

Syrian Refugees and
Food Insecurity in
Lebanon

Secondary Literature and
Data Desk Review

Syria

March 2013



Preface

After its two year anniversary, the Syrian Emergency Operation maintains its objective of relieving the very basic needs of the one million-plus needy refugees which now populate the neighboring countries of Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt.

A separate Secondary Data Analysis was completed for the countries of Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. This Secondary Data Analysis focuses on the food security of both host and refugee populations in Lebanon – a country currently struggling to satisfy the demands of an extra quarter its population size. The desk review investigates what information is accessible and what types of primary data collection methods and surveillance systems are needed in order to fill in the existing information gaps to support programming and planning in a highly dynamic environment where the influx of refugees and their needs are at the increase.

The review draws from existing reports to a) consolidate food security related formation; b) identify gaps; c) identify needs for further primary data collection. A consultant was hired in March 2013 for a period of two weeks, to work under the coordination of the Programme Unit of the Syria sub-region Emergency Coordination January to 10 February 2013. The consultant was requested to apply a critical view on the findings and also to provide recommendations to support information management. In that regard, the views of the Author does not necessarily reflect those of WFP.

The Desk Review Author

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ACRONYMS

WFP	World Food Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
ACF	Action Contre la Faim
IRC	International Red Crescent
DMI	Development Management International
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission
FCS	Food Consumption Score
JPA	Joint Plan of Action
LBP	Lebanese pound
WBSFA	World Bank's Sector Assessment Handbook
IMF	International Monetary Fund
BIS	Bank of International Settlement
BBC	Banking Control Committee
CBL	Central Bank Lebanon
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
GDP	Gross domestic product
MOPH	Ministry of Public Health
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GAM	Global acute malnutrition
SAM	Severe acute malnutrition
IOCC	International Orthodox Christian Charity
NFI	Non-food items
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
PDM	Post distribution monitoring
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Upon the onset of the crisis in Syria, in 2011 thousands of Syrian refugees spilt over Syria's borders into neighboring countries. The UNHCR reported a tenfold increase in refugee numbers between May and December 2012.¹ And the numbers keep growing.

In line with the WFP and UNHCR global memorandum of understanding, the agencies will conduct a Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) to assess the food security and nutritional situation of refugees residing inside and outside camps in Lebanon. This is done by reviewing the quality and appropriateness of on-going food assistance operations within the country; assessing the impact of refugee influx on the food security of host communities, especially those in poverty pockets; assessing the potential for targeted food assistance and identify potential target groups for these interventions; and assembling data to enable UNHCR and the WFP Lebanon country offices to develop a Joint Plan of Action (JPA).

This secondary data desk review was undertaken to support the JAM processes planned for Lebanon in March 2013. The major geographical focus areas are:

- Bekaa Valley
- North Lebanon (Akkar and Tripoli)
- South Lebanon and Beirut Suburbs

National Context

With an area of 10,452km² and a population of 4,125,247², Lebanon borders Syria to the north and the east and Israel to the south. At the crossroads of the Mediterranean Basin and the Arabian hinterland, Lebanon's history and ethnic diversity has molded the country into being the most religiously diverse country of the Middle East. The CIA Factbook estimates that 59.7% of the population is Muslim, 39% Christian, with the remaining 1.3% representing other religions and non-believers³. A demographic study found that approximately 27% of the population was Sunni, 27% Shi'a, 21% Maronite, 8% Greek Orthodox, 5% Greek Catholic, 4-5% Armenian with the remaining 2-3% mostly belonging to smaller Christian denominations. There are an estimated 4-5000 Coptic and 50,000 Iraqi Christians in the country, whilst Druze constitute 5%.

SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

Refugee policies

After thirty years of Syrian hegemony, Lebanon finds itself politically split with regards to the Syrian crisis. Despite these divisions, the Lebanese government remains committed to the 1951 Geneva Convention and has maintained an open border policy to receive refugees fleeing violence⁴.

¹UNHCR (2013) 'Syria regional refugee response', Information sharing portal, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> [last accessed on 3 March 2013].

² Figure from July 2010. There has been no official census since 1932 due to sensitive confessional political balance between Lebanon's various religious groups.

³CIA, The World Factbook, Lebanon, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/le.html> [last accessed 19 March, 2013].

⁴ Migration Policy Center, "Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: the Humanitarian Approach under Political Divisions", p.17, <http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/MPC%202012%2013.pdf> [last accessed 11 March, 2013].

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Concerned with regards to the origins of portions of the refugee community, Government assistance has been limited; aid to refugees is mainly provided by civil society and public institutions. Consequently, physical needs are barely met⁵. Furthermore, the apparent feeble legal and administrative frameworks sometimes leave Syrian and non-Syrian refugees vulnerable to arrest, detention and deportation. For Iraqi and Palestinian refugees, resettlement is the main durable solution available, as the Government will not permit local integration and most countries of origin are not stable enough to enable a safe and sustainable return⁶.

Fearing large camps of Sunni Muslim Syrians could inflame sectarian tensions still broiling from the 1975-1990 civil war, the Lebanese Government has sought to host the Syrian refugee population in its homes and communities⁷. However, considering the extended displacement and increased numbers, “rentiership” has now become a more popular option. In the month of January 2013, 60% of the registered refugee population rented accommodation at below minimum standards and unaffordable prices. Approximately 27% of the refugees lived with host families and 8.5% were accommodated in unfinished private houses. In exchange for basic rehabilitation of the house or other restructuring aid, the owners let the refugees live in the space for free. Five percent of the population lives in tented settlements and a further 2% live in collective shelters⁸; those living in these are concentrated in Akkar.

Shelter availability remains a major concern especially considering the small country is experiencing around 3,000 new arrivals per day, leaving the UNHCR and local authorities struggling to provide for them. Factors impeding humanitarian agency assistance include the increasing rate of new arrivals; the dispersed nature of the settlement; the economically and socially depressed conditions of the areas in which the refugees reside which limit local transport; and the scarcity of rental accommodation.

Refugee Demography

Compared to the other host countries in the region, Lebanon hosts the largest number of refugees. According to the UNHCR, as of the 22nd March 2013, refugee numbers – registered as well as awaiting registration – within Lebanon stand at a staggering 376,547 with a breakdown of 51.1% females against 48.9% males⁹. The government of Lebanon estimates there are 1 million Syrians in the country, including Syrian workers with their families and other Syrians whom have not registered with UNHCR. The top four cities from which the Syrian refugees are coming from are Homs (39.3%), Idleb (15%), Aleppo (12.4%), and Rural Damascus (11.8%)¹⁰ though UNHCR also reported to have registered more than 10,000 non-Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers, 80% of whom are Iraqis. Below is UNHCR’s table with a snapshot of the origin of the refugees within Lebanon as of January 2013¹¹.

⁵ Migration Policy Center, “Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: the Humanitarian Approach under Political Divisions”, p.22, <http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/MPC%202012%2013.pdf>

⁶ UNHCR, “2013 UNHCR Country Profile – Lebanon”, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e486676>

⁷ Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/09/us-syria-crisis-lebanon-idUSBRE91803220130209>

⁸ UNHCR, Shelter Sectorial Note, from the UNHCR Portal, 15 January 2013, Beirut.

⁹ UNHCR, (2013) ‘Syria regional refugee response’, Information sharing portal, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> [last accessed on 27 March 2013].

¹⁰ UNHCR, Lebanon Registration Trend Overview 07 March 2013, accessible through the UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response Information Sharing Portal, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>

¹¹ UNHCR Lebanon, 2013 UNHCR Country Operations Profile, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e486676> [last accessed 19 March, 2013].

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Table 1: Refugee demography in January 2013

TYPE OF POPULATION	ORIGIN	Jan-13
		TOTAL IN COUNTRY
Total		130,090
Refugees	Iraq	8,130
	Sudan	160
	Syrian Arab Rep.	120,000
	Various	110
Persons in refugee-like situations	Various	150
Asylum-seekers	Iraq	710
	Sudan	490
	Syrian Arab Rep.	200
	Various	140

Geographical Hotspots

The northern districts of Akkar and El Minieh-Dennie, alongside Baalbeck and Zahle hold the main concentrations of Syrian refugees. These comprise 56% of the whole registered population in Lebanon. Runners up include El Hermel, El Batroun and the majority of the south of Lebanon which together host 12%. As per UNHCR registration trends on 7 March 2013, in terms of figures, the north of Lebanon hosts 98,804 refugees, while the Bekaa hosts 81,286 and the south 16,083¹².

Impact on Host Communities

1. Wages

The inflated number of refugees weighs on the capabilities of the Lebanese host community which are themselves poor and lack the resources and adequate economic, educational and sanitary infrastructures¹³ needed. Since December 2012 alone there has been an increase of more than 45% in refugee numbers. In the north, 47% of hosting households have hosted Syrians for 3-6 months and 51% for more than a year¹⁴; these figures attest to the struggle of a significant portion of the Lebanese hosting population. Low income, high unemployment, weak physical, health and education infrastructure are several of the plagues which propagate the poorer geographical hotspots of Akkar, Hermel, and most of the northern and western Bekaa. Having impacted the labor market, the influx has

¹² UNHCR Lebanon, Syrian Refugees Registered in Lebanon, accessible through the UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response Information Sharing Portal, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>

¹³ Migration Policy Center, "Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: the Humanitarian Approach under Political Divisions", p.22, <http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/MPC%202012%2013.pdf>

¹⁴ DMI, Rapid Assessment of Impact of Syrian Crisis on Socio-Economic Situation in North and Bekaa, August 2012, p.7. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=957>

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caused up to a 60% reduction in daily wages with the increased competition limiting the number of days a family can work per month¹⁵. Lebanese focus group participants in Aarsal told Save the Children they were concerned Lebanese men had fewer job opportunities in daily labor because Syrians were willing to work for less money.

2. Food Prices

2012 was a year of economic strain in Lebanon; food imports were disrupted throughout the year due to several border closures between Syria and Lebanon, causing a hike in food prices. While traders in the Bekaa noted stable or increased business, in Wadi Khaled there were estimated profit decreases between 50%-70%¹⁶.

The Price Consumer Index for Lebanon in July 2011 was 115.6 and has increased 14 Index Points since then (in December 2012, Lebanon was at 129.5 Index Points)¹⁷. In the north, the total living expenses before the crisis was 1,207,000 LBP or US\$793¹⁸ compared to 1,275,000 LBP or US\$842 after the crisis, with a general inflation rate of about 6% - 12% for food prices, 34% for medicines, 6% for water, and utility bills¹⁹.

Save the Children noted that in Baalbeck, Lebanese suppliers were slower in meeting their requests from shop owners. This could have been partially due to humanitarian aid purchases from wholesalers which would depict a possible negative impact of aid on the markets of Baalbeck specifically. However, those participating in the WFP's food voucher programme reported a large increase in sales and revenue – one trader reported to have quadrupled his sales post-voucher initiation²⁰.

With the purpose of alleviating some of the economic burden currently weighing on the Lebanese communities, in coordination with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Ministry of Social Affairs launched the 'Lebanese Host Communities Support Programme'. The initiative aims at "assist[ing] the Lebanese hosting communities to preserve social cohesion, solidarity and prevent conflict and tension"²¹.

3. Living Space

As attested to by the Development Management International's (DMI) Rapid Assessment of the socio-economic impact of the Syrian influx on Lebanon, reasons for Lebanese host family concern vary depending on the area of the country examined; the vast majority (68%) of the respondents in the Bekaa were worried about decreased living space and increased household expenditure in having to

¹⁵IRC & Save the Children, Livihoods Assessment Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, October 2012, p.1.<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=885>

¹⁶IRC & Save the Children, Livihoods Assessment Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, October 2012, p.1.<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=885>

¹⁷Trading Economics, Lebanon Consumer Index, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/lebanon/consumer-price-index-cpi> [last accessed 17 March, 2013].

¹⁸ 1 LBP = US\$ 0.000665

¹⁹ DMI, Rapid Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Crisis on Socio-Economic Situation in North and Bekaa, August 2012, p.22. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=957>

²⁰IRC & Save the Children, Livihoods Assessment Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, October 2012, p.17.<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=885>

²¹ UNDP, 'Launching of the "Lebanese Host Communities Support" Programme', 4th March 2013, <http://www.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/presscenter/articles/2013/03/04/launching-of-the-lebanese-host-communities-support-programme/>

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host a Syrian family of 6 on average²². Social challenges are not prominent, the main issues consisting in not having enough space to separate the sexes within the house (62% in the north) and differing child-rearing practices²³.

4. Security Threat

In addition to the economic strain, the situation in Syria is becoming increasingly complicated having evolved into a multi-faceted and fragmented confrontation which is overseen by no one central authority. The *ad hoc* uprisings which take place in this neighboring country often times constitute a major security factor for Lebanon and increase the possibilities of violent outbursts across the nation.

Local infrastructure and capacity to provide for basic service delivery was already particularly stretched in the reported geographical hotspots prior to the crisis and is now significantly overburdened by the sharp increase in demand with the displaced reaching nearly 50% of the population in some areas²⁴. As a result, the immense generosity displayed by Lebanese host communities through the past two years of the crisis has come under increasing strain, with reported incidents of intra-communal violence on the rise. Local authorities remain ill-equipped to mediate the increase in competing demands between populations, potentially threatening social cohesion through rising tension and conflict.

Macroeconomic Environment

1. Purchase Power

Lebanon has a free-market service-oriented economy whose main growth sectors include banking and tourism. The Government does not restrict foreign investment; ‘however, the investment climate suffers from red tape, corruption, arbitrary licensing decisions, complex customs procedures, high taxes, tariffs, and fees, archaic legislation, and weak intellectual property rights’²⁵.

The 1975-1990 civil war damaged Lebanon’s economic infrastructure, cutting national output by half and encumbering the Government with a heavy burden of debt. Pledges of economic and financial reforms made at separate international donor conferences during the 2000s have mostly gone unfulfilled. The collapse of the Government in early 2011 over its backing of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon alongside unrest in neighboring Syria slowed economic growth to the 1-2% range in 2011-12, after four years of 8% average growth. According to a report by Ernst and Young, another factor which contributed to Lebanon’s economic slow-down was the lack of investment on behalf of the Gulf States; from 2011 to mid-2014, foreign investment dropped 84%²⁶.

²² DMI, Rapid Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Crisis on Socio-Economic Situation in North and Bekaa, August 2012, p.20. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=957>

²³ IRC & Save the Children, Livelihoods Assessment Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, October 2012, p.10. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=885>

²⁴ ReliefWeb, ‘Launching of the “Lebanese Host Community Support Programme”’, 4th March 2013, <http://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/launching-lebanese-host-communities-support-programme%E2%80%9D>

²⁵ CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/le.html>

²⁶ The Daily Star, 22 October 2012, http://www.zawya.com/story/Foreign_direct_investment_in_Lebanon_down_84-DS2202012_dsart*192256/ [last accessed 25 March 2013].

Table 3: Macroeconomic Indicators as per the World Bank in 2011²⁷

GDP	\$40,094 million US
GDP growth annual rate	3%
GNI per capita	14,470 USD
Health expenditure as percent of GDP (source from 2010)	7.0%
Agriculture as percent of GDP	6%
Industry as percent of GDP	21%
Services as percent of GDP	74%
Gross national expenditure as percent of GDP	127%
Official exchange rate	1,508 LBP/USD

2. Voucher Feasibility

Considering its past wavering economy, the WFP carried out an analysis of Lebanon's financial sector in 2012 to determine the country's capacity to withstand cash and voucher transfers. Guided by the World Bank's Financial Sector Assessment Handbook (WBFSA), the Bank of International Settlement (BIS) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), an analysis of various indicators including Government supervision, ease of entry, competition, safety and consumer protection, and efficiency, the assessment came to deem Lebanon capable of these modalities of transaction²⁸.

Being responsible for the licensing of financial institutions, setting monetary policy, and the payment settlement system, the assessment evaluated that the Central Bank of Lebanon (CBL), through the Banking Control Commission (BCC) established in 1967, has full regulatory and supervisory control over Lebanon's financial sector. This role not only incites confidence in potential investors considering transferring from another bank, but also has the authority of ensuring sector compliance with established laws. Moreover, the CBL ease of entry indicator, which measures the sector's flexibility in admitting new entrants, resulted high compared to other countries in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region, consequently proving acceptable for cash and voucher scale up.

Competition was another factor of importance in the assessment for it promotes efficiency, lowers costs charged to consumers, and improves quality and service range. The composition, competition and concentration of Lebanon's financial sector compared with MENA counterparts were drew a high score. The sector has a variety of payment outlets and increasing number of financial services²⁹ from which individuals may access cash. Lebanon's compliance rating with regards to safety and customer protection was also reputed high. This rating reflects the CBL setting an explicit monetary value for deposit insurance, which guarantees the bank will reimburse depositors a percentage of their account balances if it closes, and establishing asset quality ratio requirement. The strength of a banks' asset quality ratio protects creditors and depositors should the bank collapse³⁰.

Financial efficiency gages the ability of the financial sector to provide high quality product and services at the lowest costs which means the financial sector earns income from loans rather than account fees. Lebanon's high efficiency compliance rating correlates with its high competition

²⁷The World Bank, World Data Bank: Lebanon, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspx> [last accessed on 17 March 2013].

²⁸B. Clemens, *Macro Analysis - Financial Sector Assessment, Lebanon*, WFP Cash 4 Change, p.1.

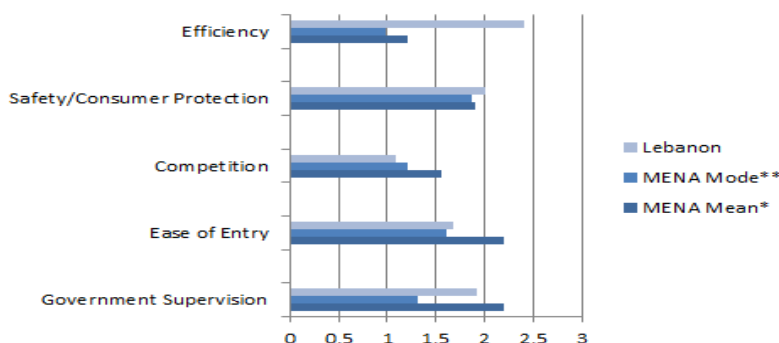
²⁹ World Food Programme: Cash and Voucher Manual; 1st edition December 2009.

³⁰ B. Clemens, *Macro Analysis - Financial Sector Assessment, Lebanon*, WFP Cash 4 Change, p.4.

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rating which will render financial service providers flexible in negotiating service fees for cash and voucher scale up³¹.

Graph 1: Lebanon versus MENA: Score of Financial Indicators related to Voucher Feasibility³²



Investment in Health

In 2010, spending on healthcare accounted for 7.03% of the country's GDP. In 2009, there were 31.29 physicians and 19.71 nurses per 10,000 inhabitants and life expectancy at birth was 72.59 years in 2011 – 70.48 years for males and 74.80 years for females. By the end of the civil war, however, only one third of the country's public hospitals were operational, each with an average of only 20 beds. With much effort and reconstruction, by 2009 the country totaled 28 public hospitals, with 2,550 beds overall. In comparison with the 15% hospitalized at private hospitals, uninsured patients pay 5% of the bill in public hospitals with the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) reimbursing the remainder. Currently, health care services in Lebanon are provided by both public and private agencies. By law, MOPH provides care for the Lebanese population in its own hospitals and outpatient facilities. Yet, the scarcity of financial and human resources made it impossible for the MOPH to perform its role. Consequently and due to the heightened costs of medical services within the nation, prior studies depicted many citizens from the Bekaa and the north often crossing the border into Syria and accessing health centers there.

The Government is said to provide no health service to the Palestinian refugee population which continues to live in camps in Lebanon and hence are therefore made to rely upon personal resources to cover the costs. Donor agencies assist with these. Adopted from the WHO, the table below depicts an overview of Lebanon's expenditures on health.

Table 4: Health expenditures in 2011³³

WHO selected ratio indicators for expenditures on health	2011
Total expenditure on health (THE) as % of GDP	6.3

³¹B. Clemens, *Macro Analysis - Financial Sector Assessment, Lebanon*, WFP Cash 4 Change, p.4.

³²B. Clemens, *Macro Analysis - Financial Sector Assessment, Lebanon*, WFP Cash 4 Change, p.4.

³³ WHO, Global Health Expenditure Database, Lebanon: National Expenditure on Health, last updated March 2013, http://apps.who.int/nha/database/StandardReport.aspx?ID=REP_WEB_MINI_TEMPLATE_WEB_VERSION&COUNTRYKEY=84542 [last accessed 19 March, 2013].

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External resources on health as % of THE	1
Private expenditure on health (PvtHE) as % of THE	74.5
GGHE as % of General government expenditure	5.8
Private insurance as % of PvtHE	20.1
Out of pocket expenditure as % of PvtHE	75.8

Trans-boundary animal diseases also pose threats to the population. Un-vaccinated live animals are being imported into Jordan and Lebanon from throughout the region and are being put to sale in public markets with minimum or zero quarantine. This is as a major concern considering veterinary services in Lebanon are weak³⁴. Alongside this, Lebanese agro-pastoralists can no longer access free or subsidized Syrian vaccines along the Lebanese border, hence resorting to selling their livestock without preventive disease measures.

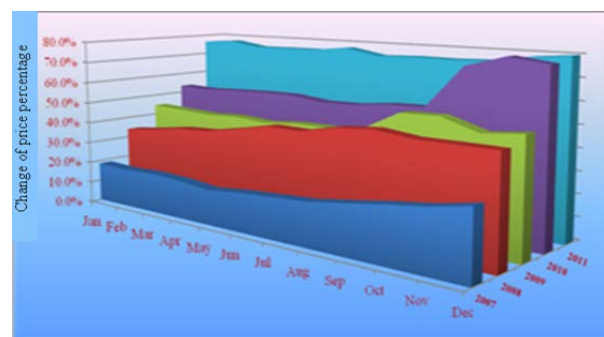
Food Price Analysis

In August 2012, the WFP prepared a Retail Food Analysis Report of Lebanon, studying the food staple retail prices in eight major cities: Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Saida, Sour, Zahle, Tripoli, Akkar, and Nabatieh. It was noticed that the greatest price hikes occurred during the period of September 2010 to 2011, possibly due to an increase of demand on the Lebanese market. The most expensive cities were Beirut and Zahle, whilst the north of the country remained relatively stable. Through an analysis of the price index until 2011, it is discerned that over the period of eight years from 1999 to 2007, overall prices increased by 20.9%. In December 2010 prices soared to over 75% until the end of 2011 with a further increase of 5% by the end of the year.

Graph 2: Change of price percentage from 2007 to 2011 base in December 1999.



Graph 3: Change of price percentage from 2007 to 2011



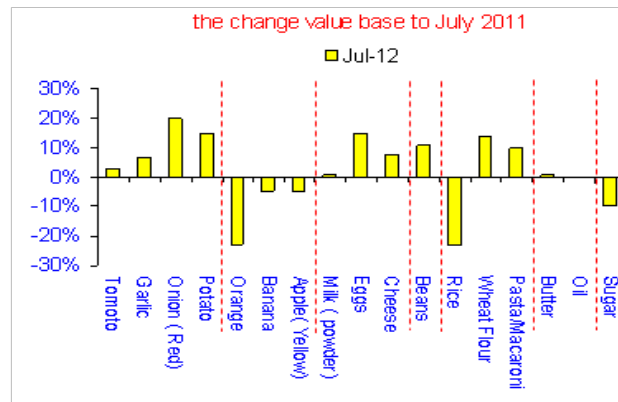
³⁴ FAO, Agricultural Livelihoods and Food Security Impact Assessment and Response Plan for the Syria Crisis in the Neighboring Countries, February 2013.

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Graph 2 & 3 Source: WFP, Retail Food Price Analysis of Lebanon, August 2012

In contemplating the above price hikes, it is worth noting that the Syrian-Lebanese border was closed for brief periods of time in 2012, causing food prices within Lebanon to soar due to malfunctioning of regional trade. The overall market prices of vegetables, fruits, and pulses also increased – by 24%, 11% and 10% respectively in period of July 2011-July 2012. Instead, the prices of sugar and rice declined by 10% and 20% respectively.

Graph 4: Evolution of wholesale prices between July 2011-July 2012³⁵



Food Security

1. Agriculture

Agriculture in Lebanon is the third most important sector in the country after the tertiary and industrial sectors and employs around 15% of the active population. In recent years, improper agricultural practices leading to soil erosion and impoverishment, depletion of underground water resources, water pollution and health impacts from inappropriate use of agri-chemicals have led the sector to struggle. ‘The Government’s policies appear to be targeting the increase in the availability of water irrigation (especially in the south) and controlling the use of pesticides, with no or little investment or incentives for water and soil-conserving irrigation techniques’³⁶.

Lebanon’s main crops include cereals, fruits and vegetables, olives, grapes, and tobacco. ‘Fruit and olive trees occupy 45% of the total cultivated area, and have increased by about 230,000 m² in the past 10 years’³⁷. The area covered by greenhouse production has also significantly increased over the past years, from 6,700 m² in the late 1980s to almost 50,000 m² in 1999. Agricultural production is concentrated in the Bekaa, which accounts for 42% of total cultivated land, hosting 62% of the total area used for industrial crops and 57% of the total area used for cereal production. The north hosts 40% the area used for olive production in the country. Fruit trees cover 24% of the total cultivated area³⁸.

³⁵ WFP, Retail Food Price Analysis of Lebanon, August 2012, p.11.

³⁶ Ministry of the Environment, Lebanon State of the Environment Report, “Agriculture”, 2011, p.17, <http://www.moe.gov.lb/getattachment/The-Ministry/Reports/State-Of-the-Environment-Report-2001/Chap-2-Agriculture.pdf.aspx>

³⁷ Ministry of the Environment, Lebanon State of the Environment Report, “Agriculture”, 2011, p.18, <http://www.moe.gov.lb/getattachment/The-Ministry/Reports/State-Of-the-Environment-Report-2001/Chap-2-Agriculture.pdf.aspx>

³⁸ Lebanon State of the Environment Report, 2008

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While the total land area under cultivation has remained stable during the past few years, irrigated lands have more than doubled, constituting a major burden for the already limited water supply.

2. Food Availability

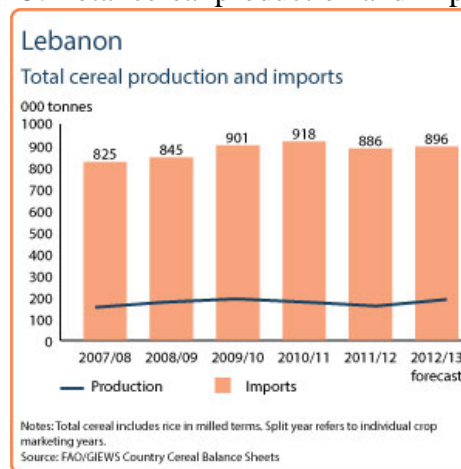
According to the FAO's Food Balance Sheet for Lebanon, however, favorable weather conditions in the country, with above average rains between January and March 2012 in main crop producing areas of the central Bekaa Valley and north Lebanon, contributed to an above average harvest³⁹. The FAO table below depicts this increase.

Table 5: Cereal production in Lebanon

Lebanon				
Cereal production				
	2007-2011 average	2011	2012 forecast	change 2012/2011
	000 tonnes			percent
Wheat	135	125	150	20
Barley	32	30	35	17
Maize	3	3	3	0
Others	1	1	1	0
Total	172	159	189	19

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

Graph 5: Total cereal production and imports

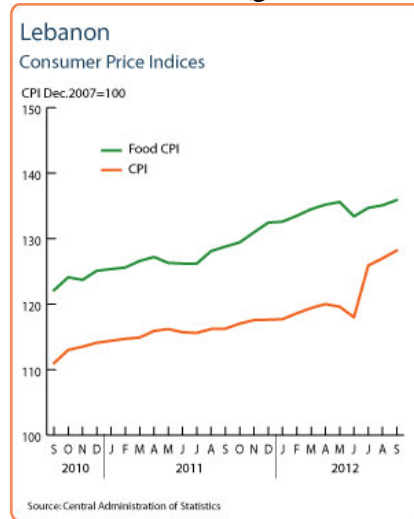


Local cereal production covers on average about 17% of Lebanon's consumption needs. Although, in the past, food inflation was consistently higher than general inflation, the pattern reversed in July 2012. General inflation increased from 2% in June 2012 (year-on-year) to over 10% in September, whereas food inflation stabilized at around 6%.

The Consumer Protection Department at the Ministry of Economy and Trade sets the subsidized price of local Lebanese flat bread; other bakery products are not subsidized. Due to the increased cost of raw materials for their bread production, in April 2012, bakers demanded compensation from the Government. Consequently, the Government decreased the weight of subsidized bread from 1,000 to 900 grams, keeping the price per package constant.

³⁹FAO, GIEWS Country Briefs: Lebanon, <http://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=LBN>

Graph 6: Changes in Consumer Prices Indices (general and food) from 2010-2012



The onset of the Syrian conflict, however, put a strain on agriculture; cereal import in Lebanon currently stands at 1,120,000 mt, yet, in order to satisfy the heightened demand and population increase, there is a shortfall of 55,000 mt of cereal⁴⁰. In addition to this, food transport was destabilized somewhat. Land routes which are needed to export horticultural products were disrupted, resulting in several having to close down. Despite this, the Aggregated News and Events on Agriculture website has reported a surge in agricultural exports to the war-ravaged country. Figures show Lebanese exports to its neighbor up to April of 2012 jumped by 17 percent, while imports from Syria in the same period fell by 19.5% due to the shrinking of cultivated lands available in Syria caused by intense fighting and instability in some of the agricultural hubs, such as Idlib⁴¹. After having to pay costly fees to insurance companies, Lebanon continued to export its agricultural produce to other Arab states through Syria, only at raised prices. Reportedly, Lebanese exports up to April 2012 reached \$74 US million compared to \$63.3 US million during the same period of 2011⁴². Based on the information attained, it can be concluded that Lebanon is not a food self-sufficient country and that aggregated balance has an impact on food availability at household level.

3. Food Access⁴³

Despite Lebanon's relatively stable agricultural yield, over a quarter of the residents in the Bekaa report to spending 30% of their income on food⁴⁴ – the issue not so much being the production but the heightened demand post-influx. As a result of the DMI report, 61% of the inhabitants of Bekaa reported not having stock available at the time of the interviews compared to the 16.4% of the north, whilst 18% of Bekaa respondents claimed they had food available for less than two weeks compared to the 82.3%

⁴⁰ FAO, Agricultural Livelihoods and Food Security Impact Assessment and Response Plan for the Syria Crisis in the Neighboring Countries, February 2013.

⁴¹ AgriFeeds, "Lebanon's agricultural exports to Syria rise 17 percent", <http://www.agrifeds.org/node/78234>

⁴² AgriFeeds, "Lebanon's agricultural exports to Syria rise 17 percent", <http://www.agrifeds.org/node/78234>

⁴³ Figures in this section originate from the DMI report. This is because other reports tend to prioritize refugee conditions over those of the hosting community, creating a gap in information (See recommendations section). The Author nonetheless finds this report useful as the impact of the refugee influx on the host community is crucial when analyzing the food security of a country.

⁴⁴ DMI, Rapid Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Crisis on Socio-Economic Situation in North and Bekaa, August 2012, p.28. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=957>

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of the north⁴⁵. These differences between the regions can be attributed to differing consumption patterns and income, alongside agricultural capacity (it being stronger in the Bekaa).

As a result of elevated food prices, the Lebanese host community is reported to have engaged in several coping mechanisms; according to the DMI rapid assessment where refugees were made to rank their coping mechanisms, 59% of the respondents in the Bekaa ranked purchasing food on credit as their first, 42% ranked borrowing food second, followed by 37% taking loans, 33% purchasing affordable foods, and 20% decreasing their expenditure on healthcare to have more money for food. Other, less frequently used strategies involve asset sales, skipping meals, cooking with relatives, and avoiding bill payments in order to save. Meanwhile, in the north, 43% ranked resorting to buying only affordable foods first, 40% reducing quality of meals second, followed by 37% growing their own products, 37% cooking with relatives, and 31% using wood as fuel⁴⁶. Less frequent strategies include reducing health care expenditure, selling livestock, and relying on less preferred food. Important coping strategies to monitor include inserting children into the labor force instead of sending them to school and universities. It is however important to note that the data collection for the DMI report took place in June-July 2012 – a period in which the WFP voucher programme had not been initiated.

Expenditure from personal savings constitutes a high percentage of the coping mechanisms reported (37% for the Bekaa respondents and 40% for the north) and threatens the savings of each of these communities. This trend, alongside that of selling livestock, proves worrisome as both these strategies have the potential of weakening future economic development and augmenting community vulnerability.

Food Security of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

According to the UNICEF and WFP joint Interagency Nutrition Assessment on Syrian children aged 6 to 59 months and pregnant and lactating women, the nutritional status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is deemed acceptable, with the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) at less than 5 per cent. Severe acute malnutrition (SAM) was recorded at less than 1% and a percentile of 6.8% of Syrian refugees were deemed at risk of malnutrition. Data regarding stunting and underweight for Syrian refugee children under-five in Lebanon proved to be lower than previously reported. However, the presence of aggravating factors such as the increased number of new arrivals, the high disease burden and cold climate, could make the situation rapidly deteriorate. Moreover, only 73% of children below 5 were receiving complementary food, meaning the remaining 27% had sub-optimal feeding. In view of this, UNICEF has finalized a new partnership agreement with the International Orthodox Christian Charity (IOCC) focusing on prevention of malnutrition. In the case of refugees, it is important to ensure that the cases of chronic malnutrition do not become cases of severe malnutrition.

1. Food Availability

Syrian refugees registered with the UNHCR receive food vouchers to exchange for food. Food assistance represents a crucial source of their consumption even though they complement meals with fresh foods which they buy on their own. However, on interviewing beneficiaries for the nutrition assessment, only 25% of households reputed food assistance as their main source of food; 66.7% of

⁴⁵DMI, Rapid Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Crisis on Socio-Economic Situation in North and Bekaa, August 2012, p.28. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=957>

⁴⁶DMI, Rapid Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Crisis on Socio-Economic Situation in North and Bekaa, August 2012, p.30. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=957>

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refugees stated they bought food with their own resources⁴⁷. There is a need to closely monitor the purchasing trend compared to each family's economic access to food in adequate quantity and quality.

The report depicted, with 51% of the beneficiaries choosing this option, that the main obstacle to food access was the high cost of food. With 19% of the respondents' consensus, shop distance did not result in a big concern.

2. Food Access

The Première Urgence Rapid Assessment Survey⁴⁸, which assessed the areas of Beirut, Al Chouf and Saida, showed widespread unemployment in 2012 with more than 18% of all refugees being jobless both before and after displacement and 68% of the refugee population not working. The average daily income was reported as being US\$15 per day (around US\$90 per week); considering the average family would spend around US\$300 per week to purchase foodstuffs, NFIs, and water, most families end up depending on a few and scattered charities as their primary source of income. Because of this, 87% of respondents reported the lack of food commodities.

According to International Red Crescent (IRC) and Save the Children's qualitative assessment, focus group participants from several areas of Lebanon explained how Syrian men could access only sporadic construction work, earning around US\$10-13 per day. Some women are able to access limited agricultural labor opportunities paid at US\$7-10 per day but, considering seasonality, these types of opportunities have not occurred since the month of October 2012⁴⁹. It is expected that starting from the month of April 2013, agricultural labor opportunities will increase, although refugees will find themselves competing with local agriculture laborers. That said, expenses – rent, electricity, water, and transport included – on average constitute US\$300-350 per month which, without assistance, surpasses a couple's monthly income by 380%. An Assessment Report carried out by Première Urgence in Akkar in August 2012 contained the following table of jobs listed according to the portions of the respondents employed for each⁵⁰:

Table 6: Percentage of Syrian refugees occupying available jobs.

Activities Prior to Displacement	Percentage
Unskilled worker	65%
Skilled worker	15%
Shopkeeper/trader	10%
High skilled jobs	10%
Current Activities	Percentage
Jobless	68%
Working part-time	15%
Working on a daily basis	17%

⁴⁷ Following the initial results from the data collection during the Nutrition Survey, WFP teams analyzed the reasons underlying such high numbers of food purchasing despite effective voucher distribution. It was discovered that most households consider the voucher a personal resource upon reception by the WFP. Therefore, by stating that food was purchased through "own resources" the household refers to vouchers.

⁴⁸ Première Urgence, Rapid Assessment Report: October 2012, p.7,

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=1060>

⁴⁹ IRC & Save the Children, Livelihoods Assessment Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, October 2012, p.7. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=885>

⁵⁰ Première Urgence, Syrian Refugees in Akkar: Assessment Report, May-August 2012, p.11.

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=921>

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9% of the Syrian men currently residing in Saida and Tyr whom were interviewed for World Vision's Needs Assessment in January stated they worked in bakeries and markets⁵¹.

3. Food Consumption Patterns

Most of the displaced families in Lebanon are used to consuming 3 meals per day in Syria, typically constituting bread, eggs, cheese, tea, rice or bulgur, tomatoes, eggplants, beef meat (once a week), and chicken (once a week). More privileged families would improve their breakfasts with fava beans and mortadella (cold processed meat)⁵². In the south of Lebanon – mainly in the districts of Saida and Tyr – World Vision reported there being a 46%:49% split between the respondents eating two meals per day (the former) and those consuming three per day (the later)⁵³. 'To meet their food needs and preferences in order to live a productive and healthy life, a Syrian family must disburse on the local markets in Lebanon 15000-16000 LBP [US\$9.95-\$10.61] a day for 3 meals without beef meat and chicken'⁵⁴. A more privileged family would spend an additional US\$1.3 each day. Compared to the low incomes earned in Lebanon and the lack of opportunities, these figures indicate that Syrian refugees cannot fulfill their food needs only through labor.

A Joint Household Assessment on the Food Voucher Project in the Bekaa was conducted by the Danish Refugee Council and World Vision Lebanon in May 2012, reporting the main food consumption commodities and patterns of Syrian refugees. Figures revealed that bread accounted for 21% to 35% of each meal, ranking it the most important foodstuff in the commodity list. Cereals and pulses were usually consumed during both lunch and dinner meals – 28% and 15% of the meal respectively. Dairy products and meat were the items consumed the least with the former constituting 27% of the food at breakfast mealtimes and meat constituting 10% of most lunches.

The results of the food consumption score (FCS) calculation for Syrian refugees in Lebanon resulted very similar to those attained in the 2010 Emergency Food Security and Nutrition Assessment done in Syria, which showed 4% of the Syrian households having a poor food consumption score and 23% considered among the borderline category. Based on these results, it can be discerned that 27% of the Syrian families in Lebanon were considered food insecure. 73% of refugees reported they did not have enough food money to buy food.

4. Coping Strategies

In view of their limited economic availability, households adopt a wide range of coping strategies in efforts to cover food gaps. The interagency nutrition survey shows a high rate of households which

⁵¹World Vision, Needs Assessment Report: Syrian Refugees, South Lebanon, 31 January 2013, p.17.

<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Needs%20Assessment%20Syrian%20Refugees%20Saida%20%26%20Tyr%20Caza.pdf> [last accessed 20 March, 2013].

⁵²DRC and WVL, Joint Household Assessment: Food Voucher Project Bekaa, April-May 2012,

https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:2uJBdcpJjMgJ:data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php%3Fid%3D955.pdf%26name%3D120501WFP_DRC_WVL_Joint%2520Household%2520Assessment%2520-%2520Food%2520Voucher%2520Project%2520Bekaa.pdf+&hl=it&gl=jo&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESgToDnRTPPLmE0nXt-ruGb_KBD1RmSU_5jdidEo2oVmLGm8qYJJNpEILozkX57pIIKQGM0uImCLG5C4nha-hy8qQBtT709J2DdhNcaFsxF9xqKBKIL03P4iUSBxNKK-pm-5wnPn&sig=AHIEtbSBY5qV49OjU7ogy09xakIrAv-Efg

⁵³World Vision, Needs Assessment Report: Syrian Refugees, South Lebanon, 31 January 2013, p.12.

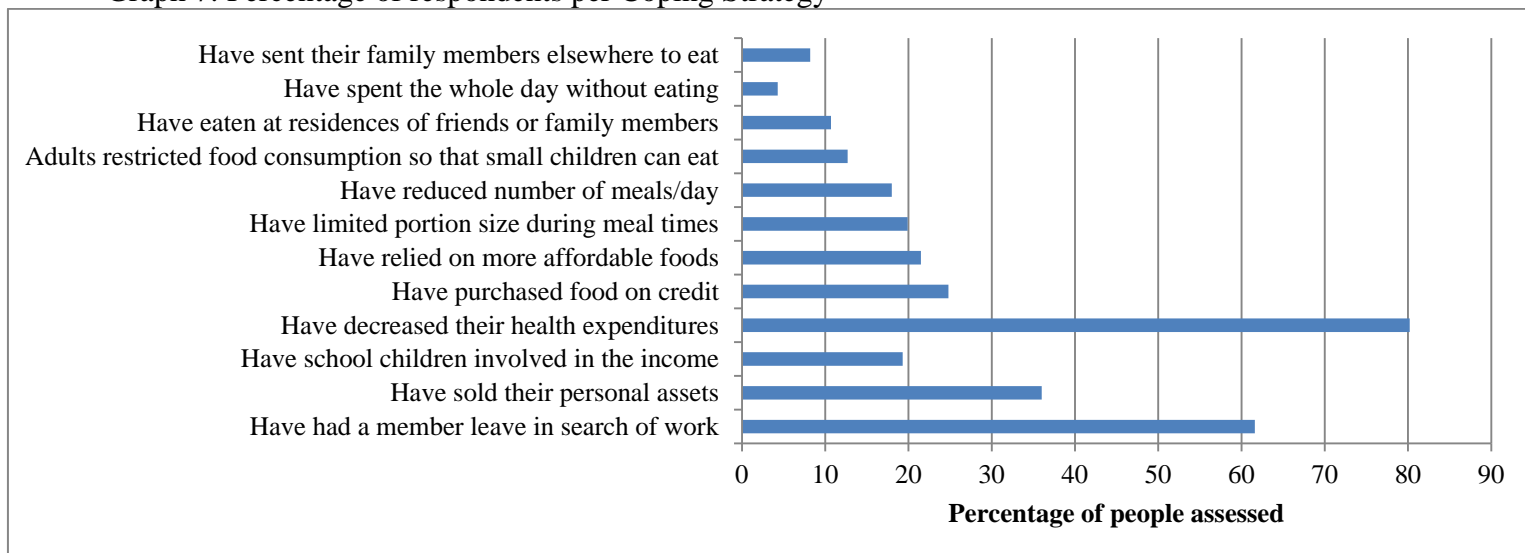
<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Needs%20Assessment%20Syrian%20Refugees%20Saida%20%26%20Tyr%20Caza.pdf> [last accessed 20 March, 2013].

⁵⁴Solidarités International, Rapid Assessment in North Lebanon, Minieh-Dennieh and Zgharta, January 2013, p.15, accessible through the UNHCR 'Syria regional refugee response' Information sharing portal [last accessed 18 March, 2013].

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send children to eat with relatives daily as well as households which five or more times a week reduce size of portions, eat less meals and not eat. The table below offers an overview of the coping strategies and data outlined in the WFP assessment.

Graph 7: Percentage of respondents per Coping Strategy



Compared to the findings of the Household Assessment Statistics recorded by the WFP in April 2012, in September 2012, there was an 8.9% increase in the number of households whom have limited portion size and 6% increase in individuals whom have reduced their number of meals per day. On the other hand, there is a 1.7% decrease in the number of adults within families which restrict their food intake so that smaller children may eat and a decrease of 5.7% in the individuals whom spend the whole day without eating compared to the month of April 2012.

5. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Water and sanitation is of major importance when discussing nutritional status and food security. Access to appropriate WASH facilities is of concern as the situation seems to have deteriorated throughout the months. Both rented and hosted accommodations are overcrowded resulting in WASH facilities being below standard hygiene and health requirements. In October 2012, Première Urgence's Rapid Assessment Report stated that the majority of the refugee community in shelters (97%) had immediate access to water where their accommodations were all connected to water networks and all had water tanks. 80% of the respondents were reported to have sufficient access to water and the majority of their accommodations were reported to be in good and hygienic conditions⁵⁵. The figures of the 2013 Interagency Nutrition Assessment depict a more dire situation with 45% of Syrian refugee families buying water while 16% stated taps did not have water at all. Compared to the 97% of refugees whom lived in sanitary conditions in October 2012, 22% currently do not have essential hygiene products in their residence⁵⁶. It is to be considered that the refugee influx increased by about 50% from October 2012 to January 2013, hence placing major strain on water supply.

⁵⁵ Première Urgence, Rapid Assessment Report: October 2012, p.5, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=1060>

⁵⁶ Inter-Agency Nutrition Assessment: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, January 2013.

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In Saida, the source of drinking water for 95% of Syrian refugees is city water, whereas in Tyr, this source seems to be less of use with a mere 32% using city water for drinking purposes and 57% depending on purchased water⁵⁷. Due to Saida's reliance on city water, 91% of the respondents to World Vision's Assessment stated the obstacles to water collection considering the flow had been cut off for long periods of time.

An ACF WASH Assessment carried out in the Bekaa reported high numbers of Syrian refugees (57.6%) relating the quality of the water they had access to with disease; only 13% of those assessed stated they treated their water before drinking⁵⁸. Bacteriological results from a study undertaken deem the quality of the water unsafe for drinking. What exacerbate water quality are the containers with which the refugees are transporting and collecting water; Solidarités International's Rapid Assessment in north Lebanon surveyed water containers in the districts of Minieh-Dennieh and Zgharta and, despite noticing their cleanliness, reported a lack of sustainability given the type of material the containers are made from⁵⁹. Some were also reported to be missing tops and not fully intact.

Despite good hand washing habits, with a reported 89% of refugees using soap each time, 44% of the population whom was assessed reported having suffered from health problems in the three weeks preceding the interview, 20% of which were due to diarrhea⁶⁰. The issue seems to lie in the lack of household knowledge regarding water quality; an ACTED study reported that 96% of the households assessed believed to know whether the water was of good quality simply by looking at it to see if it seemed "clean". The assessment found that a major portion of the Syrians connected to the municipal water supply tended to have access to satisfactory quality but, an examination of water samples taken from rented accommodation revealed high levels of microbiological contamination⁶¹.

5. Health

As per the DMI Rapid Assessment Report, the main reasons behind the lack of access to healthcare for Bekaa as well as northern respondents are the lack of ability to pay for the services as well as the absence of primary health care centers within the Lebanese community⁶². Considering the majority of the Lebanese community frequents Syrian hospitals and health centers to access cheaper medical services, lack of access to these is also of significant concern.

With regards to immunization, according to the WFP joint assessment report, 78.6% of Syrian mothers were reported to have vaccinated their children before their departure from Syria, whilst 22% administered the vaccinations upon their arrival in Lebanon.

⁵⁷World Vision, Needs Assessment Report: Syrian Refugees, South Lebanon, 31 January 2013, p.24.

<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Needs%20Assessment%20Syrian%20Refugees%20Saida%20%26%20Tyr%20Caza.pdf> [last accessed 20 March, 2013].

⁵⁸ACF, WASH Assessment: Humanitarian Response to Syrian Refugees, June 2012, p.13-14.

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=637>

⁵⁹Solidarités International, Rapid Assessment in North Lebanon, Minieh-Dennieh and Zgharta, January 2013, p.9, accessible through the UNHCR 'Syria regional refugee response' Information sharing portal [last accessed 18 March, 2013].

⁶⁰ACF, WASH Assessment: Humanitarian Response to Syrian Refugees, June 2012, p.17.

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=637>

⁶¹ACTED, WASH Assessment in Northern Lebanon, May-June 2012,

p.7.<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=639>

⁶²DMI, Rapid Assessment of Impact of Syrian Crisis on Socio-Economic Situation in North and Bekaa, August 2012,

p.27.<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=957>

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6. Assistance

According to the World Vision Assessment, in Saida only 2% of respondent families reported assistance from organizations, most being food-related (57%), but others including NFIs (19%), baby kits (17%), hygiene kits (14%), medication services (12%), kitchen items (8%), and cash (7%)⁶³. Meanwhile in Tyr, assistance to the community seems more prevalent, with 19% of respondent households reporting reception of aid. In this locality as well, food items were most prevalent (66%) alongside medical services (33%) and the majority of those whom responded to the assessment, stated that they were not aware of or had heard of anyone whom had had to pay to be in the distribution list of any organization⁶⁴.

WFP Presence, Assistance & Monitoring

Prior to the Syrian crisis, there was no WFP Office in Lebanon, the first being established in April 2012. The main office resides in the city of Beirut and there are three sub-offices: Beirut, covering South Lebanon and Beirut Suburbs, Zahle (Bekaa Valley) and Qobayat (North Lebanon). Within these governorates, 68% of WFP beneficiaries currently reside in urban areas. The WFP targets these UNHCR registered Syrians, as well as Lebanese returnees assessed as vulnerable, through food parcel and voucher modalities.

1. Voucher Modality

Over 350,676 vouchers and 7,510 food parcels have been distributed by WFP across the country since January 2013⁶⁵. Only vulnerable new arrivals receive a one-month food package. Currently, 98.9% of beneficiaries are being assisted through voucher distribution, where each beneficiary is to receive one paper voucher of value US\$31 per month to exchange in shops with which WFP has an agreement. Choice of voucher redemption per commodity is at the discretion of the beneficiary with the exception of luxury items such as alcohol, confectionary, and tobacco. Transition to an electronic system of e-vouchers is expected to occur in May 2013 to facilitate the redemption process. Introduction of targeting based on vulnerability criteria for Lebanon in April has been hampered by the massive influx of new refugees in recent months. Due to the pressure on agencies to receive, register and support the new and existing refugees, the beneficiary profiling required for accurate targeting has not been possible to date.

In April 2013, the winterization portion of the voucher will be deducted, decreasing the ration from 2,400 back to 2,100 kcal per person per day. This would result in decreasing the value of the monthly individual food voucher to US\$27 per person per month, assuming market price monitoring continue to show that retail prices and exchange rates remain stable. Some beneficiary targeting will continue and it is expected that 15% of the registered refugees will become ineligible for food assistance, bringing WFP's planning figure to 400,000 Syrian refugees for food vouchers by end-June 2013.

According to the Joint Household Assessment on the Food Voucher Programme, the majority of the respondents in the Bekaa seemed to be pleased with the assistance received; compared to the 86% of

⁶³World Vision, Needs Assessment Report: Syrian Refugees, South Lebanon, 31 January 2013, p.25.

<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Needs%20Assessment%20Syrian%20Refugees%20Saida%20%26%20Tyr%20Caza.pdf> [last accessed 20 March, 2013].

⁶⁴World Vision, Needs Assessment Report: Syrian Refugees, South Lebanon, 31 January 2013, p.25.

<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Needs%20Assessment%20Syrian%20Refugees%20Saida%20%26%20Tyr%20Caza.pdf> [last accessed 20 March, 2013].

⁶⁵ Figures from 17th March 2013 Internal Situation Report.

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those whom thought humanitarian assistance did not put their family at risk, 13% thought otherwise (mostly due to concern on name-revealing), 6% of whom thought of the assistance as humiliating. With regards to preferences, 51% of the beneficiaries in the Bekaa stated they preferred cash assistance rather than vouchers⁶⁶.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation methods include the compilation of dry food and voucher distribution monitoring forms, dry food and voucher post distribution monitoring forms, shop questionnaires, interviews with refugee households, and market surveys. For now, these tools are in paper form, but a communal regional database is in the process of being completed which will ensure a more fluid and efficient information collection process. Following five months of price commodity monitoring, and based on the observation of the average of prices of the commodity basket, no major inflation was noticed. Therefore, the value of the voucher has remained at US\$31 per month.

During the first cycle of distribution in March in Bekaa Valley and North Lebanon, WFP's Food Monitor Assistants witnessed an increase in the trend of individual dealers trying to buy cash vouchers on and around the distribution sites. No other reports exist with regards to fraudulent activities within the area hence rendering the gravity of the episode difficult to classify. Nonetheless, monitoring voucher use and contraband should be kept as a priority.

The latest WFP post-distribution monitoring indicates that over 50% of households rely solely on humanitarian aid to meet their needs and that 60% had to resort to negative coping mechanisms such as reducing meal ration sizes and skipping meals. Moreover, reports indicate that 40% of households continue to have constraints related to shelter and high rental fees. The monitoring findings show that the needs for assistance for vulnerable refugees remain high.

3. Distribution Activities

As of the 11th of March 2013, the WFP reached 191,591 beneficiaries both through vouchers as well as targeted food distributions. Below is the breakdown of WFP planned figures to date:

Table 7: WFP activities per location.

Location	Target Beneficiaries	Vouchers Distributed	Monitoring
Zahle	75,577	Distributed 27,616 vouchers to 5,786 families	Conducted 30 household PDM visits including 15 shops and 2 distribution-monitoring visits for the second round distribution of February in the Bekaa valley.
Qobayat	93,314	Distributed 74,600 full value vouchers; 9,100 half-value vouchers; 203 food parcels to	A household survey report was conducted based on 77 Syrian beneficiaries interviewed in their

⁶⁶DRC and WVL, Joint Household Assessment: Food Voucher Project Bekaa, April-May 2012, https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:2uJBdcpJmGJ:data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php%3Fid%3D955.pdf%26name%3D120501WFP_DRC_WVL_Joint%2520Household%2520Assessment%2520-%2520Food%2520Voucher%2520Project%2520Bekaa.pdf+&hl=it&gl=jo&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESgToDnRTPPLmE0nXt-ruGb_KBD1RmSU_5jdidEo2oVmLGm8qYJJNpEILozkX57pIIKQGM0ulmCLG5C4nha-hy8qQBtT709J2DdhNcaFsx9xqKBKIL03P4iUSBxNKK-pm-5wnPn&sig=AHIEtbSBY5qV49OjU7ogy09xakIrAv-Efg

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		18,200 households	homes in Akkar and Tripoli areas.
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In partnership with the nutrition working group, WFP will assist with nutrition screening and surveillance by including nutrition related questions within PDM forms for Lebanon and other countries. In theory, surveillance is best carried out in sentinel sites within the health sector but, given the extraordinary circumstances and the lack of nutrition surveillance information, alternative strategies are needed. As is the case in a number of the contexts in the region, partners working in the health and nutrition sector have not been able to establish screening or surveillance systems which could identify cases of SAM and MAM. WFP Lebanon is also coordinating with UNICEF and other partners for a follow-up nutrition survey later in 2013.

4. Protection

With regards to all staff participating in the programme, the WFP field offices in Lebanon have been working with WFP security as well as their cooperating partner to ensure staff safety and protection considerations are included in the site selection for distribution points. Consideration has also been dedicated to the actual distribution days.

On the field, distribution sites have been structured through separate male and female queues in order to prevent harassment and violence during the distribution. Vulnerable individuals are also very much supported both at the distribution point as well as in reaching the cooperating partner if they have issues of mobility. Feedback and hotline systems have been put in place in order to entice and facilitate beneficiaries to communicate with the cooperating partner and voice issues of concern that they are not able to or do not feel comfortable voicing in person. WFP staff have negotiated with the Army and the Police to enable beneficiary access to the distribution site through a difficult checkpoint in south Lebanon. In addition to this, alongside its partners, the WFP is underway to developing emergency evacuation plans for distribution points.

INFORMATION GAPS

1. Food Security

- Whilst national food availability information may be accessible through FAO and governmental portals, data regarding household food availability and access is scarce, rendering the task of analyzing household food security more difficult. Interviews and reports by various agencies clearly report that Lebanese households which host refugees suffer economically, but a lack of specific questions pertaining to social and physical food access do not provide a full picture of food security and inhibit a complete vulnerability assessment. This will make the subsequent targeting procedure very challenging.
- Little information is accessible regarding the impact of food vouchers on the local Lebanese market. It is important for the WFP monitor the positive or negative impacts of food vouchers so that, if need be, it can change its food assistance strategy without encountering major challenges.
- Wages and the lack of working opportunities for refugees are concepts found in the accessible information. However, the most important aspect of these concepts – access – seems to have been overlooked. Considering the significant portion of Lebanon's GDP being spent on

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agriculture, seasonality of working opportunities is a very important aspect to monitor and buffer. Monitoring labor seasonality is important in order to prevent protracted unemployment for both refugee and host community and mitigate competition and hence tensions between the two.

2. Protection

- Protection activities should be more frequently incorporated into documents. There is very little information regarding underage marriages, marriages for economic convenience, sexual harassment, social discrimination, and prostitution. Actions with regards to protection advocacy and awareness is present, especially during distribution cycles; however, unless mentioned within situation reports, none of the protection instances or issues are discussed.

3. Market Analysis

- There is little monitoring of markets and trade; the voucher feasibility assessment is the only document which analyzes the stability of the Lebanese financial sector. Ulterior documents certifying this and supporting the transfer to voucher modality would have strengthened the argument. The Lebanon Country Office will start a monthly information bulletin in March which will investigate the food prices in various shops, including those not participating in WFP's programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

- *Incorporation of Household Food Security Surveys* would provide extensive information regarding household level food security. This can be done through a resilience framework and according to various food security indicators. Seeing as most of the Syrian refugees are hosted by the Lebanese community, these surveys could be easily incorporated into the refugee household interviews.
- *Incorporating Retail Price Surveys into Monthly Monitoring Reports* would provide more up to date information on a regular basis. Currently, the surveys are carried out on a monthly basis from all the partners involved in the voucher programme in all the areas of implementation (aka the Bekaa Valley, north Lebanon, south Lebanon, and Mount Lebanon).
- *A Nutrition surveillance System* would be useful to monitor trends in the nutrition status of the refugee population and national population. The WFP and UNICEF joint nutritional assessment stated that, despite the low numbers of acute and chronic malnutrition, there is a risk that conditions will deteriorate over time. In order to prevent this from occurring and to improve the conditions of both refugee as well as host populations, the information system would monitor nutrition trends as well as aid in keeping track of ongoing WFP activities and their results.
- There is an extensive repertoire of information regarding WASH facilities and many agencies have submitted multitudinous valuable evaluations regarding refugee hygiene and water access. However, there is a lack of analysis regarding whether the refugee population using these resources has *WASH intelligence*. WASH monitoring could prove useful in investigating whether it might be worthwhile or necessary to implement WASH education.

- *Monitoring under-aged marriages* through household interviews and gaining the confidence and trust of the refugees would bring forth more answers with regards to the reasons behind these practices. Marriage after the age of 17 for girls is considered legal under Syrian law; the situation becomes of a different caliber if the brides tend to be younger on average. Marriages of convenience or for the scope of receiving dowries contribute to an indication of a household's food insecurity and vulnerability. The important concept for WFP monitoring in this case would be to focus solely on the data and not confront this issue from a cultural and ethical perspective.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

- Vaccination is reported to be low among host communities. This portrays a health risk for both populations. *Interventions with regards to child vaccination* must also include the host community in order to ensure complete disease prevention.
- Bacteriological tests have reported the unsatisfactory quality of the drinking water available for refugees to use. *Water improvement and purification* must be an issue on which specialists convene to discuss the best method of preventing disease for the refugee population.
- *Establishing an income generation opportunities programme* for Lebanese host families would also prove useful. Considering the current economic hardship and environmental depletion due to heightened demand and limited agricultural space, this would help ensure economic and environmental sustainability throughout the hosting.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JAM

- Attention should be directed to **household physical and social food access** in order to facilitate eventual targeting; an investigation on the household's methods of transportation, on their distance from various shops, and on alternative food production systems such as urban agriculture could be included.
- **Household coping mechanisms post-arrival, post registration and perspectives for the incoming months** should be monitored.
- **Questions on negative coping mechanisms**, knowledge and use of established protection systems.
- **Investigate WASH intelligence** in order to evaluate whether it would be worthwhile to implement a WASH awareness programme. Questions with regards to soap and water use, water composition and sedimentation, and appropriate water wells from which to extract water should all be included in the assessment in order to prevent sanitation related diseases.
- Monitor and discern **perceived risks and threats, ways to improve them** and power as much as possible relations between refugees and host communities.

Secondary Data Analysis: Lebanon

- Explore the **dynamics of return to Syria** and refugee perceptions with regards to this.
- Monitor and investigate **refugee satisfaction with the modalities of food assistance** and their perceptions on the functioning of established mechanisms.
- Investigate the **reasons for selecting the current refugee area** and the patterns of internal displacements, if any.
- Discern main **household needs and the coping means** if their need happens not to be food.
- Analyze the prevalence or lack of **participation and enrolment of children in academic activities** and the problems they have in adapting if they are being integrated.
- Investigate the **main health problems** affecting the refugee households.

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Annex I: Information Matrix

The information reviewed in this report is summarized in the following table. The reliability of the information and source were determined according to the following criteria.

L= Low

Questionable methodologies employed. Outdated or limited scope to information. Possible data bias. No primary data used.

M=Moderate

The source demonstrates knowledge on the subject, clear aims and established methods have been employed, and relevant information generated. However, the scope of the study is limited or sample sizes too small for generalizing to larger populations.

H=High

The information is relevant, appropriate objectives have been formulated and tested using sound, current food security methods. Clear recommendations. A high technical level. The output adds to general knowledge on Syrian refugees and/or refugee food security.

Secondary Data Analysis: Lebanon

Geographical Coverage	Source	Lead Agency/ Author(s)	Dates	Core information in document	Reliability
LEBANON					
	<i>'Retail Food Price Analysis of Lebanon'</i>	WFP	August 2012	-Cooking facilities -Food utilization and access -Coping Strategies -Displacement per village, age and gender breakdown -Food preferences and utilization per meal	H
	<i>'Macro Analysis - Financial Sector Assessment, Lebanon'</i>	B. Clemens, WFP		-Analysis of Lebanon's financial sector -Evaluation of whether Lebanon's financial sector could withhold voucher modality according to specific indicators	H
Bekaa	<i>'Joint Household Assessment: Food Voucher Project Bekaa'</i>	DRC, WVL	April-May 2012	-Family food consumption -Coping Mechanisms	M
Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North and South	<i>'Rapid Assessment Report'</i>	Prèmiere Urgence	October 2012	-Shelter, WASH, food needs	M
	<i>'Retail Food Price Analysis of Lebanon'</i>	WFP	August 2012	-Information on price fluctuation per area and per commodity	H
Tripoli and Akkar	<i>'Accommodation of Displaced Syrians in Northern Lebanon'</i>	DRC	June-July 2012	-Accommodation standards and prices in the North of Lebanon	H

Secondary Data Analysis: Lebanon

Akkar	<i>'Syrian Refugees in Akkar: Assessment Report'</i>	Prèmiere Urgence	May-August 2012	-Shelter, NFI, WASH assessment -Food Security -Health	M
North and Bekaa	<i>'Rapid Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Crisis on Socio-Economic Situation in North and Bekaa'</i>	DMI	August 2012	-Economic hardship -Decreased wages -Access to health and education -Food price increase -Food security -Social cohesion	L
Bekaa and North	<i>'Livelihoods Assessment Syrian Refugees in Lebanon'</i>	IRC and Save the Children	8 th October 2012	-Income, expenditure, coping strategies and impact per location	M
	<i>'DRC Livelihood Assessment'</i>	DRC	February 2012	-Livelihood	L
Bekaa Valley	<i>'Multisectorial Assessment Report'</i>	Handicap International	August 2012	-Socio-economic data and available resources	L
Bekaa	<i>'Rapid Assessment Report: Mission Conducted in the Bekaa Region'</i>	DRC	17 th -18 th October 2012	-Assessment on capacity of displacement areas	M
	<i>'DRC July Shelter Assessment'</i>	DRC	July 2011	-Shelter needs	L
North and South Lebanon	<i>'WASH Assessment Report'</i>	Relief International	October 2012	-WASH needs and gaps	M
Bekaa	<i>'WASH Assessment'</i>	ACF and UNICEF	June 2012	-WASH resources available	M
North Lebanon	<i>'WASH Assessment in North Lebanon'</i>	ACTED and UNICEF	May/June 2012	-WASH needs and gaps in five geographical areas, 4 collective centers, and Bab al-Tebbaneh in Tripoli	M



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