and debt accumulation due to market, health service and rent-related costs. According to the VASyR 2023 data, persons at heightened risk were particularly impacted by those developments, including female headed households, single parents and households with high number of children and those from impoverished families, persons living with disabilities, older persons, persons from disempowered communities and persons with chronic illnesses or those living with severe mental health concerns. Eviction threats have continuously been reported with people adopting harmful practices to avoid evictions, such as debt accumulation, exploitation, including sexual exploitation for rent, movement to substandard shelters and homelessness. Limited security of tenancy and housing and the constant threat of losing their accommodation has created additional psychological distress for those affected.

In 2023, the GBV sector observed several trends impacting the overall protective environment for women and girls giving fuel to gender-based violence in Lebanon. Firstly, the described socio-economic situation in the country contributed to barriers in accessing services as resources for transportation and telecommunication shrunk. Women have reported limited access to menstrual hygiene items and absence of access to private phones limiting their ability to seek help or receive information. The mentioned movement restrictions and fears facing Syrians with regards to risk of searches, detention and deportation have further contributed to gender dynamics. On one hand, detention threats of men particularly those without residency permit have resulted in increased participation of women in the labour market to support the family income. Women specifically worked as street vendors, domestic workers and in agricultural lands. This has increased women's access to work opportunities as men practiced caution to prevent detention at check points and searches. On the other hand, women have reported exposure to protection risks during labour activities such as sexual violence and exploitation. Risks of sexual exploitation and abuse have also been observed by GBV partners relating to increasing rent prices where women, including as part of a family, were exposed to sexual exploitation by landlords to reduce risking eviction and as a payment for rent. The impact of the crisis is also continuing to deteriorate family relations over scarce resources and fueling intimate partner violence across population groups/ nationalities particularly amongst child marriages. Secondly, in Q2 and 3 of 2023, a new wave of anti-gender and anti-GBV rhetoric was observed by gender and GBV actors. This was characterized by public statements and violent actions against individuals and women rights actors defaming them as triggering harmful values that would change family values. During prevention and awareness activities, GBV partners were approached by community members and leaders requesting access to GBV prevention curricular and programs which impacted on sensitivities and existing stigma relating to women and girls accessing safe spaces.

The worsening of the socio-economic situation in Lebanon alongside shrinking funding resources, including for education and food assistance further negatively impacted the protection environment of children. Existing poverty and vulnerability exacerbated and resulted in increased neglect, lack of access to cover needs of children, and increased school dropouts. As a result, negative coping mechanisms were on the rise, where families resort to cumulative debt, children are not being enrolled or not attending school regularly and instead being sent to work. Children exposed to child labor activities, and being engaged in street-connected harmful activities has been the main child protection risk reported by child protection actors. In Q2 and Q3, partners also noted an increase of girls being street connected and girls being exposed to child/ forced marriage that was also seen in conjunction with exploitative schemes and potential trafficking of girls.

Key protection indicators and findings

The VASyR assesses the protection space of Syrian refugees in Lebanon through indicators related to legal residency, civil documentation, safety and security concerns, community relations and evictions. Confidential interviews with individual household members were not conducted, limiting the ability to gather gender-based violence or additional child protection findings through the VASyR. Specific information and trends on GBV and Child Protection are collected through other assessments such as interagency safety audits and child protection assessments.

Protection and gender-based violence environment

Safety and Security

In 2023, several aspects indicated a significant tightening of the protection space and a worsening of the security situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon with an increase in restrictive measures applied across the country. This is, amongst other issues, observed through the increase in the percentage of households who report that curfews specifically targeting Syrians are imposed in areas where they live, with an increase of 8% (2022: 4% and 12% in 2023). Different protection monitoring tools and protection actor reports confirm the increase of different restrictive or administrative measures implemented by the different municipalities. The VASyR data also shows a considerable uptick in security measures and curfews from 4% in 2022 to 12% in 2023. The increase is particularly high in the southern governorates, particularly in El-Nabatieh, where rates of curfews increased from 21% in 2022 to 48% in 2023. The top known reason for the curfews is tensions between refugees and host communities (25% nationally). Due to the nature of the VASyR assessment being conducted at the household level, other restrictive measures are also reported including detention and deportation risks. However, it remains reported low as a security risk by men or women.

The main safety concern for men, women, boys and girls is verbal harassment, insults and bullying, with a rate of about 1 in 7 – with boys reporting this at the highest rate (16.5%). This is followed by fears around robbery and exposure to theft as well as physical punishment outside the home reported by men and boys, which is highest reported in Baalbek-El Hermel (boys: 20.3%, men: 19.2%, national averages for these cohorts are 5.9% and 5.3% respectively). This governorate also has one of the highest reports of physical abuse as a consequence of not abiding by curfew restrictions at a rate of 4.6%, ranking third behind South Lebanon (10%) and Mount Lebanon (6.3%).

The VASyR data also indicates that men are more often the subject of deportation and arrests than women. In early 2023, there was a spike in raids, which confirms these outcomes, leading to increased safety and security concerns for men and the families they support. This may explain why men reported a higher rate of avoiding the street and social/community/religious areas than women.

The most commonly reported consequences of these restrictive measures, aside from verbal warnings (85.7%), were verbal abuse (12%), fines (8.7%), arrests (8.3%) and confiscation of personal ID (6.3%). The main impact of curfews on families is limited mobility to access services and shops. About 64% of reported curfews were timebound, while 36% were continuous. The most reported known reason for the curfews was tensions between refugees and host communities (25.3%).

Figure 1: Refugees' experience of curfews, by governorate, 2019–2023
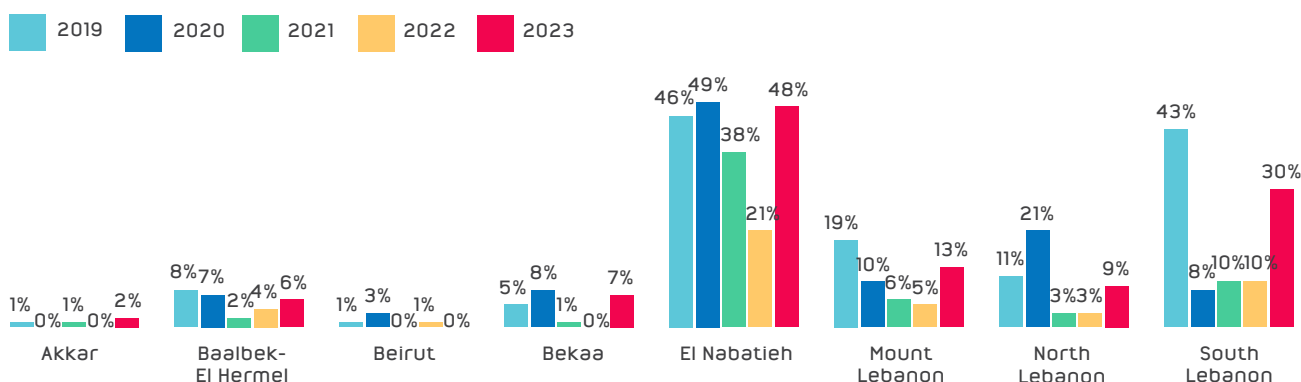
There has been an 8.7% increase in women and girls reporting feeling safe walking alone in the area at night since 2022 (2023: 56.1%; 2022: 47.4%). The greatest increase was in Baalbek-El Hermel (14.6%), while there was a decrease of 7% in Akkar. In 2023, 3.8% of women and girls felt very unsafe (this presents a decrease of 1.2% from 5% in 2022) and 1.5% reported never walking alone at night (a decrease from 4.1% in 2022). Reporting of women/girls avoiding places due to safety concerns remains the same as last year (9.4% nationally). Still, at a governorate level, there was a 7.4% increase in Baalbek-El Hermel, a 4.3% increase in Bekaa, a 7% decrease in North Lebanon and a 4.5% decrease in El-Nabatieh. This indication of lack of safety in public places represents a barrier to refugees integrating into their host communities. It may be related to the socioeconomic crisis and anti-refugee sentiment in the country.

Despite the increase in reported safety in walking alone at night for women, reported rates of women avoiding places due to unsafety remain the same as in 2022, around 9%, with Mount Lebanon reporting the highest rates at about 15%. At a subnational level, there have been increases in reported avoidance in Baalbek-El Hermel and Bekaa and decreased avoidance has been reported in North Lebanon and El-Nabatieh. The most reported place avoided by women are the neighbourhood/on the street (65%), markets (40%), public transportation (23%) and social/community/religious areas (16%). Men and boys avoid these areas in a similar ranking.

Exploitation and abuse

The highest reporting of household members under the age of 18 accepting dangerous or exploitative work was in North Lebanon at 9.4% (the national average is 2.6%). At the same time, this governorate also had the highest report of adults accepting risky work conditions (9.7% – the national average is 2.4%). El Nabatieh has a relatively high reporting of concern about exploitation when accessing services such as jobs, health services, food, humanitarian assistance, ATMs, legal documents and housing. Other aspects indicating the feeling of lack of safety include avoidance of certain locations and fear of accessing facilities. As such, reporting of family members feeling unsafe when accessing sanitation facilities increased to 8.4% from 4.7% over the past year, with the highest rates in El Nabatieh, South Lebanon and Mount Lebanon. Concerningly, El Nabatieh shows significantly higher

results (29.6% compared to the national average of 8.4%) on feeling unsafe accessing sanitation facilities. Rates are also higher for those living in non-residential shelter types and those with disabilities – a general trend of higher vulnerability and perceived high risk across the data points. From 2022 to 2023, households worrying about exploitation when accessing services have doubled for many services in El Nabatieh, where these concerns are the highest relative to other governorates in both 2022 and 2023.

Some notable cohort disparities with respect to safety and security concerns in this year's VASyR results are those with disabilities who have higher rates than those without a disability in nearly all categories. For example, it has been reported that walking alone at night is very unsafe, with men and boys with disabilities reporting this at a rate of 5.7%, compared to 3.3% of those without disabilities; a similar trend was reported for women and girls, with 6.1% reported for those with disabilities and 2.5%. 10.9% of women and girls with disabilities report avoiding places due to safety and security concerns, compared to 8.5% of those without disabilities. The starkest disparities for places which are avoided are their

homes (18.4% for PwDIS, 7.2% without) and on the street/in the neighbourhood (72.7% for PwDIS, 58.1% without).

Girls living in non-permanent shelter types have higher fears around verbal harassment (10.8% for non-permanent, 1.8% for non-residential 3.7% for residential) and sexual harassment/violence (13.7% in non-permanent, 9% in non-residential and 7.7% in residential), women report at similar rates which are much higher than reported for men and boys. Reporting of safety concerns about sexual harassment is highest for women in Baalbek-El Hermel in particular (24.4% – the national average is 4.8%) and for those living in non-permanent shelter types (10% – 2.7% for non-residential and 3.4% for residential). These same trends are apparent for girls as well. For boys, the highest concern around sexual harassment and violence is in El Nabatieh (14.6% – compared to the national average of 1.7%). The overall knowledge of those reporting to know where to refer someone to in case of gender-based violence is 58%, with South Lebanon having the lowest rate (43%) and Bekaa having the highest (77%). These services can include health, psychosocial, security and social services.

Evictions

Collective and individual eviction of Syrians has been reported as a continuous concern shared by protection sector members in 2023. 7.2% of respondents of the 2023 VASyR report having been evicted at some point during their stay in Lebanon. Of these, 14.5% have been evicted more than once. Socioeconomic and political developments are the main causes for evictions, as the VASyR 2023 data shows that inability to pay rent, disputes with the landlord/owner, as well as social tensions, were the top three reasons for vacating the residence. Additional barriers were faced by refugees following the circular from MoIM, which ordered Mukhtars not to process legal documentation and for property owners not to rent

property (residential and commercial) to displaced Syrians prior to proof of municipal registration. A further letter was issued in this regard by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to all public notaries not to issue any document or contract for any displaced Syrian without proof of municipal registration in 2023. The main impacts of eviction are homelessness (41.7%), additional costs for relocation and rent (47.6%) and loss of employment (16.8%). El Nabatieh is the governorate with the highest rate of households worrying about exploitation mainly in relation to rent, with 11.2% compared to the national average of 2%.

Legal residency status and entry regulations

Over the past few years, access to and renewal of legal residency in Lebanon have changed significantly. According to the current regulations, Syrian refugees can renew their residency permits either by registration with UNHCR, through a pledge of responsibility by a local sponsor or through a courtesy permit (if the mother or wife is Lebanese). Other categories include property ownership, tenancies and student visas, among others.

Syrian refugees who entered Lebanon prior to 2015 and have registered with UNHCR before January 2015 and did not previously renew their residency based on any other category than UNHCR registration (e.g. sponsorship, property owner, tenant, among other things) can benefit from the waiver that allows them to renew their residency based on a UNHCR certificate without paying any fees. Additionally, those who entered Lebanon legally after 2015 had to do so based on one of the entry categories (such as tourism, medical visit, transit, among other things) and could only renew their legal stay within the limitations set for the specific entry category. Each category has its own requirements, fees and residency duration.
In 2022, a further tightening of entry regulations was applied when the government of Lebanon changed its conditions for entry to Lebanon from Syria, excluding entry for reasons of tourism,

pledge of responsibility (sponsorship) and humanitarian grounds. The regularisation decision issued in 2022 (see VASyR 2022) for those who entered irregularly before April 2019 was suspended in May 2023. Following this suspension, it is not possible anymore for those who entered irregularly to regularise their situation in the country. Those who entered irregularly and those who overstayed their residency (for certain categories) may regularise their situation at the borders upon exiting Lebanon. However, they risk not being able to re-enter Lebanon either for not meeting the eligibility criteria for entry or for being issued a re-entry ban upon exit. Hence, entry and residency renewal for Syrians will continue to be challenging in 2023, requiring enhanced support from legal actors.

Though legal residency rates of Syrians have increased by 3.3% since 2021 (2021: 16.4%, 2022: 17.3% and 2023: 19.7%), the overall percentage of Syrians with valid legal residency remains low, with only 20% of all Syrians holding legal residency. That also means that despite the slight increase over the past year, 80% of Syrians do not hold legal residency, which exposes them to significant risks of detention, deportation and other security measures or protection risks, including exploitation.

Figure 2: Percentage of individuals above 15 years old with legal residency by governorate

Legend: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023
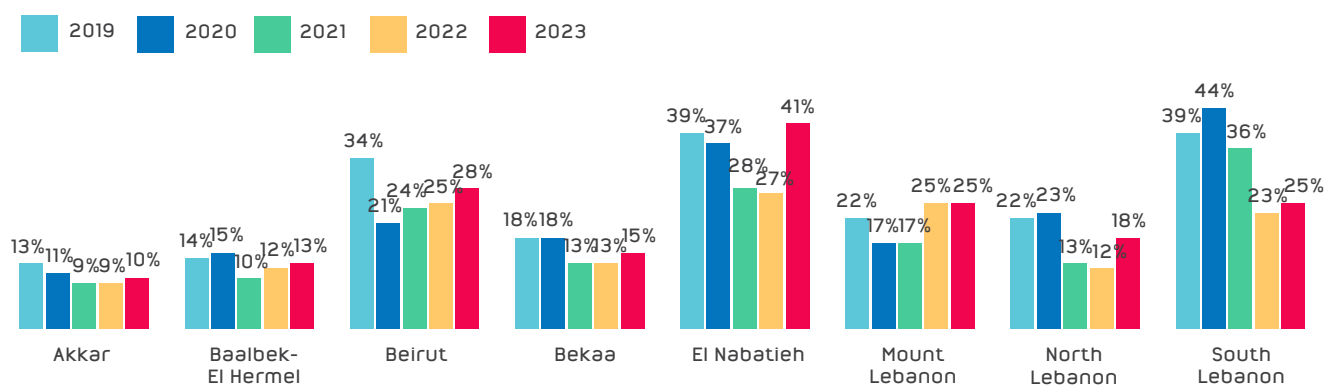
Despite the increased number of restrictive measures applied by municipalities in the southern governorates, including El Nabatieh, the increase in the national legal residency rate is driven by the increase in people obtaining legal residency in El Nabatieh with an increase of 14% between 2022 and 2023 (see VASyR 2022: 26.9% and 2023: 41%). Besides El Nabatieh, Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon show the highest rates of Syrians holding legal residency (Beirut: 28%, Mount Lebanon: 25% and South Lebanon (25%). The lowest rates of persons holding legal residency are Akkar (10%), Baalbek-El Hermel (13%) and Bekaa (15%). Akkar and North Lebanon also represent the highest proportion of respondents reporting no household members with legal residency (83%). The main reason reported by respondents for not obtaining residency is a rejection by the GSO with inconsistent practices being applied across the country (43.7%), which include requesting Syrians to obtain sponsorship residence (19.2%), denial of residence due to unofficial border crossing (23.7%) or denial without specific reason (1.1%).

According to the VASyR findings, young people and women are at higher risk of not having legal residency compared to men. There is a growing gender disparity in rates of legal residency, with the difference between men and women growing from 4.5% in 2021, 5.3% in 2022 to 9.6% in 2023. Residency rates of women have remained around 14% from 2021 to 2023, while residency rates of men increased from 18.7% to 24.5% from 2022 to 2023. Gender disparity also increases with age, as the data shows that legal residency rates among Syrian women in the age group 65+ are 34.3% lower than Syrian men in the same age group. Legal residency of Syrian individuals above 15 years old increases in number according to shelter type: residential (23% – up from 19% in 2022), non-residential (18.8% – up from 15% in 2022) and non-permanent (9.4% – down from 14% in 2022). A potential explanation for the gender divide might be the fact that GSO has requested Syrians to apply for sponsorship-based residency depending on their Lebanese employer, which is what is mostly accessed by men,

given their overall higher participation in formal labour activities. This is also demonstrated in the increase of those holding legal residency through sponsorship, which rose from 30.7% in 2022 to 47.7% in 2023. Residency through the UNHCR certificate, which was the main residency category in 2022 at the national level, remains the top category for Akkar (43.2%) and South Lebanon (57.6%) in 2023. In addition, North Lebanon and Akkar have considerably high rates of legal residency through courtesy, 26.1% and 30.5%, respectively. This disparity is likely due to the fact that men in the family were prioritised for work and men have been more scrutinised at checkpoints.

Over the past years, there has been a significant downward trend in the number of households with all members holding legal residency. Concerningly, 69% of all respondents shared that no member of their household holds valid residency. While in 2014, some 58% of all households mentioned that all members of the household held legal residency, this has significantly decreased with a significant drop between 2014 and 2015 (from 58% in 2014 to 28% in 2015) and then saw a steady decrease over the past years to only 9% of all households able to report all household members holding valid legal residency. This reflects the high level of vulnerability, dependency and potential for exploitation of the vast majority of the Syrians living in Lebanon.

Although reporting the highest rates of legal residency, El Nabatieh reported a greater risk of exploitation as a result of not having legal residency at a rate of 25%, which is over five times higher than other governorates. The highest reported impact of lack of legal residency was lack of freedom of movement at 63.9% nationally – rates were highest in Beirut and South Lebanon, where actors also reported self-imposed movement restrictions by Syrians. Fear of deportation was the second most reported impact at 43% – rates were highest in Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon.

Social and community tensions

Around 34% of all assessed Syrians indicated the impact of social tensions on the situation and daily life. 5.6% of households report having personally witnessed a physical confrontation in their area involving a Syrian refugee – 73.7% of these confrontations were between a Syrian and a member of the host community. The majority of governorates experienced a decrease in witnessing physical confrontation, with the exception of North Lebanon governorate, which had the highest rate in 2023 at 11%. Competition over jobs and resources is mentioned as the main driver behind community tensions, which includes intra- and intercommunal tensions, i.e. between Syrian communities and between refugee and host communities.

The frequency of interaction between Syrians and their host community was lowest in Beirut at 31% saying "never", with a steep increase from 13% in 2022. Daily interaction was highest in El

Nabatieh (51% – an increase from 14% in 2022) and South Lebanon (44% – an increase from 17% in 2022). Last year, Mount Lebanon had the highest reporting of interaction at 20%, and in 2023, the rate decreased to 5%. The quality of interaction between Syrians and host communities remains at about 60% positive or very positive. Mount Lebanon has the most negative or very negative interactions (10.3%), with El Nabatieh being the second highest (9.7%). Akkar experienced an 11% decrease in reported positivity in interactions. Baalbek-El Hermel and Mount Lebanon both experienced about a 6% decrease. However, notable increases in positive interactions were reported in South Lebanon (+18%), Beirut (+14%) and Bekaa (+12%).

The primary driver of community tensions reported by Syrians was competition for lower-skilled jobs (8.5%), higher-skilled jobs (6.2%) and political differences (4.3%). However, the rates vary from

governorate to governorate, for example, the lowest reporting of "no tensions" was in South Lebanon and Baalbek-El Hermel (53.6%), whereas Akkar and North Lebanon had the highest (82%). The top three drivers of tension in South Lebanon were competition for low- and high-skilled jobs and political differences, as with the national trend. However, in Baalbek-El Hermel, the top three drivers were competition for low-skilled jobs, scapegoating for the deteriorating socioeconomic situation and perceived or real discrimination in aid provision. Concerns around discrimination in aid provision have been a growing issue in Lebanon; the governorate with the highest levels of tensions attributed to this is El Nabatieh (15%).

However, a significant change in the nature of community tension was observed between 2022 and 2023. While overall competition over jobs remains highest, it dropped significantly as a reason for tensions between 2022 and 2023. In 2022, 28% shared that competition over jobs is the main reason for community tension, which decreased as a reason to 15% in 2023. Supporting the outlined trend in increased community tensions between refugee and host communities in 2023 and increasing anti-refugee sentiments, the VASyR data showed that in 2023, political differences and cultural differences were much more reported as a reason for community tension (political differences increased from 3% in 2022 as a reason for social tension, to 12% in 2023). Other reports outlining social tension developments indicate that sentiments and accusations against Syrians are mainly related to Syrians being a threat to national security, specifically in the context of South Lebanon's escalation of conflict, with Syrians being accused of being the main cause of violent robberies and theft. This has led to the strong reluctance of the population to host Syrians or to keep them in the country.

Syrian respondents noted that improvement of narratives in media/social media would improve community relations at an increased rate of 7.2%, up from 4.2%. Over a quarter of refugees believe that restrictions on the movement of foreigners (curfews) in Lebanon will help keep areas safe if there is tension. This opinion is lowest in North Lebanon (11%) and highest in El Nabatieh (55%).

Civil documentation

Birth registration

Access to a birth certificate is a fundamental human right outlined in various legal instruments, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which ensures children's right to a name and nationality. Without a birth certificate, children face significant challenges in accessing vital and basic services, such as health, social services, other basic services and education, which has a significant and detrimental impact on the child's life and future. Children without a birth certificate are at high risk of statelessness and should, therefore, be supported to ensure they receive an identity document and a nationality. Legal and child protection actors have undertaken significant efforts to advocate for increased access to birth registration through awareness-raising activities for families as well as through the support of the national civil documentation services.

In June 2023, the Personal Status Department at the Ministry of Interiors and Municipalities (MoIM) released a decision extending the previous decision related to the exemption from the procedure of late birth registration to include children born between 1 January 2011 and 26 May 2023. The decision included a waiver of the requirement of legal stay to register the birth of Syrian children and those of Palestinian refugees from Syria, a partial waiver (only one spouse) of legal stay to register marriages among Syrian nationals and Palestinian refugees from Syria and the facilitation of proof of marriage to register births by allowing Syrian parents married in Lebanon to present a marriage certificate issued in Lebanon instead of the family booklet or marriage certificate issued from Syria as previously required. Nevertheless, the legal fees for birth and marriage registration procedures were not implemented harmoniously and varied from one area to another as monitored throughout the year by legal actors. The difference was reported not only in terms of fees but also in the type of documents requested from the relevant institutions at the government level.

In 2023, 41% of all Syrian children born in Lebanon obtained a birth certificate, registered by the Foreigners' Registry. Over the past five years, the VASyR data indicates a positive, upward trend in Syrian children being registered at the Foreigners' Registry from 21% in 2018 to 31% in 2021 and 41% in 2023. However, despite the upward trend, 59% of all Syrian children are not registered at the level of the Foreigners' Registry, which would guarantee them access to nationality. 96% of all respondents mentioned that the doctor/midwife issued the child a birth notification and 85% issued the births of their children at the Mukhtar and 56% at the Nofous level. Only 0.5% mentioned they have no registration at all for the child. The main reasons for the lack of registration shared by those respondents, indicating the lack of issuance of a birth certificate for their child, are the associated costs for certificates, which were reported by 42.5% and the lack of awareness of the procedures by 42.2%. The highest reporting of undocumented births is in Baalbek-El Hermel at 9%, which takes the lead from Akkar, which had the highest rate in 2022 at 4.7% and had a rate of 5.3% in 2023.

Despite the steady progress made to issue birth certificates for all children born in Lebanon, including refugee children, there are concerns about access to birth certificates for children belonging to certain groups within the society. The socioeconomic status of families plays a significant role in access to national birth registration systems. As such, the VASyR data of 2023 shows that those living in non-permanent shelters report children born in Lebanon having completed the birth registration process at about half the rate of those living in residential shelters (47.5% versus 24.5%). Moreover, reports of only reaching Mukhtar level of birth registration due to a lack of knowledge of proper procedures have increased by 20% since 2019 (22% in 2019 and 42% in 2023). Unawareness of procedures increased as a reason for only reaching the Nofous level and not beyond (40.5% in 2023, 34.1% in 2022 and 30.9% in 2021). Potentially linked to limited socioeconomic resources, female-headed households showed a significantly lower level of registered births compared to households headed by men. At the same time, there was an increase of 12.5% in the registration of babies born to female-headed households. Also, 5.5% of female-headed households report not having documentation for the birth of their child, compared to 2.8% of male-headed households.

The four most common barriers hindering birth registration beyond the Nofous level are cost (fees and transport) (47.7%), lack of awareness of the procedures (40.5%), limited free movement due to legal residency (9.1%) and lack of ID documents (5.1%). Baalbek-El Hermel, which has the highest rates of no birth documentation, reported relatively high rates of not going to the Foreigners' Registry because of fears around requests for valid residency, which they lack (7.2% – while the national average is 1.7%). Those living in non-permanent shelter types reported being unaware of procedures at a higher rate than those living in other shelter types (59.8%). Refugees living in this shelter type also had a relatively higher rate of reporting restricted mobility (roadblocks and curfews, etc.) as a reason for not registering new births at the Mukhtar level of registration (8% – the national average, for this reason, was 4.9%). People living with disabilities were reportedly less aware of the procedures than those without (60% versus 38%).

Figure 3: Cumulative percentage of the highest level of documentation for birth registration

Legend: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

Categories: No documents; Birth notification issued by a doctor/midwife; Birth certificate issued by a Mukhtar; Birth certificate issued by the Nofous; Birth certificate registered with the Foreigners' Registry; Birth certificate stamped by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Birth certificate stamped by the Syrian Embassy; Family booklet or individual civil extract for the child or familiy civil extract

Marriage and divorce registration

The registration and legalisation of marriages are crucial for accessing equal rights and protecting women and girls from violence and deprivation of their rights within marriage and if divorce occurs. Given the confessional system in Lebanon, the country does not allow civil marriages and all marriages are conducted through the respective religious courts, namely Sharia court or Christian courts such as the Maronite church courts, among others. Due to the absence of a harmonised personal civil status law, other protection risks have been challenging to abolish, including child marriages – marriages of anyone under 18 – which are still allowed in Lebanon. On 6 February 2023, the Directorate General of Civil Status (Noufous) issued Circular No. 9 related to the payment of stamp fees. This circular allows the substitution of a stamp for a receipt paid at the same amount at companies contracted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Therefore, to register a certificate at the Nofous level, an individual can pay the LL20,000 and approach with a receipt instead of a stamp. At present, this only applies to the registration fee for civil events and not supported documents or original copies. This alternative significantly supports legal actors and households in recording their civil events.

Despite the facilitation of civil event registration, several administrative and structural challenges were faced by refugees and actors supporting the issuance of civil registration documents, including the strikes of Personal Status Department employees or working with reduced capacity significantly hampered the ability of legal actors' ability to provide legal assistance. Public institutional capacity remains strained and limits the functioning of important institutions such as the PSD, Mokhtars, GSO and Ministry of Justice (MOJ), which are critical for the implementation of legal assistance and representation procedures for civil status documentation, criminal, employment, legal residency and housing, land and property.

According to the VASyR data, there is a positive trend in registering marriages conducted in Lebanon as the percentage of marriage registration at the level of the Foreigners' Registry has increased by 10% since 2020 (2020: 27%, 2021: 29%, 2022: 32% and 2023: 37%). Moreover, the registration of marriages that occurred in Lebanon increased by 3.5% since last year (2023: 38.6%, 2022: 33.2% and 2021: 29.9%), which reflects the substantive work of actors to raise awareness of the importance of marriage registration and the individual counselling provided. However, 24% of the respondents also mentioned that they do not have sufficient legal documents confirming the marriage but that the marriage was conducted through an uncertified Sheikh or without any proof of marriage.

Akkar governorate has seen an improvement in terms of a decreasing rate of marriages by uncertified sheikhs at 30% in 2023, 34% in 2022 and 51% in 2021. However, this governorate still maintains the highest rate of marriage without any documentation (7.9% in 2023, up from 4.9% in 2022). Rates of marriage certificates registered with the Foreigners' Registry are highest in Beirut (63.9%) and lowest in Akkar (14.7%). Baalbek-El Hermel (+9%) and North Lebanon (+15%) governorates experienced the biggest increase in rates of marriage registration with the Foreigners' Registry from 2022 to 2023 (see VASyR 2023).

Figure 4: Marriage documentation of Syrian refugees

Legend: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

Categories: Marriage contract from an uncertified Sheikh; No documents or other unknown documents; Marriage contract from a religious authority or proof of marriage from the Sharia court; Marriage certificate authenticated by a Mukhtar; Marriage certificate registered with the Nofous; Marriage certificate registered with the Foreigners' Registry; Marriage certificate stamped by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Marriage certificate stamped by the Syrian Embassy; Updated Family booklet or family civil extract or marriage certificate from Syria

Of all divorced individuals assessed in 2023, 40% did not have divorce documents and only 16.9% (up from 12.4% in 2022) had documentation at the Foreigners' Registry. This presents significant concerns with the protection of women and girls from exploitation or abuse, as well as limits their ability to claim custody and other rights provided for under the law. Of those who divorced in Syria, half lack divorce documents, which is down from 58% in 2022.

The 2023 VASYR protection findings were discussed across protection, child protection and gender-based violence actors resulting in a list of programmatic and operational recommendations.

Child Protection

This section covers different forms of violence against children, namely child labour, early marriage and violent discipline.

Key findings

- There was a 3% increase in children (5 to 17 years) engaged in labour compared to last year – 7% compared to 4% in the previous year. The figure reaches 11% when the child is a boy.
- The results showed that children in female-headed households show a higher rate of child labour (11%) as compared to male-headed households (7%).
- Looking at working conditions, approximately 6% of children (aged 5–17) were exposed to hazardous working conditions.
- Similar to previous years, approximately 23% of adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 were ever married (including divorced or separated) at the time of the survey.
- Six out of 10 children aged between 1 and 14 years of age experienced violent discipline by caregivers in one month preceding the survey.

Child labour

Child labour is defined as a child having performed either economic activities or household chores during the last week for more than the age-specific number of hours or exposure to hazardous conditions during economic activity or household chores.
• Economic activities: aged 5–11: 1 hour or more; aged 12–14: 14 hours or more; aged 15–17: 43 hours or more.
• Household chores: aged 5–14: 21 hours or more; aged 15–17: 43 hours or more.
• Hazardous conditions: any exposure to the following conditions during economic activity or household chores: carrying heavy loads; working with dangerous tools; exposed to dust, fumes or gas; exposed to extreme cold, heat or humidity; exposed to loud noise or vibration; required to work at heights; required to work with chemicals; exposed to other things bad for his/her health.

Children around the world are routinely engaged in paid and unpaid forms of work that are not harmful to them. However, they are classified as child labourers when they are either too young to work or are involved in hazardous activities that may compromise their physical, mental, social or educational development. Article 32 (1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states: "Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development".

The proportion of children (aged 5 to 17) who are engaged in child labour increased from the previous two years, to 7.3% in 2023, as compared to 4.3% in 2022 and 5.3% in 2021. Similar to previous years, child labour was higher among boys (11.2%) than girls (3.2%). It is noteworthy that children between the ages of 15 and 17 who worked for at least one hour in return for pay was 14%, with the rate among boys (aged 5 to 17) more than triple that of girls, at 13% and 4%.

On a regional level, Baalbek-El Hermel, El Nabatieh and the South have the highest rates of child labour at approximately 9%, with the lowest rates in the North and Beirut at approximately 5%.

Figure 1: Child labour (5-17) by governorate
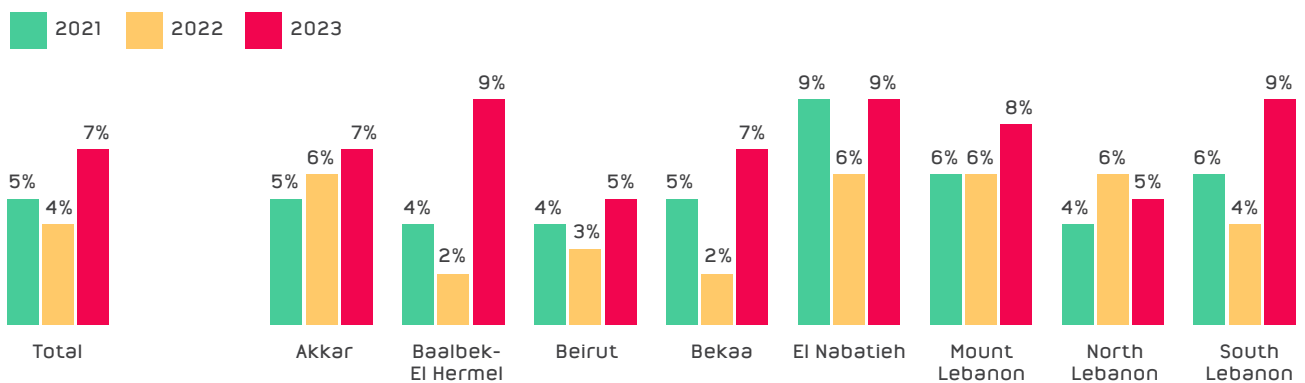
In addition, looking at the gender of the head of the household, the results showed that children in female-headed households show a higher rate of child labour (11%) as compared to male-headed households (7%).

Figure 2: Child labour by age (5-17)
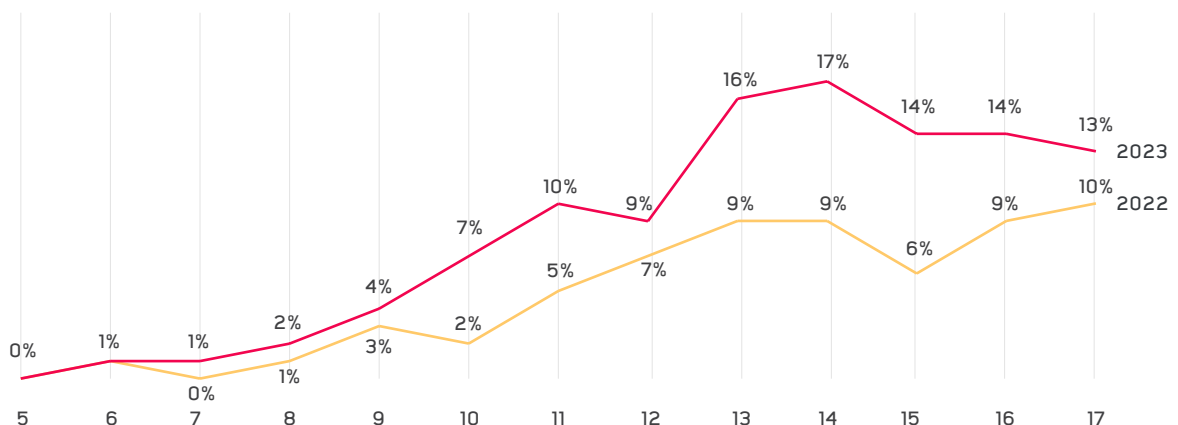
Looking at working conditions, approximately 6% of children (aged 5–17) were exposed to hazardous working conditions, with boys showing higher rates of exposure than girls (9% and 3%, respectively). In a similar vein, children in female-headed households were more likely to be exposed to hazardous working conditions (9%) than those in male-headed households (5%).

Early marriage

Early marriage was measured as adolescent girls between the ages of 15–19 who were married at the time of the survey.

Similar to previous years, approximately 23% of adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 were or had been married (including divorced or separated) at the time of the survey (22% currently married). Breaking this down by gender shows that 24% of early marriages happen to girls, as compared to 3% for boys.

The highest rate of child marriage was found in Mount Lebanon and South (30%), with the lowest being in Beirut (15%). Details are available in the figure below. Adolescent girls living in households headed by males were almost three times higher than in households headed by females (30% and 11%, respectively).

Figure 3: Adolescent girls aged 15-19 who were married at the time of the survey, by governorate

Legend: 2021 | 2022 | 2023

Governorate	2021	2022	2023
Total	20%	22%	23%
Akkar	25%	16%	25%
Baalbek-El Hermel	11%	23%	21%
Beirut	27%	36%	15%
Bekaa	17%	17%	24%
El Nabatieh	20%	23%	28%
Mount Lebanon	22%	27%	30%
North Lebanon	19%	24%	27%
South Lebanon	34%	21%	30%
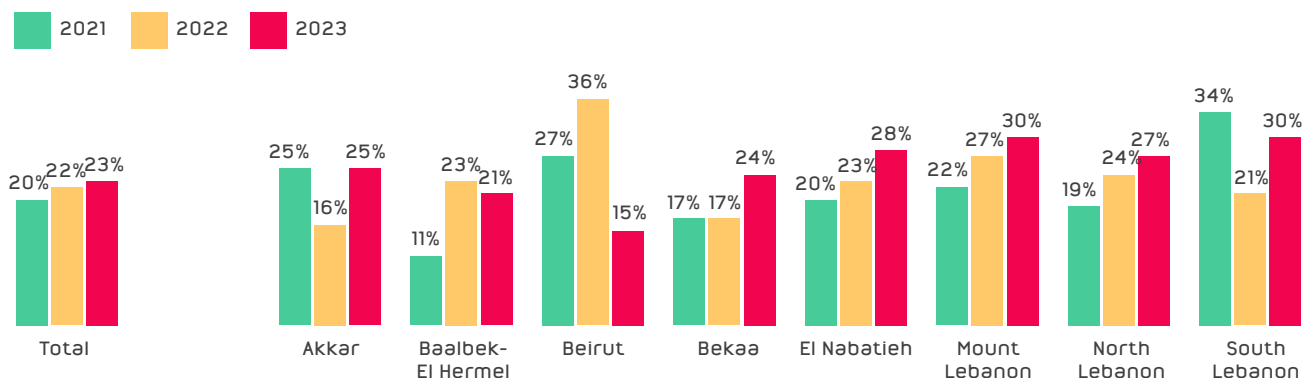
Violent discipline

Violent discipline is measured among children from 1 to 14 years of age and includes any form of psychological, physical or severe aggression.

Psychological aggression: if the child is shouted, yelled, or screamed at; called an insulting name (dumb, lazy, etc.).

Any physical aggression: shaking him/her; spanking, hitting or slapping him/her on any part of the body.

Severe physical aggression: hitting or slapping in the face.

Non-violent disciplinary practices include: taking away privileges; explaining why a behavior is wrong; giving him/her something else to do.

Teaching children self-control and acceptable behavior is an integral part of child discipline in all cultures. Positive parenting practices involve providing guidance on how to handle emotions or conflicts in manners that encourage judgment and responsibility and preserve children's self-esteem, physical and psychological integrity and dignity. Too often however, children are raised through the use of punitive methods that rely on the use of physical force or verbal intimidation to obtain desired behaviors. Violence hampers children's development, learning abilities and school performance; it inhibits positive relationships, provokes low self-esteem, emotional distress and depression, and, at times, it leads to risk taking and self-harm.

Six out of ten children aged between 1 and 14 years of age experienced violent discipline by caregivers in one month preceding the survey. Almost half of caregivers (49%) reported resorting to physical aggression and 47% to psychological aggression, while severe violence was reported at 5%. These rates are similar between girls and boys, as well as comparing children in female- versus male-headed households.

Figure 4: Percentage of children (aged 1–14 years) and disciplinary methods by their caregivers
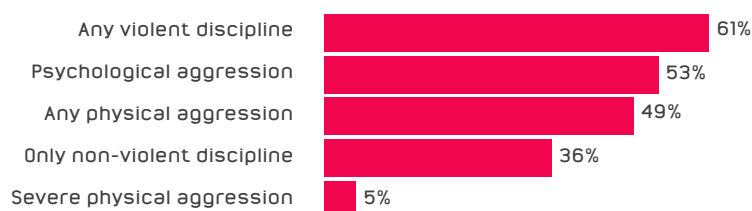
Any violent discipline	61%
Psychological aggression	53%
Any physical aggression	49%
Only non-violent discipline	36%
Severe physical aggression	5%

Figure 5: Percentage of children aged 1–14 years who experienced at least one form of violent discipline by years and sex

Legend: 2021 | 2022 | 2023

	Total	Boys	Girls
2021	56%	57%	56%
2022	58%	59%	57%
2023	61%	61%	61%
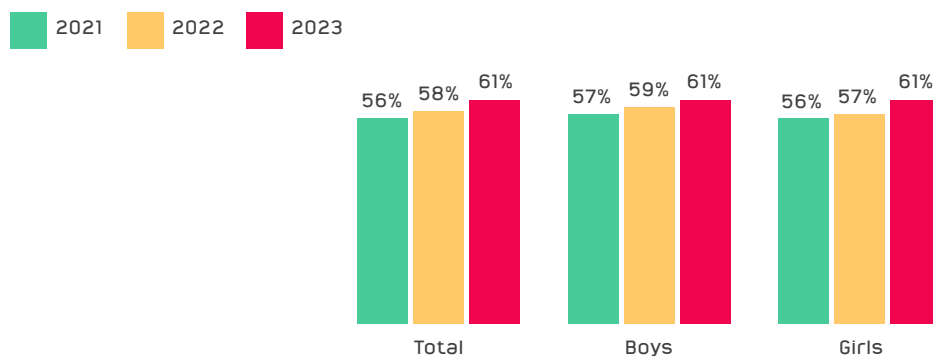
Figure 6: Child disciplinary methods used by adult members in households

Legend: 2022 | 2023

	2022	2023
Any violent discipline	58%	61%
Psychological aggression	47%	53%
Any physical punishment	47%	49%
Only non-violent discipline	25%	36%
Severe physical punishment	7%	5%
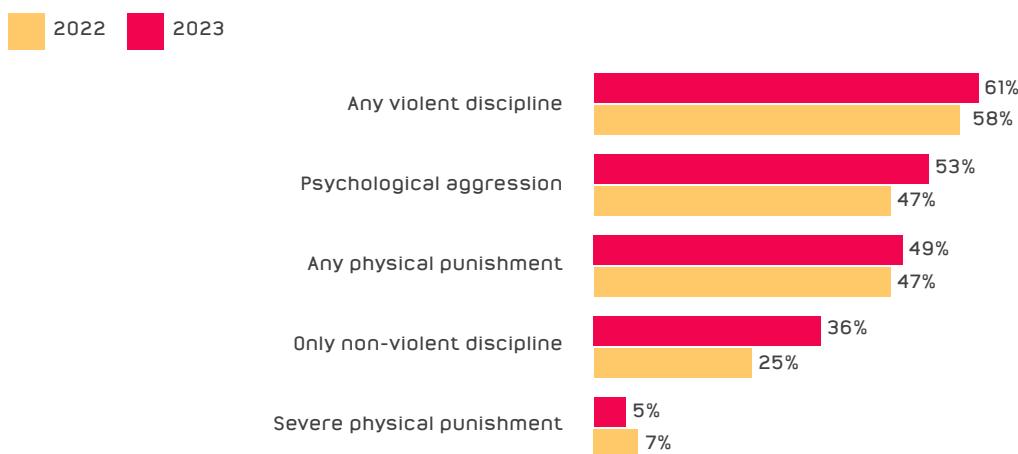
The prevalence of children experiencing violent disciplinary methods varied between the regions. The highest was in South Lebanon governorate (86%), followed by Baalbek-El Hermel (79%) governorate, with the lowest in Beirut (30%).

Figure 7: Percentage of children aged 1–14 years who experienced at least one form of violent discipline by governorate and years

Legend: 2021 | 2022 | 2023

	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
2021	68%	60%	43%	78%	69%	40%	56%	33%
2022	66%	76%	51%	57%	77%	47%	57%	51%
2023	72%	79%	30%	62%	58%	46%	54%	86%
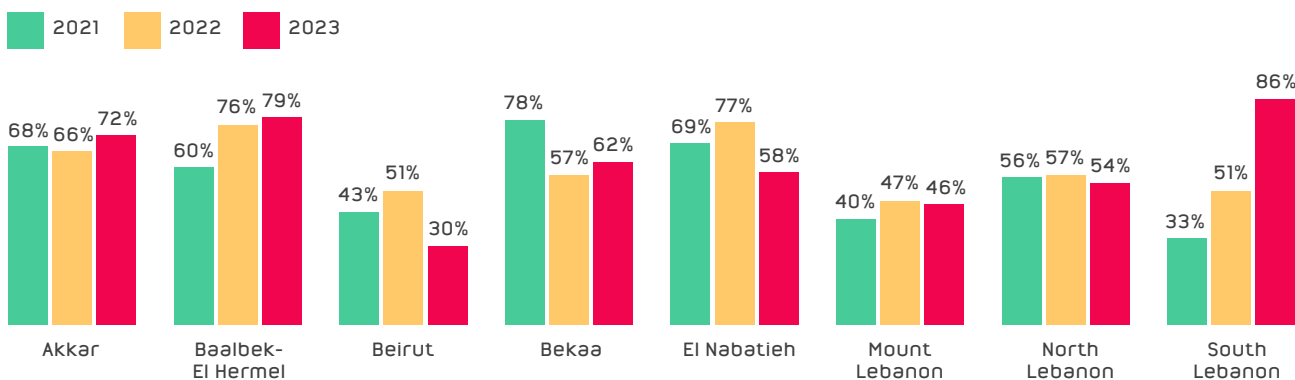
Economic Vulnerability

Key findings

- The SMEB value for June 2023 was LL28,315,000 ($304) per household compared to LL8,156,858 ($285) per household in 2022. This increase was driven by inflation and the depreciation of the Lebanese pound ($1 = LL28,608 in June 2022 versus $1 = LL93,593 in June 2023).
- In 2022, the ECMEN methodology was updated by WFP to reduce the length and complexity of the standard expenditure module and to align the ECMEN aggregate with the concept of consumption.
- The previous ECMEN methodology did not include credit within the household's economic capacity, whereas the new methodology includes credit within their capacity.
- In 2023, 63% of refugee households were living below the SMEB, a decrease from 67% in 2022. Likewise, 76% of households were living below the MEB.
- Excluding the value of assistance, the percentage of households below the SMEB was 75% and the percentage of households below the MEB was 83%.
- As for expenditure shares, households were spending 52% of their total expenditure on food, 9% on rent, 6% on electricity and 3% on health.
- Beirut and El Nabatieh recorded the highest expenditures, while Akkar and North Lebanon reported the lowest.
- The percentage of households spending more than 75% of their total monthly expenditure on food decreased from 12% in 2022 to 8% in 2023.
- In 2023, 12% of Syrian refugee households were debt-free, a notable increase from 6% in 2022.
- Food and rent remained the primary reasons for borrowing money, with rates of 90% and 52%, respectively.
- Friends residing in Lebanon continued to be the primary source of borrowing (86%).

The Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs

The Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs (ECMEN) is a metric that provides insights into the economic vulnerability of a population. ECMEN identifies the percentage of households whose expenditures exceeded either the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) or the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) that were prevalent at the time of data collection. Households with economic capacity below the MEB are unable to meet essential needs. In contrast, households with an economic capacity below the SMEB are likely unable to access the bare minimum required to survive.

In combination with other indicators, the ECMEN helps to understand humanitarian needs but can also be used to monitor essential needs outcomes as well as to understand better whether assistance is enabling households to meet their needs. When the objective of the analysis is to understand humanitarian needs, the ECMEN is calculated, excluding the value of assistance.

The methodology used to calculate the ECMEN follows the latest WFP Essential Needs Assessment Guidance Note published in January 2023. The economic capacity of households was calculated by aggregating expenditures. It included cash and credit expenditures, households' own production and labour exchange, gifts and in-kind assistance and humanitarian cash assistance. ECMEN analysis also takes into account the value of in-kind and cash assistance received by households selected to participate in the surveys during the 30 days prior to the interview. The value of humanitarian cash and in-kind assistance includes all types of assistance recorded in UNHCR's Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS), the tool used in Lebanon for tracking assistance to Syrian Refugees that is linked to proGres, UNHCR's registration database and VASyR's sample frame. As WFP updated its methodology for the calculation of the ECMEN in December 2022, changes in the ECMEN aggregate are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs (monitoring and needs analysis) as per WFP 2022 methodology

Consumption type	ECMEN (Monitoring)		ECMEN (Needs analysis)	
	2020	2022	2020	2022
Cash expenditure (Food and non-food)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Credit expenditure*	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Own production and labour exchange	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gifts/in-kind assistance	Yes	Yes	No	No
Value of cash assistance	Yes	Yes	No	No
Debt repayment	Yes	No	Yes	No
Savings	Yes	No	Yes	No

The Survival and Minimum Expenditure Baskets (S/MEB)

The S/MEB is a prerequisite for the calculation of the ECMEN. The S/MEB sets monetary thresholds for what is needed to cover essential needs (MEB) and lifesaving needs (SMEB). The cost of the basket is calculated to determine the minimum income required for individuals or households to afford a basic standard of living and meet their fundamental needs for survival. This helps in assessing economic vulnerability and designing policies and interventions to address the basic needs of vulnerable populations.

In Lebanon, the S/MEB was established in 2014 and serves as a benchmark to estimate the cost of food and other basic needs of a Syrian refugee family in Lebanon. The current food SMEB has been in use in Lebanon since 2020, while the food component of the MEB was revised in June 2022 and endorsed by the FSAS in October 2022.

The food component of the S/MEB is based on a rights-based approach of 2,100 kcal per person per day. The SMEB includes 19 food products and provides the minimum intake of vitamins and macronutrients, while the MEB consists of 30 food products and is higher in nutrients. The cost of the food SMEB is tracked monthly through the WFP price monitoring system. The non-food component of the current S/MEB consists of nine hygiene items in addition to cooking gas and blankets, adhering to Sphere standards to meet essential needs and an expenditure-based approach for non-food services that is updated yearly using VASyR data and are also monitored through WFP's price monitoring system.

In June 2023, the non-food services component of the SMEB and MEB was updated using data from the annual Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR). For clothing and electricity, the 5% trimmed mean is used to determine average spending on these items. In contrast, for transportation, the average expenditure among families who reported expenditures is used and extrapolated to the entire population. Average water expenditure is used only by looking at a subset of the population who reported having an improved water source. Prices for rent are calculated using a rights-based approach and taking the average rent costs across shelter types for the SMEB and average rent costs among shelters in adequate conditions are used for the MEB. Costs for accessing healthcare are estimated using a hybrid approach to estimate the costs of transportation to health facilities (rights-based) and estimated cost of medications (expenditure-based).

Cost of living

In June 2023, the cost of the SMEB was LL28.3 million for a family of five, registering a 14% and 247% increase monthly and yearly increase, respectively. The cost of the food component of the SMEB in Lebanese pounds decreased by 12% monthly and increased by 234% yearly to reach LL2.8 million per person in June 2023. The Non-Food SMEB reached LL4.2 million per household in June 2023, up from LL12.4 million in May 2023 and up from LL3.9 million in June 2022.

In US dollar terms, the cost of the SMEB increased by 15% in June 2023 compared to the previous month, recorded at $304. Similarly, the cost of the Food SMEB, which stood at $26.50 per person in May 2023, increased to $30 per person in June 2023. The Non-Food SMEB increased by 16%, registering $153 per household during the month.

The cost of the full MEB was LL34.4 million in June 2023 for a household of five, up from LL30.7 million in May 2023 and LL9.7 million a year ago. The cost of the food component of the MEB per person was recorded at nearly LL3.7 million in June 2023, corresponding to $40 per person. In US dollars, the cost of the full MEB reached $369 in June 2023, up from $325 in May 2023 and up from $340 a year ago.

Table 2: Total household and per capita value of the S/MEB for 2022 and 2023 in USD and LBP

Month		MEB		SMEB	
		USD	LBP	USD	LBP
June 2022	Per capita	68	1,945,344	57	1,630,656
	Per HH of five	340	9,726,720	285	8,153,280
June 2023	Per capita	74	6,925,882	61	5,709,173
	Per HH of five	369	34,535,817	304	28,452,272

The economic landscape is undergoing significant challenges, as reflected in key indicators that directly impact people's economic vulnerability and food security. The local currency, at LL93,280 per US dollar in June 2023, has lost 69% of its value in a year and 98% of its value since October 2019. Another main aspect is the decline in foreign currency reserves held by the Central Bank, which dropped from $11.1 billion in June 2022 to $9.3 billion by June 2023. Adding to this economic strain is the surge in essential commodity prices. For example, bread prices have witnessed an increase of 204%. The cost of fuel has also surged by 147% and cooking gas prices have followed with a significant 133% increase. These surges in energy prices not only burden households directly but also contribute to inflationary pressures throughout the economy.

The broader economic impact is evident in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which has experienced a substantial increase of 254%. This index reflects the overall rise in the cost of living, affecting the purchasing power of individuals and potentially pushing many towards economic vulnerability. Moreover, the Food Price Index (FPI) has surged by 280%, highlighting the specific challenges faced by households in ensuring food security. The sharp increase in food prices can lead to reduced access to essential nutritional resources, particularly for vulnerable populations. These indicators led the World Bank to forecast an economic contraction of 0.5% for the Lebanese economy for 2023 in its Lebanon Economic Monitor Spring 2023.

ECMEN

In 2023, when factoring in the value of assistance, 63% of refugee households were found to be living below the SMEB, reflecting a decrease from 67% in 2022 upon applying the new methodology. However, when the value of assistance is excluded, the percentage of households below the SMEB increased to 75%. This suggests that 12% of Syrian refugee households depended on assistance to meet the minimum essential items required for survival. As for the MEB, a total of 76% of refugee households were living below the MEB in 2023; however, upon deducting the value of assistance, the total percentage of households living in the MEB will be 83%.

Figure 1: Percentage of households living above/below the S/MEB for both ECMEN indicators

Legend:
- Below SMEB LL5,663,000
- SMEB-MEB LL5,663,000–6,889,600
- Above MEB LL6,889,600

With assistance: 63% Below SMEB, 13% SMEB-MEB, 24% Above MEB
Without assistance: 75% Below SMEB, 8% SMEB-MEB, 17% Above MEB
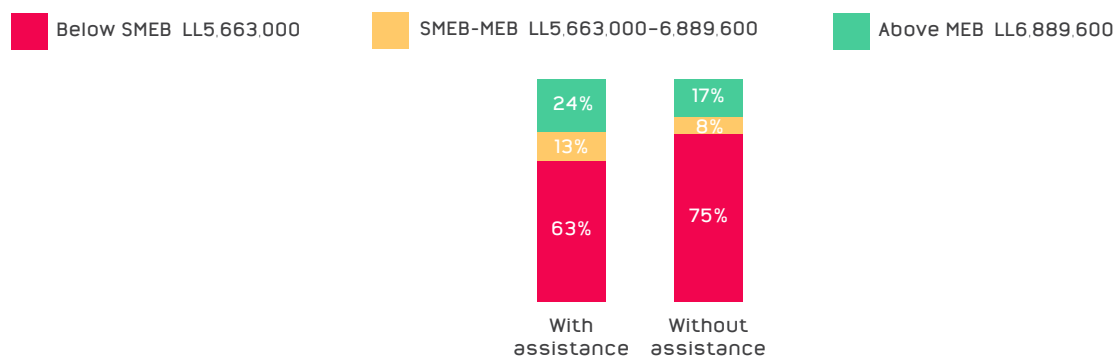
When accounting for the value of assistance, refugees in the Akkar governorate exhibited the highest rates of socioeconomic vulnerability in 2023, with 81% falling below the SMEB and unable to afford the essential minimum for survival. In contrast, Beirut had the lowest percentage of refugees below the SMEB at 44%, followed by Mount Lebanon at 57%. Furthermore, considering the value of assistance, male-headed households demonstrated higher vulnerability, with 64% falling below the SMEB, compared to 60%

for female-headed households. Similarly, when considering the value of assistance, refugee households living in non-permanent shelters experienced the highest incidence of falling below the SMEB at 72%, surpassing those in non-residential shelters (71%) and residential shelters (59%). Moreover, households with at least one member with a disability demonstrated increased vulnerability, with 66% falling below the SMEB, in contrast to 61% for households without members with a disability.

Figure 2: Percentage of households below the SMEB (including assistance) by governorate

Legend:
- Below SMEB LL5,663,000
- SMEB-MEB LL5,663,000–6,889,600
- MEB-125% MEB LL6,889,600–8,612,000
- Above 125% MEB LL8,612,000

	Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
Above 125% MEB	15%	6%	11%	30%	15%	24%	18%	10%	19%
MEB-125% MEB	9%	5%	7%	14%	9%	12%	12%	6%	12%
SMEB-MEB	13%	8%	10%	12%	17%	13%	14%	10%	9%
Below SMEB	63%	81%	71%	44%	59%	51%	57%	74%	60%
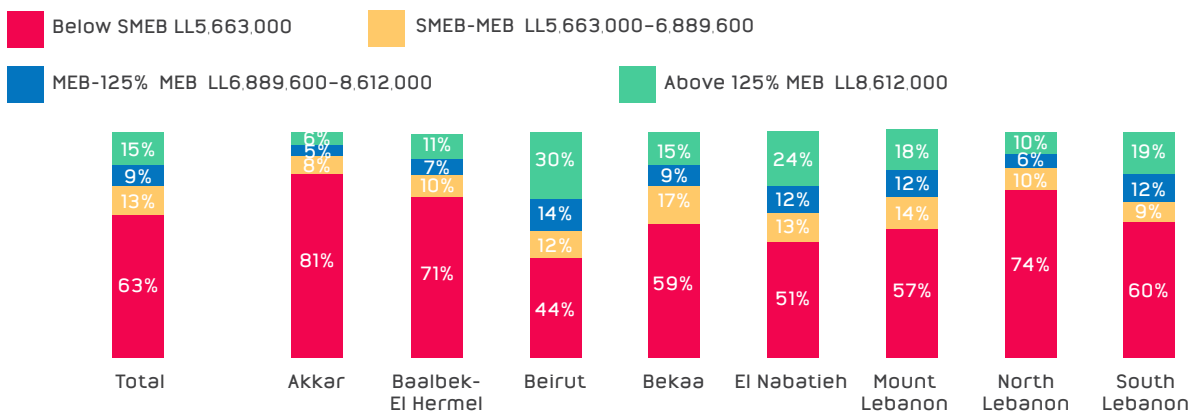
Figure 3: Percentage of households below the SMEB (excluding assistance) by governorate

Legend:
- Below SMEB LL5,663,000
- SMEB-MEB LL5,663,000–6,889,600
- MEB-125% MEB LL6,889,600–8,612,000
- Above 125% MEB LL8,612,000

	Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
Above 125% MEB	11%	3%	7%	22%	11%	18%	14%	6%	12%
MEB-125% MEB	6%	3%	6%	6%	9%	11%	6%	5%	8%
SMEB-MEB	8%	3%	4%	11%	13%	11%	8%	5%	7%
Below SMEB	75%	92%	82%	61%	68%	60%	72%	84%	72%
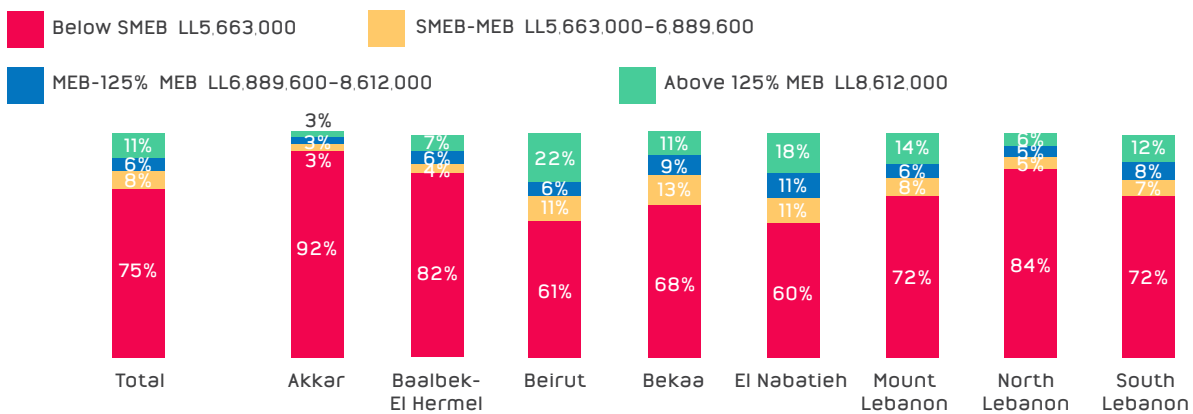
Trends

Consideration must be given to the monetary value of expenditures, encompassing both cash and credit, pertaining to food and non-food items alike. The most economically disadvantaged households may find themselves without access to credit. From a conceptual perspective, the household's capacity to procure credit for the purpose of consumption smoothing can be perceived as a manifestation of "economic capacity", given the positive correlation between household creditworthiness and its capacity to generate income, human and social capital. The refined ECMEN now demonstrates enhanced alignment with the theoretical framework, particularly in relation to consumption concepts and other vulnerability indicators. Concurrently, it provides a more nuanced picture of asset ownership, access to suitable shelter, and improved water and sanitation infrastructure. The updated ECMEN exhibits superior alignment with the targeting methodology, presenting a more open model for the incorporation of proxy measures. Lastly, taking into account both credit and cash expenditure together facilitates data collection and is more likely to improve the quality of data than collecting each type of expenditure separately.

Employing the ECMEN methodology from 2020, which excludes credit from the household's economic capacity, it was observed in 2023 that 84% of refugee households were living below the SMEB, indicating a decline from the 90% calculated in 2022. Similarly, for the same period, 90% of households were below the MEB, as opposed to the 93% recorded in 2022.

In contrast, utilising the current 2022 ECMEN methodology, which incorporates credit within the household's economic capacity, the data for 2023 revealed that 75% of refugee households were living below the SMEB, representing a reduction from the 83% reported in 2022. The proportion of households below the MEB also decreased from 88% in 2022 to 83% in 2023.

Both methodologies demonstrate an improvement in the vulnerability status among Syrian refugee households, with a decrease in the percentage of households unable to meet their essential needs (living below the SMEB).

Figure 4: Percentage of people below/above the S/MEB using both versions of the ECMEN

Legend:
- Below SMEB
- Between SMEB and MEB
- Above MEB

	2022 ECMEN (2020 Version)	2023 ECMEN (2020 Version)	2022 ECMEN (2022 Version)	2023 ECMEN (2022 Version)
Above MEB	7%	10%	12%	17%
Between SMEB and MEB	3%	6%	5%	8%
Below SMEB	90%	84%	83%	75%
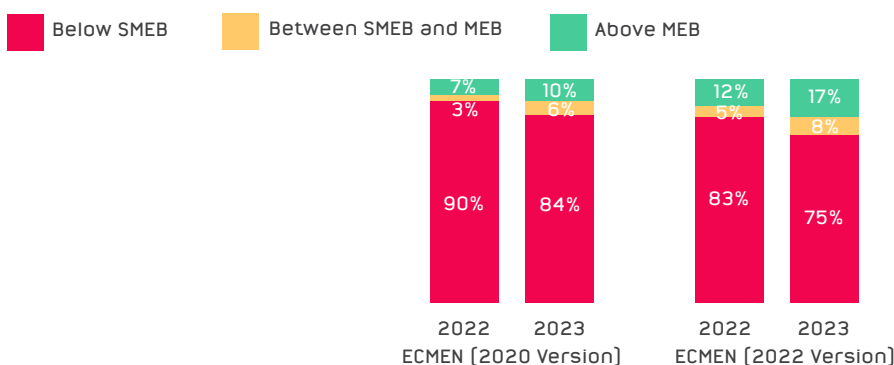
Expenditure

The per capita monthly expenditure for Syrian refugees in Lebanon reached LL4,290,864 in 2023, marking a significant increase compared to the 2022 figure of LL1,575,613. This substantial rise is mainly attributed to a dual impact. Firstly, the depreciation of the Lebanese pound played a major role, as reflected in the exchange rate shifting from $1 = LL28,608 in June 2022 to $1 = LL93,593 in June 2023. This currency devaluation directly contributed to the surge in expenditure when denominated in local currency. Secondly, inflation in both food and non-food commodity prices has further amplified the overall expenditure, indicating that the increased cost of essential items has added to the economic challenges faced by Syrian refugees in meeting their basic needs.

Refugees in Akkar and North Lebanon reported the lowest per capita expenditures at LL2,287,926 and LL3,165,841, respectively. In contrast, refugees in Beirut and El Nabatieh demonstrated higher financial capacities, recording the highest expenditures at LL6,077,741 and LL5,461,390, respectively. The disparity in

expenditures is influenced by regional economic variations, cost of living and access to resources. The analysis revealed a significant economic divide between households above and below the SMEB. Those above the SMEB threshold had notably higher monthly expenditures per capita (LL9,455,926) compared to those below the SMEB (LL2,582,015).

A variation in spending patterns was reported between food-secure households (LL6,744,605) and severely food-insecure households (LL2,088,701), emphasising the impact of food security on overall household budget allocations. This comprehensive overview underscores the complex factors influencing the expenditure patterns of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. It is important to highlight that the data collection for VASyR 2023 occurred in May/June 2023, coinciding with the initiation of the dollarisation of assistance. During this period, refugees started receiving their cash assistance in US dollars instead of Lebanese pounds (LL).

Table 3: Monthly mean expenditure per capita and expenditure proportion in 2023

	Total expenditure per month per capita (LL)	Food	Rent	Health
2019	156,943	44%	15%	12%
2020	198,981	48%	11%	10%
2021	316,129	51%	10%	8%
2022	1,575,613	58%	6%	7%
2023	4,290,864	52%	9%	3%

Figure 5: Percentage expenditure proportion for food and non-food items compared to total expenditure in 2022 and 2023
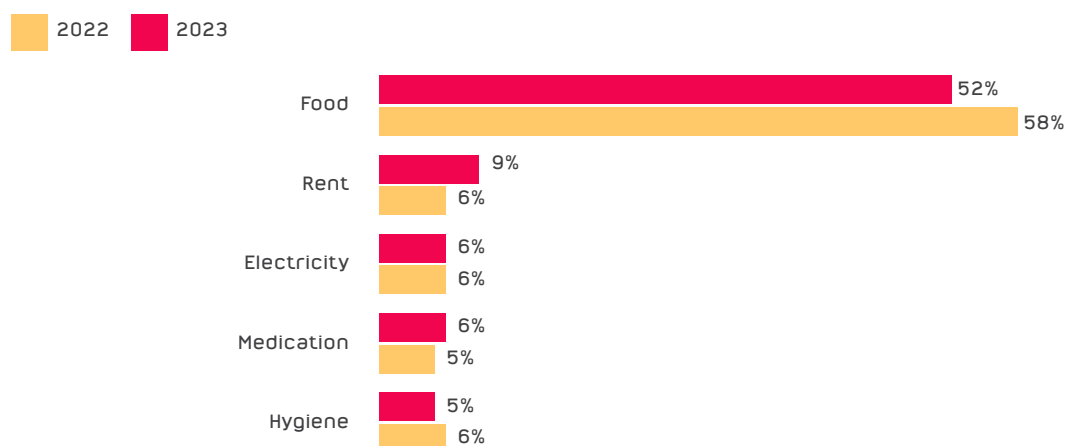
There were significant shifts in the spending patterns of refugees, particularly in terms of their food expenditure. The rise in the percentage of refugees allocating less than half of their total monthly expenditure to food, from 27% in 2022 to 46%, indicates a potential improvement in overall economic conditions, allowing for a more balanced distribution of household resources. There was also a decrease in the percentage of refugees spending more than 50% of their total expenditure on food, despite a consistent upward trend in previous years. The decline in the percentage of households with a very high food expenditure share (≥75% of total monthly expenditure) from 12% in 2022 to 9% in the current year suggests a potential easing of extreme food insecurity among refugee households. This could be attributed to various factors, including improved access to food assistance programs, economic resilience and adaptation or increased income from employment. As for individual expenditure proportions, refugee households

allocated an average of 9% of their total expenditure to rent, marking an increase from the 6% reported in 2022. Expenditure on electricity remained consistent at 6% of the total expenditure. Nevertheless, there was a minor increase of 1% in the expenditure on medications compared to the figures recorded in 2022.

Governorate-level analysis highlighted persistent challenges in Akkar and Baalbek-El Hermel, where a significant proportion of households still allocate a high percentage of their expenditure to food. This may indicate ongoing economic hardships or specific regional dynamics influencing food affordability. The contrast between Mount Lebanon and Beirut, recording the lowest percentages of households spending more than 65% of their expenditure on food, suggests a relatively better food security situation in these areas.

Figure 6: Food expenditure share by governorate

Legend: <50% | 50%-65% | 65-75% | ≥75%

	Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
≥75%	9%	14%	15%	6%	9%	6%	3%	13%	6%
65-75%	13%	22%	20%	10%	16%	13%	5%	15%	13%
50%-65%	33%	40%	37%	23%	40%	35%	22%	33%	38%
<50%	46%	25%	28%	61%	35%	47%	70%	38%	43%
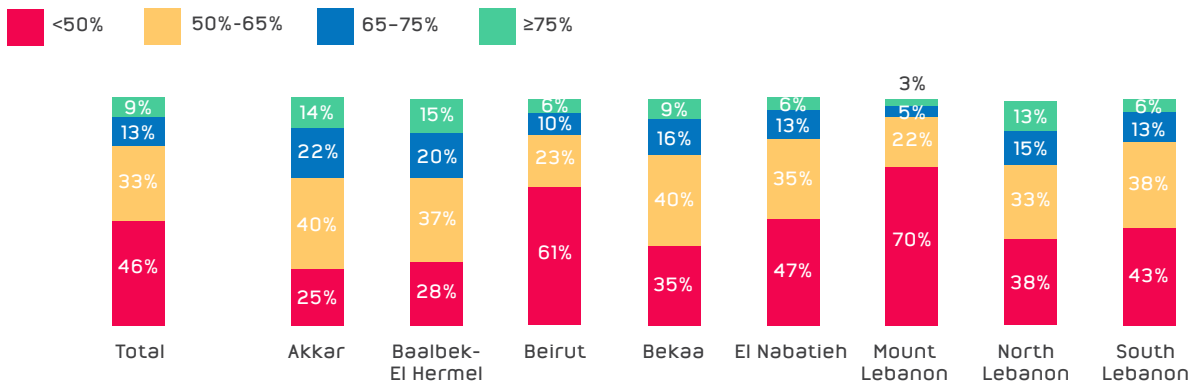
Figure 7: Single food item expenditure proportion

Bread and pasta	25.4
Vegetables	15.1
Cereals	10.3
Oil	9.6
Sugar	7.2
Tubers	6.2
Dairy	5.5
Pulses	4.8
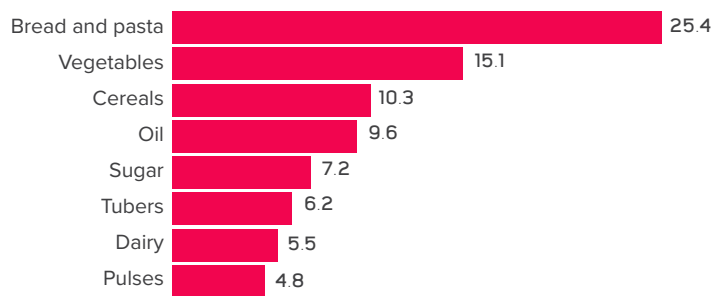
Expenditure on bread and pasta increased significantly, reaching 25% compared to 11% in 2022. This surge may be attributed to the rising cost of staple food items, influenced by inflation and economic challenges. Fresh vegetables ranked as the second-highest monthly expenditure among single food items. However, there was a notable decrease in spending, with refugees reporting an average of 15% of their total food expenditure allocated to vegetables, compared to 26% in 2022. Cereal expenditure slightly decreased to 10%, down from 13% in 2022. Dairy product expenditure witnessed a notable drop from 8% in 2022 to 5.5% in 2023. Households in South Lebanon reported the highest expenditure on dairy products, accounting for 7.7%. These changes in food expenditure highlight the dynamic nature of refugee households' economic decisions and underline the impact of external factors such as inflation, economic challenges and regional variations.

Debt

In the year 2023, 12% of Syrian refugee households were free from debt, representing a notable increase from the 6% recorded in 2022. The median debt for households showed a rise, reaching LL28,077,939 ($300), up from the 2022 figure of LL6,000,000 ($209). Moreover, the median per capita debt also had a significant increase, reaching LL6,239,542 ($67), in contrast to the 2022 value of LL1,400,000 ($49). These trends can be primarily attributed to escalated prices of both food and non-food commodities coupled with the depreciation of the Lebanese pound.

The governorate of Beirut exhibited the highest debt per household across the nation, standing at LL37,437,252. Following closely was Mount Lebanon, where the average debt reached LL31,077,939. Conversely, Akkar recorded the lowest median debt at LL17,231,176

per household, trailed by South Lebanon at LL20,218,626. This variance in debt values signifies notable regional disparities in financial obligations among Syrian refugee households.

In terms of debt-free households, Beirut was the governorate with the highest percentage of refugees, at 20%. This was followed by South Lebanon at 17% and Akkar at 16%. In contrast, Baalbek-El Hermel reported only 5% of refugee households without debts, with El Nabatieh slightly higher at 9%. These figures highlight the varying degrees of economic resilience exhibited across different regions. Both Beirut and Mount Lebanon share the highest proportion of households carrying debts exceeding LL45 million, each accounting for 34%. In contrast, South Lebanon exhibited the lowest percentage of households with debts surpassing this threshold.

Figure 8: Median debt per household in LBP (for households with debt) by governorate

Total	28,077,939
Akkar	17,231,176
Baalbek-El Hermel	28,077,939
Beirut	37,437,252
Bekaa	29,038,970
El Nabatieh	30,462,351
Mount Lebanon	31,077,939
North Lebanon	24,718,626
South Lebanon	20,218,626
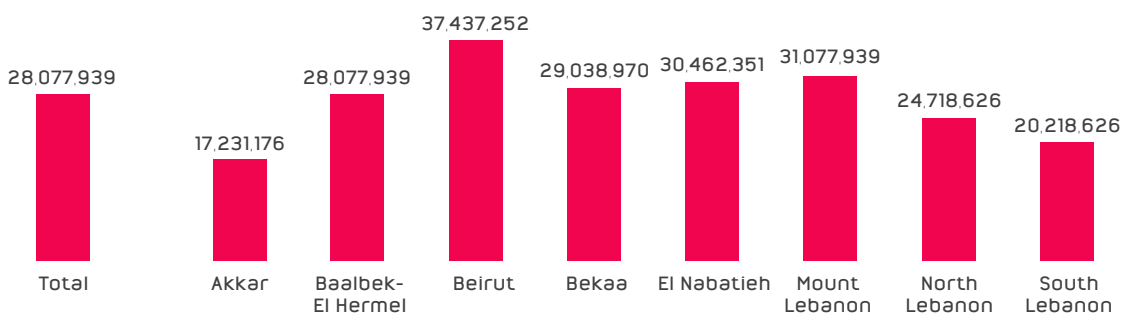
Figure 9: Median debt per household in USD (for households with debt) by governorate

	Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
	300	184	300	400	310	325	332	264	216
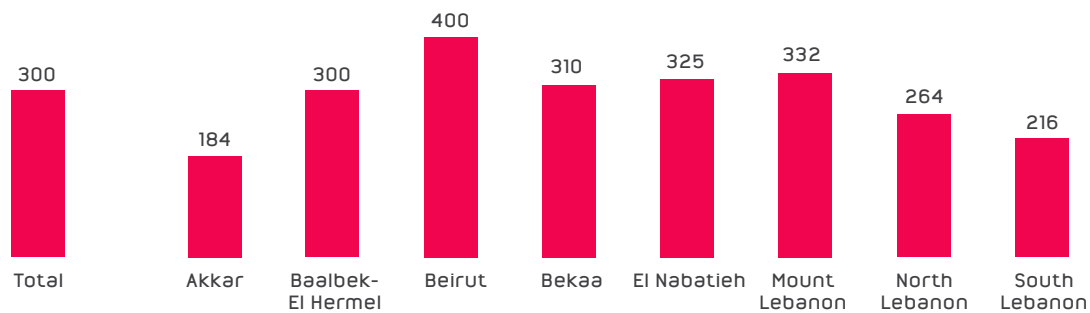
Figure 10: Categorical debt per household by governorate

Legend: No debt | ≥ LL15,000,000 | LL 15,000,001–30,000,000 | LL30,000,001–45,000,000 | › LL45,000,001

	Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
› LL45,000,001	29%	17%	30%	34%	33%	33%	34%	25%	14%
LL30,000,001–45,000,000	12%	9%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	11%	12%
LL 15,000,001–30,000,000	21%	19%	27%	14%	21%	22%	17%	25%	28%
≥ LL15,000,000	27%	38%	26%	20%	24%	23%	27%	28%	29%
No debt	12%	16%	5%	20%	12%	9%	11%	11%	17%
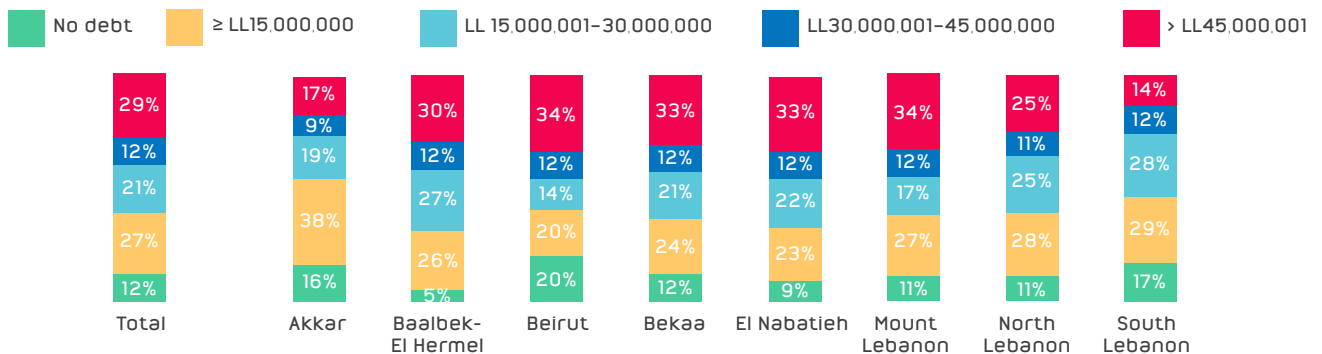
Refugees living above the SMEB exhibited slightly higher rates of households free of debt, at 13%, in comparison to those below the SMEB, at 11%. In parallel, households exceeding the SMEB had higher mean debts per household (LL57,408,395) and per capita (LL19,098,109) when compared with households below the SMEB, which reported mean debt per household and per capita values of LL43,190,228 and LL8,422,272, respectively. Households headed by females had marginally higher rates of debt-free status compared to male-headed households (14% versus 11%). However, male-headed households demonstrated a higher propensity for debts above LL45 million (31%) in contrast to female-headed households (17%). Households with at least one member with a disability presented higher rates of accumulating debts exceeding LL45 million (32%) in comparison to households without any members with disabilities (27%). Moreover, the mean debt per household was higher among households with at least one member with a disability (LL52,114,186) compared to those without members with disabilities (LL46,151,630). Refugees classified as food secure demonstrated the highest proportion of households with no accumulated debts, at 27%. In contrast, those categorised as marginally food secure, moderately food insecure and severely food insecure exhibited progressively lower percentages of debt-free households (11%, 11% and 5%, respectively).

Reasons for borrowing

Similar to the trends observed in 2022, Syrian refugee households continued to cite the acquisition of food and payment of rent as the primary reasons for borrowing money in 2023, with rates of 90% and 52%, respectively. There was an increase in the percentage of households resorting to borrowing for rent payments, rising from 46% in 2022 to 52% in 2023. Conversely, the percentage of households borrowing money for medical expenses experienced a slight decline, decreasing from 35% in 2022 to 32% in 2023. Despite this decrease, it retained its position as the third most prevalent reason for borrowing money.

The governorate of Bekaa had the highest borrowing rates among households, 96%, primarily to meet their food needs. Following closely, Baalbek-El Hermel exhibited a borrowing rate of 95% for similar purposes while also standing out for having the highest proportion of households resorting to borrowing for transportation costs (5%) and to repay existing debts (7%). Conversely, Akkar demonstrated a lower reliance on borrowing for food, with 80% of households resorting to such measures. Beirut had the highest rates of borrowing money for infant formula at 16%. North Lebanon (64%) and El Nabatieh (59%) had the highest demand for borrowing to cover rent expenses.

Figure 11: Main reasons for borrowing money in 2022 and 2023

| | 2022 | 2023 |

Food — 90% (2023), 93% (2022)
Rent — 52% (2023), 46% (2022)
Medicine — 32% (2023), 35% (2022)
Essential non-food items — 29% (2023), 35% (2022)
Health care — 20% (2023), 24% (2022)
Infant formula — 9% (2023), 12% (2022)
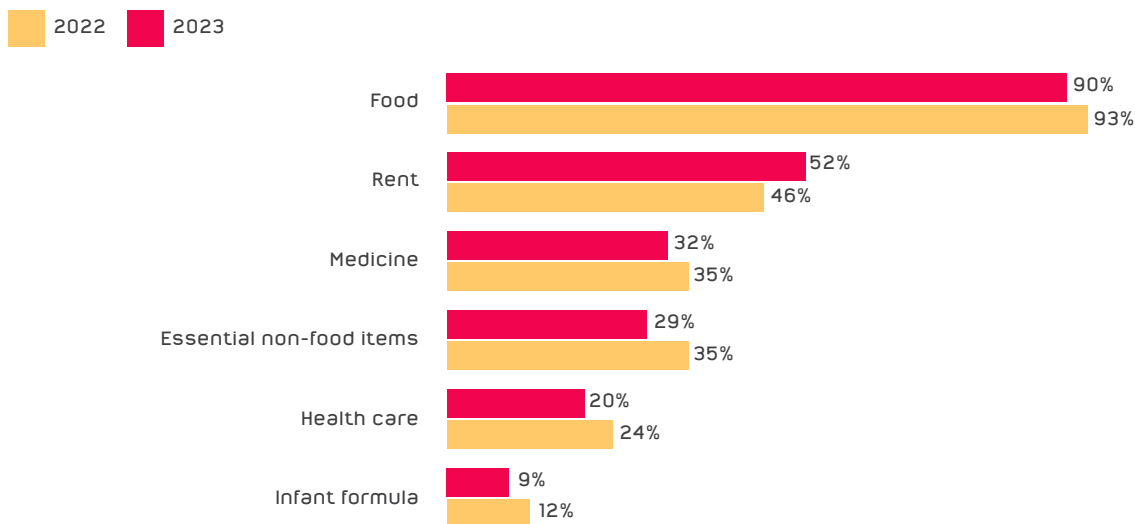
Figure 12: Sources for borrowing money in 2022 and 2023

| | 2022 | 2023 |

Friends/relatives in Lebanon — 86% (2023), 85% (2022)
Supermarket owner — 52% (2023), 43% (2022)
Landlord — 16% (2023), 15% (2022)
Friends/relatives outside Lebanon — 4% (2023), 3% (2022)
Pharmacy — 3% (2023), 5% (2022)
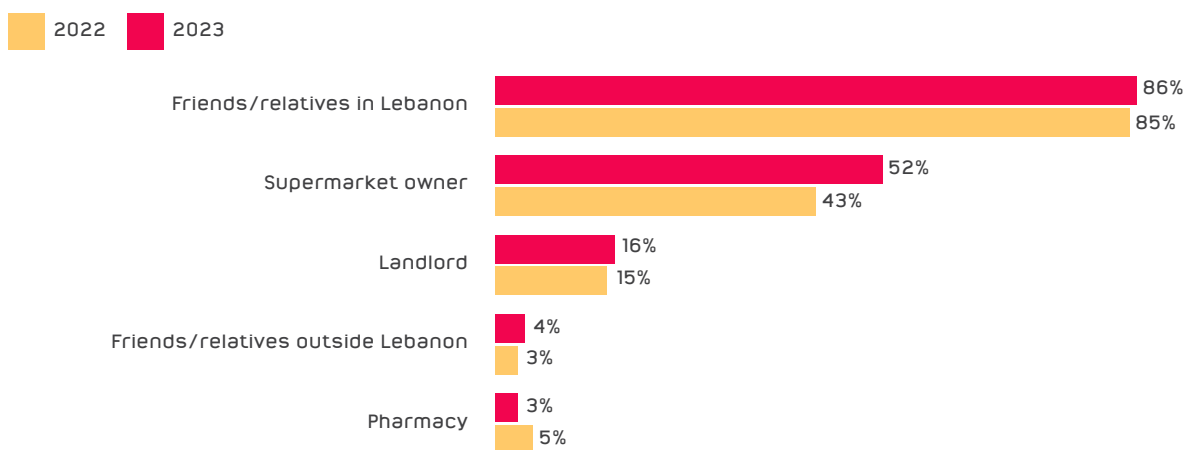
In the context of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, friends continued to be the primary source of borrowing, with 85% relying on them in 2022 and 86% in 2023. Supermarkets emerged as the second most cited source, with 43% of refugees reporting borrowing from supermarkets, indicating a decrease of 9% from the preceding year. Borrowing from friends outside Lebanon and landlords maintained consistent rates in 2023. However, there was a marginal decline in the rate of borrowing from pharmacies, from 5% in 2022 to 3% in 2023. These findings highlight the enduring significance of social networks, particularly friends, as a key support system for Syrian refugees in need while also pointing to subtle shifts in borrowing patterns from other sources, such as supermarkets and pharmacies over the specified time frame.

In the governorate of Akkar, households exhibited the highest reported rates of borrowing from friends in Lebanon, reaching 94%. Meanwhile, in Baalbek-El Hermel and Bekaa, approximately seven out of ten refugees resorted to borrowing from supermarkets. El Nabatieh stood out with the highest proportion of refugees borrowing from landlords, at 32%, followed by households in Bekaa at 29%.

Characteristics of economic vulnerability

The details below demonstrate the profiling of the most economically vulnerable households and those falling below S/MEB thresholds.

Debt: In 2023, a significant proportion of Syrian refugee households in Lebanon, specifically 88%, reported being in debt. Notably, households living between the SMEB and MEB, as well as those living between the MEB and ≥ 125% of the MEB, reported a comparatively lower incidence of refugees without accumulated debt, standing at 13% and 14%, respectively. Conversely, households living ≥ 125% of the MEB demonstrated the highest percentage of accumulated debt exceeding LL45 million, accounting for 36%. Following closely were households situated between the MEB and ≥ 125% of the MEB, comprising 34% with accumulated debt exceeding the specified threshold. The overall debt amount witnessed an escalation in 2023 when compared with the preceding years, reaching approximately LL48 million per household.

Reason for borrowing: The primary reason for borrowing among Syrian refugee households was to address essential food needs, with a substantial 88% relying on taking on debts for this purpose. Furthermore, those living between the SMEB and MEB exhibited elevated rates of borrowing specifically for covering rent expenses, reaching 55%. Similarly, refugees in households living between the MEB and ≥ 125% of the MEB demonstrated heightened rates of borrowing to meet healthcare costs, accounting for 24%.

Shelter: A total of 72% of households living in non-permanent shelters fell below the SMEB, in contrast to 59% of households dwelling in residential and 71% of households in non-residential shelters.

Food security: Nine out of ten households experiencing severe food insecurity were living below the SMEB. In contrast, 32% of households classified as food secure were living at or above

125% of the MEB. Similarly, 76% of households facing moderate food insecurity were living below the SMEB. This underscores the correlation between residing below the SMEB and a higher likelihood of experiencing food insecurity, distinguishing this group from those across other SMEB and MEB categories.

Working members: In households with no working members, 62% were living below the SMEB, while among households with at least one working member, 64% were in this category. Additionally, households with at least one working member displayed slightly higher rates of residing between the MEB and ≥ 125% of the MEB (9%) compared to those without working members (8%). For households below the SMEB, the total monthly income was reported at LL8,363,889, in contrast to an income of LL11,494,860 among households residing above the SMEB.

Coping strategies: In terms of coping strategies, a significant 90% of households situated below the SMEB relied on asset depletion coping strategies, in contrast to 86% of households living above the SMEB. This suggests that households below the SMEB exhibit higher instances of adopting coping strategies that may render them more vulnerable in the long term. Similarly, households residing below the SMEB demonstrated elevated rates of employing food-based coping strategies, with 90%, compared to 87% among households living above the SMEB.

Demographics: In terms of demographics, households below the SMEB had an average size of five members, while households between the SMEB and MEB and between the MEB and < 125% of the MEB had an average size of four members each. In contrast, households ≥ 125% of the MEB had an average size of three members. Among households with at least one member with a disability, 66% were situated below the SMEB, as opposed to 62% of households with no disability. Similarly, a higher percentage of male-headed households (64%) were below the SMEB compared to female-headed households (59%).

Assistance for basic needs

Assistance and support are provided to vulnerable Syrian refugees to help them meet their basic needs, either through in-kind distribution or cash-based interventions. Cash assistance allows refugee households to meet their basic needs in a dignified manner by allowing them to prioritise their purchases according to their needs.

Currently, the three largest cash programmes for Syrian refugees are as follows:

Multipurpose cash assistance: Recipients of multipurpose cash assistance receive a monthly cash transfer (transferred through ATM cards or over the counter through money transfer agents). At the time of the survey (June–July 2023), eligible households were receiving $25 per month. Nationally, around 182,300 Syrian refugee households were assisted with multipurpose cash in July 2023.

"**Cash for food assistance and food e-cards:** Food assistance is provided to families through two modalities. Some families can redeem unrestricted cash assistance, while others receive restricted cash through an e-card that can be redeemed at specific shops across the country to buy food items. At the time of the assessment, the food assistance transfer value (for both modalities) was $20 per person (up to a maximum of six people). Nationally, around 1 million Syrian households received food assistance in July 2023."

Social grants: These case programmes target **individuals with specific vulnerabilities** with cash grants. The cash is unrestricted and redeemed through money transfer agents across the country. Nationally, around 9,300 Syrian individuals with specific vulnerabilities were supported through social grants in July 2023.

Seasonal Assistance: During the winter season, vulnerable households face challenges in securing additional needs (including heating costs). Thus, seasonal cash and in-kind assistance are rolled out through the Basic Assistance sector. All families living in poverty are eligible for winter assistance. Transfer values and core relief items are based on the winter expenditure basket and are provided from November to March.

Other types of cash assistance from which Syrian refugees can benefit include sector-specific cash such as cash for rent, protection, emergency situations, education and work, among other uses.

Annex 1: MEB and SMEB

	Below SMEB, LL5,663,000	SMEB-MEB, LL5,663,000–6,889,600	MEB-125% MEB, LL6,889,600–8,612,000	Above 125% MEB, LL8,612,000
Total	63%	13%	9%	15%
Governorate				
Akkar	81%	8%	5%	6%
Baalbek-El Hermel	71%	10%	7%	11%
Beirut	44%	12%	14%	30%
Bekaa	59%	17%	9%	15%
El Nabatieh	51%	13%	12%	24%
Mount Lebanon	57%	14%	12%	18%
North Lebanon	74%	10%	6%	10%
South Lebanon	60%	9%	12%	19%
Shelter type				
Residential	59%	14%	10%	16%
Non-residential	71%	9%	6%	13%
Non-permanent	72%	10%	7%	11%
Food security status				
Food secure	35%	16%	17%	32%
Marginally food secure	55%	15%	11%	18%
Moderately food insecure	76%	9%	6%	9%
Severely food insecure	89%	3%	2%	6%
Gender of the head of household				
Male	64%	13%	9%	14%
Female	60%	13%	10%	18%
HH with at least one member with disability				
Yes	66%	12%	8%	13%
No	61%	13%	10%	16%

Annex 2: Debt in Lebanese pounds (LL)

	Total debt in LL (all HH)	Total debt in LL per capita (all HH)	total debt in LL (HH with debt)	total debt in LL per capita (HH with debt)	Debt categories in LL					
					No debt	Debt group: ≤ LL15,000,000	Debt group: ≤ LL15,000,000	Debt group: LL15,000,001–30,000,000	Debt group: LL30,000,001–45,000,000	Debt group: > 45,000,000
Total	23,398,283	5,279,657	28,077,939	6,239,542	12%	27%	27%	21%	12%	29%
Governorate										
Akkar	14,000,000	3,333,333	17,231,176	4,307,794	16%	38%	38%	19%	9%	17%
Baalbek-El Hermel	28,077,939	5,849,571	28,077,939	6,239,542	5%	26%	26%	27%	12%	30%
Beirut	28,077,939	6,562,197	37,437,252	8,509,742	20%	20%	20%	14%	12%	34%
Bekaa	27,359,313	6,239,542	29,038,970	6,776,750	12%	24%	24%	21%	12%	31%
El Nabatieh	28,077,939	5,348,179	30,462,351	5,962,990	9%	23%	23%	22%	12%	33%
Mount Lebanon	28,000,000	6,239,542	31,077,939	7,399,509	11%	27%	27%	17%	12%	34%
North Lebanon	21,718,626	4,835,645	24,718,626	5,915,588	11%	28%	28%	25%	11%	25%
South Lebanon	18,718,626	3,190,958	20,218,626	4,009,742	17%	29%	29%	28%	12%	14%
Shelter type										
Residential	23,398,283	5,447,622	28,077,939	6,287,071	12%	26%	26%	21%	12%	29%
Non-residential	20,000,000	4,679,657	24,231,176	5,743,725	12%	30%	30%	22%	10%	26%
Non-permanent	24,590,489	5,000,000	27,359,313	5,679,657	8%	31%	31%	22%	11%	28%
Food security status										
Food secure					27%	17%	17%	17%	9%	30%
Marginally food secure					11%	27%	27%	21%	11%	30%
Moderately food insecure					10%	28%	28%	22%	12%	27%
Severely food insecure					5%	39%	39%	21%	12%	24%
Gender of the head of household										
Male	26,718,626	5,531,232	28,802,179	6,239,542	11%	24%	24%	21%	12%	31%
Female	14,359,313	4,679,657	18,718,626	5,447,622	14%	40%	40%	22%	7%	17%
HH with at least one member with disability										
Yes	25,000,000	5,304,657	29,359,313	6,239,542	12%	25%	25%	20%	12%	32%
No	22,038,970	5,233,047	27,398,283	6,239,542	11%	28%	28%	22%	12%	27%

Annex 3: Reason for borrowing money (1/2)

	To buy food	To buy essential non-food items (toilet paper, shampoo, toothpaste, hygiene items, diapers)	To buy infant formula	To pay rent	To buy shelter materials	To buy house / apartment	To pay health care	To purchase medicine
Total	90%	29%	9%	52%	8%	0%	20%	32%
Governorate								
Akkar	80%	30%	6%	38%	4%	1%	28%	35%
Baalbek-El Hermel	96%	56%	9%	33%	7%	2%	22%	47%
Beirut	85%	30%	16%	48%	8%	1%	21%	17%
Bekaa	95%	41%	13%	53%	22%	0%	17%	43%
El Nabatieh	86%	26%	6%	59%	3%	0%	28%	25%
Mount Lebanon	89%	18%	7%	56%	3%	0%	18%	20%
North Lebanon	88%	15%	7%	64%	2%	0%	15%	24%
South Lebanon	84%	19%	12%	51%	3%	0%	30%	44%
Shelter type								
Residential	89%	24%	8%	58%	6%	0%	18%	28%
Non-residential	89%	29%	11%	49%	8%	0%	27%	31%
Non-permanent	94%	45%	12%	32%	13%	1%	23%	45%
Gender of the head of household								
Male	90%	29%	10%	53%	8%	0%	20%	31%
Female	88%	32%	4%	43%	9%	1%	20%	35%
HH with at least one member with disability								
Yes	91%	29%	8%	50%	6%	1%	26%	42%
No	88%	29%	10%	52%	9%	0%	16%	26%

Annex 3: Reason for borrowing money (2/2)

	To purchase water	For transport	To repay other, existing debts	To procure sponsorship	To start a business	To procure productive assets (equipment for home-based work)	For documentation/legal state fees (passports/marriage certificates)/ legal stay fees	Other
Total	2%	2%	4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	1%	3%
Governorate								
Akkar	2%	2%	4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0%	2%
Baalbek-El Hermel	4%	5%	7%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1%	4%
Beirut	0%	0%	2%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	2%	5%
Bekaa	3%	4%	5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0%	3%
El Nabatieh	2%	2%	1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.7%	2%	3%
Mount Lebanon	2%	1%	2%	0.3%	0.6%	0.1%	0%	3%
North Lebanon	0%	1%	2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.1%	0%	1%
South Lebanon	5%	5%	3%	0.1%	0.4%	0.0%	2%	5%
Shelter type								
Residential	2%	2%	3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	1%	3%
Non-residential	2%	3%	2%	0.5%	1.4%	0.0%	0%	3%
Non-permanent	2%	4%	5%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0%	3%
Gender of the head of household								
Male	2%	2%	4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	1%	3%
Female	3%	2%	2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0%	2%
HH with at least one member with disability								
Yes	3%	3%	3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	1%	3%
No	2%	2%	4%	0.1%	0.5%	0.2%	0%	3%

Annex 3: Sources of borrowing

	Friends/ relatives in Lebanon	Friends/ relatives out of Lebanon	Money lender	Local associations/ charity	Landlord	Supermarket owner	Shawish	Pharmacy	Other
Total	86%	4%	0.4%	0.1%	15%	43%	1%	3%	0%
Governorate									
Akkar	94%	1%	1.3%	0.0%	6%	21%	0%	1%	1%
Baalbek-El Hermel	77%	2%	0.6%	0.3%	14%	73%	3%	5%	0%
Beirut	94%	7%	0.0%	0.0%	2%	10%	0%	0%	1%
Bekaa	87%	2%	0.5%	0.0%	29%	75%	2%	5%	1%
El Nabatieh	73%	2%	0.6%	0.0%	32%	50%	0%	8%	0%
Mount Lebanon	89%	6%	0.0%	0.0%	11%	31%	0%	1%	0%
North Lebanon	85%	6%	0.5%	0.2%	13%	20%	0%	2%	0%
South Lebanon	88%	3%	0.0%	0.7%	6%	18%	0%	3%	0%
Shelter type									
Residential	87%	5%	0.4%	0.1%	16%	38%	0%	3%	0%
Non-residential	89%	3%	0.3%	0.1%	15%	31%	0%	3%	1%
Non-permanent	83%	2%	0.5%	0.0%	12%	63%	3%	4%	1%
Gender of the head of household									
Male	87%	4%	0.3%	0.1%	16%	42%	1%	3%	0%
Female	86%	3%	1.0%	0.3%	15%	46%	1%	1%	0%
HH with at least one member with disability									
Yes	87%	4%	0.5%	0.0%	15%	39%	1%	4%	0%
No	86%	4%	0.3%	0.2%	16%	45%	1%	2%	0%

Food Security

Key findings

- Rates of food security among Syrian refugees have improved. In 2023, a total of 42% of households experienced food insecurity, down from 56% in 2022, indicating a 14% increase in food security levels.
- Regional disparities were observed, with Akkar, Baalbek-El Hermel (51% each), North Lebanon (48%) and Bekaa (45%) having the highest food insecurity rates.
- All governorates witnessed an improvement in food security rates in 2023 compared to 2022, with the most significant increase in Beirut (23% increase), North Lebanon (21% increase) and Bekaa (19% increase).
- Female-headed households had higher rates of moderate food insecurity (44%) and severe food insecurity (5%) compared to male-headed households (38% and 2% respectively).
- Coping strategies played a vital role in food security, with 11% of households not employing any livelihood-based coping strategies in 2023, up from 8% in 2022.
- Food insecure households relied heavily on e-cards used in WFP food shops (36%) and informal credit/debt (29%) as their main income sources.
- Non-permanent shelters had the highest percentage of food-insecure households (59%), while non-residential shelters were at 51% and residential shelters at 36%.

The food security status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon was assessed using a comprehensive indicator that combines three key dimensions of food security: the Food Consumption Score (FCS) for current dietary consumption, the proportion of household spending on food as a reflection of economic vulnerability and livelihood-based coping strategies that provide insights into long-term resilience. Households are categorised into four groups: food secure, marginally food secure, moderately food insecure and severely food insecure based on these indicators. The FCS evaluates food consumption and categorises households into acceptable, borderline, or poor consumption. The share of food expenditure reflects economic vulnerability, while livelihood coping strategies assess the sustainability of households' livelihoods. The methodology ensures consistency for comparative analysis with previous data. It is derived from the WFP Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI) for consistency with previous reports. A detailed explanation is provided in Annex 1.

Figure 1: Food insecurity trends for the period 2022–23
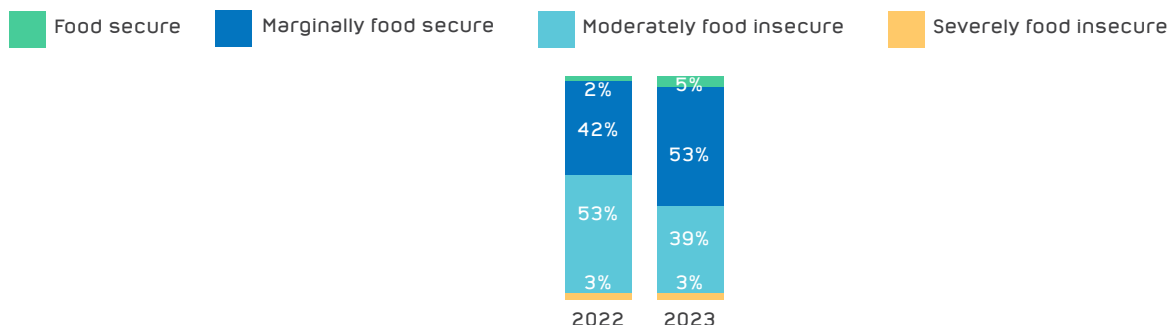
In 2023, 58% of Syrian refugee households were considered food secure compared to 44% in 2022. A combined 42% of households experienced either moderate or severe food insecurity, reflecting an improvement from the previous year (2022) when this figure was at 56%. While the prevalence of food insecurity remained relatively consistent in 2020–2021, it saw a significant increase in 2022 but is now showing a decline in 2023. In comparison to 2022, the rate of severe food insecurity has reduced among the refugee population, with 2.6% in 2023 as opposed to 3.2% in 2022. Similarly, households experiencing moderate food insecurity have seen a substantial decrease of 14%, with 39% in 2023 compared to 53% in 2022.

The improvement in food security is attributed to the improvement in all the food security components: coping strategies, food consumption and food expenditure share. In 2023, fewer refugee households were resorting to asset-depletion coping strategies; households had improved food consumption scores and their food expenditure share also significantly decreased.

Figure 2: Food insecurity by governorate
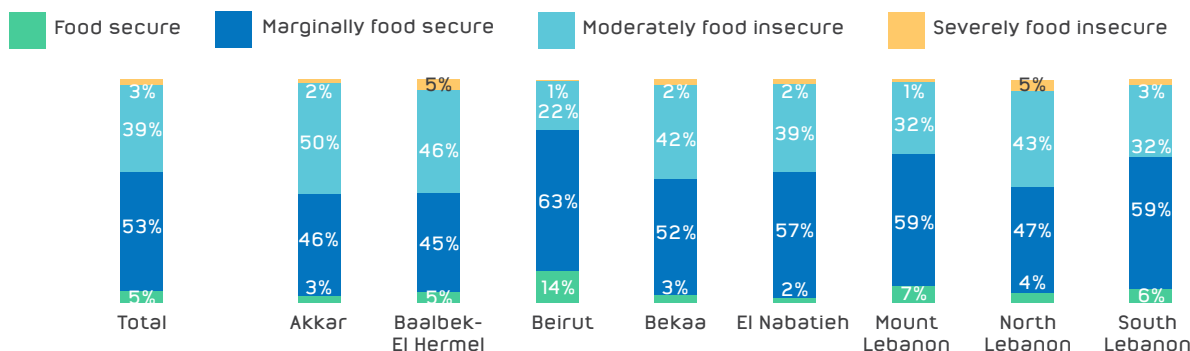
North Lebanon and Baalbek-El Hermel showed the highest proportions of households experiencing severe food insecurity at 5%, with South Lebanon following at 3%. Akkar had the highest percentage of households with moderate food insecurity, reaching 50% and Baalbek-El Hermel followed with 46%.

In comparison to 2022, all governorates experienced reduced rates of food insecurity. The most substantial decreases were observed in Beirut, with a drop of 23%; North Lebanon, with a reduction of 21% and Bekaa, with a decrease of 19%. Smaller declines were noted in Akkar, with a reduction of 16% and Baalbek-El Hermel, with a decrease of 14%. The most significant reductions in rates of severe food insecurity occurred in Akkar, with a 3% decrease.

Households headed by females experienced higher rates of moderate food insecurity, 44%, in contrast to 38% for households headed by males. In terms of severe food insecurity, the disparity was also notable, with female-headed households at 5% and male-headed households at 2%.

Food insecurity rates in residential shelters were slightly below the overall rates, registering at 35%, whereas non-permanent shelters had a rate of 59%, and non-residential shelters had a rate of 51%. The rates of food insecurity among households receiving assistance (42%) were similar to those of households not receiving assistance (40%). In households without any members with a disability, the rate of food insecurity was 5% higher compared to households with at least one member with a disability, with 40% as opposed to 45%.

Components of food security

Food consumption

Figure 3: Food consumption trends for the period 2020–23

■ Poor   ■ Borderline   ■ Acceptable
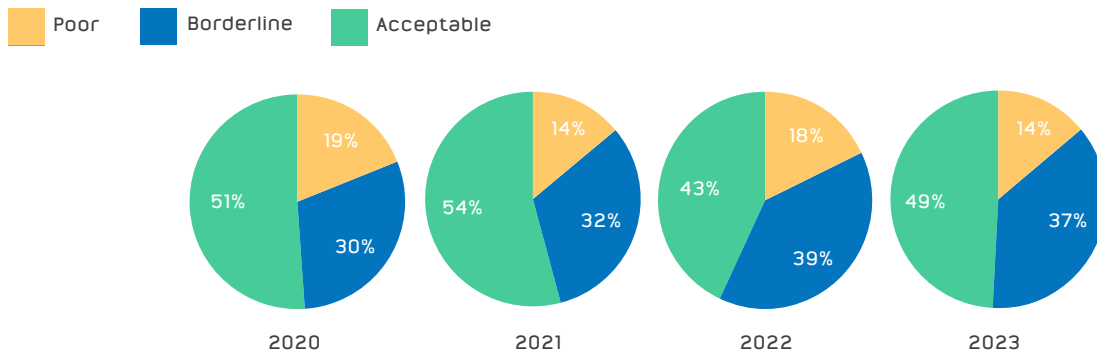
In alignment with the trends observed in food insecurity rates, the rates of inadequate food consumption in 2023 have been recorded at 51%, reflecting an improvement from 57% in 2022.

Syrian refugees in Lebanon have exhibited notable progress in their food consumption scores between 2022 and 2023. A comparative analysis of food consumption scores for 2023 against the figures from 2022 reveals a 4% reduction in the prevalence of poor food consumption, a 2% decrease in borderline food consumption and a notable 6% increase in the prevalence of acceptable food consumption. This positive shift in food consumption patterns underlines a favourable development in the overall well-being of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Livelihood-based coping strategies

The assessment of a household's coping capacity relies on evaluating livelihood-based coping strategies, which are recognised as a crucial determinant of food security. As individuals and households confront the challenge of meeting their essential needs, they tend to progressively adopt increasingly severe coping strategies until all available options have been exhausted. It is important to note that coping strategies have a direct correlation with food insecurity, as a heightened reliance on coping mechanisms is indicative of an exacerbation of food insecurity.

In 2023, 11% of refugee households did not employ any livelihood-based coping strategies, marking an increase from the 8% observed in 2022. Meanwhile, 63% of households resorted to stress coping strategies, which exhibited a slight decrease from the 65% reported in the previous year. Conversely, 21% of refugee households found themselves compelled to adopt more severe crisis coping strategies, with an additional 5% resorting to emergency coping strategies. This data suggests that refugees (in comparison to the figures from 2022) are relying to a lesser extent on coping strategies to manage their circumstances.

Food expenditure share

The food expenditure share serves as a critical estimate of both economic vulnerability and food insecurity. It signifies that the higher the proportion a household allocates to food in relation to its overall expenditures, the greater its susceptibility to economic vulnerability. The food expenditure share maintains a direct correlation with the level of food insecurity. Households that allocate less than 50% of their total expenditure to food are typically regarded as more food secure in comparison to those spending over 50% of their resources on food.

In 2023, 46% of refugee households allocated less than 50% of their expenditure to food, reflecting a notable increase from the 27% recorded in 2022. Conversely, 13% of households directed 65–75% of their expenditure towards food. The proportion of households dedicating 75% or more of their total expenditure to food was only 9%, a decrease from the 12% observed in 2022. These statistics indicate a decrease in the number of Syrian refugee households experiencing food insecurity, as evidenced by their food expenditure shares.

Figure 4: Percentage of household expenditure on food (2020–23)

■ < 50% Low   ■ 50–65% Medium   ■ 66–75% High   ■ > 75% Very high
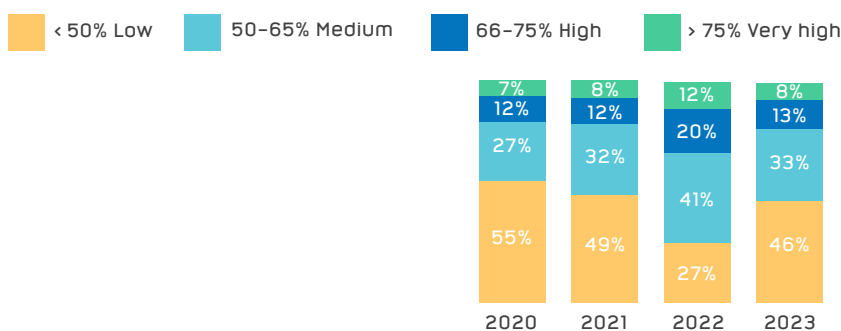
Characteristics of food insecurity

The following section presents the characteristics of food-insecure households, especially in terms of sector indicators.

SMEB/MEB: In households below the SMEB (with assistance), a combined 51% experienced moderate to severe food insecurity, compared to 26% observed in households exceeding the SMEB threshold. Households living above the SMEB displayed a higher rate of food security in comparison to those living below it, with 9% for the former and 3% for the latter.

Debt: Mean debt levels varied across different food security levels, with food-secure households averaging LL43,563,820, moderately food-insecure households at LL39,969,881 and severely food-insecure households at LL42,298,078. Debt-free households accounted for 27% among the food secure, 10.5% among the moderately food insecure, and 5% among the severely food insecure. Food-secure households had the highest proportion at 30%, with debt exceeding LL45,000,000. Furthermore, a significant 90% of households reported "buying food" as the primary reason for incurring debt, with "paying rent" following closely at 51%.

Expenditure levels: Food-secure households had the highest average total expenditures, with LL32,393,627 per household and LBP 8,089,400 per capita. In contrast, severely food-insecure households allocated less than half of the resources spent by their food-secure counterparts, with mean total expenditures per household and per capita amounting to LL14,725,810 and LL3,438,125, respectively.

Income sources: Among the various food-security categories, severe food-insecure households displayed the highest reliance on informal credit/debt, with 17% of households using this as their primary source of income. Additionally, they also had the highest proportion of households (19%) relying on e-cards used in WFP food shops as their main income source. Moderately food-insecure households reported similar percentages, with 12% depending on informal credit/debt and 17% relying on e-cards used in WFP food shops as their primary income source. The highest portion of food-secure households reported trade work (blacksmith, plumber, mechanic, etc.) as their main source of income at 16%.

Households with working members: There is a correlation between the employment status of households and the prevalence of food insecurity. Specifically, 49% of households lacking working members experience food insecurity, with 4% facing severe food insecurity. In contrast, households with at least one working member exhibit lower rates, with 39% experiencing food insecurity and 2% faced with severe food insecurity. This implies that the inclusion of a working member within a household may play a role in easing the incidence of food insecurity.

Demographics: The prevalence of food insecurity was notably higher among households headed by females in comparison to those headed by males. Specifically, 49% of female-headed households experienced food insecurity, while 40% of male-headed households faced a similar situation. Moreover, 5% of female-headed households fell into the category of severely food insecure, as opposed to 2% of male-headed households.

When considering the types of shelters, non-permanent shelters exhibited the highest percentage of households classified as severely food insecure, at 5%, in contrast to 4% in non-residential shelters and 2% in residential shelters. In addition, non-permanent shelters also had the highest percentage of refugees experiencing moderate food insecurity, with 54%, while this figure was 47% in non-residential shelters and 34% in residential shelters, respectively.

Annex 1

The food security status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is assessed using a comprehensive indicator that amalgamates three key dimensions of food security:

- **FCS** (Food Consumption Score): This dimension gauges the current dietary consumption patterns.
- **Food as a Share of Total Expenditure:** This aspect serves as a reflection of economic vulnerability, with a higher proportion of household spending on food indicating increased vulnerability.
- **Livelihood-Based Coping Strategies:** This dimension delves into the strategies employed by households to manage asset depletion, providing insights into their long-term capacity to cope with various shocks and challenges.

To facilitate a comparative analysis with the 2022 data and previous assessment trends, we have retained the methodology for household classification used in prior VaSyR assessments, as elaborated below. Based on this methodology, households are categorised into four distinct groups:

- Food secure
- Marginally food secure
- Moderately food Insecure
- Severely food insecure

This systematic approach ensures consistency in evaluating the food security status of Syrian refugee households and allows for meaningful comparisons with data from previous years.

The food security classification is based on the amalgamation of three key indicators: FCS (Food Consumption Score), livelihood coping strategies and the share of expenditure on food.

The FCS assesses current food consumption and classifies households into distinct groups based on the variety and frequency of foods consumed, as denoted by the FCS index. These groups are categorised as acceptable, borderline and poor. An additional classification is established for food security, combining those with acceptable food consumption who have employed food-related coping strategies.

The share of food expenditure functions as a measure of economic vulnerability, sorting households according to the proportion of total expenses allocated to food. Households directing a larger portion of their expenditures toward food are deemed more susceptible to food insecurity.

Livelihood coping strategies gauge the sustainability of households' livelihoods and categorise them based on the severity of the coping strategies employed.

Households that abstain from applying any coping strategies fall within the food security category. The food security classification encompasses four categories: food secure, marginally food insecure, moderately food insecure, and severely food insecure.

The subsequent section delves into an exploration of the characteristics of food-insecure households, with a particular focus on sector-specific indicators.

	Food secure	**Marginally food insecure**	**Moderately food insecure**	**Severely food insecure**
Food consumption	Acceptable	Acceptable with food-based coping strategies	Borderline	Poor
Food expenditure share	< 50%	50–65%	65–75%	≥ 75%
Livelihood-based coping strategies	Household not adopting livelihood-based coping strategies	Stress coping strategies	Crisis coping strategies	Emergency coping strategies

The procedure for calculating food security categories involves the following steps:

1. Transform the three food security indicators into the following indices:

Coping Strategy Index

Food Expenditure Share Index

FCS (Food Consumption Score) Index, which is subsequently categorised into four distinct groups as outlined below:

FCS groups	Score
Acceptable	1
Acceptable with food-based coping strategies	2
Borderline	3
Poor	4

2. Determine the coping capacity indicator by calculating the rounded mean of the Coping Strategy Index and the Food Expenditure Share Index.

3. Compute the food security classification by calculating the rounded mean of the household's FCS (Food Consumption Score) Index and the Coping Capacity Indicator. This variable will yield a value ranging from one to four, effectively representing the overall food security status of the household.

Food security categories	Description
Food secure	Able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical coping strategies.
Marginally food insecure	Has minimally adequate food consumption without engaging in irreversible coping strategies; unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures.
Moderately food insecure	Has significant food consumption gaps OR marginally able to meet minimum food needs only with irreversible coping strategies.
Severely food insecure	Has extreme food consumption gaps OR has extreme loss of livelihood assets that will lead to food consumption gaps or worse.

The food security methodology employed in VaSyR exhibits a slight deviation from the WFP Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI) methodology. This decision was made to ensure consistency and comparability across the various VASyR reports spanning the past nine years, whereas CARI was developed and finalised in 2015. The primary disparity between the two methods, starting from 2019, lies in the consolidation of food consumption and food-related coping strategies within the second food consumption category, as illustrated in the table below.

		Food secure	Marginally food insecure	Moderately food insecure	Severely food insecure
CARI	Food consumption	Acceptable		Borderline	Poor
VASyR		Acceptable	Acceptable with food-related coping strategies	Borderline	Poor

WFP advises that the VASyR methodology should remain unchanged to preserve the consistency of results over the years. In terms of the nomenclature used for food security categories, as indicated in the prior edition of VASyR, the 2022 edition of VASyR aligns with the WFP corporate definitions nomenclature. It replaces the term "mildly food insecure" with "marginally food insecure." This adjustment ensures conformity with standardised terminology.

More information about food security classification in CARI is available from the following link:

https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000134704/download/

Annex 2: Food security status

	Food secure	Marginally food secure	Moderately food insecure	Severely food insecure
Total	5%	53%	39%	3%
Governorate				
Akkar	3%	46%	50%	2%
Baalbek-El Hermel	5%	45%	46%	5%
Beirut	14%	63%	22%	1%
Bekaa	3%	52%	42%	2%
El Nabatieh	2%	57%	39%	2%
Mount Lebanon	7%	59%	32%	1%
North Lebanon	4%	47%	43%	5%
South Lebanon	6%	59%	32%	3%
Shelter type				
Residential	7%	58%	34%	2%
Non-residential	3%	46%	47%	4%
Non-permanent	2%	39%	54%	5%
Food security status				
Food secure	100%	0%	0%	0%
Marginally food secure	0%	100%	0%	0%
Moderately food insecure	0%	0%	100%	0%
Severely food insecure	0%	0%	0%	100%
Gender of the head of household				
Male	6%	54%	38%	2%
Female	3%	48%	44%	5%
HH with at least one member with disability				
Yes	6%	54%	37%	2%
No	4%	51%	42%	3%

Livelihoods and Income

Key findings

- Employment rates among Syrian refugees in 2023 improved significantly compared to the previous year, rising from 33% to 39%, while unemployment rates decreased from 13% to 7%.
- Labour force participation among male refugees had a participation rate of 75%, while female participation remained at 19%.
- Beirut and South Lebanon had the highest employment rates at 44%, while Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel had the highest unemployment rates at 11% and 9%, respectively.
- In 2023, 75% of households had at least one working member, a significant increase from 69% in 2022.
- Beirut and El Nabatieh had the highest proportions of households with at least one working member at 87% and 86%, respectively.
- The employment rate among youths (15–24) increased from 26% in 2022 to 34% in 2023 and youth unemployment reduced from 14% to 7%.
- Despite income improvements, households could cover only 28% of the monthly food and non-food SMEB value, indicating financial challenges.
- Monthly income from employment for households with at least one working member increased from $80 in 2022 to $101 in 2023.
- Beirut reported the highest monthly income per capita, while Akkar and Baalbek-El Hermel had the lowest.

In the VASyR 2023 survey, information was gathered not only at the household level but also at the individual level. The data encompassed approximately 23,900 individuals, evenly distributed between genders, with 50% male and 50% female respondents and the average age was 21. The working-age population considered for analysis comprised individuals aged 15 to 64.

Employed: Includes all working-age refugees who have been involved in remunerative work within the last seven days. Employment comes in two forms; the first category includes refugees who have worked for at least one hour in the past week as labourers, employees or apprentices for others. The second category comprises refugees with jobs who were temporarily absent from work during the reference period, with the expectation of returning to their jobs. Employment also encompasses individuals engaged in their own or their family's business, such as fishing or farming, provided that the business is oriented towards product sales or profit generation. The employment rate is the proportion of the working-age population that is employed.

Unemployed: Unemployed individuals are those who are not engaged in any form of gainful work and are actively seeking employment during the reference period. Actively seeking employment means making efforts to secure a job or establish a business. Unemployed individuals must also be available for work and ready to accept a job if offered within a brief period, typically within two weeks. To be considered unemployed, refugees should not have worked for even one hour for pay or profit during the reference period. The unemployment rate is the proportion of the working-age population that is unemployed.

Outside the labour force: Includes all working-age refugees who neither held employment nor were classified as unemployed within the past seven days. These are individuals who are not currently engaged in any form of gainful work and they are not actively seeking employment or are not available to start work within a short period.

Labour force participation ratio: Calculated as the number of refugees within the labour force divided by the number of refugees within the working-age population, this ratio serves as a measure of the labour supply among refugees.

Unemployment ratio: Derived by dividing the number of unemployed refugees by the number of refugees within the labour force, this ratio provides an insight into the extent of unemployment within the refugee population.

Employment ratio: Obtained by dividing the number of employed refugees by the number of refugees within the labour force; this ratio reflects the proportion of the refugee population engaged in gainful employment.

Employment

The employment rates in 2023 showed significant improvement compared to the previous year, with employment rates rising from 33% in 2022 to 39%. Simultaneously, unemployment rates decreased from 13% in 2022 to 7% in 2023. Notably, 54% of individuals within the working-age group among refugees remained outside the labour force.

There were notable gaps in labour force participation between males and females. In 2023, male refugees had a labour force participation rate of 75%. Conversely, female labour force participation remained at 19%, showing no significant change from 2022.

Figure 1: Employed, unemployed and outside the labour force by population and gender
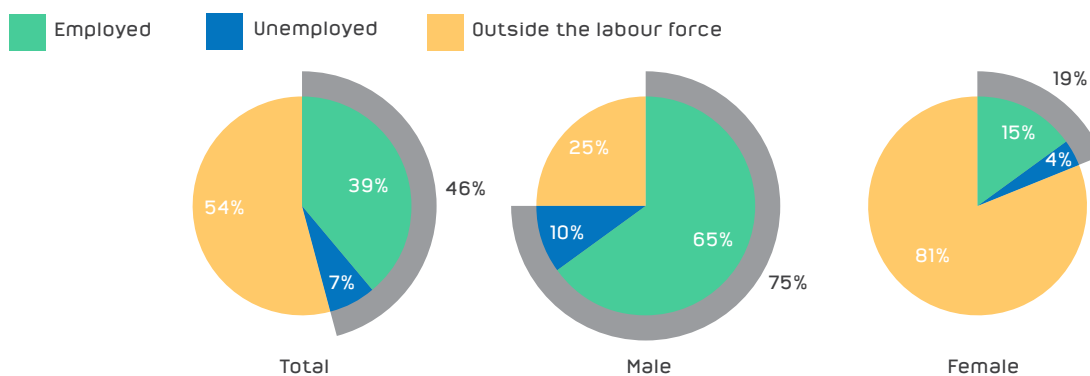
Figure 2: Employment, unemployment and the labour force trend for 2021–23
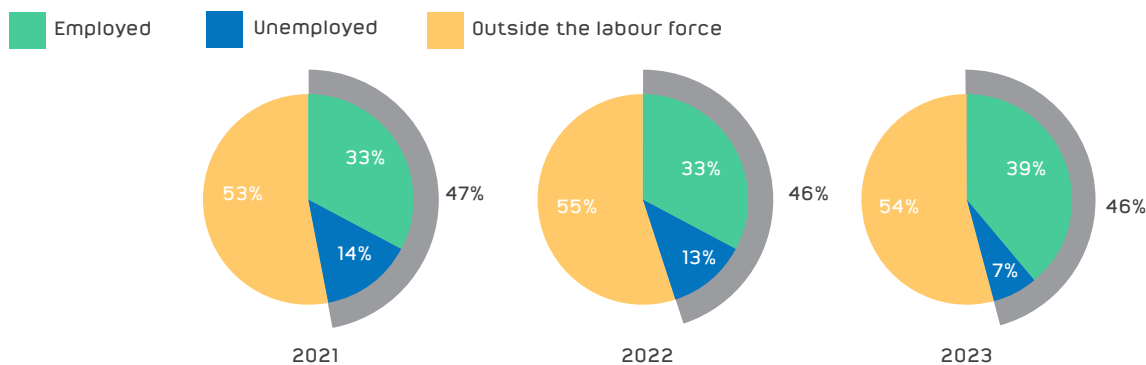
The governorates of Beirut and South Lebanon had the most significant employment rates among Syrian refugees, both at 44%. On the other hand, Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel had the highest unemployment rates, standing at 11% and 9%, respectively. Akkar, in contrast, had the highest proportion of refugees who were not in the labour force, at 63%, and the lowest percentage of refugees who were employed, at 30%.

Figure 3: Employed, unemployed and outside the labour force by governorate
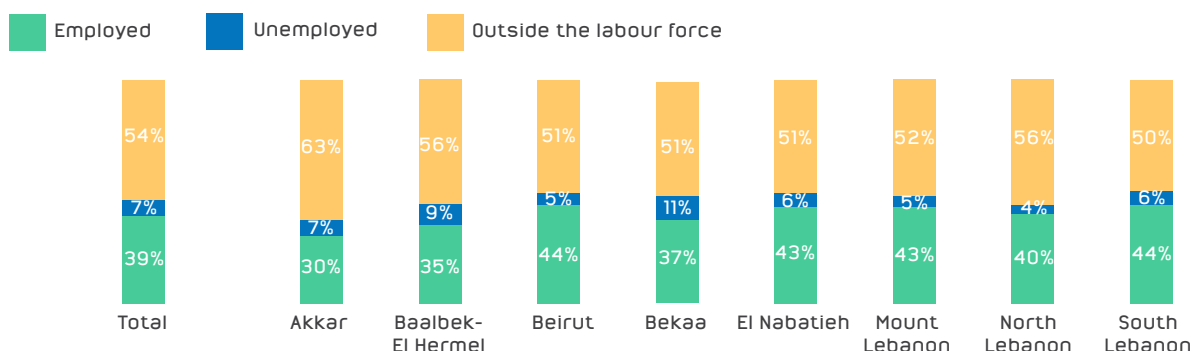
Regarding the sectors of work for employed refugees, agricultural employment retained its primary position at 31% in 2023 and 28% in 2022. This was followed by other service sectors, including hotels, restaurants, transportation and personal services, which accounted for 18% in 2023 and 15% in 2022. Construction work comprised 16% of the workforce in 2023, down from 18% in 2022.

When considering regional variations, refugees in Akkar and Baalbek-El Hermel demonstrated the highest reliance on agricultural work, both at 59%, followed by refugees in Bekaa at 47%. Refugees in

El Nabatieh commonly reported engagement in construction work, representing 38% of the workforce in that region. In contrast, the lowest rate of construction work was reported among refugees in Beirut at 6%. Beirut, Mount Lebanon and North Lebanon hosted the highest percentage of refugees working in other service sectors, such as hotels, restaurants, transportation and personal services, accounting for 24% and 25%, respectively. These findings shed light on the distribution of employment sectors among the refugee population, highlighting regional variations and preferences within the workforce.

Figure 4: Employment sectors by governorate
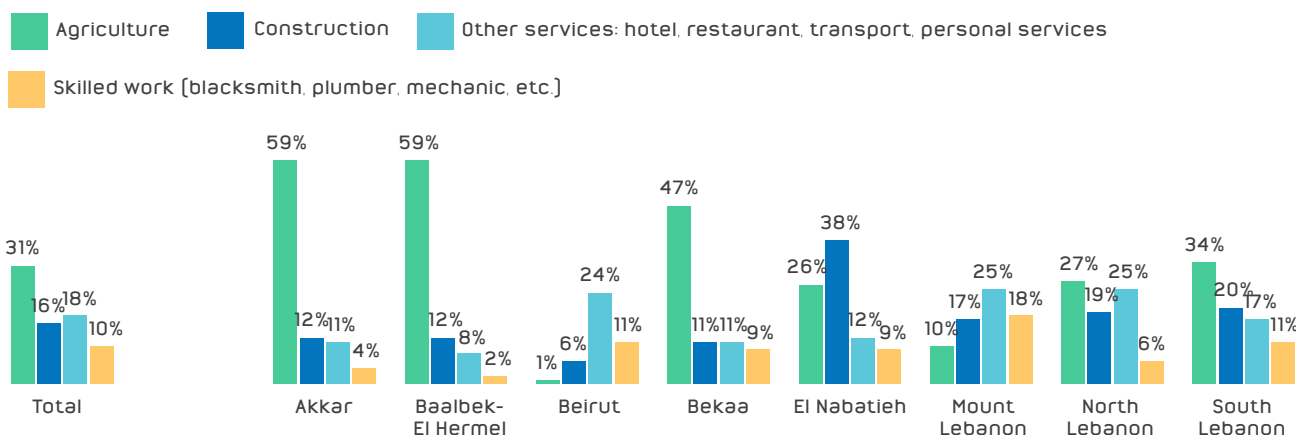
The primary cause of unemployment, as reported, has remained consistent at 60% since 2022, with refugees attributing it to the absence of job opportunities in the areas in which they reside. The second most common factor was the presence of dependent family members at 9%, followed by a lack of legal residency at 7%. In 2023, the refugees in Baalbek-El Hermel continued to have the highest percentage (68%) reporting a lack of job opportunities in the areas

in which they reside, followed closely by Bekaa (66%) and Akkar (58%). The governorates of South Lebanon and El Nabatieh had the highest proportions of refugees who were not employed due to having to take care of dependent children, at 10% and 12%, respectively. In Beirut, the most significant percentage of refugees (13%) were not working because of a lack of residency, with North Lebanon following closely at 12%.

Figure 5: Reasons for unemployment by gender

Total   Male   Female

No work in area where I live
- Total: 60%
- Male: 65%
- Female: 50%

Dependent family members
- Total: 9%
- Male: 2%
- Female: 22%

Lack of legal residency
- Total: 7%
- Male: 10%
- Female: 2%

Injury/medical condition/disability
- Total: 6%
- Male: 8%
- Female: 2%

Dependent children
- Total: 5%
- Male: 0%
- Female: 13%
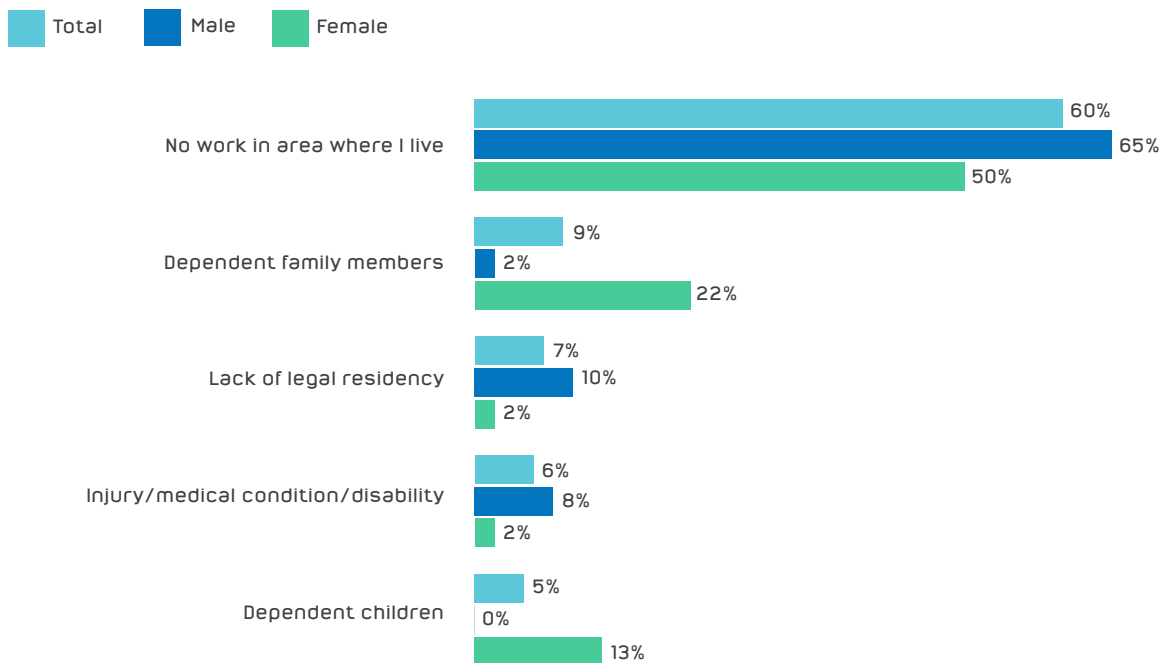
Youth employment

Around 16% of the refugee population can be classified as youths, falling within the age range of 15 to 24. Among this specific demographic, there was a notable increase in the employment rate, which rose to 34% in 2023 from the previous figure of 26% in 2022. Furthermore, it is significant that youth unemployment experienced a substantial reduction, approximately halving from 14% in 2022 to 7% in 2023. The labour force participation rate among the youth stayed at 41%.

In the regional breakdown, it was observed that South Lebanon had the highest rates of youth employment among refugees, reaching 39%, closely followed by Baalbek-El Hermel at 36%. Conversely, the region of Bekaa reported the highest rates of youth unemployment, standing at 12%. When comparing different types of shelters, youth employment was most prevalent among refugees residing in non-permanent shelters at 41%, in contrast to those in non-residential shelters at 37% and residential shelters at 31%. Similarly, households with at least one member with a disability exhibited higher youth employment rates, at 36%, in contrast to households with no members with disabilities, at 32%.

Figure 6: Youth employment rate, unemployment rate and labour force participation

Employed   Unemployed   Outside the labour force

	Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
Outside the labour force	59%	67%	53%	65%	52%	60%	61%	64%	56%
Unemployed	7%	8%	11%	5%	12%	4%	5%	3%	5%
Employed	34%	24%	36%	29%	36%	36%	33%	33%	39%
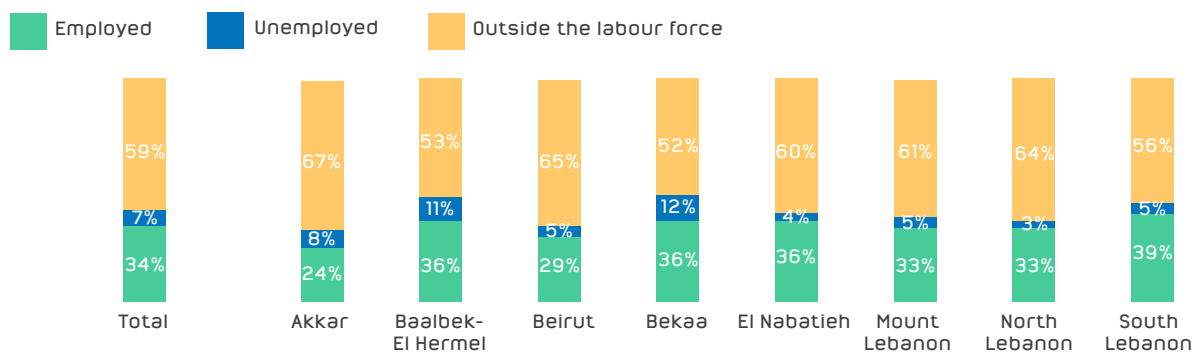
Figure 7: Employment sectors for employed youth

- Agriculture: 37%
- Other services: hotel, restaurant, transport, other services: 17%
- Construction: 12%
- Skilled work (blacksmith, plumber, mechanic, etc.): 11%
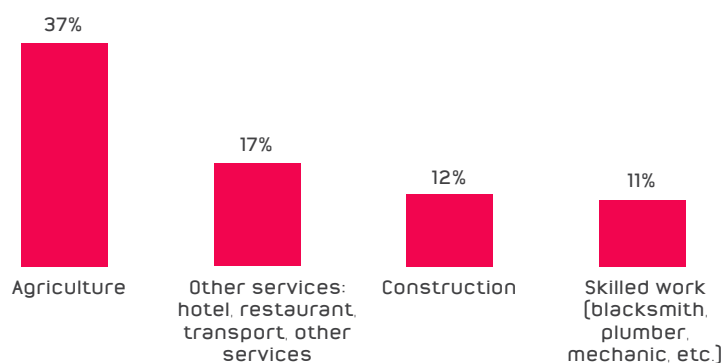
Households with at least one working member

In 2023, there was an increase in the percentage of households with at least one working member, marking a 6% rise from 69% in 2022 to 75% in 2023. This improvement was observed across all governorates, with the most significant growth reported in North Lebanon (an increase of 12%), transitioning from 67% in 2022 to 79% in 2023. Following closely, Bekaa experienced a 10% increase, going from 59% in 2022 to 69% in 2023. Conversely, Akkar and Baalbek -El Hermel retained their positions with the lowest percentages of households with at least one working member, recording 57% and 62%, respectively.

Beirut stood out with the highest proportion of households comprising at least one working member at 87%, closely followed by El Nabatieh at 86%. Moreover, this year witnessed a notable difference between male-headed and female-headed Syrian refugee households, with 79% of the former having at least one working member, compared to 56% for the latter.

Similarly, households with no members with disabilities displayed a higher rate of having at least one working member, with a rate of 77%, as opposed to households where at least one member had a disability, which registered a lower proportion at 71%. Furthermore, residential shelters showed the highest percentage of households with at least one working member, at 78%, while non-residential shelters and non-permanent shelters recorded lower percentages, at 74% and 64%, respectively.

Figure 8: Households with at least one working member by governorate (2022–23)
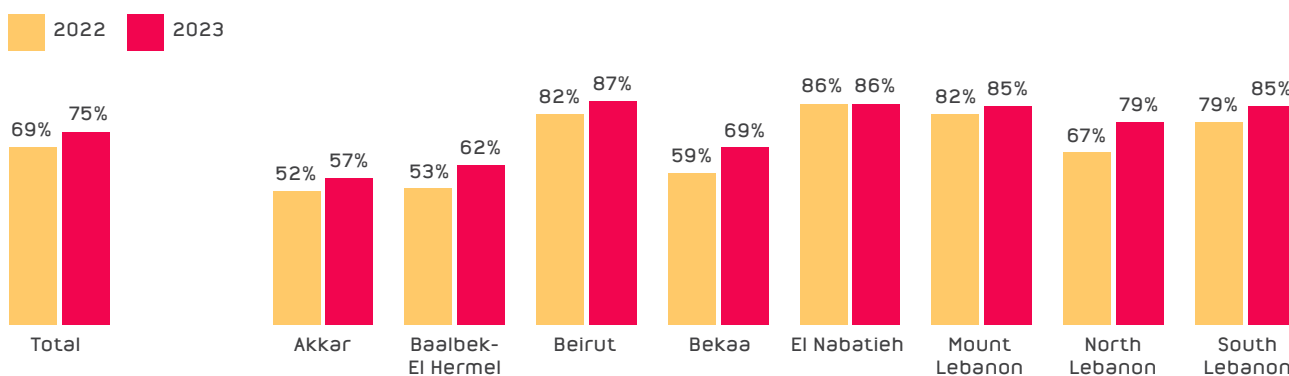
Household income

In 2023, there was a significant transformation in the financial landscape for refugees, highlighting their increasing self-reliance and adaptation to changing circumstances. The primary income source for refugee households, who were once mainly dependent on ATM cards provided by the UN or humanitarian organisations, has decreased from 22% in the previous year to 17%. These ATM cards include funding from UNHCR and WFP. E-cards used in WFP-contracted food shops also saw a considerable decline in their contribution to refugee income, falling from 29% in 2022 to 14% in 2023. These e-cards include WFP-restricted cash assistance that beneficiaries can only use for purchasing food from a WFP-contracted shop. This shift implies that refugees are diversifying their income sources, reducing their reliance on aid and increasing their engagement in income-generating activities. This transition is closely tied to the increase in employment rates observed in 2023, as refugees are taking on various income-generating activities.

In 2023, there was a rise in informal credit and debt, particularly from local shops, friends and hosts, which were the third most significant source of income for refugees at 12%. This marks a 2% increase compared to the previous year. Furthermore, the agriculture sector has gained importance as a main source of income, with the percentage of refugees reporting it as their primary income source increasing from 7% in 2022 to 12% in 2023. This signals an increasing engagement in agricultural activities among refugees, which can be seen as a positive step toward economic self-sufficiency. The number of refugees relying on construction work has experienced a slight increase, with 10% of refugees identifying this as their primary income source in 2023, compared to 9% in the previous year.

As for the combined three main sources of income, WFP FOOD SHOP e-cards and ATM cards from the UN or humanitarian organisations ranked second (43% each), preceded by informal credit from family or friends (66% versus 61% in 2022). There was also a considerable percentage that reported agriculture (22% versus 18% in 2022) and construction (15%, the same as in 2022) as their combined main source of income.

Figure 9: Main sources of household income for 2022–23
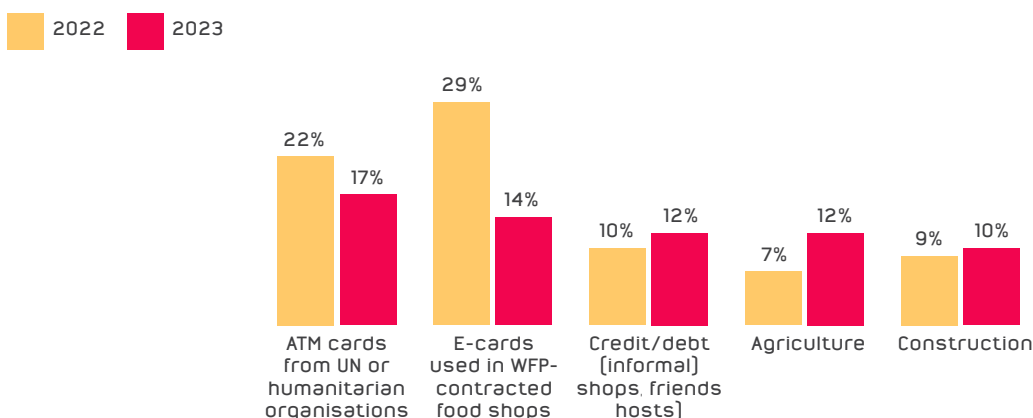
The governorate with the highest percentage of refugees depending on humanitarian aid as their primary income source was Akkar. In Akkar, 39% of refugee households reported relying on ATM cards issued by the UN or humanitarian organisations for their income. An additional 34% mentioned that e-cards used in WFP food shops were their main income source.

This indicates a substantial dependency on humanitarian assistance in this region. North Lebanon followed, with 49% of households reporting humanitarian aid as their main income source, highlighting a significant reliance on such assistance in that area as well. Baalbek-El Hermel and Bekaa governorates also demonstrated a considerable dependence on humanitarian aid, with 37% and 36% of households, respectively.

In contrast, Beirut and Mount Lebanon had the lowest proportion of refugees depending on humanitarian aid, with only 7% of households using e-cards from WFP food shops or ATM cards from the UN or humanitarian organisations as their primary income sources. This suggests a higher level of economic diversification and self-sufficiency in these regions compared to other governorates. The variation in the reliance on humanitarian aid among different governorates underscores the importance of regional factors in shaping the economic situation of refugees. It also highlights the need for tailored assistance and support programmes to address the specific needs and circumstances of refugees in various areas. Construction work was prominently reported in El Nabatieh,

accounting for 31% of income, which is approximately three times higher than the national average. Mount Lebanon came next, with 15% reporting this sector as their main income source. The reliance on informal credit and debt was most pronounced in Baalbek-El Hermel (28%) and Bekaa (27%), significantly exceeding the national average of 12%.

Comparing households living above the SMEB, those living below the SMEB had a higher percentage of refugees reporting e-cards used in WFP food shops as their primary income source (16% versus 12%). There was a similar discrepancy in the usage of ATM cards from the UN or humanitarian organisations, with 19% of households below the SMEB relying on them, compared to 13% of households living above the SMEB. Non-residential shelters hosted the highest percentage of refugees relying on e-cards from WFP food shops (17%). In comparison, non-permanent shelters hosted the highest percentage of refugees depending on ATM cards from the UN or humanitarian organisations (30%). Likewise, households with at least one member with a disability had a higher proportion of refugees reporting e-cards from WFP food shops (17%) and ATM cards from the UN or humanitarian organisations (19%) as their primary income source compared to households without any members with a disability. Finally, female-headed households appeared to depend more on humanitarian aid as their primary income source (46%) compared to male-headed households (29%).

Table 1: Monthly income (from employment) for all households for 2020–23

Period	SMEB (LL)	Monthly income (from employment) for all households (LL)	Ratio of income to SMEB value	Exchange rate ($1 to LL)	Monthly income (from employment) for all households in $	Employment rate
Aug. 2020	1,543,613	262,333	17%	7,420	35	26%
Jun. 2021	2,450,142	517,564	21%	15,158	34	33%
Jun. 2022	8,156,858	1,708,258	21%	28,602	60	33%
Jun. 2023	28,315,000	7,888,455	28%	93,593	84	39%

In 2023, 39% of refugees found employment, indicating a significant 6% increase compared to the employment rate observed in 2022. Moreover, during this period, the monthly income generated from employment across all households exhibited a rise as well, increasing from $60 in 2022 to $84 in 2023.

However, it is important to recognise that despite this positive trend, households were only able to cover 28% of their monthly

food and non-food SMEB value, which was set at LL28,315,000 per household during the data collection period. This implies that Syrian refugees continue to struggle with limited purchasing power, facing financial constraints in meeting their essential food and non-food needs independently. The total monthly income from employment for households with at least one working member amounted to LL9,489,852 in 2023. This represents a substantial increase from the $80 observed in 2022 ($101 in 2023).

Figure 10: Monthly income (from employment) for all households by governorate
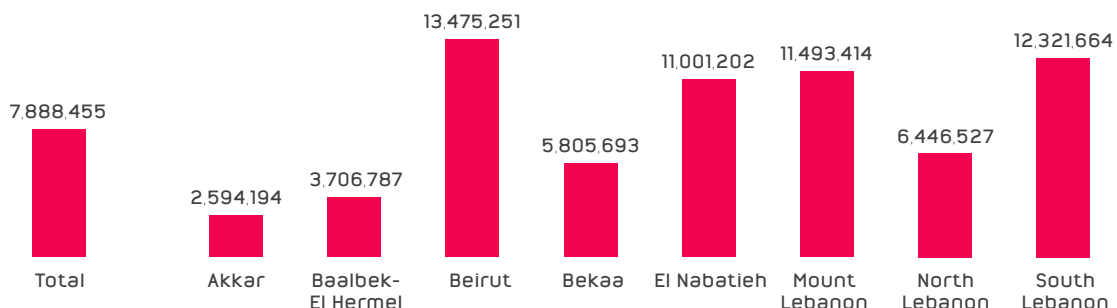
Table 2: Monthly per capita income (from employment) for all households in 2020–23

Period	SMEB per capita (LL)	Monthly income (from employment) for all households	Ratio of per capita income to SMEB value	Exchange rate ($1 to LL)	Monthly per capita income (from employment) for all households in $
Aug. 2020	308,723	62,792	20%	7,420	8.5
Jun. 2021	490,028	124,174	25%	15,158	8.2
Jun. 2022	1,631,372	410,495	25%	28,602	14.3
Jun. 2023	5,663,000	1,920,630	34%	93,593	20.5

Comparable to the monthly household income, the monthly income per capita among Syrian refugees has also increased, reaching 34% of the monthly per capita SMEB value (LL5,663,000), up from 25% in 2022. In 2021, Syrian refugees were earning an average of $8.2 per month from employment, which was significantly below the SMEB. However, by 2022, this income had risen to $14.3 per month and in 2023, it increased further to $20.5 per month. This growth in income is promising as it suggests improved economic opportunities for refugees, potentially leading to a better quality of life. The increase in income has had a tangible impact on the ability of Syrian refugees to cover their living expenses, including both food and non-food costs outlined in the SMEB. Overall, while the financial situation of Syrian refugees is still challenging, the positive trend in their income and the subsequent improvement in their ability to cover essential expenses is a step in the right direction towards economic stability and self-sufficiency.

In Beirut, refugees continue to report the highest monthly income from employment per capita, which is approximately double the national average, at LL4,080,643. Refugees in Mount Lebanon are next and earn an average of LL2,957,337, while those in El Nabatieh earn LL2,363,914 per month. Conversely, in Akkar and Baalbek-El Hermel, refugees had the lowest monthly income per capita, with figures standing at LL678,209 and LL820,795, respectively. This highlights significant regional disparities in refugee income levels within Lebanon.

Income disparities are evident across various household characteristics. Male-headed households, on average, exhibit a higher monthly income per capita from employment (LL2,019,721) in contrast to female-headed households (LL1,424,705 LBP), indicating a gender-based income gap. In addition, households living above the SMEB (LL2,867,005) have over double the monthly income per capita compared to those living below the SMEB (LL1,367,047). Moreover, whereas food-secure households demonstrate the highest income per capita (LL3,951,924), moderately food-insecure households (LL1,546,811) and severely food-insecure households (LL1,066,862) face lower income levels. Finally, households with at least one member with a disability exhibit slightly lower income per capita (LL1,561,397) compared to households without any members with disabilities (LL2,136,899).

Annex 1: Employment and unemployment

	Employment status			Employment ratio	Unemployment ratio	Labour force participation rate
	Employed	Unemployed	Outside labour force			
Total	39%	7%	54%	88%	12%	47%
Governorate						
Akkar	30%	7%	63%	81%	19%	37%
Baalbek-El Hermel	35%	9%	56%	80%	20%	45%
Beirut	44%	5%	51%	91%	9%	49%
Bekaa	37%	11%	51%	77%	23%	48%
El Nabatieh	43%	6%	51%	90%	10%	51%
Mount Lebanon	43%	5%	52%	90%	10%	49%
North Lebanon	40%	4%	56%	93%	7%	45%
South Lebanon	44%	6%	50%	89%	11%	50%
Shelter type						
Residential	40%	6%	55%	89%	11%	46%
Non-residential	42%	7%	51%	87%	13%	50%
Non-permanent	38%	11%	51%	82%	18%	50%
Food security status						
Food secure	44%	6%	51%	90%	10%	50%
Marginally food secure	40%	6%	54%	89%	11%	47%
Moderately food insecure	39%	8%	54%	86%	14%	46%
Severely food insecure	37%	17%	46%	78%	22%	48%
Gender of the head of household						
Male	40%	7%	54%	88%	12%	47%
Female	38%	10%	52%	85%	15%	47%
HH with at least one member with disability						
Yes	36%	7%	57%	85%	15%	44%
No	42%	7%	51%	89%	11%	49%

Annex 2: Main source of income (1/3)

	Agriculture	Construction	Manufacturing	Concierge	Other services (hotel, restaurant, transport, personal services)	Office work (finance, admin, secretary)	Wholesale and retail trade	Adult begging	Child begging/ selling items on the street
Total	12%	10%	2%	3%	10%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Governorate									
Akkar	13%	4%	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Baalbek-El Hermel	15%	4%	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Beirut	1%	6%	3%	20%	20%	1%	4%	0%	0%
Bekaa	9%	4%	1%	0%	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%
El Nabatieh	22%	31%	1%	4%	6%	2%	1%	0%	0%
Mount Lebanon	10%	15%	3%	4%	22%	1%	3%	0%	1%
North Lebanon	12%	11%	2%	2%	9%	0%	2%	1%	0%
South Lebanon	19%	12%	0%	1%	8%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Shelter type									
Residential	9%	12%	2%	3%	14%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Non-residential	24%	8%	2%	3%	4%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Non-permanent	18%	3%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Food security status									
Food secure	6%	13%	2%	2%	17%	2%	3%	0%	0%
Marginally food secure	10%	10%	2%	3%	12%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Moderately food insecure	15%	10%	1%	3%	8%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Severely food insecure	20%	11%	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Gender of the head of household									
Male	12%	12%	2%	3%	10%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Female	10%	2%	2%	0%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%
HH with at least one member with disability									
Yes	11%	10%	2%	2%	8%	1%	1%	0%	0%
No	12%	10%	2%	3%	11%	1%	2%	0%	0%

Annex 2: Main source of income (2/3)

	E-cards used in WFP food shops	ATM cards used in ATM machines from UN or humanitarian organisations	Cash from charitable organisations	Remittances	Savings	Credit/debt (informal, from shops, friends, hosts)	Credit/debts (formal banks)	Gifts from family/ relatives	Sale of assets (car, bicycle, refrigerator, TV, jewelry)
Total	14%	17%	0%	1%	0%	12%	0%	0%	0%
Governorate									
Akkar	34%	39%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Baalbek-El Hermel	7%	30%	0%	0%	0%	28%	0%	0%	0%
Beirut	6%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Bekaa	9%	27%	0%	1%	0%	27%	0%	0%	0%
El Nabatieh	16%	4%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Mount Lebanon	4%	3%	0%	1%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%
North Lebanon	34%	15%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%
South Lebanon	17%	8%	0%	1%	0%	11%	0%	0%	4%
Shelter type									
Residential	14%	13%	0%	1%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Non-residential	17%	17%	0%	1%	0%	14%	0%	0%	1%
Non-permanent	12%	30%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Food security status									
Food secure	4%	12%	0%	3%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Marginally food secure	13%	16%	0%	1%	0%	13%	0%	0%	1%
Moderately food insecure	17%	19%	0%	0%	0%	12%	0%	0%	0%
Severely food insecure	19%	16%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%
Gender of the head of household									
Male	14%	14%	0%	1%	0%	12%	0%	0%	0%
Female	17%	29%	0%	2%	0%	12%	0%	0%	1%
HH with at least one member with disability									
Yes	17%	19%	0%	1%	0%	12%	0%	0%	1%
No	12%	16%	0%	1%	0%	13%	0%	0%	0%

	Sale of food aid (food vouchers or parcels)	Sale of non-food assistance	Sale of crops	Sale of livestock and animal produce	Other types of sales	Home-based work/skill	Skilled work (blacksmith, plumber, mechanic, etc.)	Other
Total	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	6%	6%
Governorate								
Akkar	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Baalbek-El Hermel	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	1%	4%
Beirut	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	9%	20%
Bekaa	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	1%	6%
El Nabatieh	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	7%	1%
Mount Lebanon	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	14%	10%
North Lebanon	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	2%
South Lebanon	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	9%	6%
Shelter type								
Residential	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	8%	8%
Non-residential	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	2%
Non-permanent	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	1%	3%
Food security status								
Food secure	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	16%	9%
Marginally food secure	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	7%	6%
Moderately food insecure	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	4%	6%
Severely food insecure	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	3%	7%
Gender of the head of household								
Male	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	7%	7%
Female	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%	3%
HH with at least one member with disability								
Yes	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	6%	5%
No	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	6%	7%

Annex 3: Income sources reported by household (1/2)

	Agriculture	Construction	Manufacturing	Concierge	Other services (hotel, restaurant, transportation	Office work	Wholesale and retail trade	Adult begging	Child begging	E-cards WFP FOOD SHOPS
Total	22%	15%	2%	3%	15%	2%	0%	0%	1%	43%
Governorate										
Akkar	36%	10%	2%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	51%
Baalbek-El Hermel	29%	11%	3%	1%	7%	1%	0%	0%	0%	15%
Beirut	1%	6%	3%	22%	23%	1%	0%	0%	1%	71%
Bekaa	24%	8%	1%	1%	9%	4%	0%	0%	0%	23%
El Nabatieh	29%	44%	2%	5%	11%	2%	0%	0%	0%	44%
Mount Lebanon	11%	16%	3%	5%	25%	1%	0%	0%	1%	55%
North Lebanon	22%	18%	3%	2%	18%	1%	0%	0%	1%	59%
South Lebanon	32%	21%	1%	3%	12%	1%	0%	0%	1%	47%
Shelter type										
Residential	14%	17%	2%	4%	19%	2%	0%	0%	1%	49%
Non-residential	37%	14%	2%	3%	8%	4%	0%	0%	1%	41%
Non-permanent	41%	6%	2%	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%
Food security status										
Food secure	9%	17%	2%	2%	21%	3%	0%	0%	0%	40%
Marginally food secure	18%	16%	3%	3%	17%	2%	0%	0%	0%	43%
Moderately food insecure	27%	13%	2%	3%	11%	1%	0%	0%	1%	45%
Severely food insecure	31%	13%	1%	3%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%
Gender of the head of household										
Male	22%	17%	2%	4%	14%	2%	0%	0%	0%	44%
Female	19%	4%	2%	1%	19%	2%	0%	0%	1%	37%
HH with at least one member with disability										
Yes	22%	14%	3%	2%	14%	1%	0%	0%	1%	43%
No	22%	15%	2%	4%	16%	2%	0%	0%	0%	43%

Annex 3: Income sources reported by household (2/2)

	ATM cards ATM BOB UN humanitarian organisations	Cash from charitable organizations	Remittances	Credit debt informal shops friends	Credit debts formal banks	Gifts: family/ relatives
Total	43%	1%	2%	66%	1%	7%
Governorate						
Akkar	71%	0%	0%	58%	1%	10%
Baalbek-El Hermel	70%	0%	1%	78%	1%	7%
Beirut	11%	0%	3%	61%	0%	5%
Bekaa	54%	0%	3%	76%	0%	9%
El Nabatieh	28%	1%	1%	21%	0%	2%
Mount Lebanon	22%	1%	2%	73%	1%	4%
North Lebanon	41%	0%	2%	46%	3%	5%
South Lebanon	39%	1%	7%	59%	1%	10%
Shelter type						
Residential	36%	1%	3%	64%	1%	6%
Non-residential	40%	0%	2%	58%	1%	9%
Non-permanent	67%	1%	0%	74%	1%	9%
Food security status						
Food secure	33%	1%	8%	55%	1%	3%
Marginally food secure	43%	1%	3%	68%	1%	6%
Moderately food insecure	43%	0%	1%	64%	1%	8%
Severely food insecure	53%	0%	0%	62%	1%	6%
Gender of the head of household						
Male	41%	0%	2%	66%	1%	5%
Female	52%	1%	3%	65%	1%	16%
HH with at least one member with disability						
Yes	49%	1%	2%	62%	1%	7%
No	40%	0%	2%	68%	1%	7%

Coping Strategies

Key findings

- In 2023, 89% of Syrian refugees reported experiencing food shortages, an improvement from that of 97% in 2022.
- The mean rCSI score for Syrian refugee households in Lebanon in 2023 was 16 points, a 3-point decrease from the previous year.
- 35% scored 19 or more points in the rCSI, indicating high food insecurity and reliance on coping strategies, down from 44% in 2022.
- Mount Lebanon had the highest percentage of refugees not applying any food-based coping strategies (19%), followed by Beirut (16%).
- Male-headed households showed lower rCSI scores, with 34% scoring 19 or more, compared to 40% in female-headed households.
- In 2023, there was a slight improvement in the percentage of households not adopting any asset depletion coping strategy, 11% in 2023 versus 8% in 2022. Similarly, the proportion of households employing severe emergency asset depletion coping strategies decreased from 7% in the previous year to 5% in the current year, indicating an improvement in 2023.
- Households with at least one member with a disability were more likely to employ emergency asset depletion coping strategies (6% vs 4%).
- All severely food-insecure households were adopting at least one asset depletion coping strategy and almost half of them were adopting emergency coping strategies.

Food-based coping strategies

In 2023, a substantial 89% of Syrian refugees reported experiencing food shortages, representing a slight decrease from that of 97% reported in 2022. As a result of these hardships, they resorted to various coping strategies. However, 11% of refugees had not employed any coping strategy.

A total of 35% of refugees (a decrease from 44% in 2022) scored 19 or more points in the rCSI (Reduced Coping Strategies Index), indicating a prominent level of difficulty in accessing food and their reliance on coping strategies. In addition, 46% of refugees employed coping strategies to a lesser extent, falling within the rCSI range of 4 to 18 points. The mean rCSI score for Syrian refugee households in Lebanon in 2023 was 16 points, reflecting a 3-point decrease from the previous year. These findings highlight the continued challenges faced by Syrian refugees in accessing an adequate food supply and their diverse coping mechanisms to address these difficulties.

Mount Lebanon hosted the highest percentage of refugees who did not resort to any food-based coping strategies (19%), followed by Beirut (16%). The highest proportion of refugees who resorted to more severe coping strategies (rCSI 19+ points) was in South Lebanon (46%) and El Nabatieh (45%).

Figure 1: Households' reduced food-based coping strategy (rCSI) index for the period 2022–23

Legend: 0 | 1–3.9 | 4–18.9 | ≥ 19

2022: 3%, 4%, 49%, 44%
2023: 11%, 8%, 46%, 35%
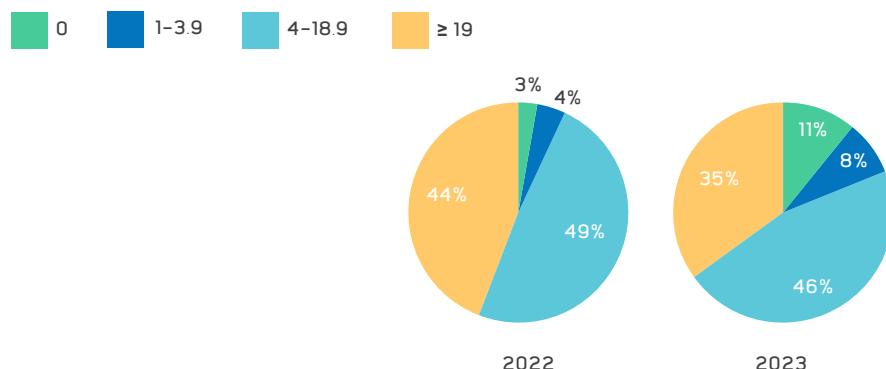
Figure 2: Households' reduced food-based coping strategy (rCSI) index by governorate

Legend: 0 | 1–3.9 | 4–18.9 | ≥ 19

	Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
≥ 19	35%	35%	33%	33%	39%	45%	26%	39%	46%
4–18.9	46%	55%	50%	39%	47%	50%	44%	45%	43%
1–3.9	8%	5%	11%	12%	7%	2%	11%	4%	6%
0	11%	5%	7%	16%	7%	2%	19%	11%	5%
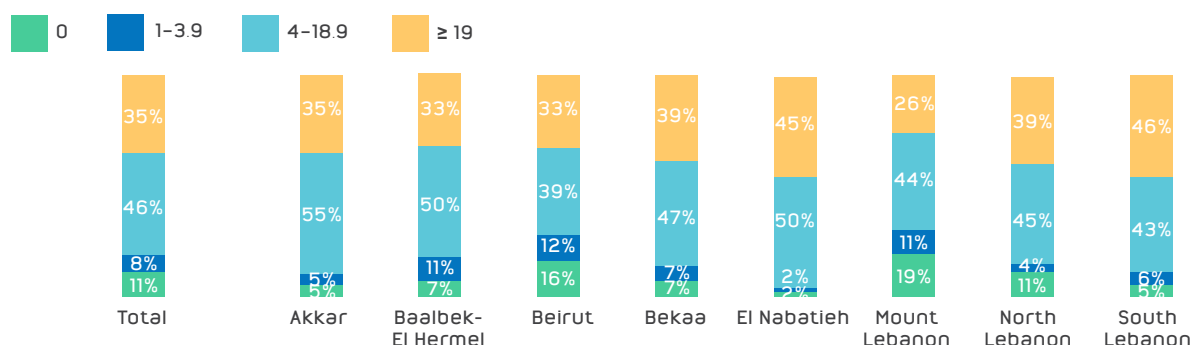
Among the coping strategies employed, reliance on less preferred or less expensive foods was the most common, utilised by 85% of refugee households. 63% of households resorted to reducing the portion size of their meals, while 58% chose to decrease the number of meals. In addition, 45% of households borrowed food as a coping mechanism and 38% reported that they restricted adult consumption to ensure that children had enough to eat.

Male-headed households exhibited lower rCSI scores, indicating their engagement in fewer coping strategies when compared to female-headed households. Specifically, 34% of male-headed households had rCSI scores of 19 or more, in contrast to 40% of female-headed households. The most significant disparity was observed in the coping strategy of borrowing food, with 57% of female-headed households resorting to this strategy, while only 43% of male-headed households employed it. These findings emphasise the gender-based variations in coping strategies among Syrian refugees.

Among Syrian refugees, 38% of those falling below the SMEB threshold (including assistance) had rCSI scores of 19 or higher, while 28% of refugees above the SMEB threshold fell into this category. Refugees above the SMEB displayed a 4-point lower average rCSI score compared to those below the threshold (17.4 points versus 13.3 points). This suggests that they were employing fewer coping strategies to manage their food shortages, indicating a notable contrast in coping mechanisms between the two groups.

Households without any members with a disability were more inclined to employ medium-level coping strategies to address their food needs. Among these households, 49% had rCSI scores falling between 4 and 18, compared to 43% of households with at least one member with a disability. In contrast, 44% of households with at least one member with a disability had rCSI scores of 19 or more points. In comparison, this figure was 29% among households without any members with a disability. It is worth noting that households with at least one member with a disability had higher rates of adopting various coping strategies, indicating a diverse approach to addressing food shortages in these households.

Refugees living in non-permanent shelters had the highest prevalence of rCSI scores within the range of 4 to 18 points (49%). In comparison, residential and non-residential shelters reported lower percentages at 46% and 43%, respectively. However, refugees in non-residential shelters had the highest rates of rCSI scores of 19 or more points (accounting for 43%), surpassing the figures for residential and non-permanent shelters, which were 33% and 38%, respectively.

Asset depletion coping strategies

The assessment of asset depletion coping strategies serves as a valuable tool for evaluating a household's ability to manage medium- and long-term shocks. These strategies are categorised into three severity levels: stress coping strategies, crisis coping strategies and emergency coping strategies. Stress coping strategies encompass activities such as selling household assets, depleting savings, obtaining food on credit, and reducing expenditure on health and education. Crisis coping strategies involve more drastic measures, including moving to where rent is cheaper, child labour and the withdrawal of children from school. Meanwhile, emergency coping strategies (considered the most severe) entail actions such as begging, accepting high-risk employment and childhood marriages.

Stress coping strategies: Purchasing food on credit, selling domestic assets, spending savings, and reducing expenditure on education and health.

Crisis coping strategies: Moving to where the rent is cheaper, withdrawing children from school and child labour.
Emergency coping strategies: Sending household members to beg, taking high-risk or illegal jobs, marrying off children.

A total of 89% of Syrian refugee households resorted to medium- and long-term asset depletion coping strategies to address their essential needs. The percentage of refugee households that refrained from employing any coping strategies rose from 7.7% in 2022 to 11.2% in 2023. While 20.8% of households were engaged in crisis coping strategies in 2022, this figure slightly increased to 21.3% in 2023. Conversely, the proportion of households employing more severe emergency coping strategies decreased from 6.6% in the previous year to 4.8% in the current year. These trends indicate the evolving landscape of coping strategies among Syrian refugees as they adapt to changing circumstances.

Figure 3: Asset depletion coping strategies for the period 2022–23
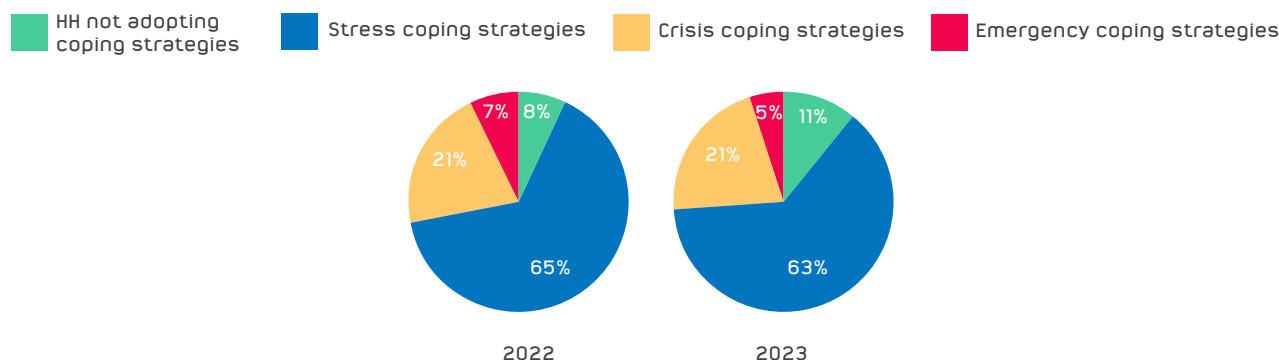
The most utilised asset depletion coping strategies among refugee households included cost-cutting measures related to food expenditure, with 84% of all refugee households employing this approach, as well as acquiring food on credit, utilised by 76% of these households. In addition, 59% of households resorted to a reduction in health care expenses, while 31% reported decreasing their spending on education to meet their essential needs. Correspondingly, 25% of refugee households indicated they had depleted their savings and 28% resorted to selling their household assets. Less frequently employed coping strategies involved withdrawing children from school (12%), relocating to more affordable housing (12.5%), selling productive assets (8%) or relying on child labour (12%). Less common strategies included adults engaging in high-risk employment (2%), adults seeking employment in other areas of Lebanon (3.5%), begging (3%), selling property (4%), children taking on high-risk work (3%), child marriages (2%) and sending children to work in different locations (3%).

Figure 4: Most adopted asset depletion coping strategies for the period 2021–23

Figure 5: Asset depletion coping strategies by governorate

Legend:
- HH not adopting coping strategies
- Stress coping strategies
- Crisis coping strategies
- Emergency coping strategies

	Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
Emergency	5%	1%	5%	4%	1%	7%	5%	12%	7%
Crisis	21%	14%	20%	18%	29%	37%	21%	12%	24%
Stress	63%	76%	73%	57%	66%	52%	54%	63%	60%
HH not adopting	11%	9%	2%	21%	4%	4%	20%	14%	10%

The implementation of asset depletion coping strategies varied across different governorates. In El Nabatieh, 37% of refugees primarily resorted to crisis coping strategies, while Bekaa followed closely at 29% and South Lebanon reported an engagement of 24%. Conversely, North Lebanon had the highest rate of emergency coping strategies at 12%, with South Lebanon, El Nabatieh and Mount Lebanon at 7% and 5%, respectively. North Lebanon repor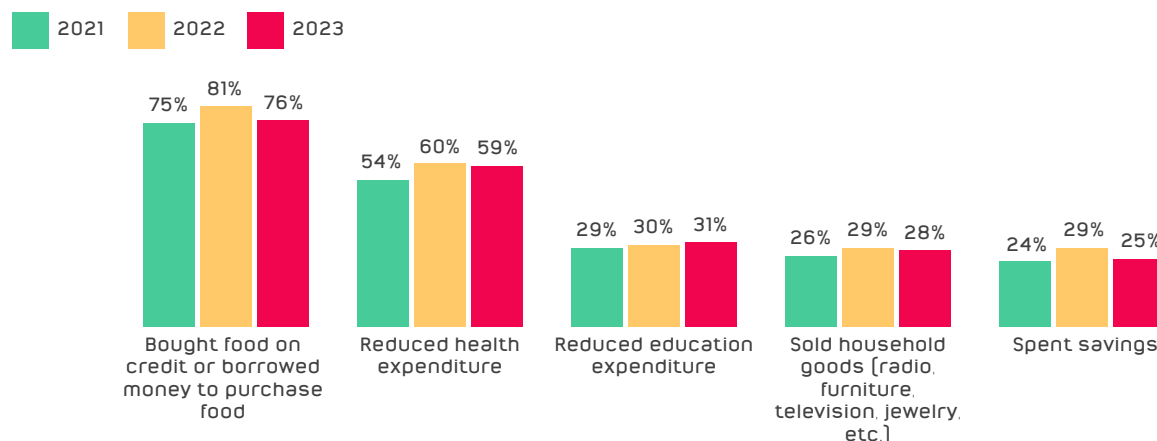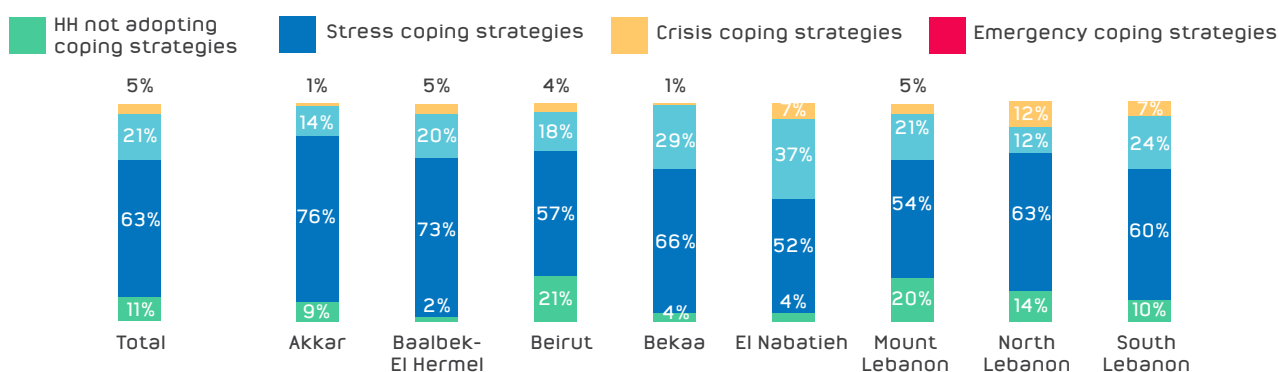ted the lowest utilisation of crisis coping strategies at 12%, and Akkar and Bekaa had the lowest employment of emergency coping strategies at just 1%. In South Lebanon, the prevalence of refugee households reducing expenditure on health was the highest nationwide at 74%, and this governorate also had the highest percentage of households selling household goods at 47%. El Nabatieh, on the other hand, reported the highest proportion of households that reduced their expenditure on education at 50%, followed by Bekaa at 42%. In comparison, North Lebanon recorded the highest incidence of begging at 10%.

Refugees living above the SMEB (including assistance) had a higher prevalence of not resorting to any coping strategy, with rates of 14% versus 10%. Conversely, refugees living below the SMEB demonstrated higher rates of engaging in emergency coping strategies, with percentages at 5.5% compared to 3.5%. Refugees in households living below the SMEB primarily employed livelihood-based coping strategies, such as reducing expenditure on food (85%), health (61%) and education (35%), along with buying food on credit (77%). In addition, these households reported higher rates of withdrawing children from school, child labour and resorting to begging when compared to households above the SMEB threshold. This suggests that households living below the SMEB have fewer resources to cope with potential future crises, rendering them more susceptible compared to refugee households living above the SMEB.

Male-headed households appeared to utilise fewer coping strategies (12% of male-headed households did not employ any coping strategies, compared to 10% in female-headed households). On the other hand, females had higher rates of reducing expenditure on food (88% versus 83%).

A greater proportion of households having at least one member with a disability were employing emergency coping strategies, in contrast to households with no members with disabilities (6% versus 4%). Within households having at least one member with a disability, there was a relatively higher prevalence of utilising strategies such as selling household goods (27% versus 31%), reducing expenditure on education (28% versus 35%) and limiting health-related spending (54% versus 67%). The incidence of sending children to work was nearly twofold in households featuring at least one member with a disability, compared to households without any members with disabilities (16% versus 9%).

Residential sheltered households (14%) had a larger portion of them not utilising any coping strategies, as compared to the 10% of refugees in non-residential shelters and 4% in non-permanent shelters. Notably, non-residential sheltered households showed the highest occurrence of emergency-based asset depletion strategies, standing at 9%, which exceeded the 5% in residential shelters and the 3% in non-permanent shelters.

Crisis coping strategies were most prevalent among households classified as moderately and severely food insecure, comprising 29%. A total of 48% of food-secure households avoided employing any coping strategies, while 52% resorted to stress coping strategies. Among households with severe food insecurity, the coping strategies most frequently employed included reducing expenditure on education (49%), withdrawing children from school (44%), involving children in labour (37%), seeking more affordable housing (34%) and even resorting to begging (33%).

Annex 1: Reduced coping strategies (1/2)

	Reduced Coping Strategy Index	Reduced Coping Strategy Index Categories				Relied on less preferred, less expensive food	Borrowed food or relied on help from friends or relatives	Reduced the number of meals eaten per day	Reduced portion size of meals	Restricted consumption by adults in order for children to eat
	Mean	.00	1–3.9	4–18.9	≥ 19					
Total	15.89	11%	8%	46%	35%	85%	45%	58%	63%	38%
Governorate										
Akkar	17.36	5%	5%	55%	35%	95%	46%	65%	62%	22%
Baalbek-El Hermel	14.33	7%	11%	50%	33%	86%	48%	54%	63%	37%
Beirut	15.89	16%	12%	39%	33%	74%	45%	55%	45%	32%
Bekaa	16.94	7%	7%	47%	39%	87%	63%	52%	52%	36%
El Nabatieh	20.95	2%	2%	50%	45%	97%	23%	70%	81%	37%
Mount Lebanon	12.84	19%	11%	44%	26%	74%	39%	54%	62%	38%
North Lebanon	18.56	11%	4%	45%	39%	88%	34%	66%	74%	48%
South Lebanon	17.52	5%	6%	43%	46%	92%	51%	70%	77%	49%
Shelter type										
Residential	15.36	12%	9%	46%	33%	83%	42%	58%	62%	38%
Non-residential	18.82	11%	3%	43%	43%	86%	47%	62%	69%	46%
Non-permanent	16.41	6%	7%	49%	38%	88%	56%	58%	63%	34%
Food security status										
Food secure	1.01	51%	49%	0%	0%	40%	1%	4%	16%	0%
Marginally food secure	15.46	9%	7%	52%	33%	87%	41%	58%	63%	38%
Moderately food insecure	18.23	8%	4%	46%	41%	88%	57%	65%	69%	42%
Severely food insecure	19.22	19%	3%	33%	45%	74%	58%	71%	69%	44%
Gender of the head of household										
Male	15.64	11%	8%	47%	34%	84%	43%	57%	62%	39%
Female	17.13	8%	6%	45%	40%	89%	57%	63%	66%	30%
HH with at least one member with disability										
Yes	14.02	13%	9%	49%	29%	82%	43%	54%	59%	34%
No	18.99	7%	6%	43%	44%	89%	49%	66%	70%	44%

Annex 1: Reduced coping strategies (2/2)

	Number of days Relied on less expensive/less preferred food	Number of days Borrowed food and/or relied on help from friends/relatives	Number of days Reduced the number of meals eaten per day	Number of days Reduced portion size of meals	Number of days Restricted consumption of adults in order for young children to eat
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Total	3.97	1.45	2.30	2.44	1.43
Governorate					
Akkar	5.56	1.49	3.29	2.74	0.93
Baalbek-El Hermel	3.85	1.38	1.97	2.17	1.20
Beirut	3.27	1.89	2.61	2.07	1.39
Bekaa	4.24	2.14	2.01	1.95	1.49
El Nabatieh	6.05	1.03	3.32	4.44	1.69
Mount Lebanon	2.66	1.20	1.89	2.22	1.22
North Lebanon	4.63	0.92	2.82	3.04	2.08
South Lebanon	4.32	1.56	2.31	2.64	1.71
Shelter type					
Residential	3.80	1.32	2.27	2.40	1.42
Non-residential	4.50	1.63	2.56	2.93	1.86
Non-permanent	4.34	1.82	2.30	2.37	1.25
Food security status					
Food secure	0.69	0.01	0.06	0.24	0.00
Marginally food secure	4.03	1.29	2.29	2.39	1.39
Moderately food insecure	4.33	1.81	2.59	2.77	1.64
Severely food insecure	4.00	2.10	2.72	2.84	1.82
Gender of the head of household					
Male	3.88	1.35	2.23	2.39	1.48
Female	4.44	1.92	2.65	2.68	1.17
HH with at least one member with disability					
Yes	3.69	1.32	2.01	2.11	1.19
No	4.44	1.67	2.79	2.98	1.81

Annex 2: Livelihood coping strategies (1/4)

	Summary of asset depletion coping strategies			
	HH not adopting coping strategies	**Stress coping strategies**	**Crisis coping strategies**	**Emergencies coping strategies**
Total	11%	63%	21%	5%
Governorate				
Akkar	9%	76%	14%	1%
Baalbek-El Hermel	2%	73%	20%	5%
Beirut	21%	57%	18%	4%
Bekaa	4%	66%	29%	1%
El Nabatieh	4%	52%	37%	7%
Mount Lebanon	20%	54%	21%	5%
North Lebanon	14%	63%	12%	12%
South Lebanon	10%	60%	24%	7%
Shelter type				
Residential	14%	62%	20%	5%
Non-residential	10%	58%	24%	9%
Non-permanent	4%	69%	24%	3%
Food security status				
Food secure	48%	52%	0%	0%
Marginally food secure	11%	70%	17%	2%
Moderately food insecure	7%	56%	29%	7%
Severely food insecure	0%	28%	29%	43%
Gender of the head of household				
Male	11%	63%	21%	5%
Female	10%	63%	22%	5%
HH with at least one member with disability				
Yes	13%	64%	19%	4%
No	8%	61%	25%	6%

Annex 2: Livelihood coping strategies (2/4)

	Selling household goods (radio, furniture, television, jewelry, etc.)	Sell productive assets or means of transport (sewing machine, wheelbarrow, bicycle, car, livestock)	Reduce expend in food	Reduce essential non-food expenditures on health etc.	Reduce essential non-food expenditures on education etc.	Spent savings
Total	28%	8%	84%	59%	30%	25%
Governorate						
Akkar	34%	11%	90%	53%	26%	24%
Baalbek-El Hermel	42%	10%	87%	50%	25%	22%
Beirut	19%	5%	83%	37%	14%	10%
Bekaa	18%	3%	86%	61%	42%	26%
El Nabatieh	34%	8%	96%	77%	50%	35%
Mount Lebanon	20%	5%	79%	62%	26%	23%
North Lebanon	36%	15%	78%	54%	33%	31%
South Lebanon	47%	14%	89%	74%	20%	32%
Shelter type						
Residential	27%	8%	84%	57%	30%	25%
Non-residential	30%	11%	85%	70%	33%	31%
Non-permanent	30%	7%	85%	60%	32%	23%
Food security status						
Food secure	21%	7%	51%	17%	5%	15%
Marginally food secure	27%	7%	85%	59%	27%	26%
Moderately food insecure	30%	8%	86%	64%	37%	26%
Severely food insecure	39%	25%	92%	79%	49%	32%
Gender of the head of household						
Male	29%	8%	83%	59%	31%	26%
Female	26%	7%	88%	61%	28%	22%
HH with at least one member with disability						
Yes	27%	7%	82%	54%	28%	24%
No	31%	9%	87%	67%	34%	28%

Annex 2: Livelihood coping strategies (3/4)

	Bought food on credit or borrowed money to purchase food	Sold house or land	Moved to a cheaper rental place/live on the street	Withdrew children from school	Have school children (6–15 years old) involved in income generation	Begged	Household members 18 years and over accepting high risk, dangerous, or exploitative work
Total	76%	4%	9%	12%	12%	3%	2%
Governorate							
Akkar	79%	2%	3%	7%	8%	1%	1%
Baalbek-El Hermel	90%	5%	7%	10%	9%	2%	1%
Beirut	60%	1%	10%	8%	7%	2%	1%
Bekaa	89%	2%	7%	15%	14%	1%	0%
El Nabatieh	80%	5%	23%	25%	17%	4%	2%
Mount Lebanon	64%	2%	11%	10%	10%	2%	2%
North Lebanon	72%	12%	13%	15%	14%	10%	10%
South Lebanon	68%	2%	7%	16%	16%	1%	3%
Shelter type							
Residential	72%	3%	9%	12%	11%	2%	2%
Non-residential	73%	6%	16%	18%	13%	5%	5%
Non-permanent	89%	4%	6%	11%	14%	2%	1%
Food security status							
Food secure	39%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Marginally food secure	75%	2%	7%	8%	8%	1%	1%
Moderately food insecure	81%	4%	13%	18%	17%	4%	3%
Severely food insecure	94%	30%	34%	44%	36%	33%	26%
Gender of the head of household							
Male	76%	4%	10%	12%	12%	3%	3%
Female	76%	2%	8%	13%	13%	3%	1%
HH with at least one member with disability							
Yes	74%	4%	10%	11%	9%	2%	2%
No	79%	3%	9%	15%	16%	3%	2%

Annex 2: Livelihood coping strategies (4/4)

	Household members under the age of 18 accepting high risk, dangerous, or exploitative work	Adult work elsewhere	Child work elsewhere	Marriage of children under 18
Total	3%	4%	3%	2%
Governorate				
Akkar	0%	1%	1%	0%
Baalbek-El Hermel	1%	3%	2%	1%
Beirut	1%	1%	1%	0%
Bekaa	0%	2%	1%	0%
El Nabatieh	2%	5%	2%	0%
Mount Lebanon	2%	3%	2%	1%
North Lebanon	9%	10%	9%	9%
South Lebanon	4%	2%	2%	1%
Shelter type				
Residential	3%	3%	3%	2%
Non-residential	5%	5%	5%	4%
Non-permanent	1%	3%	1%	1%
Food security status				
Food secure	0%	1%	0%	0%
Marginally food secure	1%	2%	1%	1%
Moderately food insecure	4%	5%	4%	3%
Severely food insecure	29%	25%	23%	20%
Gender of the head of household				
Male	3%	4%	3%	2%
Female	2%	3%	3%	1%
HH with at least one member with disability				
Yes	2%	3%	2%	2%
No	3%	4%	3%	1%

Food consumption

Key findings

- In 2023, 51% of Syrian refugees had inadequate dietary intake, marking a decrease from the 2022 figure of 57%, suggesting an improvement in food consumption.
- Female-headed households had a slightly higher prevalence of inadequate food intake at 54%, compared to 50% in male-headed households.
- The rates of inadequate food consumption have decreased across almost all governorates compared to 2022. The regions with the highest prevalence of inadequate food consumption were North Lebanon and Akkar, while Beirut and South Lebanon governorates demonstrated the lowest rates of inadequate food intake.
- There has been a notable improvement in dietary diversity among Syrian refugee households in 2023. More households are consuming a greater variety of food groups, with 23% of households consuming over 6.5 food groups per day, compared to 14% in 2022. In addition, 53% of households are consuming nine or more food groups per week, up from 46% the previous year.
- In 2023, Syrian refugee adults and children consumed an average of two meals per day and 2.6 meals per day, respectively, indicating relatively stable meal consumption compared to the previous year.
- Daily consumption of vitamin A-rich foods and protein-rich foods increased in 2023. However, iron-rich food consumption remained extremely low compared to 2022.
- Non-permanent shelters exhibited the highest percentage of refugees who had never included vitamin A-rich foods (28%), protein-rich foods (10%) and iron-rich foods (78%) in their diets.

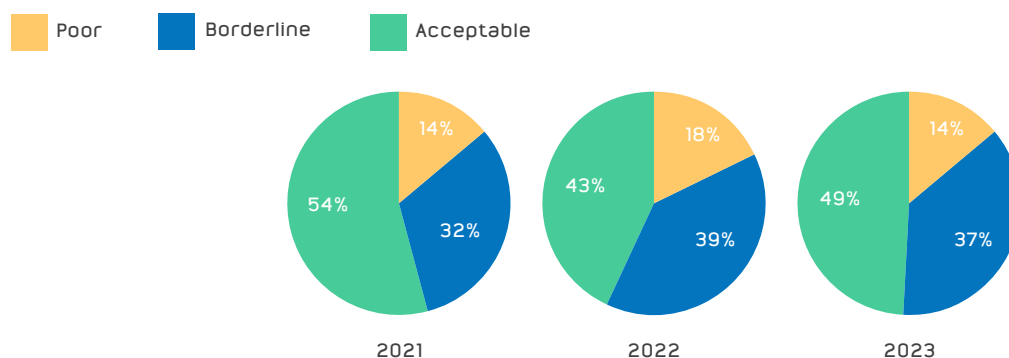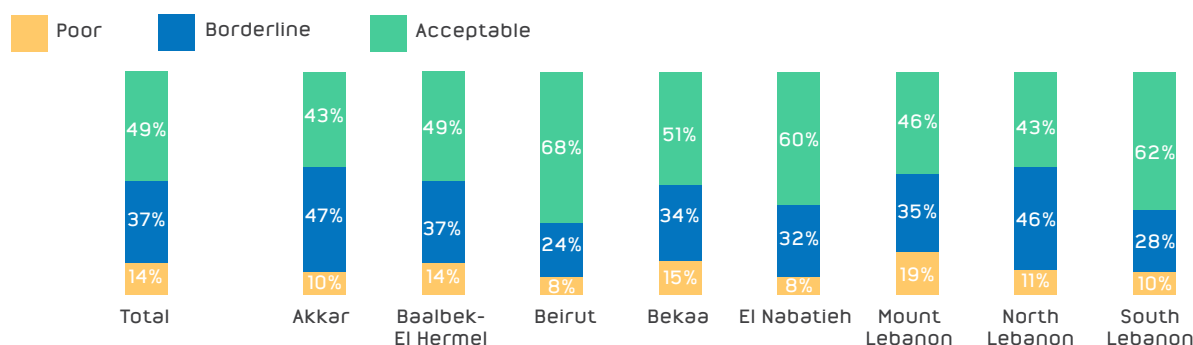**Figure 1: Households with a poor borderline and acceptable food consumption score for the period 2021–23**

Poor ■ Borderline ■ Acceptable ■

| 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |

Figure 2: Households with a poor borderline and acceptable food consumption score by governorate

Poor ■ Borderline ■ Acceptable ■

| Total | Akkar | Baalbek-El Hermel | Beirut | Bekaa | El Nabatieh | Mount Lebanon | North Lebanon | South Lebanon |

In 2023, food consumption scores reveal that 51% of Syrian refugees had an insufficient dietary intake. Among them, 14% were classified as having poor food consumption scores, while 37% were considered to have borderline scores. This marks a decrease from the 2022 figure, where 57% of refugees faced inadequate food intake.

The regions with the highest prevalence of poor and borderline food consumption were North Lebanon and Akkar, each recording a rate of 57%. Conversely, the Beirut and South Lebanon governorates demonstrated the lowest rates of insufficient food intake at 32% and 38%, respectively. The rates of inadequate food intake did not differ across households that were assisted (51%) versus those that were not assisted (52%).

Female-headed households had a 54% prevalence of inadequate food intake, while male-headed households exhibited a slightly lower rate of 50%. This suggests that households headed by females are more prone to experiencing inadequate dietary intake. When it comes to shelter types, non-permanent shelters showed the highest proportion of refugees with poor food consumption scores, standing at 21%, in contrast to 13% in non-residential shelters and 12% in residential shelters. In addition, households falling below the SMEB displayed a 17% prevalence of poor food consumption scores, as opposed to the 10% rate observed among households surpassing the SMEB threshold.

Dietary diversity

Table 1: HDADD and HWDD groups and mean (2021–23)

	Household daily diet diversity (HDADD)	HDADD categories			Household weekly diet diversity (HWDD)	HWDD categories		
		< 4.5 food groups	4.5–6.4 food groups	≥ 6.5 food groups		≤ 6 food groups	7–8 food groups	≥ 9 food groups
2021	5	22%	57%	21%	8	11%	41%	48%
2022	5	20%	66%	14%	8	12%	42%	46%
2023	6	13%	64%	23%	9	8%	39%	53%

In 2023, there has been a slight enhancement in the average daily and weekly dietary diversity scores among refugee households. Most notably, 23% of these households were found to be consuming more than 6.5 food groups per day, reflecting an increase from the 14% reported in 2022. Furthermore, the weekly dietary diversity scores showed even more promising results, with 53% of households consuming nine or more food groups per week, up from 46% in the previous year. This indicates an overall improvement in the dietary diversity of refugee populations.

When examining specific governorates, it is worth noting that Mount Lebanon exhibited the highest percentage of refugees consuming fewer than 4.5 food groups per day, standing at 25%. Conversely, the Bekaa and Akkar governorates recorded the lowest percentages in this category, both at 4%. In terms of weekly dietary diversity scores, Baalbek-El Hermel had the highest percentage of refugees consuming six or fewer food groups per week at 10%.

Among Syrian refugees, those residing in residential shelters exhibited the highest prevalence of low daily dietary diversity at 14%. In contrast, refugees in non-permanent shelters had the highest rates of weekly low dietary diversity, standing at 13%. 24% of refugees living in non-residential and residential shelters experienced high daily dietary diversity, whereas this figure was slightly lower at 18% for those in non-permanent shelters.

However, when it came to weekly dietary diversity, refugees in residential shelters surpassed the others, with 58% achieving high weekly dietary diversity, compared to 50% in non-residential shelters and 38% in non-permanent shelters.

Among refugees living above the SMEB (with assistance), 31% had high daily dietary diversity scores, as opposed to 18% among refugees living below the SMEB threshold. Moreover, 65% of those above the SMEB had high weekly dietary diversity scores in comparison to the 46% observed among those below the SMEB.

Regarding households with at least one member with a disability, the analysis revealed no significant disparities in the rates of high daily dietary diversity scores when compared to households without any members with disabilities. However, households without any members with disabilities had a greater rate of high weekly dietary diversity scores (57% in contrast to 47% in households with members having disabilities).

Likewise, households headed by males had better dietary diversity scores. Specifically, 20% of female-headed households were found to consume more than 6.5 food groups per day, while a higher proportion (24%) of male-headed households achieved this level of daily dietary diversity. A similar trend was observed in terms of weekly dietary diversity, with 54% of male-headed households attaining high dietary diversity, as compared to 50% among female-headed households.

Figure 3: Household mean of the food groups by sex of the head of household
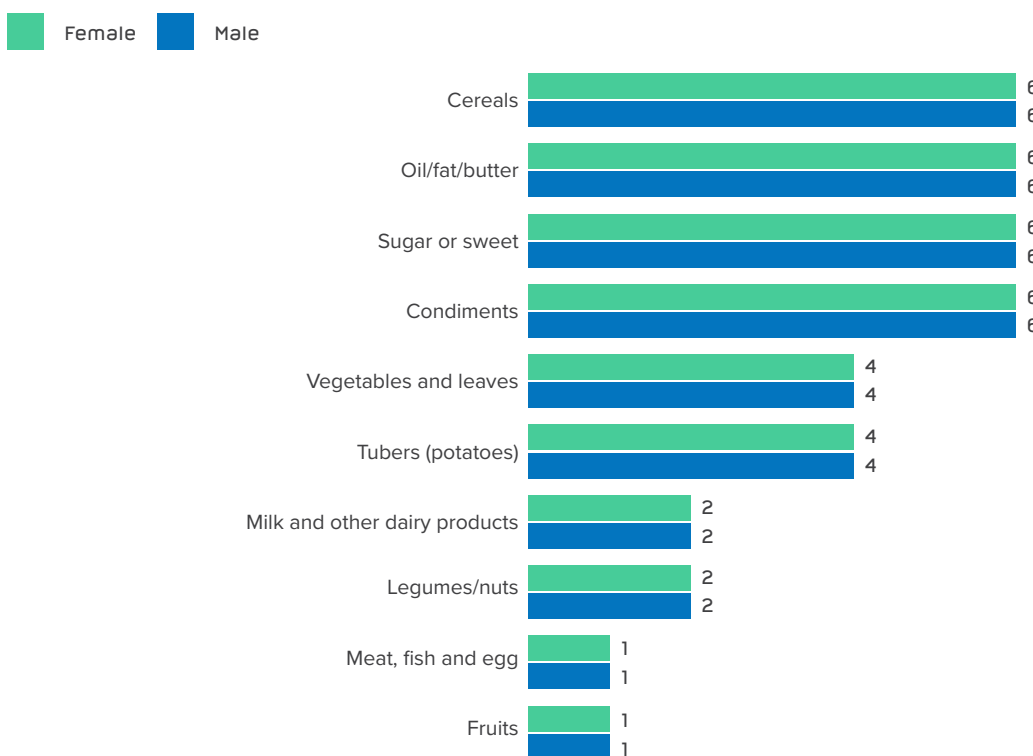
On a weekly basis, the dietary intake of Syrian refugees showed a consistent pattern, with tubers and cereals being the most frequently consumed food groups on a daily basis. In addition, oil/fat/butter, sugars/sweets (six days per week) and vegetables (four days per week) were also regularly consumed. Conversely, fruits, meat and fish were the least frequently consumed food groups, with consumption frequencies of less than once a week and once a week. These consumption patterns remained consistent with the data from 2022.
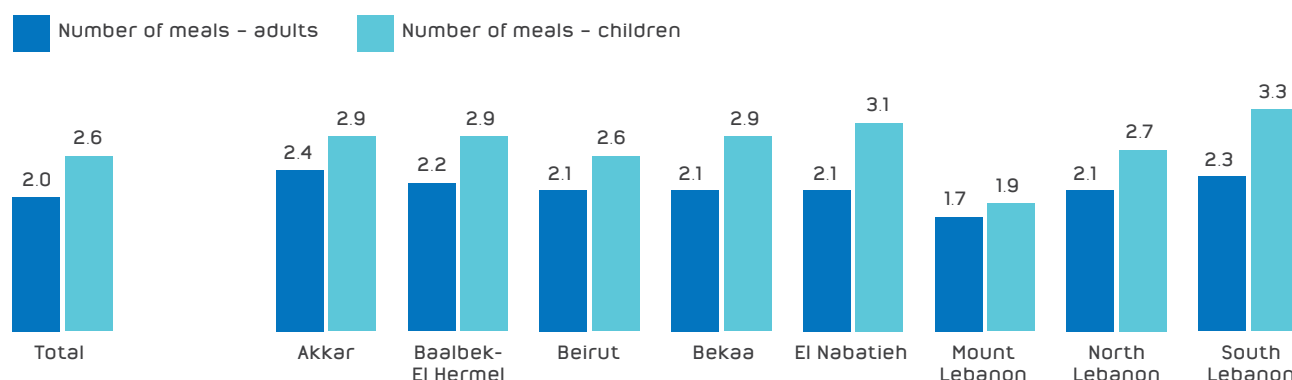
Akkar was the governorate with the lowest consumption rates in three food groups, specifically meat/fish/eggs, dairy products and fruits. Refugees residing in Mount Lebanon had the lowest consumption of vegetables, oil/butter/fat and sugar. Meanwhile, refugees in Bekaa reported the lowest consumption of legumes among all governorates.

Number of meals per day

Adults: Syrian refugee adults were consuming, on average, two meals per day, indicating no significant change from 2022. A meal is defined as food that is warm and cooked or prepared; snacks are not accounted for as meals. Adults in Mount Lebanon had the lowest meal frequency, with an average of 1.7 meals per day. Refugees living in non-permanent and non-residential shelters reported consuming more meals, approximately 2.2 meals per day, compared to those living in residential shelters who consumed around two meals per day. There were no significant differences in meal frequency between male-headed households and female-headed households, with both groups consuming an average of two meals per day. This indicates that the gender of the household head did not appear to have a significant impact on the frequency of meal consumption.

Children: Syrian refugee children were consuming an average of 2.6 meals per day in 2023. This suggests that the overall meal consumption for children remained relatively stable compared to the previous year. Children in South Lebanon and El Nabatieh demonstrated the highest meal consumption, with daily averages of 3.3 and 3.1 meals, respectively. In contrast, children in Mount Lebanon reported the lowest meal frequency, consuming only 1.9 meals per day. Furthermore, shelter type played a role, with children in non-permanent shelters consuming the most meals (2.9 per day), followed by non-residential shelters (2.8 per day) and residential shelters (2.5 per day).

Figure 4: Number of meals consumed by adults and children under five per day by governorate

■ Number of meals – adults   ■ Number of meals – children

	Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
Adults	2.0	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.7	2.1	2.3
Children	2.6	2.9	2.9	2.6	2.9	3.1	1.9	2.7	3.3

Food consumption score–Nutrition

Figure 5: Food consumption score nutrition (FCS-N) by category for the period 2022–23

■ At least daily   ■ 1 to 6 times a week   ■ Never consumed

2022

Iron: 0% / 28% / 72%
Protein: 34% / 59% / 6%
Vitamin A: 24% / 60% / 15%

2023

Iron: 0% / 36% / 64%
Protein: 37% / 58% / 5%
Vitamin A: 29% / 56% / 16%
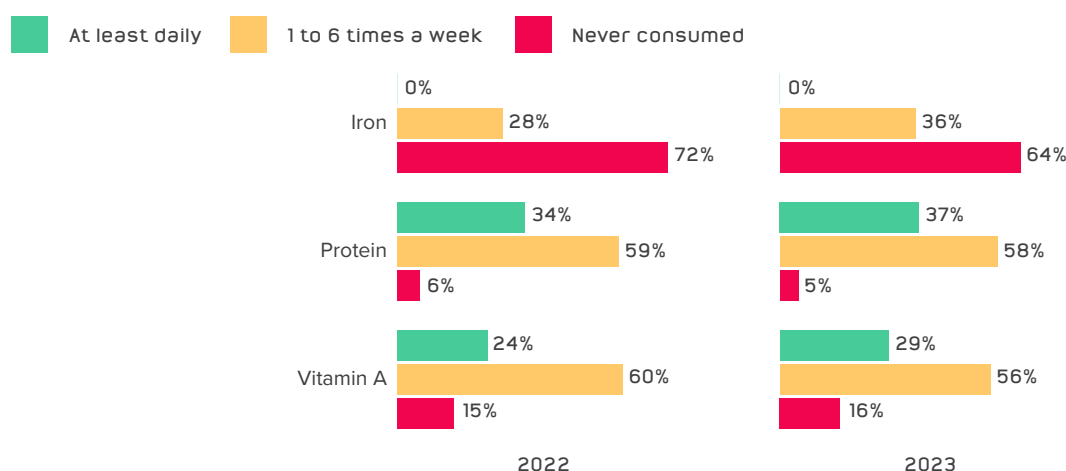
In terms of nutritional food consumption scores among Syrian refugees, three key elements were measured: intake of vitamin A, protein and iron. In 2022, 24% of Syrian refugees were found to consume vitamin A-rich foods on a daily basis. However, there was a positive shift in 2023, with 29% now reporting daily consumption, marking a notable increase of 5%. Similarly, protein-rich foods saw an improvement, with 34% of refugees consuming them daily in 2022, which increased to 37% in 2023, reflecting an increase of 3%.

In contrast, the situation regarding the consumption of iron-rich foods is still stable and low. In 2022 and 2023, only 0.2% of refugees reported daily consumption of iron-rich foods, primarily meat, offal or fish. Furthermore, a significant 64% of Syrian refugees stated that they had never consumed iron-rich foods in the past week. This data highlights a critical area of concern, indicating the need for efforts to improve access to and awareness of iron-rich food sources among the refugee population to address nutritional deficiencies effectively.

A significant gap in dietary practices was evident between households living below the SMEB and those living above it. Specifically, 19% of households below the SMEB reported that they had never included vitamin A-rich foods in their weekly diet, in contrast to 10% of households above the SMEB. Households below

the SMEB exhibited a higher rate of individuals who had never consumed protein-rich foods during the week (6% for households below the SMEB compared to 3% for households above the SMEB). In addition, households below the SMEB reported a greater frequency of individuals who had never consumed iron-rich foods during the past week (70% for households below the SMEB versus 53% for households above the SMEB). These findings underscore the heightened vulnerability of Syrian refugees living below the SMEB to nutritional deficiencies, as they consumed fewer vitamin A, protein and iron-rich foods compared to those living above the SMEB.

In terms of gender-based differences within households, it was observed that daily consumption of vitamin A-rich foods was more prevalent among male-headed households, with 30% adhering to this practice, in contrast to 23% of female-headed households. Similarly, a higher proportion of male-headed households, specifically 38%, reported daily consumption of protein-rich foods, compared to 32% in female-headed households. However, when it comes to iron intake, male-headed households exhibited a lower prevalence of low iron consumption, with 63% of them reporting this issue. In comparison, 68% of female-headed households reported never consuming iron-rich foods during the past week.

Annex 1: Food consumption score (1/2)

	Food consumption score	Food consumption groups			Number of meals – adults	Number of meals –children	Household Daily Diet diversity
	Mean	Poor	Borderline	Acceptable	Mean	Mean	Mean
Total	44.6	14%	37%	49%	2.0	2.6	5.7
Governorate							
Akkar	42.9	10%	47%	43%	2.4	2.9	5.8
Baalbek-El Hermel	44.5	14%	37%	49%	2.2	2.9	5.9
Beirut	53.5	8%	24%	68%	2.1	2.6	6.2
Bekaa	45.7	15%	34%	51%	2.1	2.9	5.9
El Nabatieh	49.7	8%	32%	60%	2.1	3.1	6.1
Mount Lebanon	42.6	19%	35%	46%	1.7	1.9	5.3
North Lebanon	42.0	11%	46%	43%	2.1	2.7	5.5
South Lebanon	50.1	10%	28%	62%	2.3	3.3	5.8
Shelter type							
Residential	45.5	12%	36%	52%	2.0	2.5	5.7
Non-residential	44.4	13%	38%	49%	2.2	2.8	5.7
Non-permanent	41.5	21%	39%	39%	2.2	2.9	5.7
Food security status							
Food secure	58.7	0%	0%	100%	1.9	2.6	6.6
Marginally food secure	51.0	0%	27%	73%	2.1	2.7	6.1
Moderately food insecure	35.2	31%	56%	13%	2.0	2.6	5.1
Severely food insecure	26.1	82%	18%	0%	1.6	2.2	4.4
Gender of the head of household							
Male	45.0	13%	37%	50%	2.0	2.6	5.7
Female	42.3	18%	36%	46%	2.1	2.7	5.5
HH with at least one member with disability							
Yes	44.8	14%	37%	50%	2.0	2.7	5.7
No	44.1	15%	37%	48%	2.0	2.6	5.7

Annex 1: Food consumption score (2/2)

	Household Daily Diet diversity Categories			Household weekly Diet diversity	Household weekly Diet diversity Categories		
	<4.5 food groups	4.5–6.4 food groups	≥6.5 food groups	Mean	≤ 6 food groups	7–8 food groups	≥ 9 food groups
Total	13%	64%	23%	8.7	8%	39%	53%
Governorate							
Akkar	4%	74%	21%	8.4	5%	50%	44%
Baalbek-El Hermel	6%	69%	26%	8.4	10%	43%	47%
Beirut	11%	43%	46%	9.6	3%	19%	78%
Bekaa	4%	71%	25%	8.8	7%	39%	54%
El Nabatieh	10%	52%	38%	8.6	7%	40%	53%
Mount Lebanon	25%	59%	17%	8.8	9%	35%	56%
North Lebanon	14%	70%	16%	8.4	6%	48%	46%
South Lebanon	19%	45%	36%	9.5	7%	27%	66%
Shelter type							
Residential	14%	61%	24%	8.9	6%	36%	58%
Non-residential	13%	63%	24%	8.6	8%	42%	50%
Non-permanent	9%	73%	18%	8.1	13%	49%	38%
Food security status							
Food secure	0%	43%	56%	10.1	0%	11%	89%
Marginally food secure	6%	62%	33%	9.3	1%	29%	70%
Moderately food insecure	23%	70%	7%	7.9	15%	56%	29%
Severely food insecure	47%	53%	0%	6.6	48%	45%	7%
Gender of the head of household							
Male	13%	64%	24%	8.8	7%	39%	54%
Female	15%	65%	20%	8.5	9%	41%	50%
HH with at least one member with disability							
Yes	13%	63%	23%	8.9	7%	36%	57%
No	13%	64%	22%	8.5	9%	44%	47%

Annex 2: Food consumption score nutrition

	Food group vitamin A			Food group protein			Food group hem iron		
	Never consumed	1 to 6 times a week	At least daily	Never consumed	1 to 6 times a week	At least daily	Never consumed	1 to 6 times a week	At least daily
Total	16%	56%	29%	5%	58%	37%	64%	36%	0.2%
Governorate									
Akkar	20%	64%	16%	3%	68%	29%	76%	24%	0.2%
Baalbek-El Hermel	21%	51%	28%	7%	57%	36%	76%	24%	0.0%
Beirut	4%	46%	50%	1%	38%	61%	44%	55%	0.8%
Bekaa	20%	51%	30%	6%	62%	33%	62%	37%	0.2%
El Nabatieh	12%	49%	39%	4%	47%	49%	70%	30%	0.0%
Mount Lebanon	15%	61%	25%	5%	57%	38%	56%	44%	0.4%
North Lebanon	12%	65%	23%	3%	66%	30%	75%	24%	0.2%
South Lebanon	8%	38%	54%	5%	39%	56%	47%	53%	0.0%
Shelter type									
Residential	12%	58%	30%	3%	56%	40%	60%	40%	0.2%
Non-residential	18%	51%	31%	6%	58%	37%	67%	33%	0.2%
Non-permanent	28%	51%	21%	10%	64%	26%	78%	22%	0.3%
Food security status									
Food secure	0%	48%	52%	0%	24%	76%	31%	69%	0.4%
Marginally food secure	5%	55%	40%	0%	46%	54%	53%	46%	0.1%
Moderately food insecure	30%	59%	11%	10%	79%	12%	81%	19%	0.3%
Severely food insecure	61%	33%	6%	40%	56%	4%	93%	7%	0.0%
Gender of the head of household									
Male	15%	56%	30%	5%	57%	38%	63%	36%	0.2%
Female	21%	56%	23%	6%	62%	32%	68%	32%	0.0%
HH with at least one member with disability									
Yes	14%	57%	29%	5%	58%	37%	60%	40%	0.2%
No	18%	54%	28%	5%	58%	37%	71%	29%	0.1%

Child Nutrition

Optimal Infant and child nutrition practices are pivotal to reducing malnutrition, morbidity, and mortality. According to UNICEF and WHO, infants should be put to the breast within one hour of birth, exclusively breastfed the first six months of life and up to two years of age and beyond. When the infant is over six months, solid, semi-solid and soft foods are introduced along with breastmilk. This transition (known as complementary feeding) is crucial for the child's development. With the current situation in Lebanon, the survival, growth and development of infants and young children have been and remain at high risk. This assessment examined IYCF practices in Syrian refugee households. The information was collected on 360 infants under six months of age, 222 infants from 6 to 8 months, 146 infants from 9 to 11 months, 185 infants from 12 to 15 months and 643 infants from 16 to 23 months.

Key findings

- Around 75% of infants under 24 months had ever been breastfed and 55% were still receiving breast milk. Also, 35% of children under six months old were exclusively breastfed.
- Among infants between six and eight months of age, 54% received complementary feeding one day preceding the survey. There was a notable difference between boys and girls according to age, with the rates of boys being higher than girls.
- Only 17% of children between the ages of 6 and 23 months were fed a diverse diet on the previous day, consisting of four or more food groups.
- Just more than half (56%) of infants aged 6 to 23 months received between one and two food groups, 35% had between three and four food groups and only 6% had more than four food groups.
- The proportion of children between 6 and 23 months who met the minimum acceptable meal frequency number slightly decreased from 11% in 2022 to 7% in 2023.

Breastfeeding practices

Proper feeding of infants and young children can increase their chances of survival. It can also promote optimal growth and development, especially in the critical window from birth to two years of age. Breastfeeding for the first few years of life protects children from infection, provides an ideal source of nutrients and is economical and safe. However, many mothers do not start breastfeeding early enough, do not breastfeed exclusively for the recommended six months or stop breastfeeding too soon. There are often pressures to switch to infant formula, which can contribute to growth faltering and micronutrient malnutrition and can be unsafe if hygienic conditions, including safe drinking water, are not readily available.

UNICEF and WHO recommend that infants are breastfed within one hour of birth, breastfed exclusively for the first six months of life and continue to be breastfed up to two years of age and beyond.

Starting at six months, breastfeeding should be combined with safe, age-appropriate feeding of solid, semi-solid and soft foods.

The situation of breastfeeding practices has slightly increased compared to previous years. Specifically, out of all infants below 24 months, around 75% had ever been breastfed, compared to 70% last year. Furthermore, 55% were still receiving breastmilk, an increase of 6% since 2022. Among children under six months, 35% were exclusively breastfed.

As the child's age increases, the ratio of breastfeeding decreases. Specifically, 91% of children under six months had ever been breasted, an increase of 7% from last year, and among children between 16 and 23 months, the rate was at 61%. Similar trends were observed for children who were still receiving breast milk.

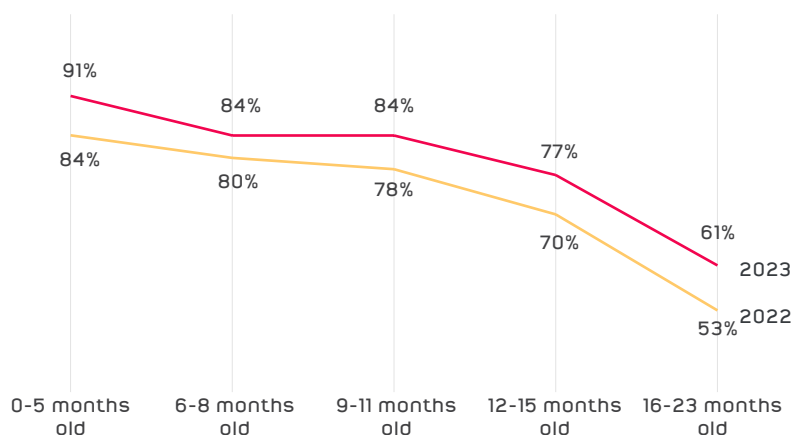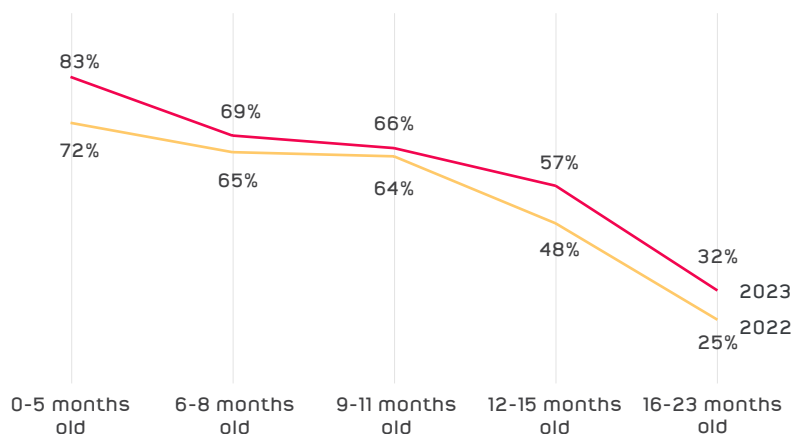**Figure 1: Percentage of infants who had ever been breastfed by age**

Figure 2: Percentage of infants who were still receiving breastmilk by age
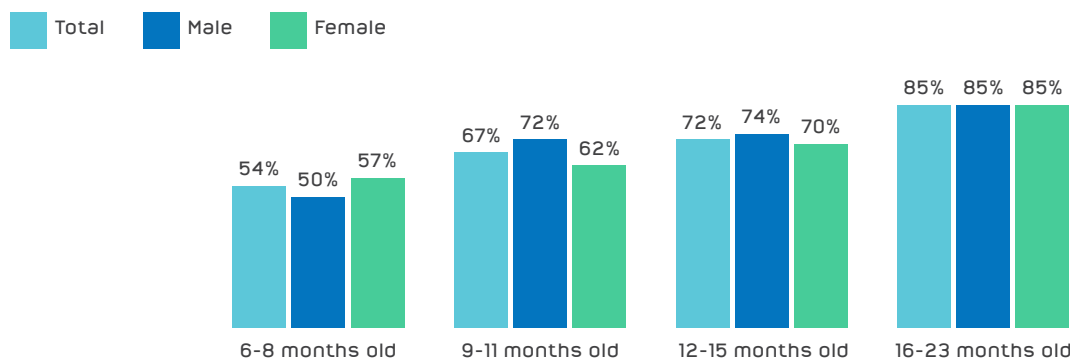

Complimentary feeding

Around the age of six months, an infant's need for energy and nutrients starts to exceed what is provided by breast milk and complementary foods, which include solid, semi-solid, soft foods or other liquids, are necessary to meet those needs. An infant of this age is also developmentally ready for other foods. This transition is referred to as complementary feeding. The percentage of children between six and eight months of age who received complementary

feeding the previous day increased by 8% from last year (54% in 2023 in comparison to 46% in 2022). The rate increases as the child's age increases, reaching 85% among children between 16 to 23 months of age. There was a notable difference between boys and girls according to age, with the rates for boys being higher than girls, as can be seen in the figure below.

Figure 3: Percentage of infants who received solid, demi-solid or soft foods or other liquids during the previous day by age and sex
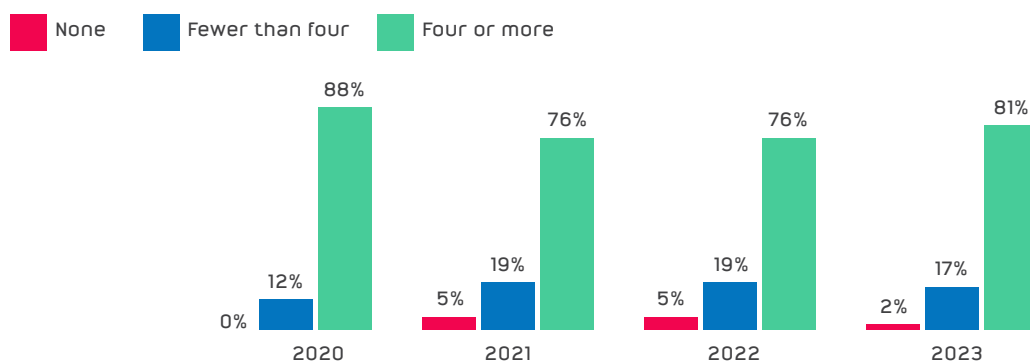
Total   Male   Female

- 6-8 months old: Total 54%, Male 50%, Female 57%
- 9-11 months old: Total 67%, Male 72%, Female 62%
- 12-15 months old: Total 72%, Male 74%, Female 70%
- 16-23 months old: Total 85%, Male 85%, Female 85%

Minimum dietary diversity

According to WHO guidelines (2008) for assessing IYCF practices, children who are 6 to 23 months old should consume a minimum of five food groups out of eight to meet the minimum dietary diversity target, independent of age and breastfeeding status. The food groups are:

1- Breast milk
2- Grains, roots and tubers
3- Pulses and nuts
4- Dairy products (milk, yoghurt, cheese)
5- Meats (red meat, fish, poultry and liver/organ meats)
6- Eggs
7- Vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables
8- Other fruits and vegetable

Feeding frequency is used as a proxy for energy intake, requiring children to receive a minimum number of meals/snacks (and milk feeds for non-breastfed children) for their age. Dietary diversity is used to ascertain the adequacy of the nutrient content of the food consumed (not including iron). For dietary diversity, seven food groups were created and a child consuming at least four of these is considered to have a better-quality diet. In most populations, consumption of at least four food groups means that the child has a high likelihood of consuming at least one animal-source food and at least one fruit or vegetable in addition to a staple food (grain, root or tuber).
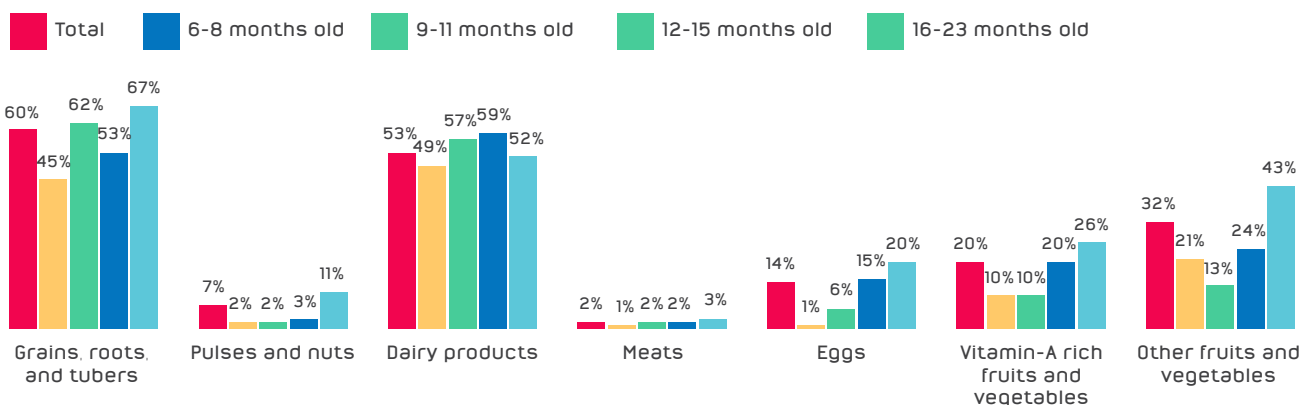
In 2023 (similar to the previous year), only 17% of children between the ages of 6 and 23 months were fed a diverse diet on the previous day, consisting of four or more food groups. As for those remaining, 81% received a diet consisting of three or fewer food groups and 3% did not receive any of the diverse food groups. More specifically, 56% of infants aged 6 to 23 months received between one and two food groups, 35% had between three and four food groups, and only 6% had more than four food groups.

Figure 4: Proportion of children aged 6 to 23 months who receive food from four or more food groups/categories

None   Fewer than four   Four or more

- 2020: None 0%, Fewer than four 12%, Four or more 88%
- 2021: None 5%, Fewer than four 19%, Four or more 76%
- 2022: None 5%, Fewer than four 19%, Four or more 76%
- 2023: None 2%, Fewer than four 17%, Four or more 81%

Taking a closer look at the different food groups/categories, as in previous years, there was a very low proportion of children eating meats, pulses and nuts, as well as Vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables. The highest proportion was for grains, roots and tubers, as well as dairy products.

Figure 5: Proportion of children aged 6 to 23 months who received foods from each food group

Legend: Total | 6-8 months old | 9-11 months old | 12-15 months old | 16-23 months old

Grains, roots, and tubers: 60%, 45%, 62%, 53%, 67%
Pulses and nuts: 7%, 2%, 2%, 3%, 11%
Dairy products: 53%, 49%, 57%, 59%, 52%
Meats: 2%, 1%, 2%, 2%, 3%
Eggs: 14%, 1%, 6%, 15%, 20%
Vitamin-A rich fruits and vegetables: 20%, 10%, 10%, 20%, 26%
Other fruits and vegetables: 32%, 21%, 13%, 24%, 43%

Minimum meal frequency

WHO defines the minimum acceptable meal frequency for young children as follows:
- Two meals/day for breastfed infants (6–8 months old)
- Three meals/day for breastfed children (9–23 months old)
- Four meals/day for non-breastfed children (6–23 months old)

The proportion of children between 6 and 23 months who met the minimum acceptable meal frequency number slightly decreased from 11% in 2022 to 7% in 2023. Among children who were breastfed and who were non-breastfed, 8% and 6% met the meal frequency number, respectively.

Health

Health services are available to the refugee population in Lebanon through a network of primary healt care centres (PHC), dispensaries and hospitals. VASyR 2023 examined the refugee population's access to the required care, barriers to health care access and related coping mechanisms. VASyR does not evaluate the quality of the care received. Since 2022, VASyR has measured health access and barriers at both the individual and household levels, whereas these used to be measured at the household level in previous VASyR exercises. At the individual level, VASyR measured the need and access to health care, places where health care was accessed, payment methods and barriers to accessing health care. In addition, further factors related to refugee health and health-seeking behaviour were examined, such as the incidence of childhood diseases, women's health and the incidence of home deliveries. At the household level, VASyR measured the barriers to accessing medications, coping mechanisms and knowledge of health emergency services. Some VASyR findings for health are not comparable with those from previous years since the formulation of questions changed in 2022 in alignment with the Multi-sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) to allow comparison between populations of different nationalities.

Key findings

- About 17% of individuals had a health problem that required access to health care in the last three months compared to 18% in 2022 – 82% of these individuals were able to access the health care they needed compared to 73% in 2022.
- Among individuals requiring health care, 88% needed PHC and 10% needed secondary health care (SHC), with 2% needing both PHC and SHC. The percentage of individuals in need who were able to access PHC was 82% and those who were able to access SHC were 76.9%.
- Cost was, by far, the main barrier to accessing the care needed. This included direct costs such as consultation fees and indirect costs such as transportation. Moreover, long waiting times for the service needed were also mentioned as a main barrier.
- The percentage of refugee children under the age of two who suffered from at least one disease in the two weeks prior to the survey was 32%, which showed an increase since the past three years when the percentage was around 24%.

Types of health care

PHC refers to health care that does not require hospital admission. This includes services such as vaccination, medications for acute and chronic conditions, care for non-communicable diseases, sexual and reproductive health care, malnutrition screening and management, mental health care, dental care and basic laboratory and diagnostic services, as well as health promotion. Fixed PHC outlets are either PHC centres that are part of the Ministry of Public Health's network or dispensaries outside the network. Other types of fixed PHC outlets include social development centres, private clinics and pharmacies.

SHC refers to services that require hospital admissions, such as elective or life-saving surgeries, delivery services, advanced laboratory or diagnostic procedures, newborn illnesses, inpatient malnutrition treatment, inpatient psychiatric admissions and other specialised services provided at the hospital level.

Individual health

Demand for and access to health care

About 17% of individuals had a health problem that required access to health care in the last three months compared to 18% in 2023; 82% of these individuals were able to access the health care they needed. El Nabatieh governorate had the highest percentage of refugees in need of health care (29%), while the North Lebanon governorate had the lowest percentage (7%), as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Share of individuals reporting health problems requiring access to health care in the previous three months by governorate
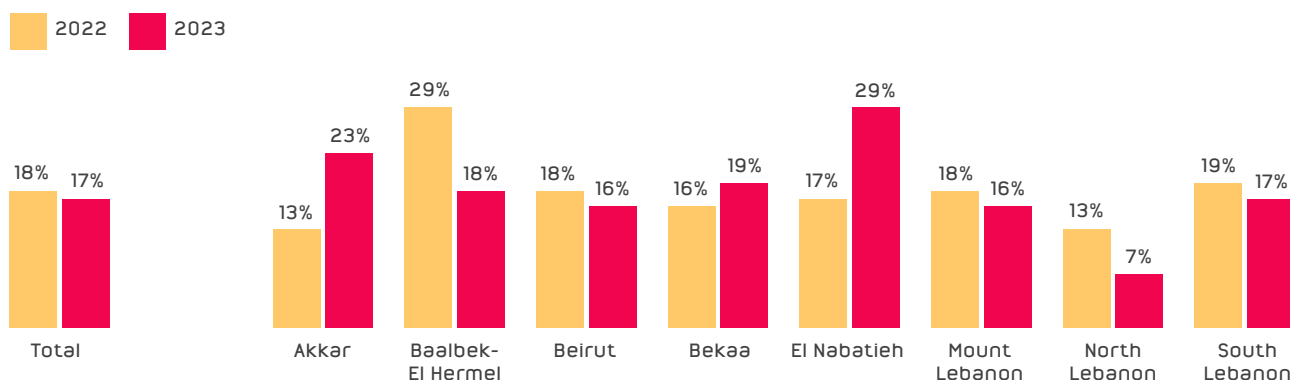
A larger proportion of individuals with a disability (34%) reported their need for health care compared to 14% of those who did not have a disability. However, individuals with a disability reported a lower percentage of access to the required health services (78%) than individuals without a disability (83%).
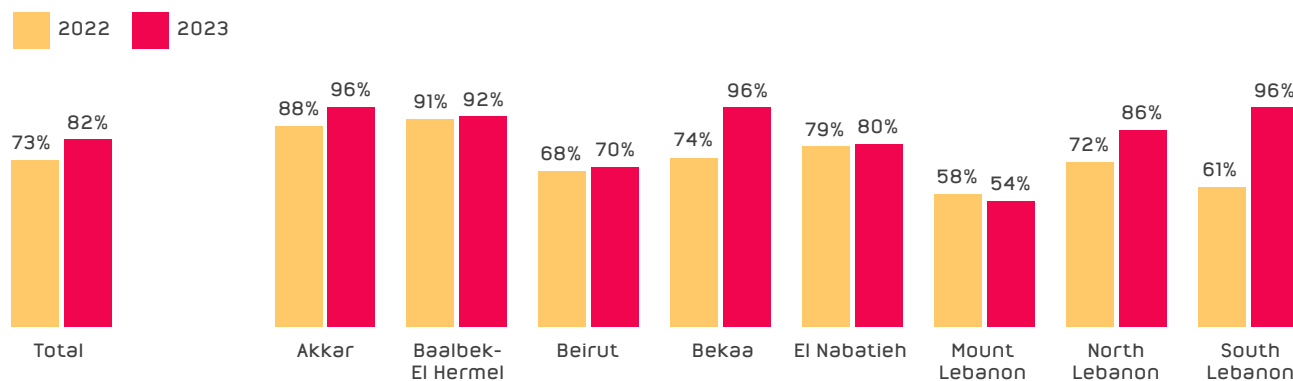
Among individuals in need of health care, 88% needed PHC and 10% needed SHC, with 2% needing both primary and secondary health care. As per Figure 8.2, the highest need for PHC was in the Bekaa governorate (93.5%), while the highest need for SHC was in North Lebanon (24%).

Figure 2: Type of health care needed by Syrian refugees in the previous three months by governorate
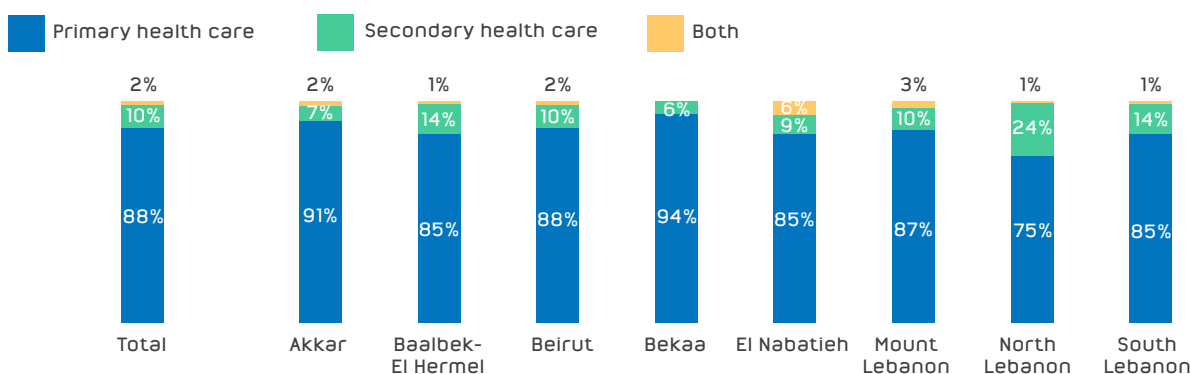
At the national level, 82% of individuals in need of health care were able to access it. Mount Lebanon showed the lowest percentage of individuals being able to access the health care they needed at 58% and Baalbek-El Hermel showed the highest at 91% (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Percentage of individuals with health problems who were able to access the required health care in the previous three months by governorate
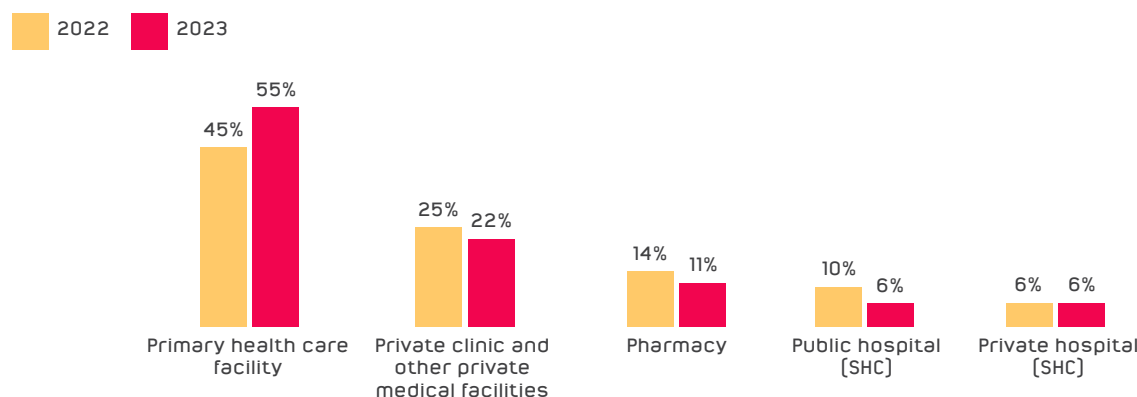
Legend: 2022 2023

- Total: 73% / 82%
- Akkar: 88% / 96%
- Baalbek-El Hermel: 91% / 92%
- Beirut: 68% / 70%
- Bekaa: 74% / 96%
- El Nabatieh: 79% / 80%
- Mount Lebanon: 58% / 54%
- North Lebanon: 72% / 86%
- South Lebanon: 61% / 96%

Type of health care needed

About 91% of households indicated that the main type of primary health care needed was general and specialised consultation for acute or chronic conditions and basic laboratory and diagnostics tests, excluding care related to pregnancy. The main types of secondary health care needed were advanced laboratory or diagnostic procedures, other interventions (47%), elective and non-life-saving surgeries (21%) and emergency-lifesaving surgery, including trauma care (10%).

Type of health care providers

About 54.5% of individuals received health services through a primary health care centre, 22.4% received health care through private clinics or medical facilities, 11% through pharmacies, 6% through private hospitals and 6% through public hospitals (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4: Places where primary health care services were accessed

Legend: 2022 2023

- Primary health care facility: 45% / 55%
- Private clinic and other private medical facilities: 25% / 22%
- Pharmacy: 14% / 11%
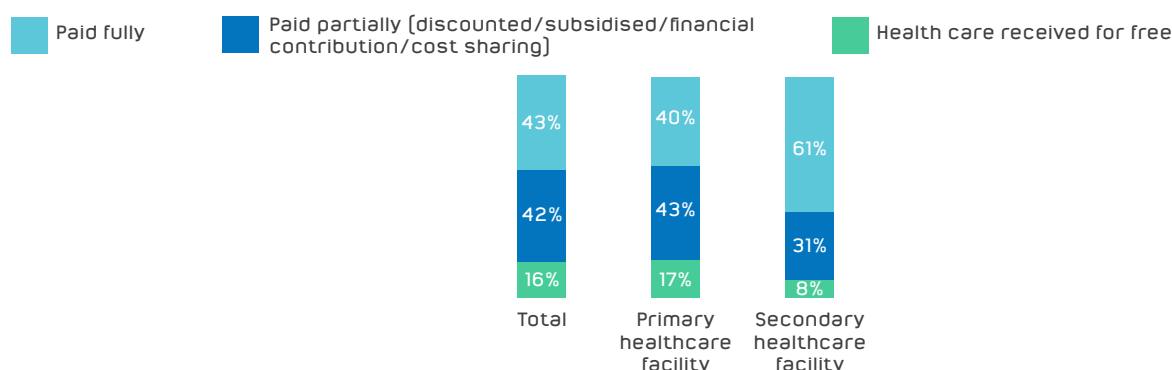- Public hospital (SHC): 10% / 6%
- Private hospital (SHC): 6% / 6%

Payment for health care services

About 43% of individuals who accessed health care paid the health care cost fully, 42% paid partially and only 16% received their health care for free (see Figure 8.5 below). These percentages were similar to 2022.

About 17% of those receiving PHC received it for free, 43% paid partially and 40% paid the full treatment cost. Regarding SHC, only 8% of those receiving it did so for free compared to 6% in 2022, 31% paid partially compared to 42% in 2022, while 62% paid the treatment cost fully compared to 51% in 2022.

Figure 5: Payment for health care received

Legend: Paid fully | Paid partially (discounted/subsidised/financial contribution/cost sharing) | Health care received for free

- Total: 43% / 42% / 16%
- Primary healthcare facility: 40% / 43% / 17%
- Secondary healthcare facility: 61% / 31% / 8%

Barriers to accessing health care

Likewise, as with previous years, the main barrier to accessing health care was cost. About 89% of individuals who were unable to access primary health care mentioned that they could not afford the cost of consultation, 78% indicated long waiting times for the service and 6% could not afford the cost of the treatment. As for those who were unable to access secondary health care, 86% could not afford the cost of a consultation, 61% had a long waiting time for the service and 9% could not afford the cost of the treatment (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6: Barriers to accessing health care among individuals unable to access the required health care
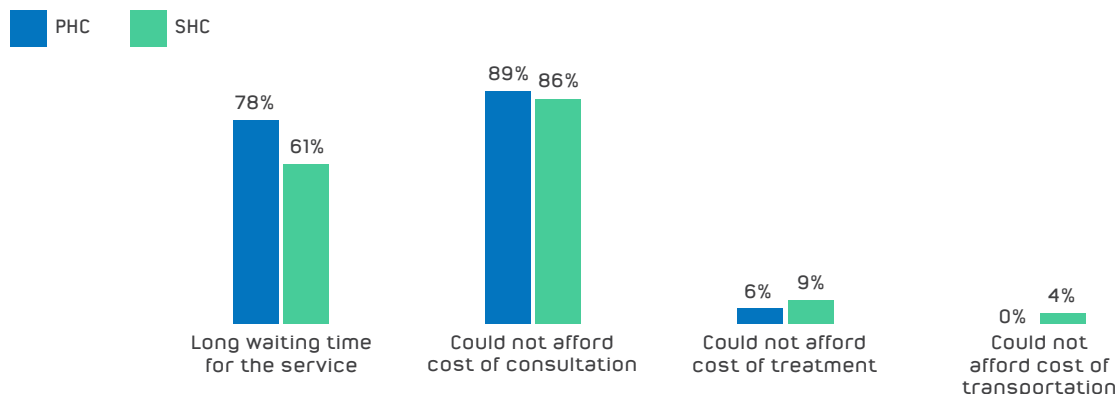

Household health

About 44% of households had at least one member in the last three months who needed access to health care compared to 48% in 2022. About 39% of households had a member in need of PHC in the last three months and 9% had at least one member in need of SHC. Almost 83% of households in need of health care had at least one member accessing the required health care compared to 79% in 2022. The percentage of households with all their members in need of health care and who were able to access it was 77% compared to 66% in 2022.

The percentage of households that reported knowing where to access emergency medical care or services slightly decreased from 86% in 2022 to 84% in 2023. However, the percentage is still higher than in 2021. The highest decrease was in North Lebanon, from 81% in 2022 to 68% in 2023 (see Figure 7 below).

Figure 7: Percentage of households reporting knowing where to access emergency health care services by governorate
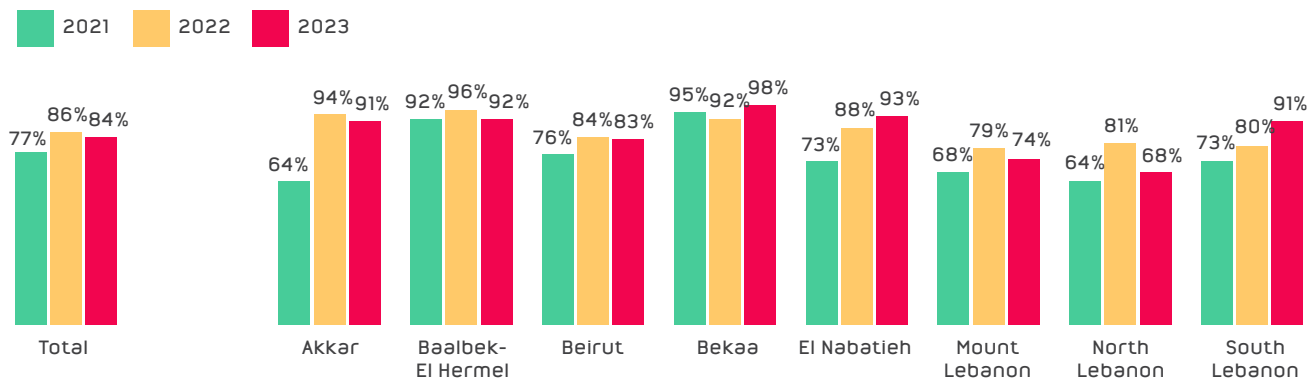

Medication barriers and coping mechanisms

About 73% of Syrian refugee households resorted to using at least one coping mechanism relating to access to medication in the previous three months, which was similar to 2022. The main coping mechanisms used were switching to substitute/generic drugs (43%), borrowing money (26%) and rationing existing medications (26%), as can be seen in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Coping mechanisms relating to access to medication used by households

2022   2023
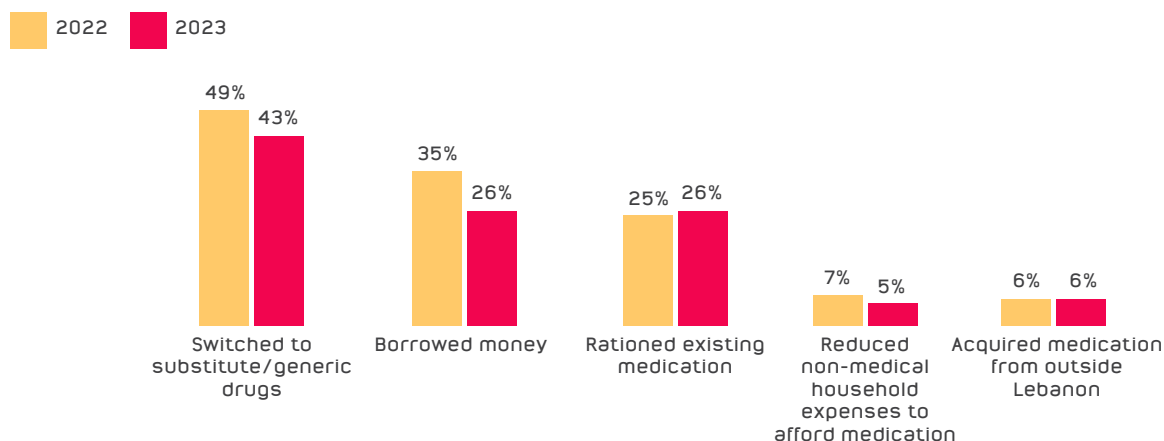
About 18% of those in need of health care in the last three months were not able to access it compared to 27% in 2022. A total of 18% of households who were able to access health care did not face any barriers to accessing medications or did not need any medication. The main barriers to accessing medication, as shown in Figure 9, were medication cost (59%), visiting doctors to obtain a prescription (26%) and the availability of medication in health care facilities (18%) or pharmacies (11%).

Figure 9: Barriers to accessing medication in Syrian refugee households

2022   2023
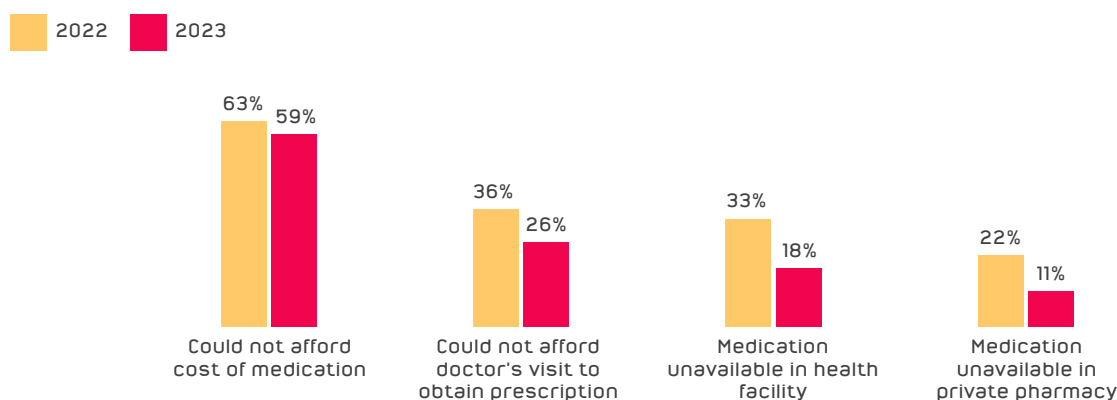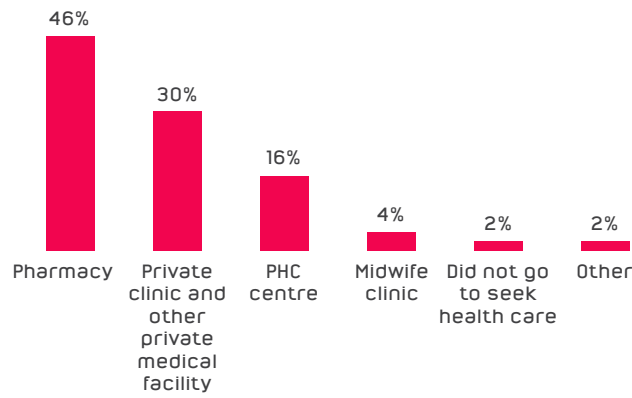

Women and child health

Childbirth

About 26% of women aged 15–49 had delivered a baby in the last two years, compared to 24% in 2022. The vast majority of these women (94%) delivered their babies in a health care facility, and 3% delivered at home under the supervision of professional health care personnel. About 3% of women reported home deliveries with non-professional care (a traditional midwife) and 0.5% reported that they delivered at home unattended. Moreover, 56% of women had at least four antenatal care visits during their pregnancy.

Family planning

The percentage of women aged 15 to 45 who are not single and perceived they needed contraceptives for family planning was 13%, of which 95% were able to access the contraceptives they needed.

Women were mainly seeking family planning and contraceptives from pharmacies (46%), private clinics (30%) and primary health care centres.
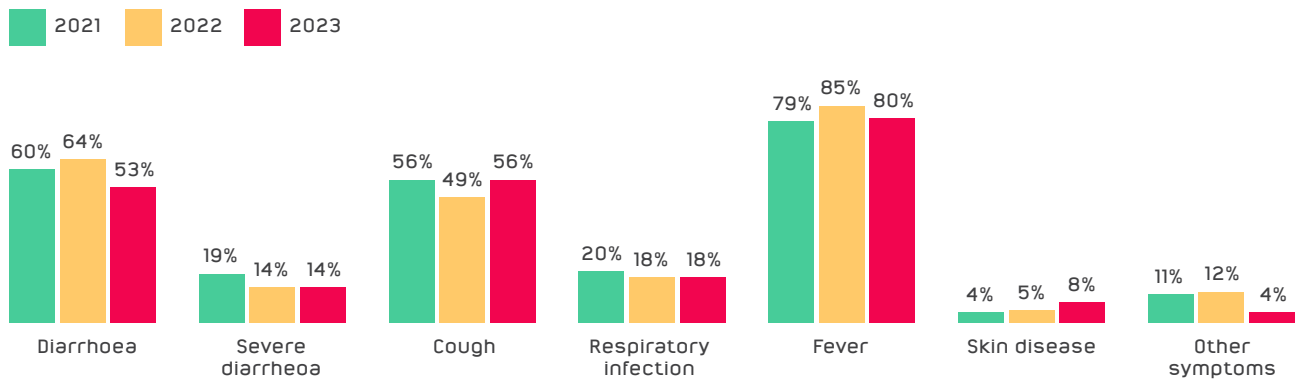
Figure 10: Location where women were seeking access to family planning/contraceptives

Pharmacy: 46%
Private clinic and other private medical facility: 30%
PHC centre: 16%
Midwife clinic: 4%
Did not go to seek health care: 2%
Other: 2%

Child health

The percentage of refugee children under the age of two who suffered from at least one disease in the two weeks prior to the survey increased from 24% in 2022 to 32% in 2023. Of those who were sick, 53% suffered from diarrhoea and 14% from severe diarrhoea. The proportion of children who suffered from a respiratory infection remained at 18%, which is similar to 2022 (see Figure 11 below).

Figure 11: Types of sickness experienced by children aged 0–23 months who suffered from disease in the previous two weeks for the period 2021–23

2021 2022 2023

	2021	2022	2023
Diarrhoea	60%	64%	53%
Severe diarrheoa	19%	14%	14%
Cough	56%	49%	56%
Respiratory infection	20%	18%	18%
Fever	79%	85%	80%
Skin disease	4%	5%	8%
Other symptoms	11%	12%	4%

Annex 1: Households' access to health care

	Primary health care			Secondary health care			Coping	Other
	Households having at least one individual in need of primary health care	Households with at least one individual able to get the required primary health care	Households with all individuals were able to get the required primary health care	Households having at least one individual in need of secondary health care	Households with at least one individual able to get the required secondary health care	Households with ALL individuals who were able to get the required secondary health care	Households with at least one coping strategy to address medication access barriers	Households that have knowledge on how to access emergency medical services
Total	39%	82%	77%	9%	77%	76%	73%	84%
Governorate								
Akkar	47%	96%	93%	9%	93%	93%	53%	91%
Baalbek-El Hermel	44%	92%	89%	11%	85%	83%	81%	92%
Beirut	32%	76%	64%	8%	68%	65%	67%	83%
Bekaa	46%	95%	94%	6%	89%	89%	68%	98%
El Nabatieh	55%	92%	70%	21%	80%	78%	83%	93%
Mount Lebanon	39%	56%	48%	9%	48%	47%	83%	74%
North Lebanon	18%	85%	81%	7%	91%	91%	57%	68%
South Lebanon	41%	97%	93%	13%	99%	99%	85%	91%
Gender of the head of household								
Male	39%	83%	77%	9%	78%	76%	72%	84%
Female	42%	81%	78%	8%	75%	75%	74%	84%
Shelter type								
Residential	38%	79%	72%	9%	72%	70%	73%	83%
Non-residential	33%	82%	74%	11%	82%	82%	68%	78%
Non-permanent	47%	94%	91%	9%	93%	93%	72%	93%

Shelter

In the context of the governmental policy prohibiting the establishment of formal refugee camps, most of the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon lives in cities and villages. The remaining fraction lives in spontaneous informal tented settlements throughout the country. Refugees face harsh winters with sub-zero temperatures and flooding, particularly affecting those living in non-permanent and non-residential shelters. Throughout the years, the shelter sector under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan has been massively underfunded, leaving a substantial proportion of Syrian refugees in inadequate shelter at a time of a deepening economic crisis and steep increases in rental costs.

Through the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees, the physical conditions of these shelters were assessed, as were the occupancy agreements, rental costs and the ability of families to pay rent. The mobility of households between places of residence (including reasons for eviction) was also examined.

Key findings

- Geographical trends remained similar to previous years, with the highest rental costs reported in Beirut and the lowest in Baalbek-El Hermel.
- When using the exchange rate to US dollars during months of June and July we see that there is no big change in the average rent in US dollars. It increased from $29.17 in 2022 to $60 in 2023, however, we didn't reach the average rent in 2019 which was $176.
- Monthly rental costs have almost quintupled since 2022, reaching an average of over LL5.6 million nationally, up from LL863,155 in 2022.
- Rent cost and proximity to relatives are still the main factors for selecting place of residence.
- The distribution of Syrian refugee households across the main shelter types remained stable, with the majority (71%) living in residential structures, 20% in non-permanent shelters and 9% in non-residential structures.
- As in 2022, over half (52%) of Syrian refugee households were living in overcrowded shelters, had conditions below humanitarian standards, and/or were in danger of collapse.
- A total of 15% of households were living in shelters that were in danger of collapse and another 30% were living in shelters with substandard conditions.
- Almost a quarter of households (16%) were living in overcrowded conditions of less than 4.5 m²/person, which dropped from 23% in 2021.
- A total of 3% of households were currently living under an eviction notice and the majority were expected to leave within one month.
- More than half of households were behind in their rent payments. The average of the unpaid rent for those families is around LL14 million.

Shelter type, rent and occupancy agreements

The types of shelters occupied by refugee households are classified into three categories, as per the table below.

Table 1: Types of shelters occupied by refugee households

Shelter type	Examples of shelter
Residential	Apartment/house Concierge room in residential building Hotel room
Non-residential	Factory Workshop Farm Active construction site Shop Agricultural/engine/pump room Warehouse School
Non-permanent	Tent Prefab unit

As with previous years, most households (71%) continued to live in residential structures, with 20% residing in non-permanent shelters and 9% in non-residential shelters. The largest proportions of households in non-permanent shelters were in Baalbek-El Hermel, Bekaa and Akkar.

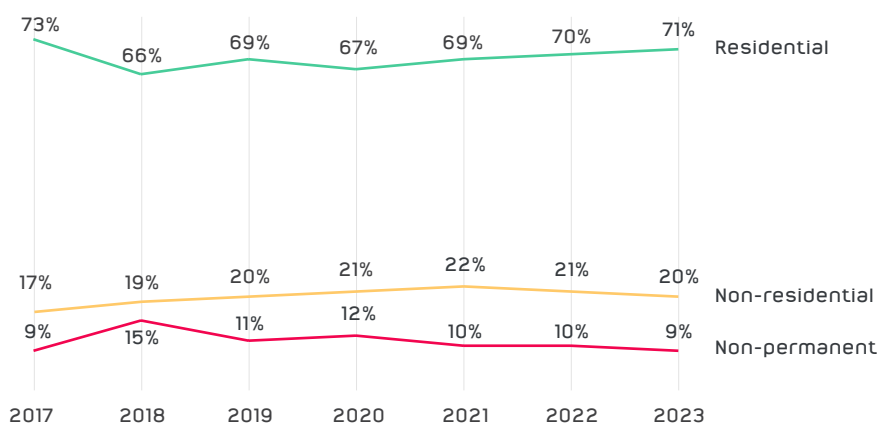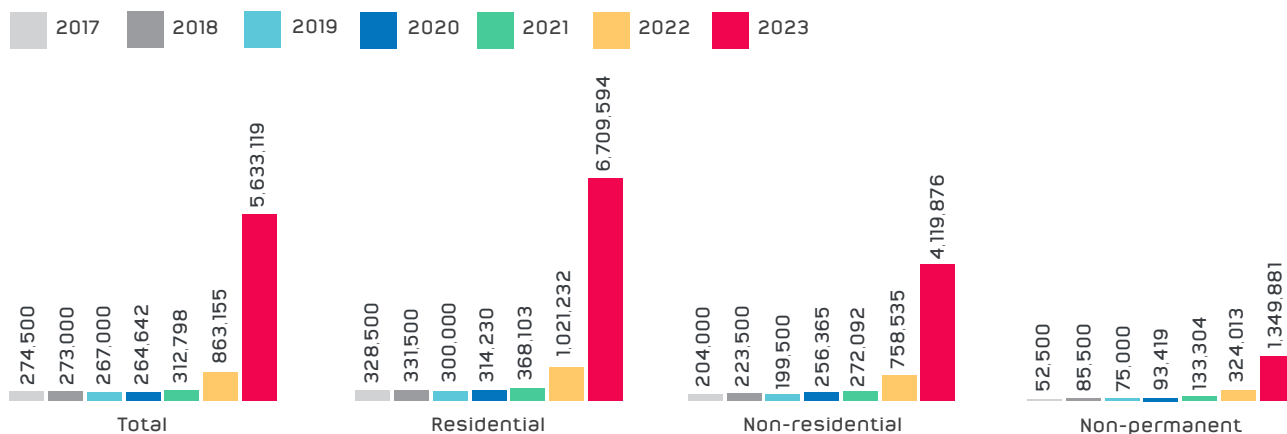**Figure 1: Types of shelters occupied by refugee households for 2017–2023**

Table 2: Shelter types occupied by refugee households by governorate

	Residential			Non-residential			Non-permanent		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Total	69%	69.5%	70.7%	9%	9.6%	9.1%	22%	20.9%	20.2%
Akkar	56%	62.0%	53.3%	10%	11.5%	13.1%	35%	26.6%	33.7%
Baalbek-El Hermel	39%	37.5%	38.7%	8%	6.0%	5.9%	53%	56.6%	55.3%
Beirut	96%	93.4%	96.7%	4%	6.2%	3.1%	1%	0.4%	0.2%
Bekaa	46%	49.8%	54%	9%	10.0%	6.2%	45%	40.1%	39.8%
El Nabatieh	84%	82.2%	85.3%	8%	10.4%	8.5%	8%	7.4%	6.3%
Mount Lebanon	91%	90.8%	93.9%	7%	7.6%	4.5%	2%	1.5%	1.5%
North Lebanon	76%	75.1%	76.3%	16%	14.2%	16.9%	8%	10.7%	6.8%
South Lebanon	80%	80.9%	72.6%	15%	11.3%	23.6%	5%	7.8%	3.9%

Average monthly rental costs increased by 553% nationally, reaching just over LL5.6 million, up from around LL863,155 in 2022. Rental costs in residential (LL6,709,594), non-residential (LL4,119,876) and non-permanent (LL1,349,881) shelters increased by 557%, 443%, and 317%, respectively, compared to 2022; this is mainly due to inflation and the rate of exchange between the Lebanese pound versus the US dollar.

Figure 2: Average monthly rental costs by shelter type for 2017–23 (in LL)

Legend: 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023

Total
- 2017: 274,500
- 2018: 273,000
- 2019: 267,000
- 2020: 264,642
- 2021: 312,798
- 2022: 863,155
- 2023: 5,633,119

Residential
- 2017: 328,500
- 2018: 331,500
- 2019: 300,000
- 2020: 314,230
- 2021: 368,103
- 2022: 1,021,232
- 2023: 6,709,594

Non-residential
- 2017: 204,000
- 2018: 223,500
- 2019: 199,500
- 2020: 256,365
- 2021: 272,092
- 2022: 758,535
- 2023: 4,119,876

Non-permanent
- 2017: 52,500
- 2018: 85,500
- 2019: 75,000
- 2020: 93,419
- 2021: 133,304
- 2022: 324,013
- 2023: 1,349,881

Likewise, in comparison to previous years, the highest rental rates were reported in Beirut (LL10,198,293) and Mount Lebanon (LL7,672,035) governorates, with the lowest being in Baalbek-El Hermel (LL2,385,386) and Akkar (LL2,432,057). Most households reported paying rent in US dollars in 2023, with 22% stating that they are still paying rent in Lebanese pounds. Reported rental costs were lower among female-headed households at LL4,623,649, compared to LL5,807,577 among male-headed households.

Table 3: Average monthly rental costs by governorate

	National	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
Rent 2022 (LL)	863,155	516,661	412,934	1,567,871	690,786	932,836	1,156,322	938,422	1,004,695
Rent 2023 (LL)	5,633,119	2,432,057	2,385,386	10,198,293	4,457,653	6,844,491	7,672,035	6,095,449	6,459,372
% change 2022–2023	553%	371%	478%	550%	545%	634%	563%	550%	543%
% of households that reported having to pay rent in dollars	78%	56%	62%	89%	78%	89%	91%	85%	57%

And when we use the market exchange rate during the time of collecting data between June and July 2023 which is LL94,187.2 for $1 and use the same logic for older rent values in Lebanese pounds and draw a trend line for change in rent using the US dollar we found that the increase in US dollar rent value has doubled from last year $29 in 2022 to reach $59 in 2023 as the figure below shows.

Half (50%) of households stated that they were late in paying their rent, with the majority being in El Nabatieh, at 67%. When asked about their last rental payment, households had paid, on average, only half of the requested amount. Households in Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel reported paying the least of their rental costs in the past payment, with households having paid 29% and 32% of their rental cost, respectively. Only 6% of households had written proof of rental payment.

Last year, we predicted that most of rent contracts will be changed to US dollars, and this prediction has been confirmed this year 2023, as we see significant increase for households' rent in US dollars from 4% in 2022 to 78% in 2023.
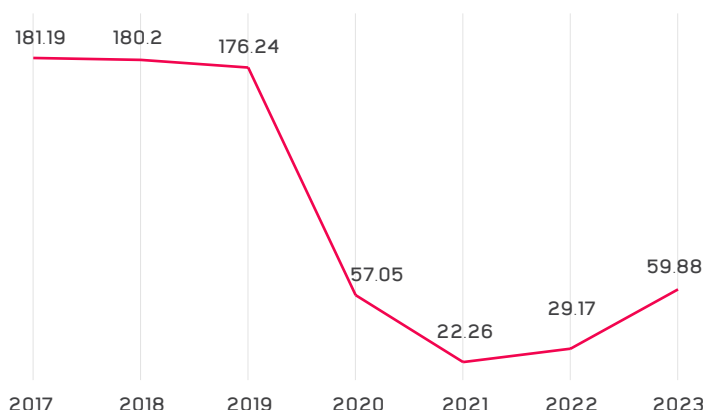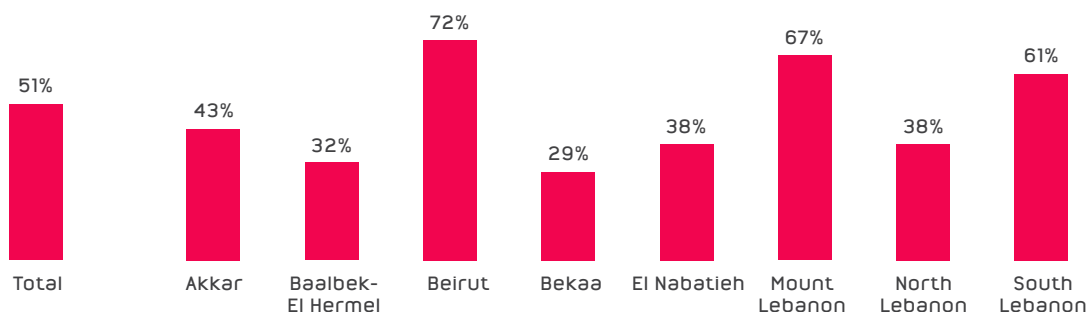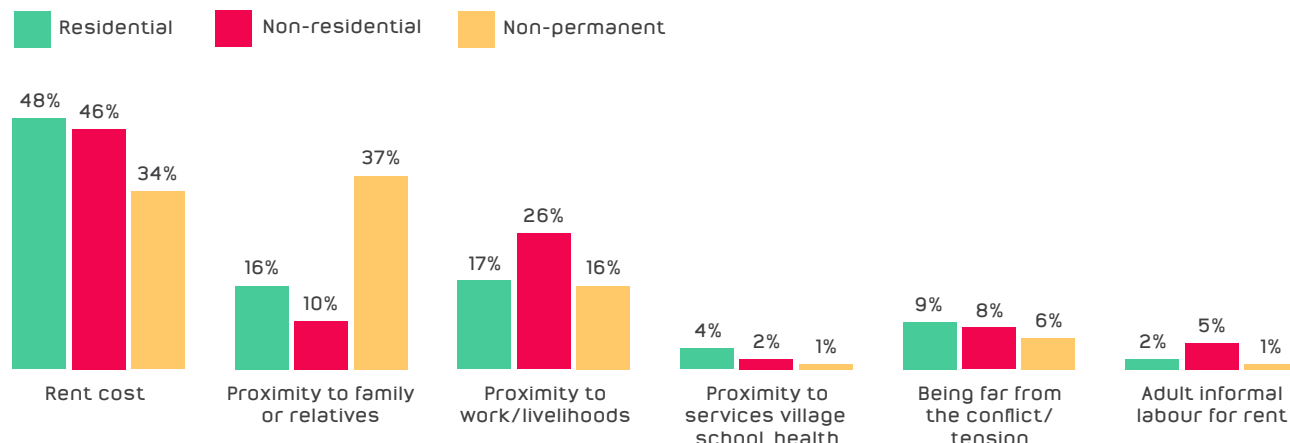
Figure 3: Monthly average rent in US$

- 2017: 181.19
- 2018: 180.2
- 2019: 176.24
- 2020: 57.05
- 2021: 22.26
- 2022: 29.17
- 2023: 59.88

Figure 4: Average amount of rental payment paid in the previous 30 days by governorate

Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
51%	43%	32%	72%	29%	38%	67%	38%	61%

Regarding the type of occupancy, most households (83%) paid rent directly to their landlord, while 9% worked in exchange for their residency. A higher proportion of households (20%) living in non-residential shelters were being hosted in exchange for work. A higher proportion of female-headed households were being hosted for free compared to male-headed households (18% versus 6%). The vast majority of households that were renting had verbal agreements with their landlords (97%) as opposed to written lease agreements. This lack of written documentation remains a major house, land and property issue, inducing a precarious form of displacement.

Like the situation in 2022, half the population in residential and non-residential shelters cited rental costs as a primary determinant for their choice of accommodation at a much higher rate than other reasons. Households residing in non-permanent structures mentioned the proximity of family members and friends (37%), followed by the rental cost (34%). In keeping with trends in previous years, a higher proportion of female-headed households cited being close to relatives as a primary factor in choosing accommodation compared to male-headed households (31% versus 17%).
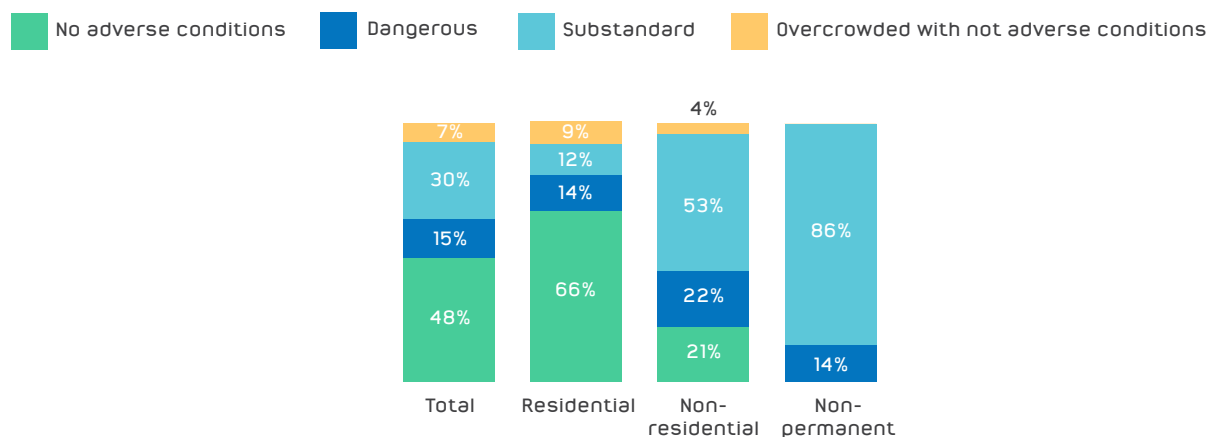
Figure 5: Primary reasons for choosing current accommodation by shelter type

Legend: Residential (green), Non-residential (red), Non-permanent (yellow)

	Rent cost	Proximity to family or relatives	Proximity to work/livelihoods	Proximity to services village school health	Being far from the conflict/tension	Adult informal labour for rent
Residential	48%	16%	17%	4%	9%	2%
Non-residential	46%	10%	26%	2%	8%	5%
Non-permanent	34%	37%	16%	1%	6%	1%

Shelter conditions

As with the situation in previous years, over half (53%) of Syrian refugee households were living in overcrowded shelters, had conditions below humanitarian standards, and/or were in danger of collapse.

Figure 6: Shelter conditions by shelter type

Legend: No adverse conditions (green), Dangerous (blue), Substandard (light blue), Overcrowded with not adverse conditions (yellow)

	Total	Residential	Non-residential	Non-permanent
Overcrowded with not adverse conditions	7%	9%	4%	
Substandard	30%	12%	53%	86%
Dangerous	15%	14%	22%	14%
No adverse conditions	48%	66%	21%	

Overcrowding

16% of households were living in overcrowded conditions, defined as less than 4.5 m²/person. A higher proportion of households in non-permanent (25%) and non-residential shelters (24%) were living in overcrowded conditions compared to households in residential shelters (13%). The highest rates of overcrowding were found in Beirut and Baalbek-El Hermel (27%).

Physical conditions

Shelter is considered to be below humanitarian standards depending on the number of issues per shelter type, as shown in the table below.

Table 4: Physical conditions in shelters

Shelter conditions	Residential structures	Non-residential structures	Non-permanent structures
Inadequate physical conditions: • Windows/doors not sealed against natural elements • Leaking roof, leakage/rot in walls/floors • Water pipes not functional or not available • Sanitation pipes not functional or not available • Latrine/toilet not usable (damaged, full, no handwashing facilities, etc.) or not available • Bathing/washing facilities not usable (damaged, no privacy, etc.) or not available • Electricity installation/connection not adequately installed/not safe • Damaged walls	Three conditions and above	One condition and above	All refugees living in non-permanent structures (informal settlements) are considered to be living in substandard physical conditions and are at higher risk of being affected by extreme weather, fires, etc.
Dangerous conditions: • Shelter structure in danger of collapse • Damaged roof • Damaged columns			

A total of 15% of households were living in shelters that were in danger of collapse, with the highest rates in South Lebanon (22%) and Mount Lebanon (20%). Baalbek-El Hermel continued to have the highest rates of households living in substandard or dangerous conditions (65%), followed by South Lebanon (53%). The vast majority of non-permanent shelters were in substandard conditions (86%), a much higher rate than those of other shelter types. The highest proportion of shelters with no adverse conditions was among residential shelters (66%), compared to 21% in non-residential shelters and none of the non-permanent shelters.
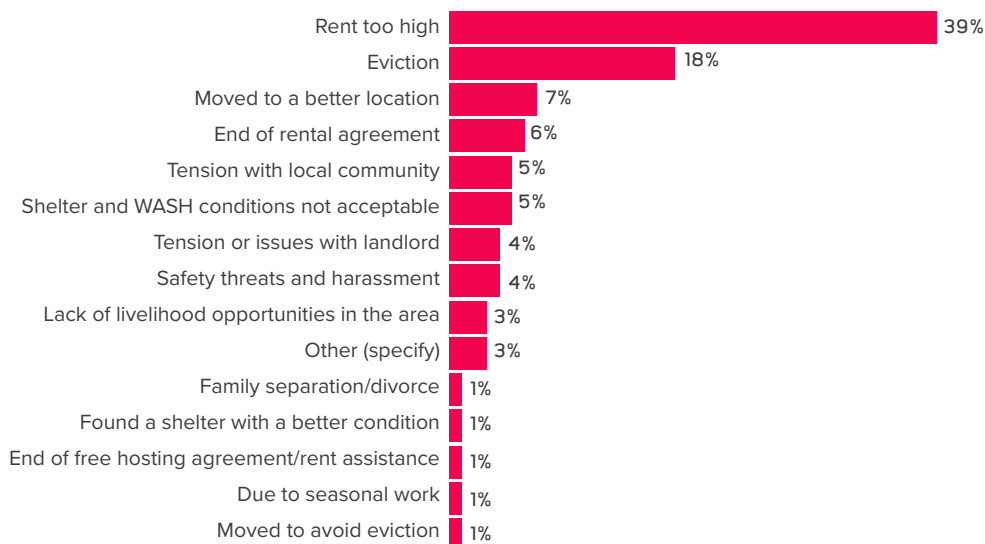
Figure 7: Condition of shelters by governorate

Legend: No adverse conditions | Dangerous | Substandard | Overcrowded with not adverse conditions
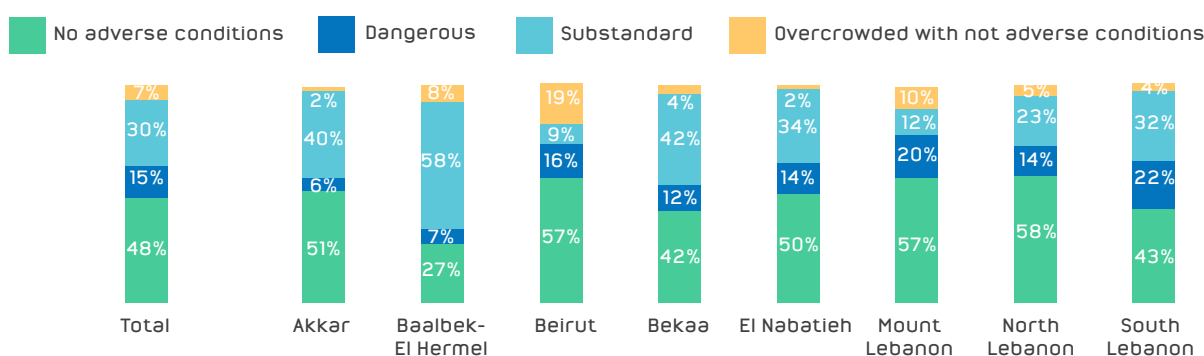
Mobility and movement

A total of 11% of households reported changing their accommodation in the previous 12 months (the same percentage as in 2022), with higher rates for households currently living in residential or non-residential shelters (12%) as compared to those in non-permanent shelters (7%). 10% changed their accommodation once and 1% changed twice.

Figure 8: Reasons for changing accommodation in the previous 12 months

Reason	%
Rent too high	39%
Eviction	18%
Moved to a better location	7%
End of rental agreement	6%
Tension with local community	5%
Shelter and WASH conditions not acceptable	5%
Tension or issues with landlord	4%
Safety threats and harassment	4%
Lack of livelihood opportunities in the area	3%
Other (specify)	3%
Family separation/divorce	1%
Found a shelter with a better condition	1%
End of free hosting agreement/rent assistance	1%
Due to seasonal work	1%
Moved to avoid eviction	1%

The most commonly cited reason for changing accommodation was rent being too expensive (39%). A total of 18% of households that moved in the previous 12 months did so because they were evicted. This rate was higher for households currently living in non-permanent shelters (29%) compared to those in residential or non-residential shelters (16%). The inability to pay the rent was the most cited reason for evictions (52%), followed by disputes with landlords (20%).

The majority of families previously living in residential shelters moved to other residential shelters, with a small number moving to non-residential (7%) and non-permanent shelters (7%). Of the families previously living in non-residential shelters, 51% moved to residential shelters, 40% moved to non-residential shelters and 9% moved to non-permanent shelters. Similarly, 63% of families that had been in non-permanent shelters moved to other non-permanent shelters, while 31% moved to residential shelters and 6% moved to non-residential shelters.

Figure 9: Previous and current shelter types among those who moved in the previous 12 months

A total of 6% of households were planning to move within the coming six months, with over a third of these mentioning the rent being too high as the reason for the planned move.

At the time of the survey, 3% of households were living under an eviction notice (compared to 7% in 2022), three-quarters of which were expected to leave within the coming month. For almost all those under eviction notices, the notices were issued by the landlord. A smaller proportion of households living in non-permanent shelters (1.5%) were living under eviction notices compared to those in residential shelters (4%) and non-residential (4%) shelters.

Figure 10: Percentage of households living under an eviction threat by governorate

Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
3%	2%	3%	4%	2%	7%	3%	2%	7%
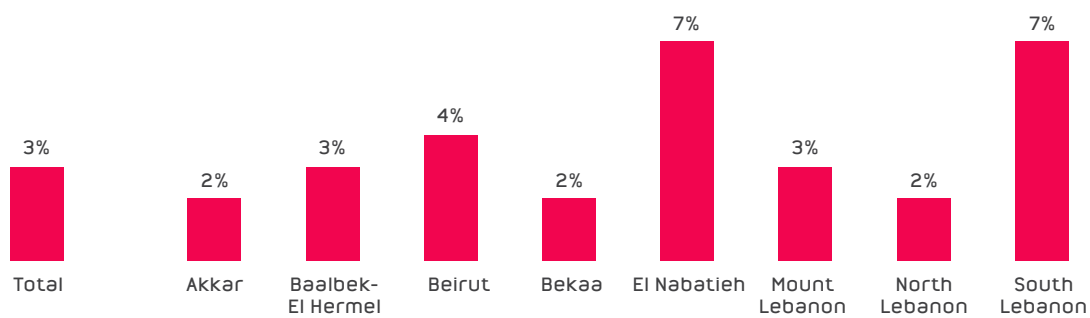
Energy

Lebanon's electricity sector has suffered chronic power supply shortages for decades, which have been partially met by private diesel generators. In addition to their negative impact on the environment and health, diesel generators rely on increasingly sparse and costly fuel supplies. The reliance on private diesel generators has exacerbated since the start of the economic crisis in October 2019. While the national utility network covers most of Lebanon, the electricity sector faced numerous challenges prior to the current crisis, including high technical and non-technical network losses, inadequate tariffs, and insufficient generating capacity due to underinvestment in supply. In fact, 40–45% of Lebanon's national debt is due to subsidies that the Government of Lebanon has transferred to Electricité du Leban (EDL) to cover the cost of fuel since the 1990s, equal to $1–2.3 billion in transfers per year.[1]

This chapter analyses access to electricity by displaced Syrian households in Lebanon. It also assesses the hours of electricity supplied by different sources, including the grid and private generators. The data on hours of supply is as reported by the households and not based on data from EDL or providers of electricity from private generators.

Key findings

– Access to electricity improved slightly in 2023, with 9% of households reporting having no connection to any electricity source, compared to 12% in 2022. This was highest in Baalbek-El Hermel, at 15%, the data doesn't show any big difference between female headed households and male headed households as the female headed households reported 11 per cent having no connection to any electricity while male headed households reported 9.

– Access to the national grid declined in 2023 by 10% to reach 27%, and private generators also declined by 3% in 2023, while households relying on other sources of electricity dropped to 7% from 13% in 2022, we also see increase in the usage of solar panels from 1.2 in 2022 to reach 6% in 2023.

– Hours of electricity slightly improved in 2023, with most of households (91%) experiencing some power outage better than last year where 97% experiencing power outage. On average, 10 hours of power outage per day were reported, compared to 15 hours in 2022.

– The national grid supplied only 6 hours of electricity per day, and private generators supplied an average of 13 hours per day.

– Expenditures on electricity increased significantly from 2022, with national spending averaging over LL440,000 per family per month, to reach over LL2.7 million per month nationally, highest is in Beirut with LL3.9 million followed by Mount Lebanon with LL3.3 million.

– Almost all households reported having access to a source of energy for cooking, mainly gas (96%).

– Reliance on wood as for heating remains almost the same since 2022 with 41% of households relying on wood for heating in 2023 compared to 40% in 2021.

While for cooking there is a drop in using woods for cooking by 6% to reach 11% for 2023 compared to 17 per cent in 2022.

– Almost 30% of households did not have any heating source during last winter (2022–2023), the same situation for 2021–2022 season (32%).

[1] International Monetary Fund, "2016 article IV consultation—press release; staff report; and statement by the Executive Director for Lebanon", IMF country report no. 17/19 (2017). Washington, D.C. https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2017/01/24/Lebanon-2016-Article-IV-Consultation-Press-Release-Staff-Report-and-Statement-by-the-44572.

Access to electricity

Overall, 91% of households had a connection to an electricity source,[2] increased from 88% in 2022. This leaves 9% of households with no electricity connection in their shelter. The highest proportion of households with no connection to an electricity source was in Baalbek-El Hermel (15% in 2023 and the same percentage in 2022), followed by Mount Lebanon (14%). Its important to mention that last year, Bekaa was highest with 21% without electricity connectivity improved this year to only 4% in 2023.

By shelter type, there is no big difference this year between shelter types in electricity access, however there is a slightly higher portion in non-permanent shelters 13% has no access to electricity compared to Non-residential and residential shelters 10% and 8% respectively.

Figure 1: Households with connection to an electricity source by shelter type
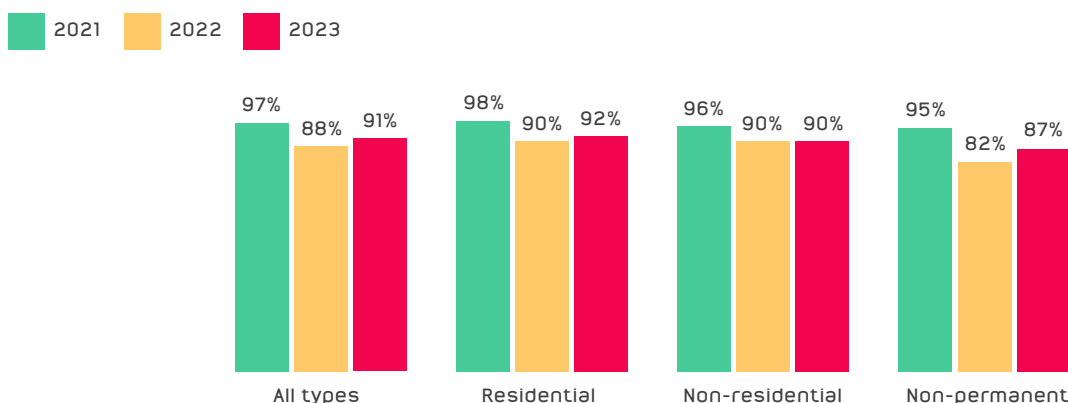
Figure 2: Percentage of households that had connection to an electrcity source by governorate
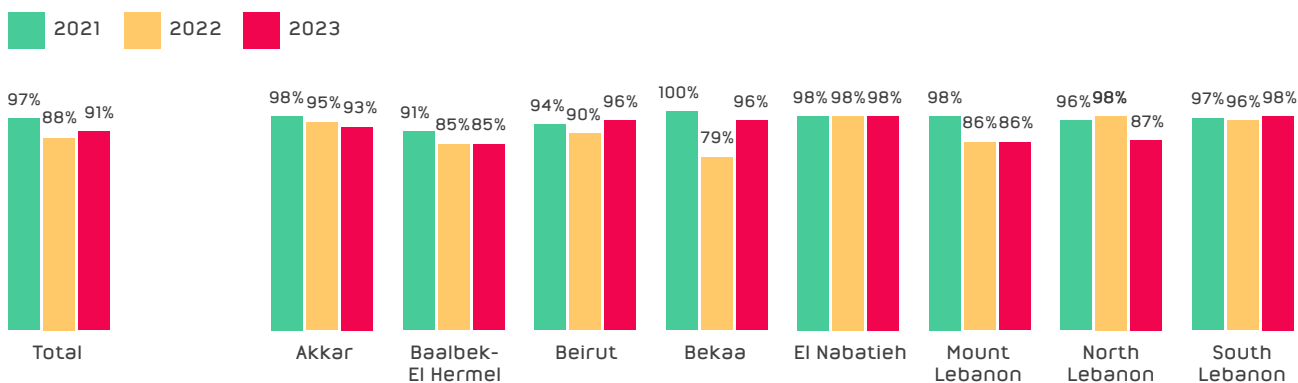
Sources of electricity

A total of 73% of households had access to the grid. Households living in non-permanent shelters reported lower connection rates to the grid (60%) compared to the other shelter types. Regionally, Baalbek-El Hermel had the lowest access to the national grid, with a 39% big drop since last year when 84% had access to the grid and even Baalbek-El Hermel had 71% had access to the grid.

Access to diesel generators increased slightly, from 47% in 2022 to 50% in 2023. Connection to diesel generators varied significantly per governorate, ranging from 72% in El Nabatieh to only 17% in Baalbek-El Hermel. Other power sources were negligible in previous years. However, in 2023, we see a significant increase in using solar panels as this increased from 1.2% to 6% in 2023. In Baalbek-El Hermel, 28% of households reported reliance on solar panels, a much higher percentage than in any other area.

---

[2] Connection to the energy source is not related to hours of supply.

Figure 3: Sources of electricity by governorate

■ National grid   ■ Private generators   ■ Solar panels   ■ Other sources
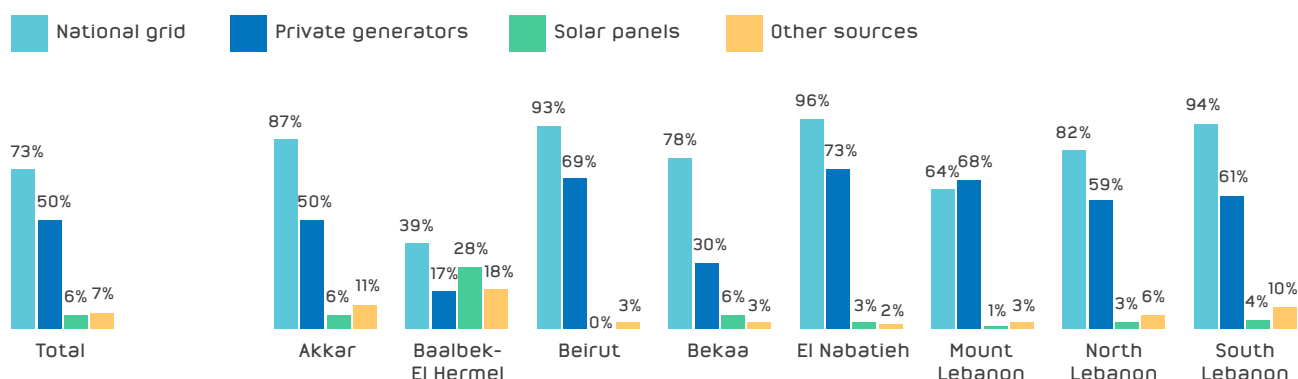
Hours of electricity by source

In line with trends discussed above, hours of electricity supply improved in 2023 but has not yet reached figures seen in 2021, with quarter of all households (27%) not experiencing some form of power outage – last year it was only 3%. On average, 10 hours of power outage per day were reported (compared to 15 hours in 2022 and 6.5 hours in 2021). The number of hours supplied by the national grid and private generators have both decreased since 2021. On average, the grid supplied doubled this year to reach 6 hours of electricity per day,[3] up from 3 hours in 2022 and 7 hours in 2021. Private generators supplied, on average, 13 hours of electricity per day,[4] an improvment on 9 hours in 2022. Power outages lasted longest in Akkar at almost 16 hours a day, followed by Baalbek-El Hermel, Beirut and North Lebanon. Usage of solar energy increased this year with an average of 18 hours per day (among the 6% of households that reported access).

Table 1: Average number of hours of electricity per day by electricity source

	Percentage of households	Average hours (per day)
National grid	73%	5 hours 55 minutes
Private generator	50%	13 hours 9 minutes
Power outage	73%	10 hours 11 minutes

Figure 4: Average number of hours of electricity by power source and governorate

■ National grid   ■ Power outage   ■ Private generator   ■ Other
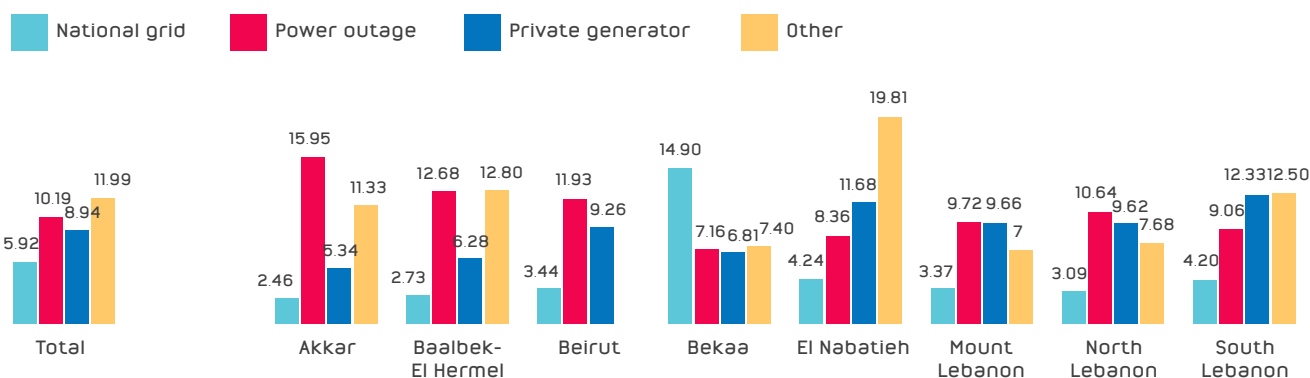
Electricity bill collection

Collection of bills by EDL even increased since 2021, with 44% of households reporting that EDL staff collected their bills (33% in 2022 and 4% in 2021) and 20% reporting that bills were either collected by the landlord (11%) or included as part of the rental payment (9%). Almost 29% of households reported that no one was collecting bills for the national grid, down from 32% in 2022 and 15% in 2021.

---

[3] The average is based on the 73% of households that have access to electricity from the national grid.
[4] The average is based on the 50% of households that have access to private diesel generators.

Figure 5: Entity collecting electricity bills by governorate

Legend: EDL · Collected by landlord · Payed as part of rent · None · Other
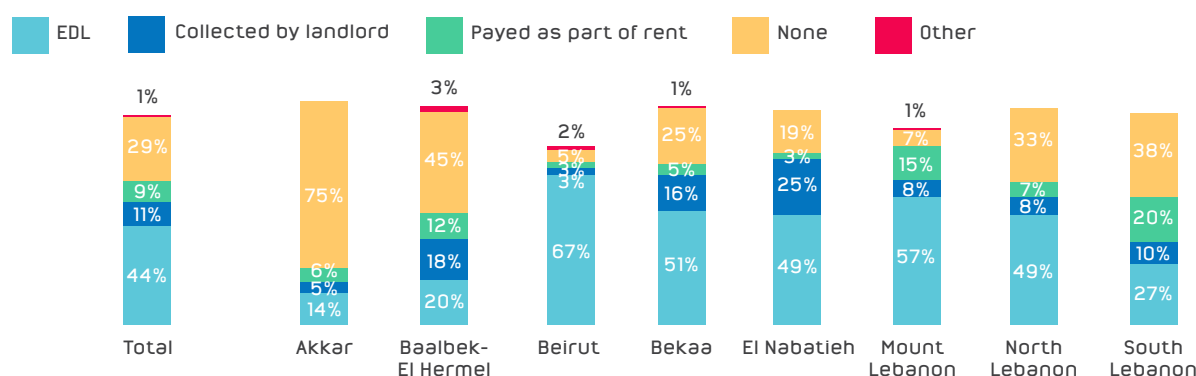
Households in residential structures were more likely to pay their bills to an EDL employee (49%), compared to those in non-permanent (33%) and non-residential (31%) shelters. A larger proportion of households in non-permanent shelters reported that no one was collecting bills (42%).

More than half (53%) of households who paid their electricity bill (to EDL staff or a landlord) paid it at least monthly; this was highest among those in non-permanent structures, where 82% paid monthly.

Table 2: Frequency of payments to EDL among households that reported EDL collecting bills

Governorate/district/type of shelter		Once per month or more often	Once per every two months	Once per every six months or year
Shelter type	Total	53.4%	38.5%	8.1%
	Residential	47.0%	44.6%	8.4%
	Non-residential	61.6%	32.7%	5.7%
	Non-permanent	82.2%	10.5%	7.4%
Governorate	Akkar	47.0%	50.6%	2.4%
	Baalbek-El Hermel	69.2%	12.1%	18.7%
	Beirut	15.6%	80.1%	4.4%
	Bekaa	91.1%	1.1%	7.8%
	El Nabatieh	27.2%	68.6%	4.3%
	Mount Lebanon	30.8%	58.2%	11.0%
	North Lebanon	54.5%	42.4%	3.1%
	South Lebanon	42.9%	45.1%	12.0%

Expenditure on electricity

Expenditures on electricity increased significantly from 2022, with national spending averaging over LL440,000 per family per month, to reach over LL2.7 million per month nationally, highest is in Beirut with LL3.9 million followed by Mount Lebanon with LL3.3 million.

Figure 8: Average monthly expenditure on electricty (cash and credit in LL million) in the past 30 days by governorate
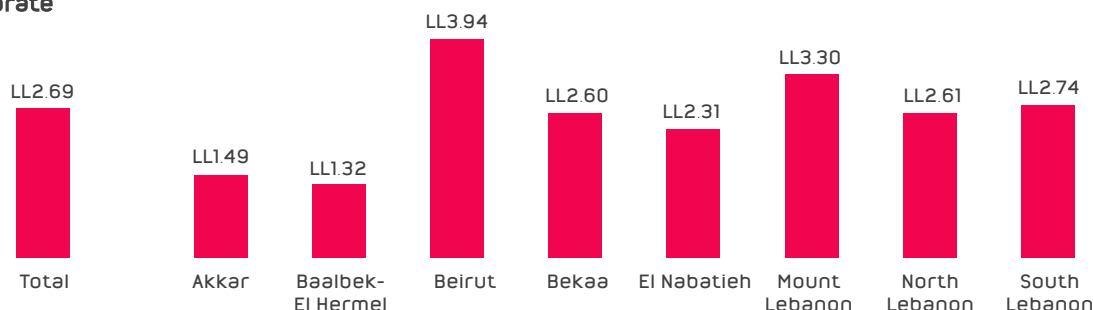
Energy sources for cooking

Almost all households (99.2%) reported having access to a source of energy for cooking. The main energy source used for cooking remained gas, as reported by 96% of households. A total of 11% of households reported relying on wood to cook, a significant decrease from only 17% in 2022. Reliance on wood in Akkar reached 43% of households, compared to 41% in 2022. Akkar also had the one of the lowest proportion of families relying on gas for cooking (94%). A higher proportion of households in non-permanent shelters relied on wood (25 per cent) compared to non-residential and residential shelters.[5]

Table 3: Energy sources for cooking by shelter type and governorate

Governorate/district/type of shelter		Gas	Wood	Other
Total	2022	95.0%	17.0%	2.0%
	2023	96.3%	10.9%	1.5%
Shelter type	Residential	97.8%	5.4%	1.1%
	Non-residential	92.3%	21.5%	2.5%
	Non-permanent	93.2%	25.5%	2.5%
Governorate	Akkar	93.7%	43.0%	1.0%
	Baalbek-El Hermel	94.0%	16.2%	1.8%
	Beirut	98.2%	0.0%	0.8%
	Bekaa	99.6%	6.1%	2.2%
	El Nabatieh	93.5%	11.0%	0.5%
	Mount Lebanon	97.1%	2.9%	1.6%
	North Lebanon	95.1%	7.6%	0.9%
	South Lebanon	94.5%	15.8%	1.3%

Energy sources for heating

Last winter season, 30% of households stated that they did not have any source of heating. This was highest in Beirut (69%) and South Lebanon (43%). A higher proportion of families in residential shelters reported not having any heating source (37% compared to those in non-residential (22%) and non-permanent shelters (9 per cent).

Nationally, wood was the most commonly cited heating source at 41%, similar to 2022 (38 per cent). In 2023, only 13% of households reported relying on diesel for heating, down from 22% in 2022. Almost three quarters of households in non-permanent shelters reported relying on wood, the same percentage as in 2022. A total of 3% of households reported having to burn trash to stay warm during the last winter, a significant per cent of the population in non-permanent structures at 11% compared to residential and non-residential structures (1.2% and 2%).

Table 4: Energy sources for heating by shelter type and governorate

Governorate/district/type of shelter		No heating source	Gas	Diesel	Wood	Electric powered cooker / heater	Burning trash	Other
Total	2022	31.7%	7.9%	21.5%	37.8%	5.8%	4.7%	6.6%
	2023	29.9%	13.6%	12.5%	40.8%	3.3%	3.2%	4.6%
Shelter type	Residential	36.9%	16.8%	12.1%	30.1%	4.3%	1.2%	4.6%
	Non-residential	21.5%	13.9%	11.4%	49.0%	1.8%	2.0%	7.0%
	Non-permanent	9.3%	2.6%	14.3%	74.8%	.2%	11.0%	3.9%
Governorate	Akkar	21.0%	8.7%	9.5%	62.6%	1.4%	1.4%	1.2%
	Baalbek-El Hermel	2.3%	2.3%	25.7%	77.5%	.3%	9.3%	5.5%
	Beirut	69.0%	11.2%	0.0%	.2%	18.2%	.6%	2.4%
	Bekaa	2.8%	1.9%	28.8%	64.1%	.4%	8.2%	1.4%
	El Nabatieh	11.7%	22.9%	10.9%	56.6%	3.3%	1.2%	4.2%
	Mount Lebanon	53.7%	20.5%	3.3%	15.9%	4.7%	.5%	7.9%
	North Lebanon	41.9%	23.4%	5.5%	20.6%	4.4%	.3%	7.2%
	South Lebanon	42.6%	22.9%	3.3%	29.6%	4.9%	0.0%	0.4%

---

[5] *Respondents could select multiple answers, as households can have more than one source of energy for cooking.*

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Safe drinking water is a basic requirement for good health and child development. Unsafe drinking water can be a significant determinant of diseases such as hepatitis, cholera, typhoid and schistosomiasis. Drinking water can also be contaminated with chemical, organic and physical contaminants with harmful effects on human health, particularly the health of children. In addition to preventing disease, improved access to sufficient water is particularly important for women and children, especially for drinking, hygiene and domestic use.

Unsafe water, inadequate disposal of human excrement, poor personal hygiene are associated with a range of diseases, including diarrhoeal diseases and polio and are important determinants of stunted growth. Improved sanitation and the quality of water can reduce diarrhoeal disease and can significantly lessen the adverse health impacts of other disorders.

Key findings

- Families living in non-residential and non-permanent structures remain the most vulnerable populations in Lebanon in terms of appropriate access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) services.
- Bottled water is no longer a household's most common drinking water source. As a source, it a has dropped to 29% in 2023 from 36% in 2022 and 38% in 2021.
- Around 29% of households reported an insufficient quantity of water for all their needs in the month preceding the survey.
- Displaced Syrians in non-permanent locations relying on water trucking provided by humanitarian actors as the main source of drinking water (43%) are at the highest risk of turning to unsafe, unimproved water sources in light of anticipated funding shortfalls and potential cessation of humanitarian water trucking services for informal settlements.
- In non-permanent locations, 25% of toilets were shared with another household, with a higher prevalence among female-headed households (23%) compared to male-headed households (13%).
- Observations on handwashing facilities in non-permanent and non-residential locations revealed substandard conditions for many households. In non-permanent locations, 25% were without soap or detergent and 5% were without water at the place for handwashing. Similarly, in non-residential locations, 16% of households were without soap or detergent and 8% were without water at the place for handwashing.

Access to water

Sources of drinking water

The majority (94%) of displaced Syrian households had access to improved drinking water sources. Noteworthy is the fact that this does not reflect the challenges households face across Lebanon to access safe, sufficient and affordable drinking water. Improved drinking water sources are those that have the potential to deliver safe water by nature of their design and construction (the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme). It should be noted that the VASyR does not measure the quality of the water provided.

Displaced Syrians living in non-permanent shelters relied heavily on water trucking provided by humanitarian actors as their main source of drinking water (43%). The extensive water quality monitoring by sector partners ensures that the water provided in this way is treated appropriately and safe for consumption.

The main source of drinking water was piped water (34%), a slight increase from 30% in 2022, except for displaced Syrians living in non-permanent shelters where water trucking provided by humanitarian actors remained their main source of drinking water (43%). Bottled water, both branded and from water refilling shops, was no longer the highest drinking water source that households rely on, as this dropped to 29% in 2023 (16% branded and 13% from refilling shops) from 36% in 2022 and 38% in 2021.

The distribution varied widely across governorates. For example, while Beirut and Mount Lebanon showed the highest rates of use of bottled water (60% and 54%, respectively), these governorates also had a huge drop in the use of this source when compared to last year (81% and 69% respectively in 2022). Baalbek-El Hermel households reported the lowest use of bottled water (4%) while the highest reliance on water trucking provided by humanitarian actors (34%). Similarly, Bekaa households had a low use of bottled water

(7%), while the main drinking water sources were piped water (32%) and water trucking provided by humanitarian actors (22%).

A significantly higher percentage of female-headed households relied on water trucking supplied by humanitarian actors (15%) than male-headed households (9%).

Improved drinking water sources
- Household water tap/water network
- Piped water to neighbour
- Bottled water
- Water tank/trucked water (UN/NGO provided)
- Protected borehole
- Piped water to yard/lot
- Protected spring
- Protected well
- Public tap/standpipe
- Water kiosk/shop

Unimproved drinking water sources
- Water tank/trucked water (non-UN/NGO private provider)
- Unprotected borehole/well/spring
- Rainwater
- Surface water

Basic drinking water sources
- Water source in dwelling/yard/plot
- Water source within a 30-minute round trip collection time

Sources of water for purposes other than drinking

Displaced Syrians in residential and non-residential shelters reported using piped water[1] as their main source of water for purposes other than drinking (57% and 56%, respectively). For the displaced Syrians living in non-permanent shelters, piped water was their main water source for purposes other than drinking only for 12%. In comparison, water trucking provided by humanitarian actors remained their main source (44%), followed by protected wells (23%). El Nabatieh governorate had the highest ratio of piped water used for purposes other than drinking (73%). In comparison, Akkar had the lowest (15%), with boreholes and protected wells reported as the main sources (44%).

Water sufficiency

Only 71% of households reported having sufficient water for all their needs in the month preceding the survey. Households did not have enough water for drinking (21%), cooking (20%), washing (19%) and other domestic uses (16%). Water insufficiency was higher for households living in non-residential settings (32%) and non-permanent shelters (36%) than those in residential shelters (27%). El Nabatieh was the governorate with the highest water insufficiency (50%).

Water expenditure

Water costs should not exceed 3% of household income.[2] Displaced Syrians in permanent locations should contribute to the cost of water services provided by public utilities, while sources such as bottled water or private water trucking are commercially available.

Within this context, it is worth noting that 39% of the Syrian population reported paying for drinking water, a slight decrease from 42% in 2022. More residential households paid for drinking water (45%) than those in non-residential (26%) and non-permanent

(26%) shelters. Paying for drinking water was most frequent in Mount Lebanon (68%), while least in Baalbek-El Hermel (20%). In Beirut, only 54% reported paying for drinking water, a significant 30% drop from last year. The payment ratio varies significantly between different water sources and regions.

Only 16% of households indicated paying for bottled water, with the highest proportion in Beirut (42%) and the lowest in Baalbek-El Hermel (6%). The proportion of households paying for water

[1] Combined: (a) piped into dwelling, (b) piped into compound, yard or plot and (c) piped to neighbour.
[2] https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/water.

trucking was highest in Baalbek-El Hermel (37%). Also, significantly more households in non-permanent shelters paid for water trucking (26%) compared to other shelter types, 14% in residential and 12% in non-residential shelters, respectively.

Displaced Syrians in residential shelters paid around LL800,000 per month on average for drinking water, while those in non-permanent locations paid around LL500,000 per month.

Sanitation facilities

Improved sanitation facilities
- Flushing toilets
- Improved pit latrines with cement slabs

Unimproved sanitation facilities
- Traditional/pit latrine with no slab
- Bucket

98% of displaced Syrian households had access to improved sanitation facilities,[3] a slight increase from previous years (89% in 2021 and 92% in 2022). Most households primarily utilise a flush/pour-to-piped sewer system (67% of respondents), followed by ventilated improved pit latrines with a slab (13%) and flush/pour-to-pit latrines (10%).

Figure 1: Types of sanitation facilities

Type	%
Flush/pour-to-piped sewer system	67%
Ventilated improved pit latrine (with slab)	13%
Flush/pour-to-pit latrine	10%
Flush/pour to septic tank	6%
Pit latrine with a slab	2%
Flush/pour to open drain	1%
Ventilated improved pit latrine	1%
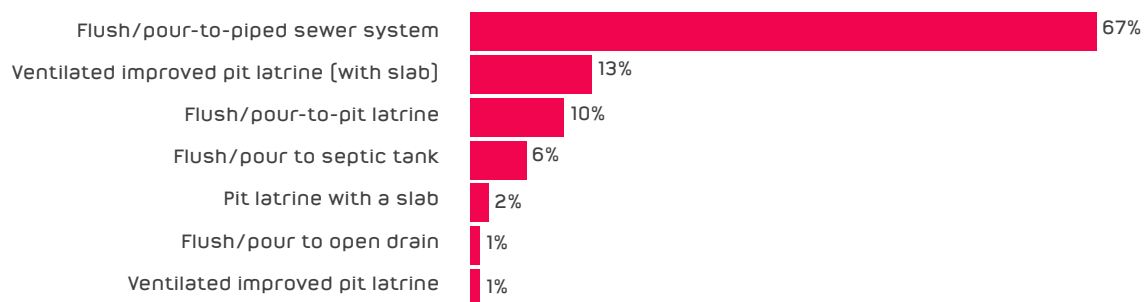
In all governorates, access to improved sanitation facilities exceeded 97% (with the lowest rates in Akkar and Baalbek-El Hermel, both at 97%). The Bekaa region witnessed a remarkable improvement, rising from 71% in 2021 to 81% in 2022 and reaching 98% in 2023. The results for non-permanent shelters indicate an increase from 78% in 2022 to 96% in 2023. Male-headed and female-headed households showed no significant difference in access to improved sanitation facilities.

A non-shared basic sanitation facility was used by 85% of the displaced Syrian population. This percentage was lower in non-permanent locations, where 25% of the facilities are shared with another household, with a higher prevalence among female-headed households (23%) than male-headed households (13%).

Improved sanitation does not guarantee the safe management of faecal waste,[4] as this aspect involves the conveyance, transport and disposal thereof. In Baalbek-El Hermel, 30% of respondents are unaware of where their sanitation facilities are emptied. In comparison, 28% of those in non-residential areas and 39% in non-permanent locations reported that their facilities are emptied in a hand-dug hole in the ground. Furthermore, in 4% of households in non-permanent sites, waste drainage occurs in an open area outside the shelter, where it remains stagnant. Among the household members with a disability, 98% had access to a sanitation facility adjusted for disabilities, a slight increase of 4% since 2022.

Handwashing facilities

Observations on handwashing facilities indicate that 87% of displaced Syrian households had a fixed facility in a dwelling (82%) or in the plot/yard (4%). In comparison, a further 10% used a mobile object for handwashing, such as a bucket, jug or kettle. No handwashing facilities were observed in 2% of households overall but significantly above average in non-residential (4%) and non-permanent (7%) locations. Also, in non-permanent locations, only 48% of households had a fixed facility[5] in their dwelling.

However, in 11% of households overall, no soap or detergent was observed at the place for handwashing and in 3% of households, there was no water. Such observations were significantly higher for non-permanent households, where 25% were without soap or detergent and 5% were without water at the place for handwashing. Similarly, in non-residential locations, 16% of households were without soap or detergent and 8% were without water at the place for handwashing.

Hygiene

This section tackles the availability of hygiene items at the household level. 84% had access to personal hygiene items, 94% had access to cleaning items and 45% had access to baby care items. Similar to other indicators, access to hygiene items was lowest among non-permanent shelters as opposed to residential or non-residential shelters. Furthermore, the estimate varied across regions, as per the figure below.

In addition, 77% of households had access to female hygiene items (e.g. sanitary pads) and 20% reported not having access to female hygiene items due to the menstrual materials being too expensive.

[3] Improved sanitation facilities are those designed to hygienically separate excreta from human contact.
[4] JMP sanitation ladder: https://washdata.org/monitoring/sanitation.
[5] Sink installed inside the dwelling.

Figure 2: Access to hygiene items by shelter

Personal hygiene items　Cleaning items　Baby care items

	Residential	Non-residential	Non-permanent
Personal hygiene items	88%	75%	73%
Cleaning items	95%	87%	93%
Baby care items	44%	47%	44%
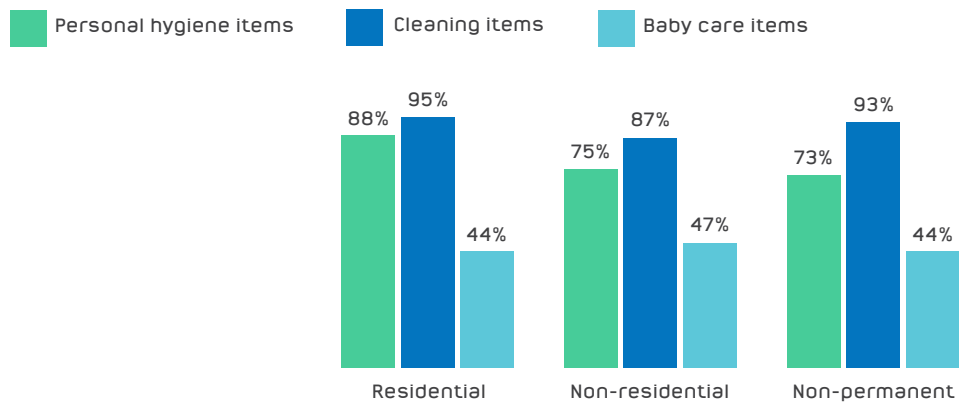
Figure 3: Access to hygiene items by governorate

Personal hygiene items　Cleaning items　Baby care items

	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
Personal hygiene items	95%	82%	96%	75%	85%	93%	68%	86%
Cleaning items	96%	96%	94%	97%	87%	96%	79%	97%
Baby care items	43%	54%	48%	35%	52%	46%	38%	58%
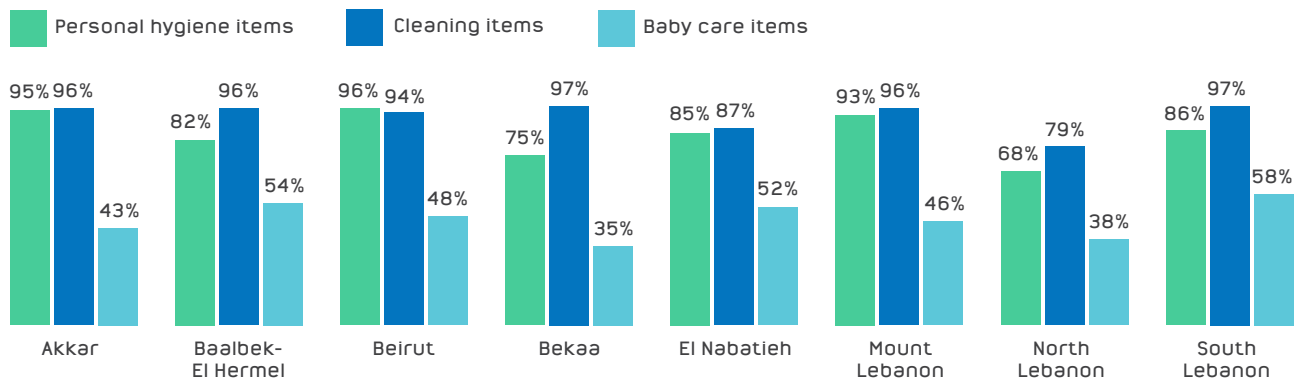
Education

Universal access to basic education and the achievement of primary education by the world's children is in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Education is a vital prerequisite for combating poverty, empowering women, protecting children from hazardous and exploitative labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment and influencing population growth.

In an attempt to accommodate hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugee school-aged children, the Government of Lebanon, with the support of the international community, runs a two-shift school system that has non-Lebanese children attending in the afternoon.

In Lebanon, children enter primary school at the age of 6 and enter secondary school at the age of 15. There are nine grades in primary school and three grades in secondary school. In primary school, grades are referred to as year 1 to year 9. For secondary school, grades are referred to as year 10 to year 12. The school year typically runs from September of one year to June of the following year. The results in this section are based on 2,683 children of pre-primary school age (3–5), 5,929 children of primary school age (6–14), 1,517 secondary school-age children (15–17) and 3,547 youths (15–24).

Key findings

- Of all individuals above the age of 6, 70% reported knowing how to read and write.
- Participation of children aged 3 to 5 in organised learning or an early childhood education programme, namely kindergarten or nursery, was at 19% in 2023 – a 5% increase from 2022.
- The primary net attendance ratio in 2023 was 57% – an increase of 5% since 2022. The rate was similar among children with disabilities, at 53%.
- The secondary school net attendance (adjusted) considers children aged 12 to 17 years who are attending secondary school or higher, which was at 18%. The ratio shows discrepancies between gender and governorates. The ratio for females was higher by 5% than their male counterparts. As for the governorates, Beirut had the highest percentage at 30% and El Nabatieh the lowest at 14%.
- Among the reasons given for not attending school, cost remained as prominent compared to previous years, with the cost of transportation at 30% and the cost of education materials at 27%.
- In 2023, the NEET ratio was 51% – a decrease of 8% from 2022. Girls were found to be not in employment, education or training (NEET) at a ratio of almost double that of their male counterparts – 70% and 32%, respectively.

Population literacy

Among all individuals above the age of 6, 77% have attended school or univeristy. The ratio varied across the age groups but the values between governorates were similar. Slightly more males attended school than females, 70% and 66%, respectively. When it comes to individuals with a disability, the results show that 64% have attended formal school.

When asked about the highest level of education reached, 56% reported primary school, 33% reported secondary, 6% reported pre-primary and 3% reported university. Of all who reached the highest education level, 65% completed the grade reported with completion rate increasing with age.

Figure 1: Percentage of individuals who have attended school or university
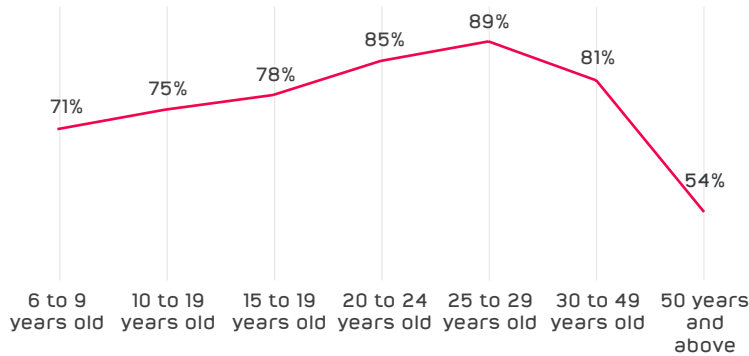
Figure 2: Percentage of individuals (over 6 years old) who completed their highest level of education
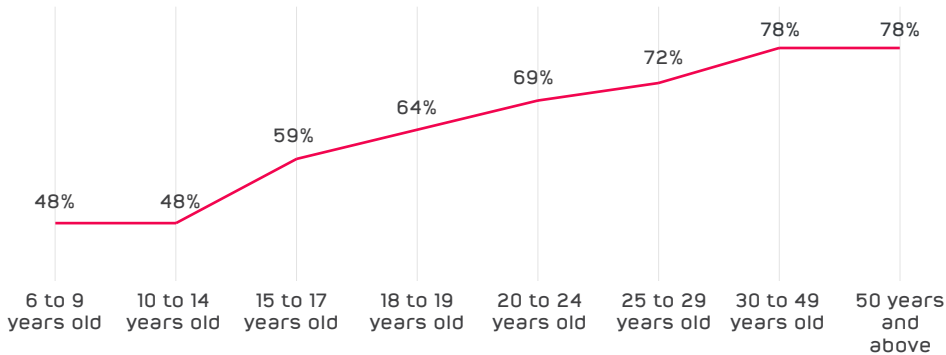
Furthermore, out of the children between the ages of 3 and 17, only 4 in 10 children were attending school at the time of the survey, with a slight difference between boys and girls, at 44% and 48%, respectively. Similarly, 46% of children with a disability were attending school. The attendance ratio is similar across governorates except for Beirut at 60%.

Early childhood education

The readiness of children for primary school can be improved through attendance of early childhood education (ECE) programmes or pre-school attendance. Early childhood education programmes include programmes for children that have organised learning components as opposed to babysitting and daycare, which do not typically have organised education and learning.

Participation of children aged 3 to 5 in organised learning or an early childhood education programme, namely kindergarten or nursery,

was at 19% in 2023, which is an increase of 5% from 2022. The rate for children with a disability was 16%. The rates varied across governorates, with the highest being in Beirut at 23% and the lowest in Bekaa at 13%.

There was no difference between boys and girls with regard to pre-primary attendance. In addition, the figure below shows the fluctuations in the attendance rate since 2018.

Figure 3: Participation in organised learning by sex and governorate
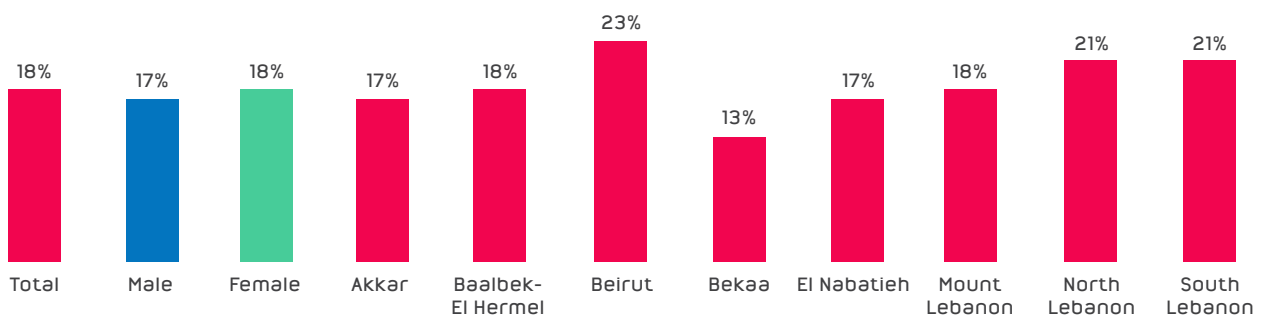
Figure 4: Participation in organised learning by year
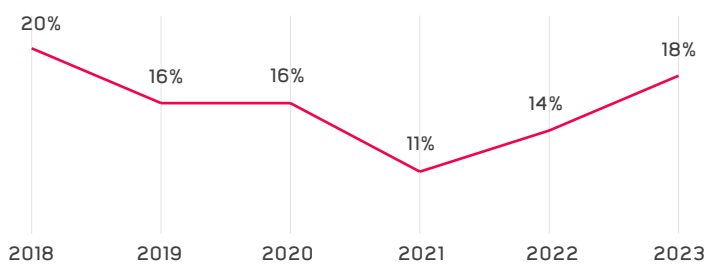
Primary and secondary school participation

Similar to last year, the percentage of children between 6 and 14 years of age, 63% were attending school at the time of the survey. The results show a 5% difference between girls and boys, at 65% and 60%, respectively. The following graph shows the estimates at the governorate level.

Figure 5: Percentage of children aged 6 to 14 attending the current school year by governorate
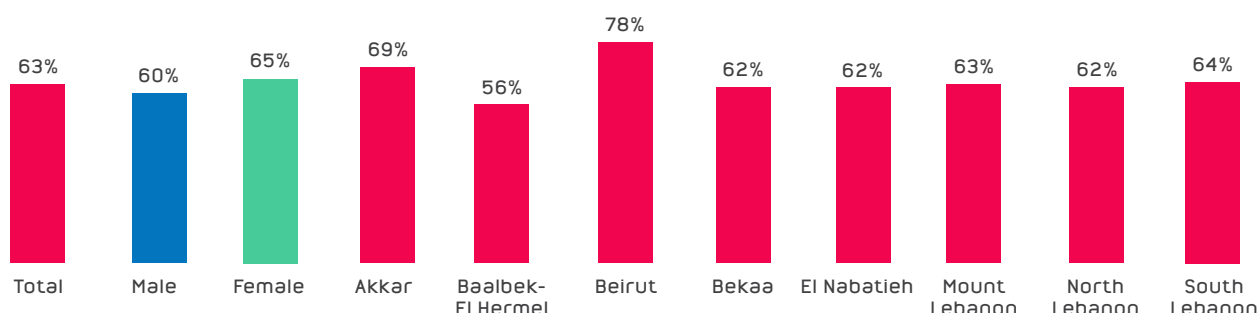
Primary school net attendance

The primary school net attendance ratio (adjusted) considers children of primary school age (6 to 11) who were attending primary or secondary school at the time of the survey. The primary net attendance ratio in 2023 was 57%, an increase of 5% over 2022. The rate was similar among children with disabilities, at 53%. Among households headed by females, the primary net attendance was higher than households headed by males, with 58% and 51%, respectively. The ratio slightly varied across governorates, with the lowest scores observed in Baalbek-El Hermel and El Nabatieh, at 51% and 56%, while Beirut and Akkar scored the highest, at 70% and 64%.

Figure 6: Primary school net attendance ratio by governorate
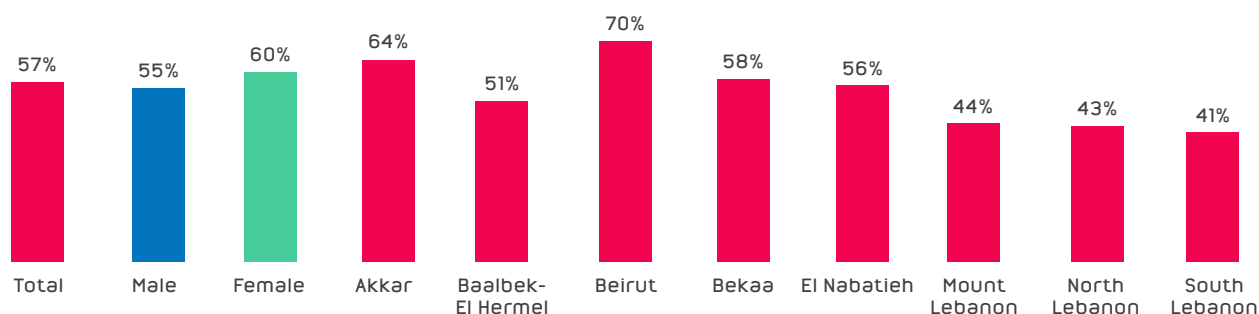
Figure 7: Primary net attendance ratio by year
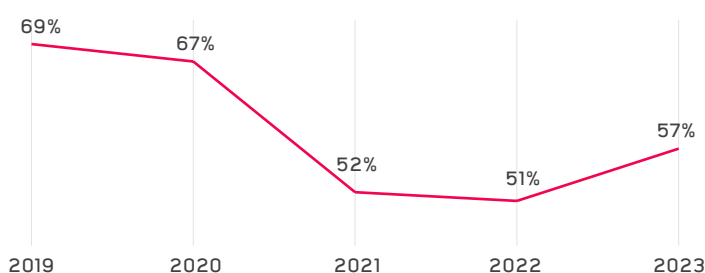
Secondary school net attendance

The secondary school net attendance (adjusted) considers children aged 12 to 17 years who are attending secondary school or higher. In 2023, the ratio was 18%, a similar value to that of 2022. Across the regions, El Nabatieh scored the lowest at 14% and Beirut had the highest value at 30%. The results show a 5% difference between boys and girls, at 16% and 21%, respectively. The ratio among children with disabilities was lower than the national average by 5%, with a total of 13%.

Figure 8: Secondary school net attendance ratio by governorate
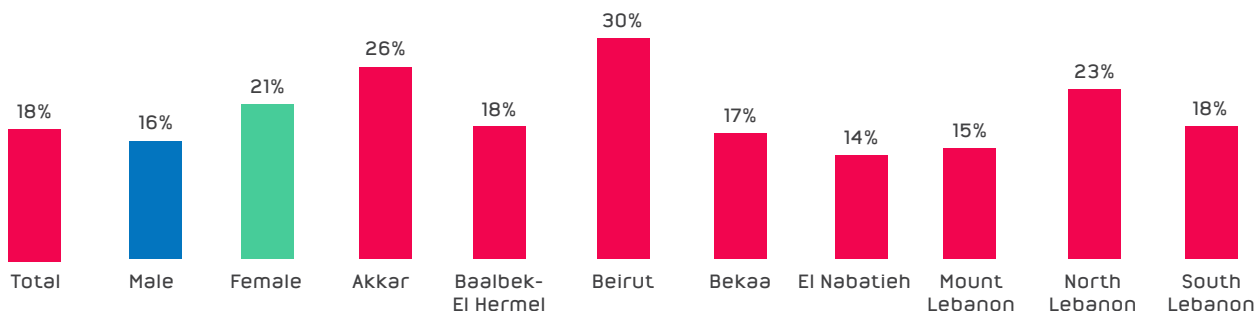
When dividing secondary school into the lower and upper secondary levels, the results show an attendance rate of 16% for those attending at the lower secondary level and 6% for those at the upper secondary level. There was a 4% difference between girls, at 18% and boys at 14% in the lower secondary level.

Reasons for not attending school

For children aged 3 to 17, among the reasons given for not attending school, costs remained the prominent reason compared to previous years, with 30% being the cost of transportation and 27% the cost of education materials. In third place was not attending due to age, at 27%. Yet, this ratio applies mostly to children between 3 and 5 years, with a value of 65%. Nationally, 9% of those who did not attend school mentioned work as the main reason, with a significant gender difference (boys 14% and girls 4%). In addition, 11% of boys and girls did not attend school because the school did not allow enrolment or registration. The remaining reasons are at most 5%. Similarly, the cost of education (transportation and materials) was also one of the top two barriers to school among children with disabilities. That being said, the third reason cited for not going to school was the disability itself at 18%.

Figure 9: Reasons children did not attend the current school year, by sex and age
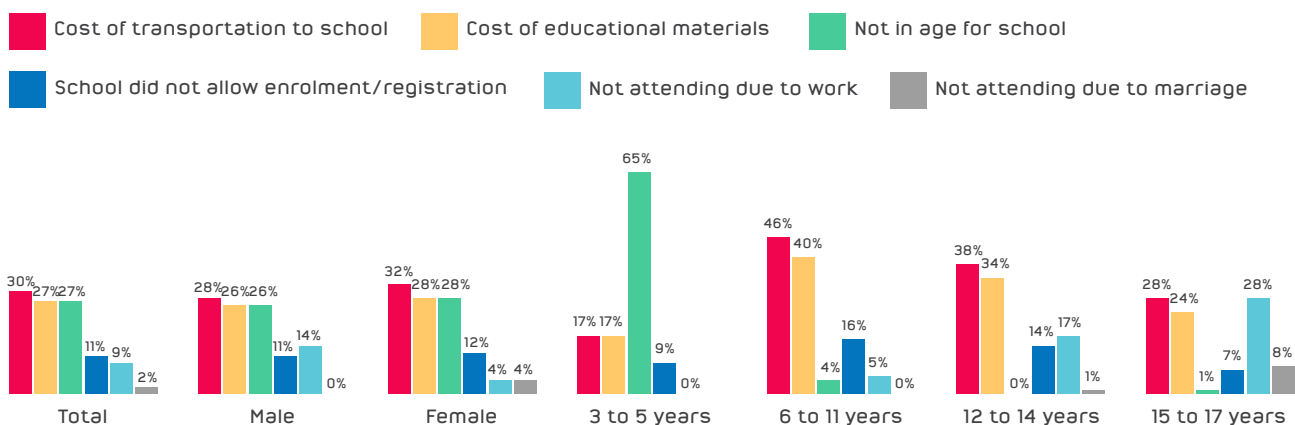
Since 2019, the cost of transportation and cost of materials have always been the main barriers to accessing learning, and the rate for these reasons has increased over the years.

**Figure 10: Cost of education as a barrier to attending school by year**
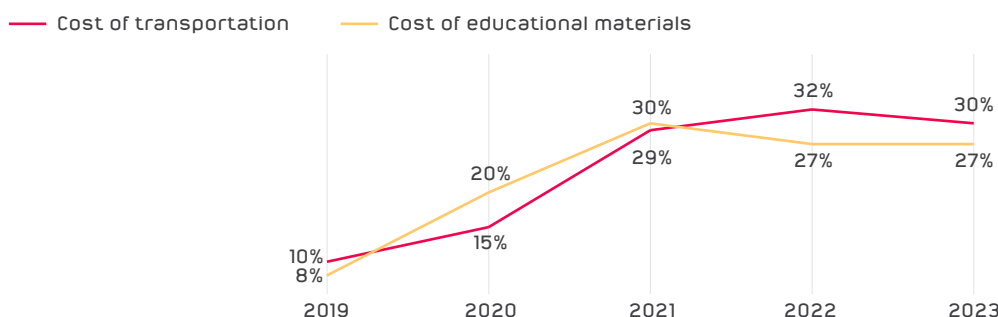
Gender parity index

The gender parity index presented here is the ratio of girls' attendance to boys' attendance. As an indication, we can consider that a gender parity index below 0.97 indicates a disparity in favour of boys and an index above 1.03 indicates a disparity in favour of girls.

In 2023, the primary school gender parity was at 1.09, which slightly favours girls over boys, which is similar to previous years. The lower-secondary-level gender parity was at 1.28, and that of the upper-secondary level was 1.01. The graph below shows the gender parity across the years for each grade level.

Figure 11: Gender parity by school level
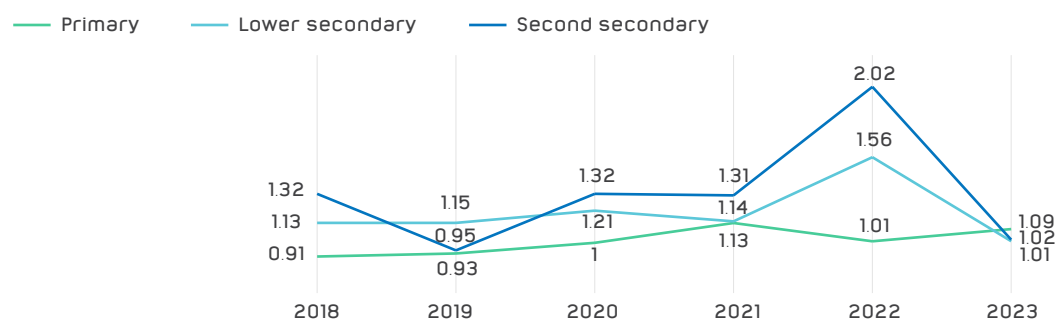
Dropout from school

Dropout from school is defined as not being enrolled in school for a given school year (the SY 2022–23 at the time of the survey) while having been enrolled in the previous scholastic year (SY 2021–22).

At the national level, the dropout rate is 2% and it varies according to the age groups, with the highest being for children between the ages of 10 and 14 (around 4%). While there is no variation between boys and girls, this rate varies geographically, with Baalbek-El Hermel and South Lebanon registering the highest levels of dropout (3%).

Figure 12: Dropout rates by age
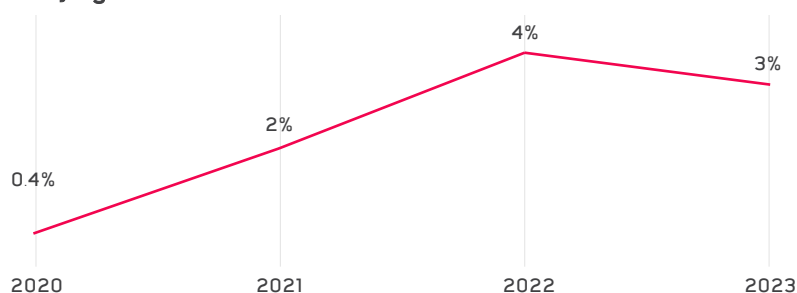
Youth schooling and education

In 2023, the results showed that 16% of youths between the ages of 15 and 24 were attending school at the time of the survey. There was a vast difference between the ages 15 to 18 and 19 to 24, at 29% and 7%, respectively. When it comes to youths with disabilities, the ratio decreases to 11%.

On a governorate level, the highest ratio was in Beirut (25%) and the lowest ratio was in El Nabatieh at 11%. The percentage was higher by 3% among girls, with a value of 18%. Similarly, the percentage rate for households headed by females was 20% compared to their counterpart male-headed households at 16%.

Table 1: Percentage of youths (15-24) attending the currrent school year

Total	Total	16%
Gender of the respondent	Male	15%
	Female	18%
Age group	15 to 18	29%
	19 to 24	7%
Has a disability (according to WGQ classification)		11%
Governorate	Akkar	21%
	Baalbek-El Hermel	13%
	Beirut	25%
	Bekaa	15%
	El Nabatieh	11%
	Mount Lebanon	17%
	North Lebanon	18%
	South Lebanon	17%
Shelter type	Residential	20%
	Non-residential	12%
	Non-permanent	7%
Gender of the head of the household	Male	16%
	Female	20%

Not in employment education or training (NEET)

The share of young people (aged 15 to 24) who fall under the not in education, employment or training (NEET) definition tends to be at higher risk of social exclusion, with little to no income and lacking skills to improve their economic situation. Thus, reducing the NEET ratio is a result of effective school-to-work transition, improved access to decent work conditions and income-generating opportunities. In 2023, the NEET ratio was at 51%, a decrease of 8% from 2022. Girls were found to be higher in not being in employment, education or training at a ratio almost double that of their male counterparts, 70% and 32%, respectively. Furthermore, youths with disabilities face challenges being in school, work or training, with a NEET value of 60%.
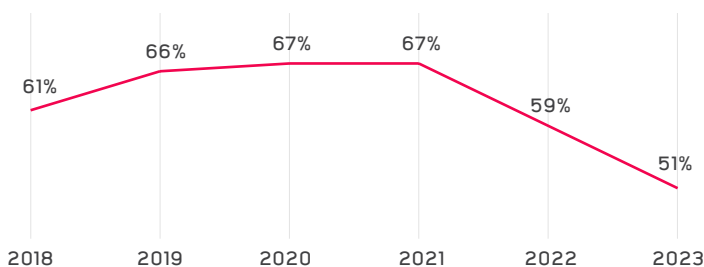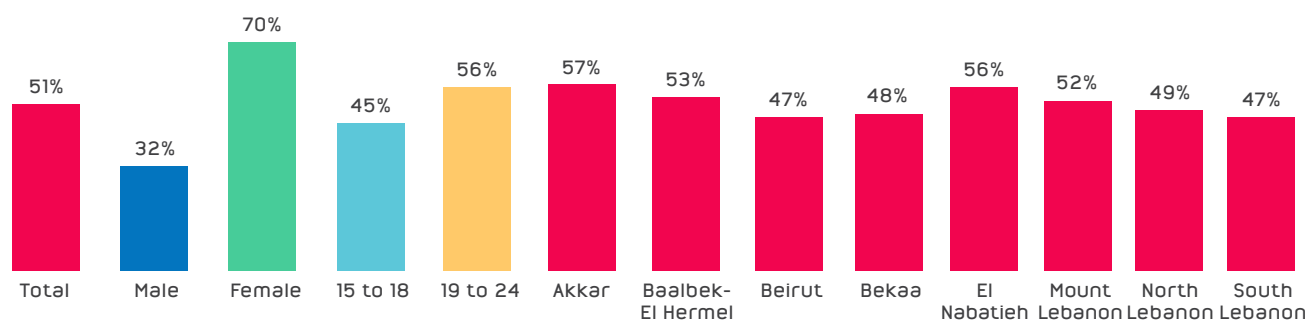
Figure 13: NEET by years

Figure 14: NEET by age, sex and governorate

AAP
Accountability to Affected Populations

The VASyR 2023's Accountability to Affected Populations module targeted the collection of data on households' contentment, utilisation, and accessibility of complaint and feedback systems. It also focused on the dissemination of information regarding humanitarian aid and assessed satisfaction with the conduct of humanitarian aid personnel.
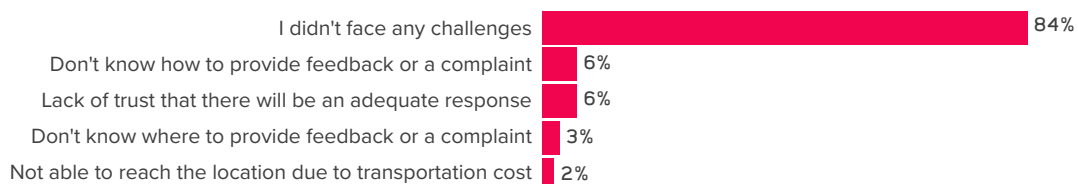
Complaints and feedback

Refugees were asked about their familiarity with, awareness of, and engagement with the current feedback mechanisms. They reported insights into the obstacles they encountered and their preferred methods of expressing concerns and providing feedback to humanitarian agencies regarding assistance and the conduct of humanitarian personnel.

Figure 1: Utilisation of complaint mechanisms by refugees in the previous six months to provide feedback about the aid received and/or aid workers

Yes No I don't know

3%
18%
79%

A total of 79% of the survey participants affirmed their utilisation of complaint mechanisms within the last six months. Among the households surveyed, those in Bekaa (89%), Baalbek-El Hermel (88%), Akkar (88%) and Beirut (87%) demonstrated the highest engagement with complaint mechanisms. Conversely, respondents from South Lebanon (60%) and El Nabatieh (62%) exhibited the least participation. There were no significant variations based on the gender of the head of the household or the presence of individuals with disabilities within the household.

Figure 2: Obstacles encountered in submitting complaints or offering feedback

I didn't face any challenges	84%
Don't know how to provide feedback or a complaint	6%
Lack of trust that there will be an adequate response	6%
Don't know where to provide feedback or a complaint	3%
Not able to reach the location due to transportation cost	2%

Regarding the difficulties encountered when lodging a complaint or offering feedback to humanitarian agencies, 84% of respondents reported that they faced no challenges. Meanwhile, 6% expressed uncertainty about how to provide feedback or complaints and an equivalent percentage cited a lack of trust that a satisfactory response would be received. In terms of the lack of knowledge on how to submit complaints, El Nabatieh (18%), South Lebanon (15%) and Mount Lebanon (9%) reported the highest rates. The issue of a lack of trust in an adequate response was notably widespread in Bekaa (15%) and Baalbek-El Hermel (14%).

Figure 3: Preferred methods for providing feedback to aid agencies regarding assistance received and misconduct of aid workers

Phone call	59%
Face to face (at home) with aid worker	51%
Face to face (in office/other venue) with aid worker	24%
SMS	21%
WhatsApp	13%
Complaints and suggestions box	9%
Face to face with member of the community	6%

A total of 59% of the survey participants indicated that phone calls are their primary preferred method for providing feedback to humanitarian aid agencies regarding both assistance received and the conduct of personnel and workers. This was followed by face-to-face meetings at home with agency personnel (51%) and meeting personnel at the organisation's office or another venue (24%). Notably, there were no significant variations based on the gender of the head of the household or whether at least one household member had a disability.

Communication

This segment encompassed inquiries about the channels favoured for aid agencies to disseminate information regarding humanitarian assistance and programmes. It also looked at the specific types of information respondents would like to receive from humanitarian agencies and examined the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities that limit their access to assistance. As for receiving information, SMS is the highly preferred means (83%), followed by phone calls (71%) and WhatsApp (23%).

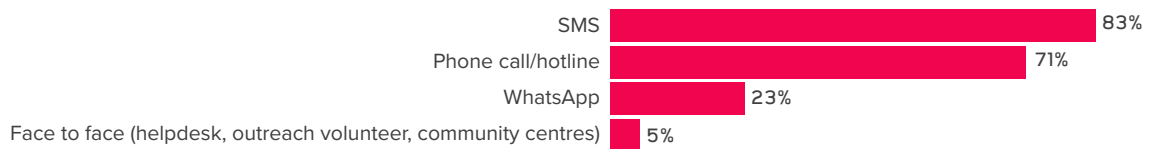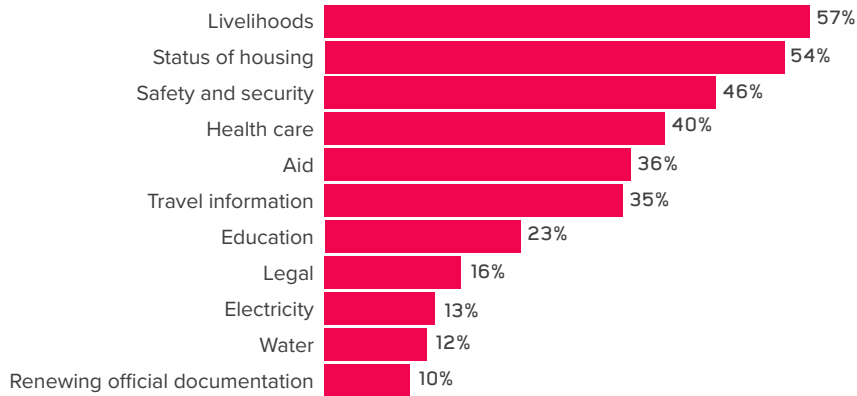**Figure 4: Preferred channels for receiving information**

SMS	83%
Phone call/hotline	71%
WhatsApp	23%
Face to face (helpdesk, outreach volunteer, community centres)	5%

Figure 5: Preferred information types for household communication from humanitarian aid agencies

Livelihoods	57%
Status of housing	54%
Safety and security	46%
Health care	40%
Aid	36%
Travel information	35%
Education	23%
Legal	16%
Electricity	13%
Water	12%
Renewing official documentation	10%

When asked about the information that refugees would like to receive from humanitarian aid agencies, 57% expressed a preference for more details on livelihood programmes, followed by housing status (54%), safety and security (46%), health care (40%), aid (36%) and travel information (35%).

Households with individuals with disabilities or elderly persons encounter various obstacles in accessing information, including difficulties in reading or seeing (62%), challenges in using technology (46%), hearing impairments (24%) and complete dependence on another household member for information access (20%). Among female-headed households, difficulties in reading or seeing (67% versus 60% in male-headed households) and complete reliance on another household member (27% versus 17% in male-headed households) were reported.

Satisfaction with the behaviour of aid workers

A significant majority (81%) expressed satisfaction with the behaviour of aid workers, while 9% reported dissatisfaction and 10% indicated uncertainty. The highest rates of satisfaction were in Akkar (98%) and Beirut (96%). On the other hand, the lowest rates of satisfaction were reported in Bekaa (68%) and Mount Lebanon (75%).

Regarding the reasons for dissatisfaction, 48% of respondents mentioned that aid workers predominantly engage with local leaders and male heads of households (31%) while also requesting favours in exchange for aid or service provision (10%). While there were no notable gender-based differences in the overall level of satisfaction, a concerning aspect emerges in the reasons for dissatisfaction. Specifically, 20% of female-headed households reported being asked for favours in exchange for assistance, compared to 8% among male-headed households.

Figure 6: Household satisfaction with the behaviour of aid workers in the local area by governorate

Legend: Yes (green), No (red), I don't know (orange)

	Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
I don't know	10%	2%	12%	2%	18%	3%	12%	2%	5%
No	9%	2%	8%	2%	14%	9%	8%	12%	12%
Yes	81%	98%	80%	96%	68%	88%	79%	85%	82%
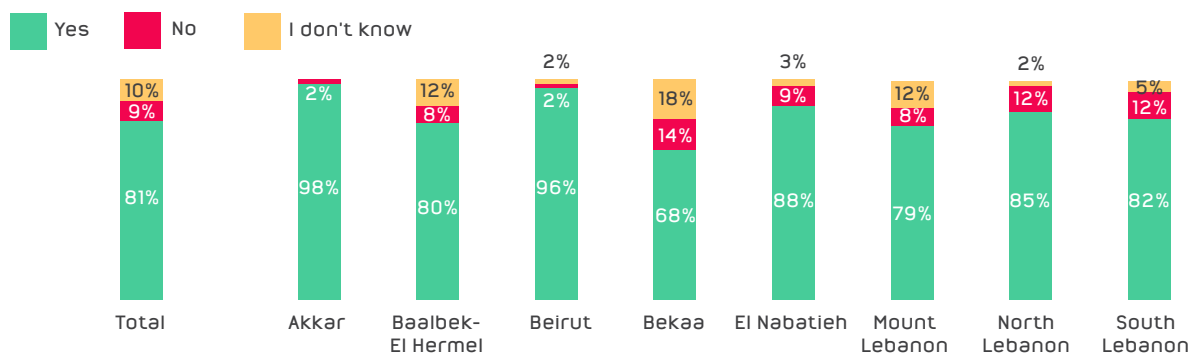
Gender

In collaboration with

UN WOMEN

Findings summary

Demographics

• **One in five households (17%) were female-headed households (FHH).**
• **Compared to 2022, the average household size for FHH decreased from 4.1 to 3.47,** while it remained consistent for male-headed households (MHH) at 4.96. **FHH continued to be older,** with 11% over 59 years of age compared to MHH (5%) and **more likely to be single parents** (21%) compared to 1% for MHH.

Protection

• **Legal residency rates for men improved slightly** from 20% in 2022 to 25% in 2023, **while those for women remained lower at 15%.**
• **Employer sponsorship for both genders increased in 2023.** Men saw a significant increase from 41% in 2022 to 60% in 2023, whereas for women, it rose from 16% to 29%. Women more often had UNHCR certification than men, at 52% compared to men's 26%.
• **Legal and safety risks persisted, with 15% of households feeling nighttime was unsafe for women and girls.** Concerns of bullying and robbery were prevalent, with 15% of women and girls experiencing bullying.
• **Consistent with previous years, approximately one-fifth (22%) of females aged 15–19 was married at the time of the survey.** This was true for 3% of males in the same age category.
• **Child labour among boys remains a concern.** In 2023, approximately 4% of children aged 5–17 years (more boys (7%) compared to girls (2%) were engaged in child labour.

Accountability to Affected Populations

• **FHH and MHH reported comparable rates of receiving assistance but FHH showed higher satisfaction levels.** Yet, FHH more frequently reported exploitative conditions with aid workers, while MHH felt aid organisations did not hear their community.

Shelter

• **In 2023, FHH continued to be disproportionately represented among households in non-permanent shelters.** Almost one in three FHH (28%) resided in such conditions compared to 19% of MHH. This remains most notable in Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel.
• **In 2023, the proportion of FHH living in substandard housing slightly dropped to 48%.** In recent years, a steady increase in substandard housing was observed from 32% in 2019 to 53% in 2022.
• **36% of households shared sanitation facilities and 18% of FHH received free housing.**

Health

• **Overall, both FHH and MHH continued to struggle for health care affordability and accessibility.**
• **Childbirth among women 15–49 years old remained high,** with 90% occurring in health facilities.

WaSH

• **In 2023, access to improved sanitation was nearly universal with no difference between MHH and FHH.** However, a notable gap existed in shared sanitation facilities, with 23% of FHH sharing compared to 13% of MHH.
• **A significant 23% of households faced challenges in accessing menstrual hygiene items,** primarily due to cost.

Energy

• **Nearly all Syrian refugee households had access to the electricity grid, with a slight disparity in private generator use;** 45% of FHH had access compared to 52% of MHH. MHH spent more on electricity than FHH, continuing the trend of rising generator costs.

Education

• **More than half (56%) of children aged 6–17 years were in school during the 2022–2023 school year (59% female versus 53% male), with girls enrolled at higher rates in primary and lower secondary school.** There was gender parity in upper secondary school. Significantly, fewer girls (4%) were not attending school due to marriage in 2023 compared to 13% in 2022; as well, significantly fewer boys (14%) were not attending school due to work compared to 35% in 2022.
• **Youth (15–24 years) increased their enrolment in education, employment and training from 2022 to 2023. However, a significant gender gap remains in the rate of youth who were not in education, employment or training (NEET).** In comparison to 2022, there were no changes in these rates for female youth, while for male youth, there was a marked improvement. In 2023, 70% of girls and young women 15–24 were NEET compared with 69% in 2022, while 32% of boys and young men were NEET compared with 43% in 2022.

Food security and economic vulnerability

• **In 2023, food insecurity was more prevalent among FHH, with 49% affected versus 40% for MHH.** FHH also experienced poorer dietary diversity and higher poor food consumption rates.
• **The majority of households fell below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), with assistance narrowing the gap between FHH and MHH.** Coping strategies evolved due to inflation, with equal rates of FHH and MHH borrowing food.
• **Debt levels remained high, with MHH carrying significantly more debt on average than FHH,** reflecting the sustained economic strain on Syrian refugee households.

Livelihoods and income

• **In 2023, women's labour force participation in Lebanon remained consistent at 18%, with men's participation notably higher at 77%.** Women with disabilities had similar labour force rates as other Syrian refugee women, while disabled men participated less than those without disabilities. Women's labour force was highest in Baalbek-El Hermel and lowest in Mount Lebanon, while men's labour force was highest in El Nabatieh and South Lebanon.
• **Unemployment rates improved, particularly for women, dropping to 21% from 40% in 2022, with men's unemployment also reducing from 18% to 10%.** Women continued to work predominantly in agriculture and services, while men were more present in construction and craft work.
• **The gender gap in monthly per capita income persisted,** with FHH earning an average of LL1,424,705 compared to MHH's LL2,019,721.

• **New data revealed the extent of the disproportionate care burden on women and the extent to which care duties prevented them from being employed:** 32% of men indicated they were not working because there was no work in the area where they lived and 29% of men cited injury or disability as the primary reason. In contrast, 65% of women identified caring for dependents as the main factor hindering them from employment compared to 5% of men.

• **Dependence on WFP ecards and ATMs for income saw a decrease in 2023, more so for FHH than MHH.** For FHH, dependency decreased from 57% to 46%, and for MHH, it decreased from 39% to 28%. Dependency for both MHH and FHH had risen steadily since 2019 and peaked in 2022; it has consistently been higher for FHH.

Analysis overview

This chapter was developed based on a sex-disaggregated analysis of each indicator included in the VASyR assessment.[1] The VASyR was designed so that some survey questions were posed at the household level (i.e., the head of household or any adult household member was asked questions regarding the entire household). In contrast, others were posed at the individual level per each household member. This means full sex disaggregation was available for some findings, while disaggregation only by the sex of the head of household was available for others. Wherever possible, disaggregated findings at the individual level are reported throughout this chapter.

Table 1: Data collection on indicators at the individual level and the household level

Individual level	Household level
Demographics	Income/debt
Civil status	Shelter
Specific needs/disability	Eviction and mobility
Other protection indicators	Energy
Child protection	Water, sanitation and hygiene
Child health/child nutrition	Expenditure
Education	Food consumption
Employment/work sectors	Coping strategies (food and non-food)
Health	Safety and security/sexual exploitation
	Community relations/social stability
	Child discipline
	Communication

Each sector chapter discusses age, gender, disability and diversity analysis where relevant. This chapter summarises the main gender findings across sectors for ease of reference.

A note on female-headed households

An FHH is a household in which an adult female is the sole or main decision maker, whereas an adult male leads an MHH. In the VASyR, the head of the household was self-identified, as enumerators asked the first person they encountered upon visiting a household to designate the main decision-maker of the household. If the head of the household was not available, information about this person was gathered, and enumerators interviewed another adult in the family who was capable of responding to the interview questions. In some cases, therefore, the sex of the head of household and that of the respondent was different. A little over one-third (36%) of respondents were female, an additional 35% were male and female household members answering together[2] and the remaining respondents (29%) were male. It should be noted that in many cases, women are not considered heads of households unless no adult male is living permanently in the household, as the patriarchal assumption is often that the head of a household is always an adult man, even if a woman's economic contribution to the household's maintenance and/or decision-making power is the same or greater.[3]

Demographics

Since the VASyR began in 2013, there has been an overall even split between Syrian men and women. Despite minute variations, the population sex ratio remains on average at almost 1 (99:100). There is a notable distinction in the governorate of Baalbek-El Hermel where the sex ratio is 92:100 with two districts contributing largely to the variation, Baalbek (91:100) and El Hermel (93:100). However, the district with the lowest sex ratio in 2023 is Rachaya in Bekaa governorate (86:100).
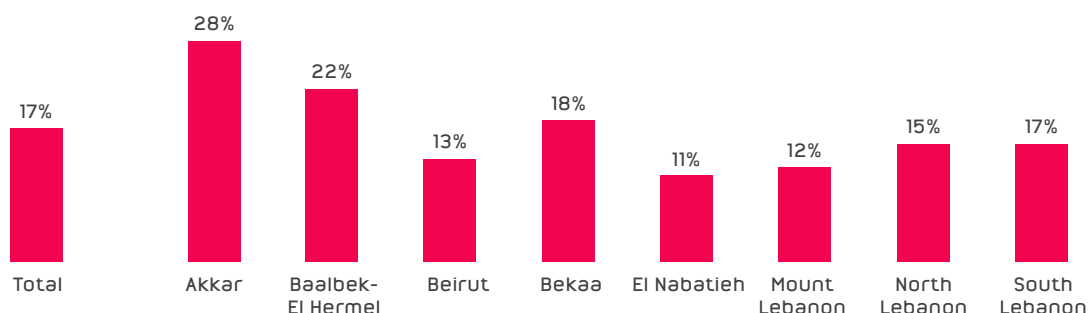
Over the past five years, between 16% and 19% of households have self-identified as FHH. In 2023, FHH constituted 17% of households, a slight decrease from 2022, where 18% self-identified as FHH. The VASyR has also consistently captured regional variation in the sex of the heads of households. In 2023, FHH were most common in the border governorates of Akkar (28%) and Baalbek-El Hermel (22%) and least common in Beirut (13%), El Nabatieh (11%) and Mount Lebanon (12%). It is worth noting that there was an increase in the percentage of FHH in Akkar from 2022 from 24% to 28%.

---

[1] This chapter was written by UN Women, in partnership with UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP.
[2] It is worth noting that even when men and women answer the questionnaire together, male bias in responses may persist due to prevailing cultural norms.
[3] World Bank, "Metadata glossary: Female headed households (% of households with a female head)" (no date). Available from https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/gender-statistics/series/SP.HOU.FEMA.ZS.

Figure 1: FHH by governorate in 2023

17%	28%	22%	13%	18%	11%	12%	15%	17%
Total	Akkar	Baalbek-El Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	El Nabatieh	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	South Lebanon

Size and composition among male and female-headed Syrian households have seen changes based on the new data. The average household size of FHH dropped from 4.1 in 2022 to 3.47 in 2023, while MHH remained similar in size on average (4.96). Consistent with previous years, 62% of MHH had young children (under five years old) compared to 29% of FHH. MHH had a higher dependency ratio (0.93) than FHH (0.76) and more FHH (27%) had no dependents compared with MHH (14%). Close to 11% of FHH and 29% of MHH reported having a pregnant or lactating woman present.

Consistent with previous years, female heads of households were more commonly over 59 years of age. Overall, 6% of heads of households reported were older, with more FHH (11%) reporting this than MHH (5%). There was no major difference in the proportion of men (14%) and women (12%) with disabilities in the overall population. FHH also far more often included single parents than MHH. Overall, 4% of households had at least one household member who was a single parent, with more FHH (21%) having single parents in their households than MHH (1%). These findings are consistent with VASyR data since 2019.

Figure 2: Households with specific needs
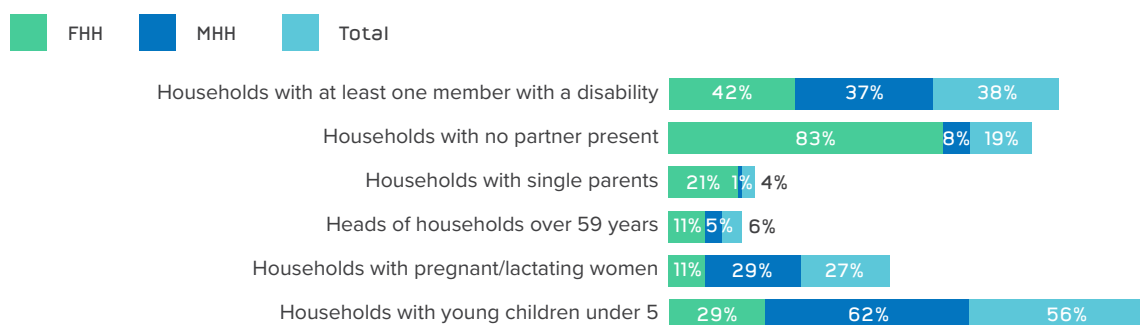
Almost one in ten (10%) of women (aged 18+) were widowed, divorced or separated, compared to just 2% of men. The vast majority of female heads of households (83%) were either single, divorced or widowed or had no partner present with them in the household, compared to just 8% of male heads of households in the same categories.

Protection

Rates of legal residency remained stable for women and increased slightly for men in 2023. As in previous years, rates of legal residency for women were lower than for men. In 2023, the rate of women with legal residency was 15%, which remained lower than the rate for men at 25%. It is worth noting that the rate of legal residency for men increased from 20% in 2022 to 25% in 2023. Fewer FHH (21%) had at least one member with legal residency than MHH (34%). While there was a slight difference between men and women in terms of entry, it is worth noting that women (22%) and members of FHH (25%) more often reported they had entered through an unofficial border and the General Security Office had not allowed them to regularise for this reason, compared to 18% of men. Prioritising men for legal residency in Syrian refugee households is likely because more men work and due to perceptions that men without legal documentation are more likely to be arrested or detained compared with women.

Figure 3: Legal residency for males and females 15+ since 2019
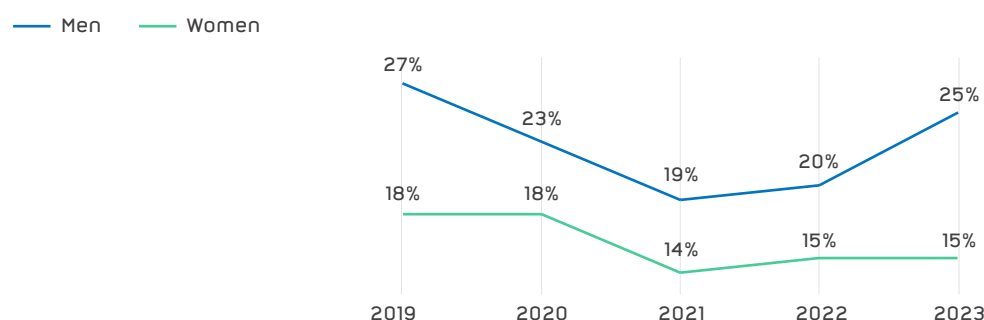
In 2023, the overall number of Syrians with UNHCR certificates decreased and employment sponsorships increased. The number of women holding a UNHCR certificate remained higher than that of men. In 2022, a higher percentage of women (65%) than men (44%) held a UNHCR certificate. By 2023, while the rate of sponsorship via UNHCR for both men and women decreased, women still had a certificate more often (52%) compared to men (26%). On the other hand, employer sponsorship for both genders increased in 2023. Men saw a significant increase from 41% in 2022 to 60% in 2023, whereas for women, it rose from 16% to 29%.

Figure 4: Main types of legal residency for men and women 15+ in 2022 and 2023
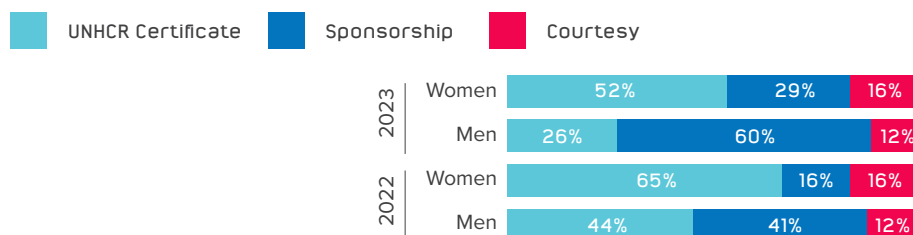
Low rates of legal residency continue to expose both women and men to risks such as arrest, detention, deportation or extortion. Lack of residency papers likely prevents Syrian refugee women and men from approaching the police or justice mechanisms to report incidents of harassment or violence, including gender-based violence.

Safety concerns persisted in 2023. One in seven (15%) households believed it was unsafe for women and girls to walk alone in the area at night. One in eleven (9%) households reported women and girls avoid some places because they feel unsafe. When asked about the specifics, most often, women and girls avoided streets, markets and public transportation. About 27% of households reported safety concerns for women, 27% for girls, 28% for boys and 27% for men. Approximately 65% of women and girls avoided streets or neighbourhoods due to unsafety. Other significant places they avoided were markets at 40% and public transportation at 23%.

More than a quarter (27%) of households had at least one safety concern for women and girls. Bullying was the most reported issue for both groups, with about 15% of women and girls indicating they had been bullied; being robbed was the second most reported issue at around 9% for women and 7% for girls.

There were few differences between the few female and male-headed households who were likely to witness or experience violence from the host community, perceived drivers of tension or factors that respondents believed would improve community relations.

Accountablity to affected populations

Both MHH and FHH reported receiving assistance in the past year at similar rates, with 36% of FHH expressing higher satisfaction compared to 29% of MHH. No significant difference was noted between MHH and FHH in terms of feedback processes or reported barriers to aid. However, FHH were slightly more inclined to note they felt aid workers only spoke and listened to the leaders and head men in their area. Close to 19% of dissatisfied FHH stated that aid workers asked for favours in exchange for assistance, compared to 8% of MHH.[4] Furthermore, 40% of MHH felt aid workers did not listen to their community, a sentiment shared by 24% of FHH. Both groups were similarly aware of the complaint filing process.

Child protection

The VASyR consistently highlights child labour as the primary risk for boys and child marriage for girls. In 2022, 4% of children aged 5–17 years old were engaged in child labour, with 7% of boys and 2% of girls working. By 2023, this rose to 7% overall, with an increase to 11% for boys and a slight rise to 3% for girls. Most child labourers were aged 12–17 years old and 79% were working in hazardous conditions with no gender difference. Early marriage rates remained steady for girls and young women at 22% but saw a slight increase for boys and young men from less than 1% in 2022 to 3% in 2023.

Figure 5: Rates of early marriage (ages 15-19) and child labour (17 and younger) for boys and girls in 2022 and 2023
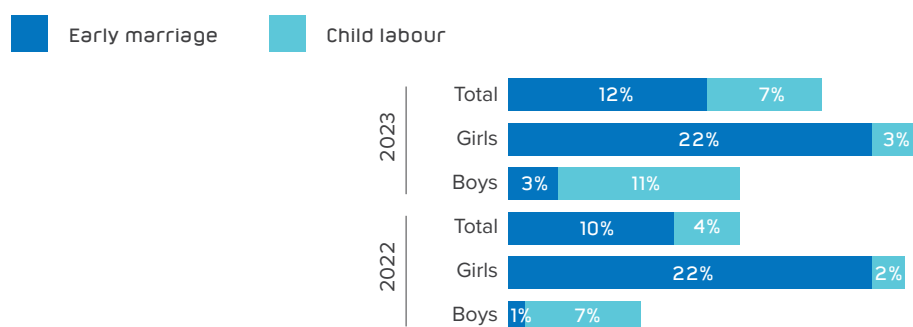
[4] Although the count of households that reported being dissatisfied with assistance is very small, the reason for this dissatisfaction is concerning. A total of 20 FHH reported being dissatisfied with assistance, and of these, 16 (or 80%) reported it was because aid workers were asking for favours in exchange. 153 MHH reported being dissatisfied, and of these, 32 (or 21%) reported it was because aid workers were asking for favours.

Shelter

The VASyR consistently shows that high numbers of women and FHH remained in substandard, non-permanent informal settlements in Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel governorates. As in the previous four years, in 2023, a higher proportion of FHH (28%) lived in non-permanent shelters compared to MHH (19%).[5]

Data from 2019 to 2022 shows a clear increase in the proportion of FHH in substandard housing, rising from 32% in 2019 to 53% in 2022. However, this proportion slightly dropped to 48% in 2023. MHH also saw an increase in the prevalence of substandard housing, especially since 2021. This could be attributed to evictions or voluntary relocations, especially in regions such as Baalbek-El Hermel, where non-permanent shelters are most common. The rate of FHH (62%) in apartments, houses or rooms remained similar. Living in non-permanent or substandard shelters exposes households to vulnerabilities, encompassing health and protection risks and intensifies poverty.

Figure 6: MHH and FHH in substandard housing in 2023
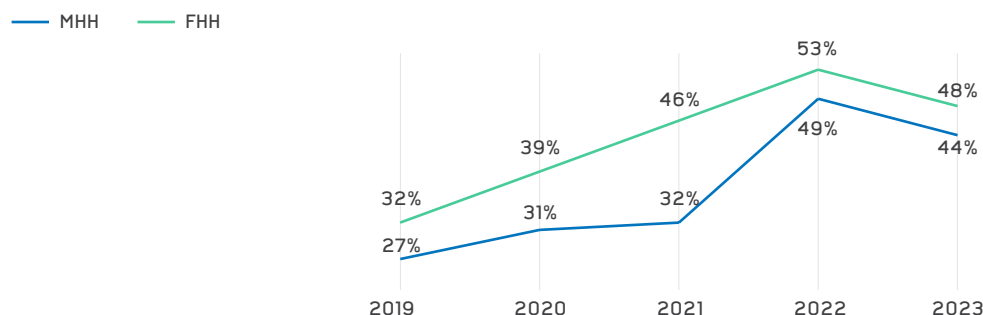
The 2023 data reveals that 36% of households shared toilets with another household. Additionally, 18% of FHH were hosted free of charge, a rise from the 15% reported in 2022. In contrast, only 4% of MHH benefited from such arrangements. This could be reflective of societal norms, where communities feel a duty to protect women or it may indicate more exploitative conditions for FHH in exchange for shelter.

As for accommodation costs, MHH typically resided in settings where the rent was higher than that for FHH, likely because of their household size. The average monthly rent for MHH was recorded at LL5,807,577 in 2023, while FHH paid an average of LL4,623,649. A substantial 66% of FHH paid LL5 million or less for rent, whereas this percentage was lower (57%) for MHH. Upcoming rental increases were reported by 36% of FHH and 39% of MHH.

Finally, the data showed that 11% of households had relocated in the past year, with little variance between MHH and FHH. The reasons for these relocations varied but rent increases and evictions were common triggers. No significant gender-based discrepancies were observed in terms of rental agreements or planned relocations in the upcoming months.

Health

In 2023, 61% of households required primary health care in the last six months, with negligible differences between male and female-headed households. At the individual level, 17% had required some form of health care, again with no significant difference between men and women. When health care was required, 82% received the care they needed with no difference across FHH and MHH. In 2023, 59% of households could not afford essential medications, 65% FHH compared to 58% MHH. However, both groups used coping strategies such as rationing, medication substitution or borrowing money at similar rates. Cost remained the primary barrier to accessing healthcare for all households.

Similar to previous years, the number of women who had given birth continued to be high, with 34% of women between 15–49 years having given birth in the last two years. The majority (90%) of these births took place in health facilities. Vaccination for Covid-19 saw a mild increase, with 39% of individuals vaccinated; men (42%) continued to be vaccinated at a slightly higher rate than women (36%). Close to 33% of infants had suffered from diseases, with a slight male predominance. Only 13% of women reported they needed contraceptives in recent months, suggesting a low rate of utilisation. Of those who reported using contraceptives, almost all (93%) reported they could access them and mainly sourced them from pharmacies and clinics. Data showed limited knowledge of emergency medical services, minimal private insurance access, and consistent barriers to healthcare accessibility and affordability, with little difference across MHH and FHH.

WaSH

Almost all (98%) households had access to basic sanitation facilities, with no difference between MHH and FHH. There was no significant difference concerning whether these facilities were emptied or the average number of bathrooms present. However, there was a difference in households sharing a toilet with another household; 23% of FHH shared facilities, compared to 13% of MHH. Both household types had low access to bottled water at 16%. There were no major gender differences in use and main types of unimproved water sources, availability of drinking water, the sufficiency of water for washing and domestic purposes, nor in treating water to make it safer to drink. Nearly a quarter of households (23%) reported they did not have access to sufficient menstrual hygiene items. This was almost entirely due to their prohibitive cost.

[5] Almost all FHH in non-permanent shelters live in tents.

Energy access

The vast majority of households had access to the electricity grid, with no difference across MHH and FHH, though FHH had slightly lower access to private generators. While 52% of MHH sourced electricity from private generators, this was slightly lower for FHH at 45%. When it came to expenditures on private generators, MHH spent an average of LL444,581, which was more than the LL398,426 spent by FHH. This represents a continuation of an upward trend in expenditures on generators since 2021. Notably, 39% of FHH reported that no one collected their electricity bills, a figure higher than the 27% reported by MHH. Additionally, a larger percentage of MHH (79%) reported having sufficient energy for cooking, compared to 71% of FHH. There were no significant differences in the main sources of electricity or the average number of hours they received electricity daily.

Education

Syrian households are relatively literate. The head of the household knew how to read and write in 70.8% of MHH compared to 62.5% of FHH. Where formal schooling was concerned, the head of the household had ever attended formal schooling in 68.7% of MHH compared to 61.3% of FHH. More than half of heads of households had primary education (MHH: 57.5% versus FHH: 54.2%), followed by those that had lower secondary education (MHH: 26.6% versus FHH: 26.7%). Significantly fewer had completed upper secondary education (MHH: 5.6% versus FHH: 7.9%), university education (MHH: 2.4% versus FHH 3.1%) or technical education (MHH: 1.6% versus FHH: 1.9%).

Consistent with findings in 2022, about half (an average of 56%, female 59% and male 53%) of Syrian children between the ages of 6–17 was in school during the 2022–2023 school year, with no difference between children with and without disabilities. More girls than boys were in primary and lower secondary school. However, the gender parity index indicated an even ratio for girls and boys in the upper secondary level. Notwithstanding that parity is sustained, the trend of the four years for this level of education shows that fewer girls may be attending upper secondary education compared to 2021–2022.

Figure 7: Gender parity index during 2019–2023
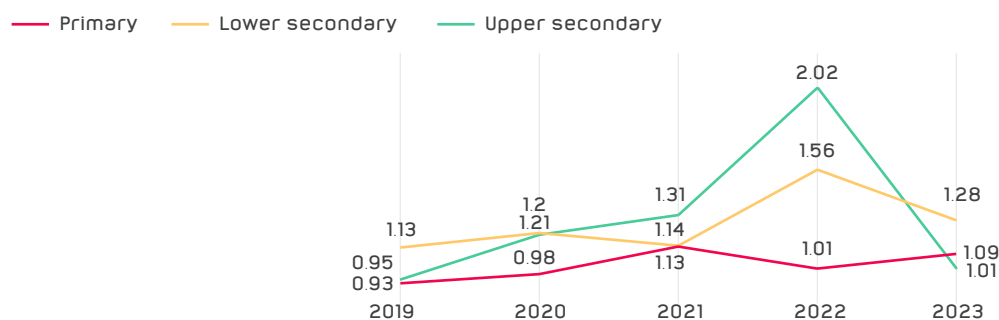
This dynamic also plays out in the findings on boys' and girls' attendance across age groups for the 2022–2023 school year. As Table 2 shows below, for children between three and five years of age, an almost similar proportion of boys and girls reported attending school. However, for the 6–14, 15–17 and 18–24 age groups, a higher percentage of girls reported attending school compared to boys.

### Table 2: School attendance by age group for school year 2022–2023

	Female	Male	Total
School attendance (3–5 age group)	19%	18%	19%
School attendance (6–14 age group)	65%	60%	63%
School attendance (15–17 age group)	32%	26%	29%
School attendance (18–24 age group)	9%	6%	8%

Findings on school non-attendance for boys and girls showed that the cost of access to education (materials and transportation) remains significant for almost a third of the children in 2023 compared to 2022. Although still worrisome, markedly, in 2023, fewer girls are not attending school due to marriage than in 2022. As well, there is a telling decrease in the number of boys that are not attending school due to work in 2023 compared to 2022.

Table 3: Reasons for not attending school among children aged 3–17 years old

Reasons	Female		Male	
	2022	2023	2022	2023
Marriage	13%	4%	1%	0.20%
Work	5%	4%	35%	14%
Cost of materials	33%	28%	25%	26%
Cost of transportation	40%	32%	30%	28%

The proportion of young people (15–24 years old) who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) remained almost the same for female youth but it decreased for males by more than 10% from 2022. More than twice as many females than males were not in education, employment or training in 2023. An analysis of the past five years shows that, despite some improvement, the wide gender gap in NEET is sustained.

Figure 8: Young people not in education, empoyment or training (15-24 years old) during 2019-2023

── Men ── Women
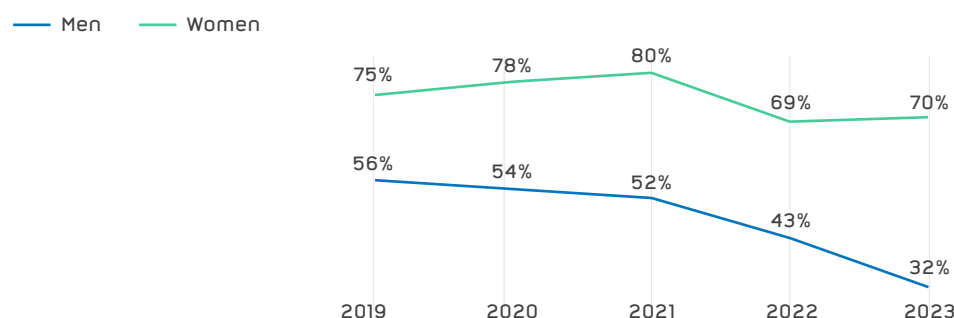
Food security and economic vulnerability

In 2023, food insecurity remained a significant concern among Syrian refugee households, particularly among FHH. FHH continued to exhibit a higher rate of food insecurity, with 49% of FHH being food insecure, as compared to 40% of MHH. The percentage of households falling within the poor food consumption category was also slightly higher among FHH at 18% compared to 13% for MHH. Similarly, the daily dietary diversity showcased a more significant disparity between FHH and MHH; 25% of FHH households exhibited poor dietary diversity, compared to 13% of MHH. Without considering any assistance, 74% of FHH and 75% of MHH had incomes below the SMEB in 2023. When assistance was incorporated into their income calculations, the percentage dropped to 60% for FHH and 64% for MHH, suggesting no significant difference between FHH and MHH.

Financial expenditure data in 2023 revealed a notable rise from the previous year. The average monthly expenditure per capita rose to LL5,982,464 for FHH and LL5,697,223 for MHH, reflecting ongoing inflation and price surges. Interestingly, while in 2022, FHH reported a higher monthly per capita expenditure compared to MHH, this trend became even more pronounced in 2023. Additionally, a considerable portion of these expenditures was dedicated to food. FHH spent more than half (62%) of their total expenses on food, compared to 53% for MHH.

Due to the continuing economic challenges in Lebanon, households persisted in resorting to potentially detrimental coping mechanisms. While in 2022, there was a distinction in the rates of FHH borrowing food compared to MHH, by 2023, this gap had closed. Both FHH and MHH borrowed food at the same rate of 76%. The use of asset depletion as a coping strategy underwent a change due to inflation, registering at 27% for FHH and 26% for MHH. In terms of rCSI scores, 88% of all households had some form of debt, showing no difference between FHH and MHH. The reasons behind the acquisition of debt remained consistent across both groups, though MHH were slightly more inclined to incur debt for rent and infant formula. Conversely, FHHs were more likely to shoulder debt for medication purposes.

MHH continued to be more dependent on debt than FHH, with more MHH owing LL30,000,000 or more. While 44% of MHH had such outstanding amounts, only 24% of FHH owed similar amounts. The average debt for MHH stood at a substantial LL46,393,666, which was significantly higher than the FHH average of LL27,517,526.

There were no other major differences between MHH and FHH in the other coping strategies assessed. MHH and FHH adopted stress, crisis and emergency coping strategies at similar rates. Likewise, there were no important gender differences in food consumption categorisation, number of meals per day, number of meals consumed by children under five and types of food consumed on a weekly basis.

Livelihoods and income

In 2023, women's participation in the labour force remained similar to 2022, at 18%, while men's participation remained significantly higher at 77%. There was little difference between the labour force participation of women with disabilities and women without disabilities. However, men with disabilities showed a lower rate of participation (61%) compared to those without disabilities (76%). Regionally, women's labour force participation was highest at 27% in Baalbek-El Hermel and lowest at 12% in Mount Lebanon. The lowest sex ratio in the former and the highest sex ratio in the latter may be inversely related to women's labour force participation. The highest labour force participation for men was recorded in El Nabatieh and South Lebanon at 80% and 82%, respectively. There were no significant changes from 2022 to 2023 in male and female labour force participation across all regions.

Figure 9: Women's and men's labor force participation over time
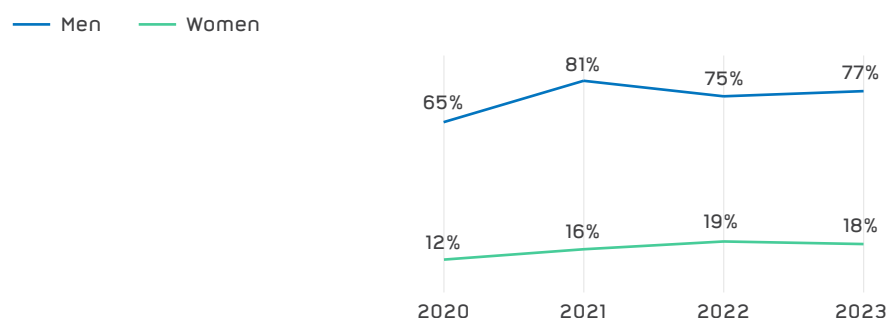
── Men ── Women

Unemployment significantly dropped from 2022, particularly for women. Women's unemployment fell from 40% to 21%, while men's unemployment dropped from 18% to 10% in 2023.

Figure 10: Sex-disaggregated unemployment rate over time
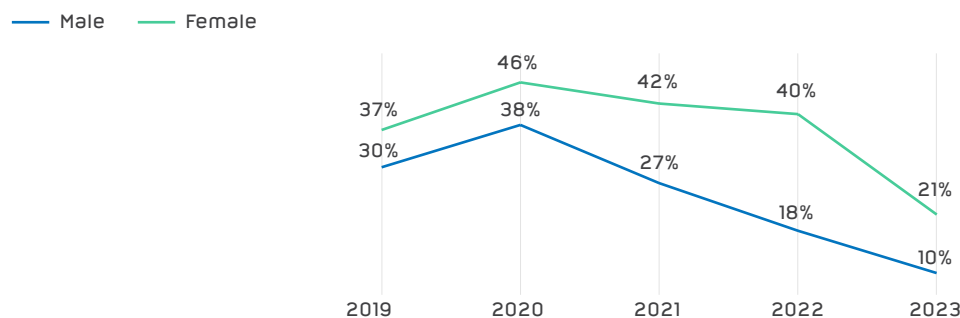
As in previous years, women were predominantly employed in agriculture. Almost half (49%) of working women were in agriculture compared to 27% of working men. Men were more heavily represented in construction, with 20% working in this field, whereas only 1% of women did so. Additionally, skilled work (trades) had higher male participation at 12%, compared to 2% for women. In the services sector, women's participation (27%) exceeded that of men (16%).

Figure 11: Main sectors of work by sex
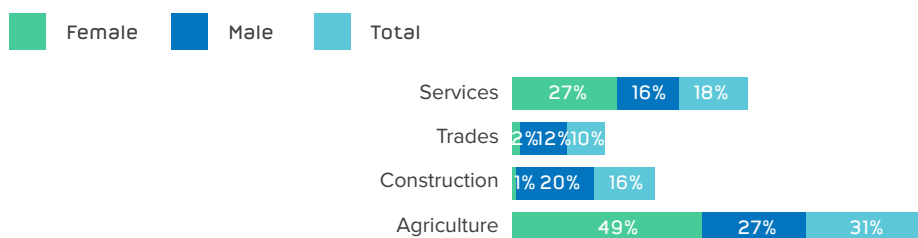
In 2023, there was a small increase in the percentage of FHH with at least one member who had worked in the week prior to the interview, rising to 56% from 50% in 2022, yet this rate was still significantly lower than the 79% observed for MHH. The gender gap in monthly per capita income persisted, with FHH earning an average of LL1,424,705 compared to MHH's LL2,019,721. Although there is a narrowing of disparity in 2023 compared to 2022, the overall income disparity between FHH and MHH persists, as indicated in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Average per capita monthly income in LBP in MHH and FHH during 2019-2023

Year	All households	MHH	FHH	Percentage difference
2019	57,298	63,307	30,473	-52%
2020	62,792	65,240	52,258	-20%
2021	124,174	133,398	80,782	-39%
2022	410,495	440,941	256,569	-42%
2023	1,920,630[6]	2,019,721	1,424,705	-29%

The leading reasons for not working in the 30 days prior to the interview varied significantly between males and females: 32% of males said they were not working because there was no work in the area where they lived and 29% of males cited injury or disability as the primary reason. In contrast, 65% of females identified caring for dependents as the main factor hindering employment compared to 5% of males. This highlights the persistent disparity in household care work between men and women and that dependent children and family members are overall the biggest barriers to women's participation in the workforce, whether in FHH or MHH.
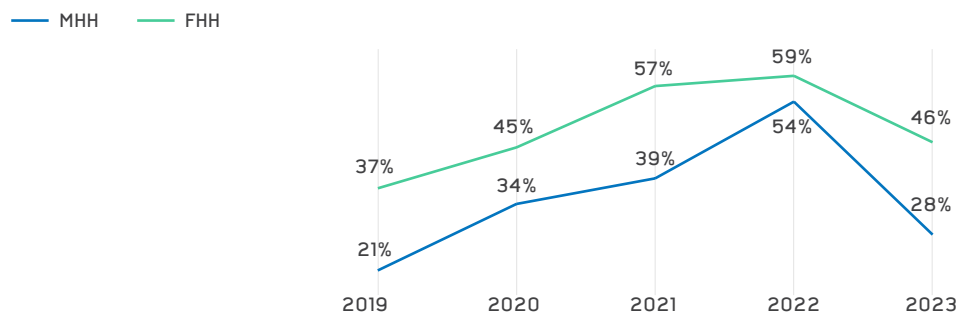
Figure 12: Top three reasons for women and men not working in the past 30 days
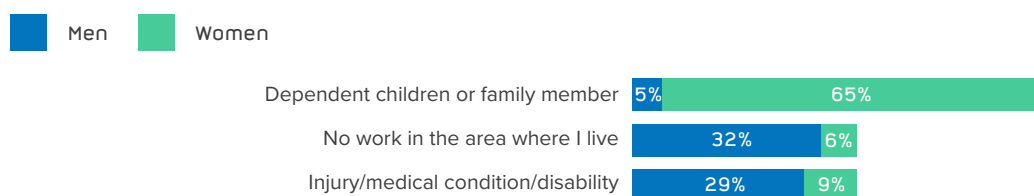
Overall dependence on WFP ecards and ATMs for income decreased in 2023. For FHH, dependency decreased from 57% to 46%, and for MHH, it decreased from 39% to 28%. Dependency for both MHH and FHH has risen steadily since 2019 and peaked in 2022, consistently being higher for FHH over time.

---

[6] Per Central Administration Statistics, the Annual Inflation Rate in 2023 for Lebanon was 221.3% (http://www.cas.gov.lb/index.php/latest-news-en/165-inflation-4). Conversion to US$ shows that income actually decreased in 2023.

Figure 13: Percentage of MHH and FHH dependent on ecards and ATM cards for their main source of income since 2019

MHH —— FHH ——

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
FHH	37%	45%	57%	59%	46%
MHH	21%	34%	39%	54%	28%