

FOOD SECURITY

CHAPTER

METHODOLOGY

The sector chapters were predominantly designed to present the data that exists, and that was shared with the Multi Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) team. Annex A provides a summary of the assessments and reports reviewed for the chapter. There is much that sector experts know from experience that is not captured in the assessment reports. To capture some of the expert views within the Sector Working Groups (SWGs), MSNA SWG workshops were facilitated by the MSNA team and sector experts. These views are taken into account throughout the document. However, due to the short notice, attendance was limited in some workshops and the views presented in the chapter cannot be considered as representative of all SWG members.

The MSNA team aimed to provide an objective overview of the available data and SWG views and therefore has not altered the data or language used in the reports and assessments.

The following target groups were used for the purposes of data analysis:

- Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR or awaiting registration
- Syrians living in Lebanon who have not been registered with UNHCR
- Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS)
- Vulnerable local Communities including Host Communities and Palestinians (PRL)
- Lebanese returnees

Analysis was undertaken at the lowest possible geographic levels for the various target groups, depending on the type of information available. Where possible, information was aggregated to; Mount Lebanon and Beirut, South, Bekaa, Akkar, North/T+5, Palestinian Camps, and Outside Palestinian Camps.

Main Steps



- **Identifying information needs:** In order to identify the relevant research questions for collation, the Thematic Working Group (TWG) combined the indicators of the Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP6) with additional information needs from the SWG. These information needs were used to form the basis of the chapter themes.
- **Secondary data collation:** An assessment inventory was developed and shared for input from as many stakeholders as possible; to encourage sharing of assessment data. A sector focal point was assigned from the TWG and supported the MSNA team to collect data from the sectors. Within the team, analysts were assigned to sector chapters and a number of partners were approached including: INGOs, UN agencies, the Ministry of Social Affairs Lebanon (MoSA), the National NGO forum and the World Bank with requests for assessment reports.
- **Data categorisation:** To facilitate the data analysis component, all data was summarised and categorised into an excel spreadsheet.
- **Analysis and Writing:** The Sector Leads and respective analysts assessed the usefulness of the reports and used them accordingly. For example, a nationwide multi-sector report would have been used to develop broad conclusions, whilst an assessment with a small sample size in one particular location may have been used to provide examples to support/contradict the overall findings.
- **Review and Consultation:** The MSNA team reviewed a number of databases, assessments and reports that were provided by partner agencies. In order to obtain as comprehensive overview as possible a number of consultations were built in with the SWGs.

For more information on the methodology please refer to the main report.

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SECTION 1

1. KEY FINDINGS

Summary of Priorities

Based on the data review and inputs from the Sector Working Group we can provide the following preliminary conclusions:

The available data does not provide an indication on priority needs. Participants of the MSNA SWG workshop underlined the need to enable vulnerable populations to access the labour market, provide them with sufficient food assistance and make sure they do not move to insecure settlements as a way of maintaining their level of food expenditure.

In terms of target groups, both the data and workshop participants identified unregistered refugees, newcomers and Lebanese returnees as key target groups. Newcomers and unregistered refugees are prone to food insecurity as they are unaware of food assistance programs and whether they can benefit from them. Additionally, lack of data and information on their situation and location means that it is difficult to provide them with the necessary assistance. Workshop participants also mentioned host communities as a key target group due to their fear of being assimilated to refugees and subsequent refusal to attend food distributions.

MSNA analysts were not able to identify specific geographical priorities due to the lack of geographically disaggregated data on most information needs (themes). Workshop participants, however, mentioned that Wadi Khaled in Akkar was particularly prone to food insecurity.

The available data indicated that there is a lack of food assistance to Lebanese returnees with a majority of them reporting that they had not received any assistance from the humanitarian sector or the government since arriving in Lebanon. Moreover, the SWG highlighted the need for different distribution sites for specific targets as well as medium- and long-term orientated planning.

In terms of the future, the participants of the MSNA workshop highlighted that a sudden increase in the number of arrivals, the escalation of internal conflicts, the increase in tensions between refugees and host communities and the occurrence of a drought could affect food security programming.

While most of the MSNA SWG workshop participants' perceptions of priority targets and response gaps were similar to those identified by the data, there is a clear need for additional data collection to be able to determine priority needs and geographic priorities.

1.1 Priority Needs

There was insufficient data for the MSNA team to be able to identify priority needs¹.

The participants of the MSNA SWG workshop identified the following priority needs²:

- Enabling vulnerable populations to access the labour market in order for them to have income-generating activities and reduce their reliance on food assistance.
- Addressing the problem of vulnerable populations moving to cheaper settlements that are insecure (for example tented settlements) to be able to maintain the same level of expenditure on food.

1.2 Priority Target Groups

Based on the data available, the MSNA team has found the following priority groups:

- Unregistered refugees and newcomers were identified as priority target groups based on the available data. Handicap International recommended promoting UNHCR registration to refugees who are newcomers and/or not registered in order to allow them to get the food assistance from WFP and UNHCR assistance.
- Lebanese returnees were identified as a priority target groups as, according to International Organization for Migration's (IOM) December 2013 report entitled The Situation and Needs of Lebanese Returnees from Syria, when asked about their most urgent needs, returnees most frequently ranked food (34%) as their first or second priority need.

The participants of the MSNA FSSWG workshop identified the following priority groups:

- Newcomers were identified as a priority target group due to lack of data on their food security situation and their vulnerability.
- Host communities were also identified as being particularly vulnerable to food insecurity as they generally refuse to receive assistance in fear of being viewed as refugees.
- Lebanese returnees are currently facing problems of access to food and have only been receiving assistance on an ad-hoc basis.

1.3 Geographic Priorities

There was insufficient data broken down at a geographical level for the MSNA team to be able to identify geographic priorities in the food security sector.

The participants of the MSNA SWG workshop identified the following geographic priorities:

- Wadi Khaled in Akkar was identified as a geographic area particularly affected by food insecurity.

1.4 Response Gap Analysis

Based on the data available, the MSNA team has found the following response gaps:

¹ It should be noted that the MSNA team's analysis has been built from the data that was available and might not capture the complete situation on the ground.

² The MSNA held a workshop discussion with 14 people from the Food Security Sector Working Group with representatives of 10 organisations who are appealing for funds through the RRP6. Although the full working group was invited to participate, short notice impacted attendance. Therefore, the results of this workshop can in no way be interpreted as a consensus of the views of the entire working group.

- The available data showed that there is a gap in assistance to vulnerable Lebanese returnees. IOM's December report on Lebanese returnees showed that 84% of returnees reported that they had not received any assistance, whether from the humanitarian community or the government since arriving in Lebanon.

The participants of the MSNA SWG workshop identified the following response gaps:

- It would be worth differentiating distribution sites to be able to reach a maximum of targets.
- There is a need to link livelihoods with food assistance. Access to the labour market and income generation activities are extremely important in order to offer vulnerable populations a way to afford food and to ensure their dignity.
- Workshop participants noted that planning is generally short-term oriented and should be viewed on a medium- to long-term basis.

1.5 Future Developments with Possible Impacts on Sector

The available data did not allow the MSNA team to determine future developments that may have an impact on the sector.

The participants of the MSNA SWG workshop identified the following future developments may have an impact on the sector:

- A sudden increase in the number of arrivals
- The escalation of internal conflicts
- An increase in tensions between refugees and host communities
- The occurrence of a drought

SECTION 2

2. CONTEXT

In the last year and a half, the biggest challenge to Lebanon's food security has been the predominance of the Syrian crisis and its consequences on Lebanon.

The Syrian crisis is affecting food availability due to the increased demand for food caused by the growing influx of refugees and returnees into the country. The number of refugees has now reached one million and UNHCR has recently announced that an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees are expected to enter Lebanon in 2014. Lebanon is currently facing the challenge of having to satisfy the needs of an extra quarter³ of its population size in addition to the demands of Lebanese people themselves.

Lebanon is heavily dependent on imported food, and inhabitants of the border towns in Lebanon are dependent on Syria as a major source of imported food products and other groceries⁴. However, Syria has seen a significant drop in its food production⁵ and the security situation has been restraining all transportation through the country, threatening food importation in Lebanon.

The crisis has had an overall negative impact on household incomes and has increased prices for basic commodities⁶, affecting access to food. Increased competition from refugee workers with local workers has resulted in reduced household incomes in host communities⁷.

Future threats to food security are likely to arise. The possibility of a drought in 2014 may lead to a major rise in the prices of food staples and expose the country to further turbulence in its food supply.

Donors, INGOs, local NGOs and governments are set to revise the response plans for the year ahead. It is necessary to compile and to assess the information available on the food security situation in different parts of Lebanon to understand how food insecurity is affecting populations to better support the most vulnerable ones.

³ *Syrian Refugees and Food Insecurity in Lebanon*, Secondary Literature and Data Desk Review, WFP, March 2013.

⁴ *Lebanon baseline information*, SNAP, 10 October 2013

⁵ FAO synopsis of the FAO Action Plan: Resilient Livelihoods for Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security in Areas Affected by the Syria Crisis, FAO.

⁶ *Lebanon baseline information*, SNAP, 10 October 2013

⁷ *Agricultural Livelihoods and Food Security Impact Assessment and Response Plan for the Syria Crisis in the Neighbouring Countries of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey*, FAO, March 2013.

SECTION 3

3. DATA SOURCES

At the start of the process, SWGs developed a list of information needs (i.e. those themes that they required information on within their sector). These were built from RRP6 indicators and a consultation within the working group. For the purpose of Phase 1, MSNA analysts reviewed and examined the available data on each theme. See Section 4 for results.

The table below highlights the information needs and whether or not they were met by the available data. Note there is data available across all information needs. Several information needs were covered in the Basic Needs chapter. Please refer to sector chapter 1 for more information on them.

Table [1]: Extent to which information needs have been met through data available to the MSNA team

Chapter Themes	Information needs
Diet Diversity and Food Groups Consumption	Average Daily Diet diversity score
	Average Weekly Diet diversity score
	Food Groups Consumption
Number of Meals	Number of Meals comparable to breakfast, lunch and dinner that were eaten yesterday
Coping Strategies	Consumption-Based Coping Mechanisms
	Assets Depletion Coping Mechanisms
Food Sources	Food Sources
Food Prices	Food Prices
See Basic Needs	Income sources
See Basic Needs	Level of debts
See Basic Needs	Food expenditure
Access to Water for Cooking	Access to Water for Cooking
Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices	Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices
See Basic Needs	Access to fuel for cooking
See Basic Needs	Ability to cook

Legend

- No data available to the MSNA team at the time of writing
- Some data available but may be outdated or lack methodological rigour
- The available data addresses the information need
- White indicates: that the information need has been covered in another chapter of the MSNA report

This section aims to highlight the data sources and limitations.

General: In 2013 and 2014, there was no specific food security assessment undertaken, but there were 11 multi-sector assessments that integrated the topic. Most of the data used was collected more than six months ago and might not reflect the current situation. This is especially true due the rollout of the targeting exercise in October 2013. However, new assessments have been taken on lately, such as WFP and UNRWA's Needs Assessment of Palestinian Refugees from Syria, with the final report expected end of March 2014. Furthermore, other assessments are already planned for 2014, as is the inter-agency Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon (VASyR⁸), which would take place in May of this year.

Other main data limitations are the geographical coverage as well as the representativeness of the different groups of populations. The assessments the MSNA team reviewed generally do not cover all target groups in all geographic areas. There is a general lack of data on vulnerable local communities, Lebanese returnees and unregistered refugees. There is a lack of data on specific geographic areas such as Akkar and Bekaa, partly due to access constraints caused by insecurity. Very little data, in particular the regionally focused data, provided representative samples to allow generalisation to the target populations. Only one assessment, the VASyR, provided a representative sample, though did not show regional differences as sampling was based on the registration time in-country. Other assessments used cluster sampling techniques; however flaws in the sampling limit the ability to make national generalisations from the data.

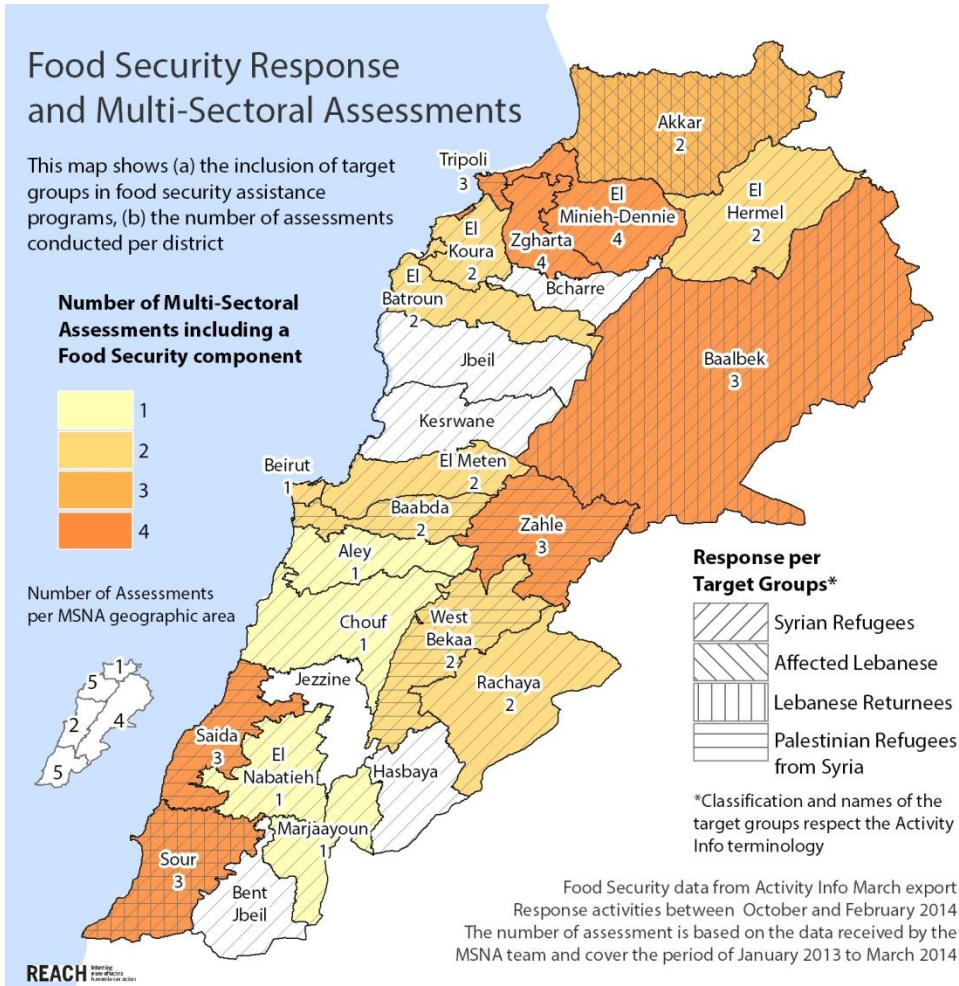
Although quantitative data cannot be generalised, the qualitative data reinforced and supports results and conclusions, enabling a strong understanding of the key themes.

Where possible, we attempted to separate data regarding registered, awaiting registration, and unregistered Syrian refugees. However, because most data was collected at the household level, even surveys targeting Syria refugees registered and awaiting registration include unregistered refugees, and therefore cannot be separated. Even though the data is presented for overall Syrian refugees regardless of registration status, we should assume there are differences between these groups.

⁸ Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, WFP-UNHCR-UNICEF, 2013

From the below map, it becomes apparent that there are not assessments available to inform operations in all areas where response activities are ongoing.

Figure [1]: Food security assistance programmes and assessments by geographic area and target group



SECTION 4

The following section provides an analysis of data according to theme, including a summary table of assessment coverage by target group and geography.

4. ANALYSIS PER THEME

4.1 Diet Diversity and Food Groups Consumption

Summary of assessment findings: The available data shows that the majority of Syrian refugees has high food diversity pattern. The VASyR pointed out that although most households surveyed showed acceptable diet diversity, the food groups most consumed were bread, condiments and sugar, which are characterized by their low nutrient value. There is no information available on diet diversity of Lebanese returnees, vulnerable local communities such as Lebanese host communities and PRL. Additionally, there was no differentiation between registered and unregistered Syrian refugees. In terms of geographical areas, there was generally data on the national level or focused on specific regions with limited geographical disaggregation.

The summary table below shows assessment coverage by geographic area and target group. It does not, however, show the quality of the assessments or the extent of the coverage.

Table [2]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

Syrian refugees

National

The majority of the population surveyed by the VASyR 2013⁹ (93%) was found to have an acceptable food consumption score and registered a high food diversity pattern. The assessment found that, on average, households consume nine to ten food groups per week, and seven to eight food groups on a daily basis out of a total of 12 standard household weekly diet diversity food groups (cereals, tubers, pulses, vegetables, fruits, meat, fish, eggs, milk, sugar, oil, spices).

This data is supported by The Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD) Food Aid Project report on Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon from July to December 2013. This classified households based on their daily dietary diversity scores, with 'low dietary diversity' indicating consumption of three or fewer food types, 'medium dietary diversity' indicating consumption of four or five food types, and 'high dietary diversity' indicating consumption of six or more food types (out of a total of 12 food groups). The endline survey found that the majority of households (92%) had a medium or high dietary diversity.

Not surprisingly, in the VASyR, diet diversity was found to be significantly lower for those households awaiting registration and households recently registered, compared to households who have been registered for a longer period of time. The longer the households were registered the more diverse their food pattern was – 86% of households assessed that had been registered with UNHCR for longer than six months consumed over six food groups, compared to 74% of those awaiting registration (VASyR).

The food consumption score identified during the VASyR was closely related to the types of food regularly consumed. Among the households with an acceptable food consumption score, around 40% consumed animal protein almost on a daily basis, while 94% of households with a poor score did not consume animal protein at all. A similar difference was noted for the consumption of pulses and dairy. Oil/fat consumption, however, did not significantly change.

The VASyR pointed out that although most households surveyed showed acceptable food consumption and diet diversity, the food groups most consumed were bread, condiments and sugar, which are characterised by their low nutrient value.

More than 60% of the households did not consume any vitamin A-rich vegetables or fruit during the week prior to the survey, and nearly 40% of households did not consume iron-rich food groups such as meat or fish. The main source of vitamin A is milk, followed by eggs. The VASyR report noted that this food consumption pattern implies a risk of micronutrient deficiencies, especially for iron deficiency anaemia. This risk applies in particular to children and pregnant women, for whom it is recommended to have a daily intake of vitamin-A rich fruit, vegetables, and meat or fish.

The food consumption pattern was significantly different among strata. The longer the households were registered the more diverse their food pattern. The main differences were found in meat and milk consumption (sources of iron and vitamin A-rich food groups). Differences were also found in the consumption of cereal tubers, pulses, vitamin-A rich fruit, sugar, fats and condiments.

Through monthly monitoring, WFP found that the food security situation of Syrian refugees receiving food assistance remained fairly stable over the last months, with 76% of refugees having acceptable food consumption scores, and an acceptable average daily diet diversity (*Syrian Refugee Response: Lebanon Inter-Agency Update*, UNHCR, February 2014). However, the dietary situation of unregistered refugees is currently unknown.

⁹ More than 1,400 Syrian refugee households (awaiting and registered refugees) were interviewed for the VASyR in May and June 2013.

South

A January 2013 in-depth needs assessment by World Vision in Saida and Tyre showed that bread was the first main item included in Syrian refugees' daily meals (Saida 92%, Tyre 95%). A second highly consumed item was cereals and starches (Saida 89%, Tyre 67%); in addition to canned food (Saida 48%, Tyre 80%) and dairy products (Saida 53%, Tyre 71%). The high consumption of canned food loaded with sodium, and the low consumption of other essential food groups such as meats (Saida 10%, Tyre 5%), and fruits and vegetables (Saida 36%, Tyre 44%), was identified by the report as a serious risk to refugees' physical wellbeing, especially children.

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process for the North/T+5, Akkar, Bekaa and Mount Lebanon and Beirut

Palestinian refugees from Syria

National

A multi-sectoral household survey of registered PRS in Lebanon conducted by UNWRA¹⁰ in October 2013 showed that on average, households consumed 12 food groups per week, and seven to eight food groups on a daily basis. All visited households (843) consumed more than seven food groups in the past week and four or more per day.

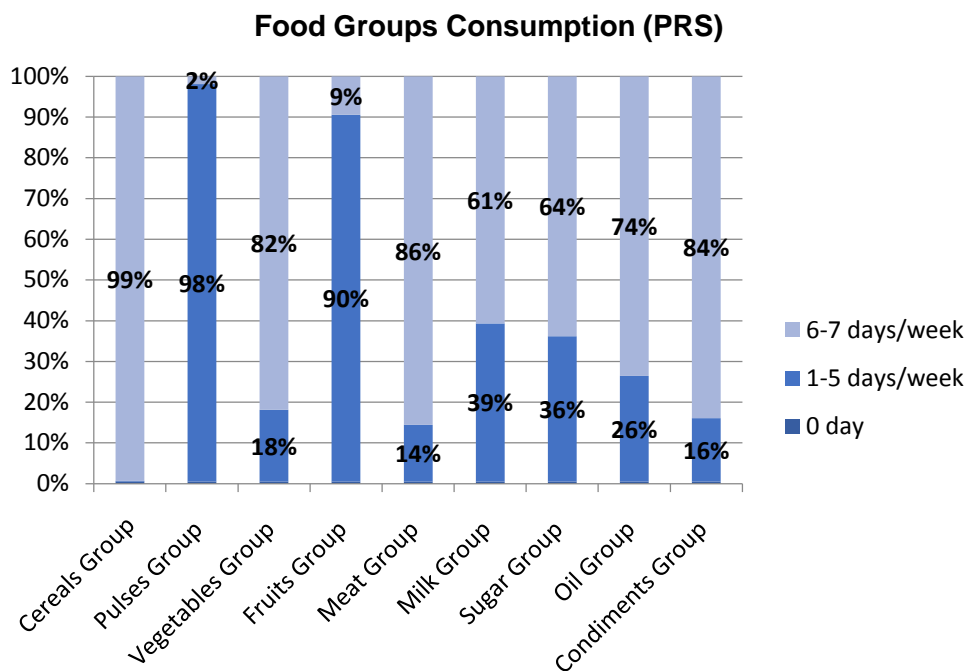
Table [3]: Number of food groups consumed daily by geographical area

Number of food groups consumed daily	Beirut inside camp	Beirut Outside camp	Bekaa inside camp	Bekaa outside camp	Saida inside camp	Saida outside camp	Tyre inside camp	Tyre outside camp	Average
Average	8.1	6.4	8.3	7.4	7.5	7.9	8.5	8.0	7.8
4-5 food groups	0 %	14 %	0 %	1 %	0 %	1 %	0 %	0 %	1 %
5-7 food groups	8 %	39 %	9 %	21 %	22 %	11 %	2 %	4 %	14.7 %
>=7 food groups	92 %	47 %	91 %	78 %	77 %	88 %	98 %	96 %	84 %

UNWRA's October 2013 survey of registered PRS found that nearly all households surveyed (99%) had an acceptable food consumption score. The majority of households consumed vegetables (82%) on a daily basis, and fruits on one to five days per week (90%). Also, most of the households (86%) consumed animal-source protein on a daily basis. Almost all of the households (98%) consumed pulses one to five days per week, while 2% reported consuming pulses on daily basis.

¹⁰ The assessment has not been published yet

Figure [2]: Frequency of food groups consumption



*Source: UNWRA's survey of registered PRS (October 2013)

Inside Palestinian camps

Generally, diet diversity was found to be highest inside camps. For example, diet diversity was particularly high in the Bekaa, Beirut and Tyre camps where respectively 91%, 9 % and 98% of households consumed more than seven food groups (out of a maximum of 12) per day.

Outside Palestinian camps

Outside camps, Beirut had the lowest diet diversity. Only 47% of households consumed more than seven food groups per day. In Bekaa, Saida and Tyre, dietary diversity was high with respectively 78%, 88% and 96% of households consuming more than seven food groups per day.

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process for vulnerable local communities and Lebanese returnees.

4.2 Number of Meals Consumed

Summary of assessment findings: Information on number of meals consumed was found in several different sources. However, these were not measured in the same way across assessments. Some looked at number of warm/cooked meals per day, while others simply looked at number of meals per day. This means that comparisons across target groups and geographies are not possible. The VASyR found that only 20% of the adult Syrian refugees assessed reported having consumed three or more warm/cooked meals prior to the survey. An assessment conducted by HI, showed that Tripoli had the highest proportion of Syrian refugees who only ate one to two meals per day compared to Akkar and Bekaa. Concerning PRS, UNWRA's October 2013 survey found that almost half of the surveyed households (45%) reported having consumed only one cooked meal the previous day.

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process on number of meals consumed for vulnerable locals, Lebanese returnees and unregistered Syrian refugees.

Table [4]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
Legend					
	Section not applicable			Data available	
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

Syrian refugees

National

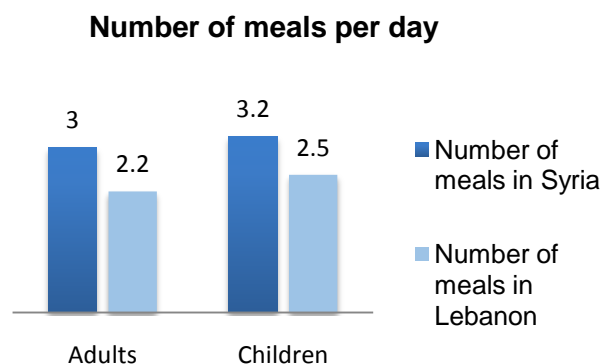
The VASyR found more than half of the Syrian refugee adults (58%) reported having consumed less than three warm or cooked meals the day prior to the survey. Another 23% of the households reported to have consumed less than two cooked meals the previous day. For children under five, the situation was slightly better, with “only” 42% of them having consumed less than three warm or cooked meals the previous day. The VASyR also looked into the reason why households did not cook and found that the main reasons were lack of food, fuel and stoves, as well as a lack of cooking utensils. The percentage of households unable to cook at least once a day was significantly higher among those awaiting registration compared to those registered with UNHCR.

Another survey – the survey and voucher data analysis conducted by the LSESD Food Aid Project for Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon from July to December 2013 – showed that refugees had an average of 2.5 meals a day.

North/T+5

Solidarités International's January 2014 Living Condition Assessment Report conducted in the T+5 region showed that, while in Syria, refugees were used to having at least three meals per day, and only few of them were experiencing lack of food because food was very affordable compared to Lebanon. The assessment found that in Lebanon, adults were having 2.2 meals a day and children were having 2.5 meals a day (see chart below). Moreover, 82% of the households interviewed reported having faced problems during the last 30 days prior to the assessment because of lack of food or money to buy food.

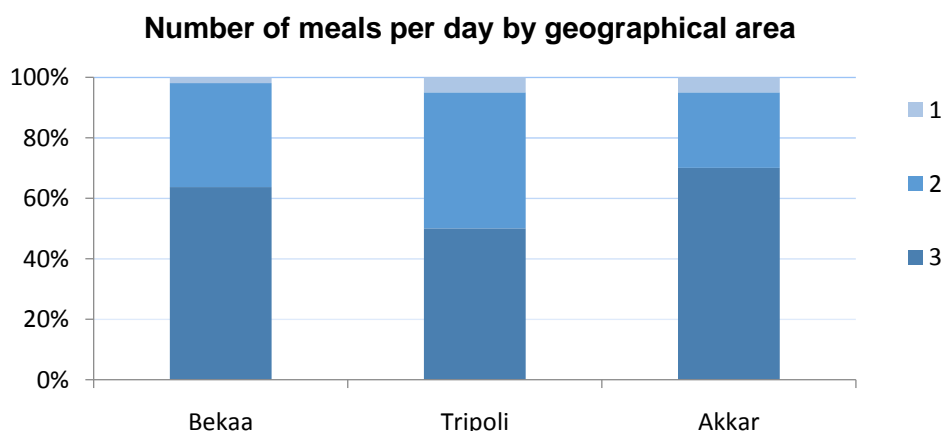
Figure [3]: Number of meals consumed per day by Syrian refugees in the North/T+5



*Source: Solidarités International's January 2014 Living Condition Assessment Report

Handicap International's August 2013 Livelihoods Assessment Report showed that nearly half of refugees in Tripoli were only having one to two meals per day.

Figure [4]: Number of meals consumed per day by Syrian refugees by geographic area



*Source: Handicap International's Livelihoods report

Akkar

Handicap International's Livelihoods report found that approximately 70% of refugees in Akkar were having three meals per days. The geographical area saw the highest number of meals per day per Syrian refugee compared to Bekaa and Tripoli.

Bekaa

Handicap International's Livelihoods report also identified that nearly 40% of refugees in Bekaa were only having one to two meals per days.

South

Similar to the VASyR findings, a January 2013 in-depth needs assessment by World Vision in Saida and Tyre indicated that the large majority of households assessed (around 95%) consumed two to three meals a day.

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process on number of meals consumed by Syrian refugees in Mount Lebanon and Beirut.

Palestinian refugees from Syria

National

According to American Near East Refugee Aid's (ANERA) March 2013 needs assessment of Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon, when asked about their food intake the day before the interview, nearly 70% of the families reported not being able to provide three meals a day; 58% could only provide two meals and 10% were only able to provide one meal for the family. Moreover, 73% of those interviewed said that they did not have enough food to feed the whole family.

UNWRA's October 2013 survey of registered PRS found that almost half of the surveyed households (45%) reported having consumed only one cooked meal the previous day. The survey found that about 15% of the PRS adults (classified as individuals twelve years old and above in this survey) reported having consumed three warm or cooked meals the day prior to the survey, while 35% consumed two cooked meals the previous day. Only about one in five children (22%) reported having consumed three cooked meals the day prior to the survey. The survey showed that the main reasons why PRS households were unable to cook were lack of food and lack of money.

Inside Camps

UNWRA'S 2013 PRS survey looked at number of cooked meals inside camps and found that in Beirut, 51% of respondents had only one cooked meal the previous day. In Saida, 54% of respondents had only one cooked meal the previous day. In Tyre, it was 15% of respondents. For the Wavel camp, in Bekaa, it went up to 70%.

Outside Camps

Outside the camp in Bekaa, 15% of the population reported having no cooked meals the previous day. In other camps; in Tyre, Saida and Beirut, less than 10% of the population reported having no cooked meals the previous day.

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process on number of meals consumed for vulnerable local communities and Lebanese returnees.

4.3 Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices

Summary of assessment findings: Overall, the main sources of data on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices in Lebanon were the VASyR 2013 and UNICEF's Joint Nutrition Assessment for registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The VASyR found that out of the 618 children between six and 23 months old that were included in the survey, only 6% had a minimum acceptable diet according to WHO IYCF indicators. The VASyR also found that meal frequency was a problem, as almost 75% of the children surveyed did not meet the minimum acceptable meal frequency set by WHO guidelines. UNICEF's assessment found that among Syrian refugees in Lebanon, over 85% of children aged 0-23 months were breastfed. However, around 35% of children aged 0-23 months received bottle feedings. UNICEF therefore recommended raising awareness around appropriate infant and young child feeding practices.

At the time of the MSNA process, there was no specific data available on IYCF for any other target in any of the predetermined geographical areas.

Table [5]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
Legend					
	Section not applicable			Data available	
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

Syrian refugees

National

The VASyR offered a comprehensive look at IYCF practices among Syrian refugees and showed that out of the 618 children between six and 23 months old that were included in the survey, only 6% had a minimum acceptable diet according to WHO IYCF indicators.

The period from birth to two years of age is the “critical window” for the promotion of good growth, health, and behavioural and cognitive development. Optimal IYCF is crucial during this period: exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continuous breastfeeding for two years or more, together with nutritionally adequate, safe, age appropriate complementary feeding starting at six months.

In terms of breastfeeding, about 50% of children aged between six and 23 months were breastfed the day before the survey. Breastfeeding practice decreased significantly with child age. The percentage of children under the age of one who are breastfed was almost 75%, dropping to about 50% among children between one and one and a half years old, and decreased further to 25% in children between one and a half and two years old.

In terms of complementary feeding, the VASyR found that about 75% of the children surveyed received complementary feeding in the form of solid, semi-solid or liquid food, other than breast milk.

The VASyR also highlighted that meal frequency was a problem, as almost 75% of the children surveyed did not meet the minimum acceptable meal frequency which, according to WHO guidelines, should be two daily meals for breastfed children between six and eight months, three daily meals for breastfed children between nine and 23 months, and four daily meals for non-breastfed children.

On the topic of diet diversity¹¹ and food group consumption, findings were alarming. According to WHO, children aged between six and 23 months should consume a minimum of four of the seven food groups daily to meet the minimum dietary diversity, independent of age and breastfeeding status. Yet about 85% of the children surveyed did not meet the minimum diet diversity requirements the day prior to the survey. This percentage was significantly higher among children under one (94%) than for older children, between one and two years.

In terms of nutrition, the VASyR found that out of 1,690 children between six and 59 months, 22 (1.0%) were found to be moderately acute malnourished (MUAC 124-115 mm) and 0.4% severely acute malnourished (MUAC <115 mm). Both results are below the emergency thresholds (for more information on nutrition please refer to the health chapter).

In February 2014, a Joint Nutrition Assessment for Syrian registered refugees in Lebanon was published by UNICEF. The assessment, conducted in October and November 2013, investigated IYCF practices¹² among parents of children aged 0-23 months and found that among Syrian refugees across Lebanon (1,200 households were surveyed), more than 85% of children aged 0-23 months were breastfed. More than 60% of mothers initiated the breastfeeding in the first 23 hours after birth and 25% of children aged 0-23 months were exclusively breastfed. However, around 35% of children aged 0-23 months received bottle feedings.

¹¹ Dietary diversity can be defined as the number of different food groups eaten over a reference time period, regardless of the frequency of consumption.

¹² UNICEF's report noted that when IYCF indicators are collected in nutritional surveys, it is not feasible to achieve a large sample size, that would allow for some of the indicators to be estimated as precisely as desired, especially the indicators that cover a very narrow age range (e.g. 12-15 months, 6-8 months). Hence, trend analyses need to be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, trend analyses are useful for assessing the situation and major differences seen from year to year should warrant further investigation.

Table 27-1: Prevalence of IYCF practices indicators – Syrian refugees in all Lebanon

Indicator		Age range	Number/total	Prevalence	95% CI
Children ever breastfed		0-23 months	399/457	87.3%	(83.94–90.05)
Timely initiation of breastfeeding	<One hour	0-23 months	157/502	31.3%	(27.37–35.45)
	1-24 hours		201/502	40.0%	(35.85–44.39)
	≥24 hours		144/502	28.7%	(24.91–32.8)
Exclusive breastfeeding under 6 months		0-5 months	22/88	25.0%	(17.13–34.96)
Continued breastfeeding at 1 year		12-15 months	44/68	64.7%	(52.85 – 75.0)
Continued breastfeeding at 2 years		20-23 months	19/63	30.2%	(20.24–42.36)
Introduction of solid, semi-solid or soft		6-8 months	20/35	57.1%	(40.85–72.01)
Consumption of iron-rich or iron-fortified		6-23 months	135/371	36.39%	(31.66–41.40)
Bottle feeding		0-23 months	154/372	41.4%	(36.51–46.47)

The assessment also covered the North, Bekaa, the South and Mount Lebanon and Beirut. In general, results were similar across these geographical areas.

North/T+5

In the North of Lebanon, the UNICEF assessment found that nearly 90% of children aged 0-23 months were breastfed. However, only 25% of children under the age of six months were exclusively breastfed.

Bekaa

In Bekaa, more than 80% of children aged 0-23 months were breastfed. Similar to the North of Lebanon, only 25% of children under the age of six months were exclusively breastfed.

South

In the South of Lebanon, more than 90% of children aged 0-23 months were breastfed. A little more than a quarter (28%) of children under the age of six months were exclusively breastfed.

Mount Lebanon and Beirut

In Mount Lebanon and Beirut, the assessment found that more than 85% of children aged 0-23 months were breastfed. Approximately 25% of children under the age of six months were exclusively breastfed.

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process on IYCF practices for Syrian refugees specifically in Akkar. There is no data on IYCF for vulnerable local communities, Palestinian refugees from Syria and Lebanese returnees.

For more information on nutrition and child nutrition please refer to the Health chapter

4.4 Food Sources

Summary of assessment findings: The available data identified several different food sources for Syrian refugees. However, much of the data is now outdated due to the rollout of targeted assistance in October 2013, which led to the withdrawal of food assistance for around 35% of the population. Food sources for Syrian refugees may have changed since then. At the time of the assessment, Handicap International found that the main source of food was assistance from UN agencies and INGOs. The VASyR found that that nearly all registered households reported that they had received food vouchers on a regular basis. PRS were generally identified by different assessments as not receiving as much food aid as Syrian refugees, which was resulting in a poorer overall food security situation for them.

At the time of the MSNA process, there was no available data on food sources for vulnerable communities, Lebanese returnees or unregistered refugees.

Food sources are largely dependent on income and access to markets. For more information on these topics, please refer to the Basic Needs chapter.

Table [6]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
Legend					
	Section not applicable			Data available	
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

Syrian refugees

National

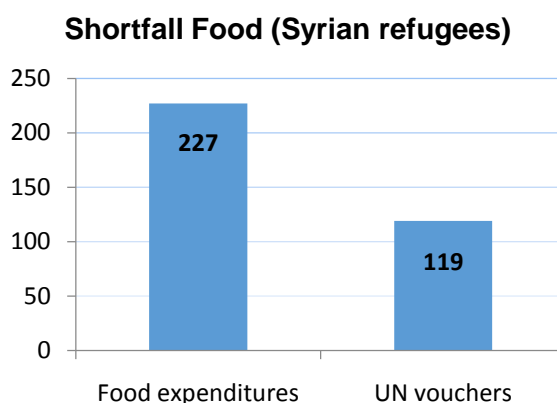
Handicap International's Livelihoods August 2013 assessment noted that finding food in Lebanon is not an issue. It is available in quantity and quality in all areas assessed (the North, Bekaa, Beirut and Mount Lebanon, and the South).

Handicap International's assessment explained that, at the time of the assessment, a main source of food for Syrian refugees was assistance - either from UN agencies or INGOs. The WFP was providing support to all the Syrian refugees registered by the UNCHR. They were receiving food vouchers for an amount of USD 27 per person per month from WFP and its partners. The voucher's value was increased during the winter

season up to USD 31 per person.

Comparing the average food expenditures with the average amount received by beneficiaries from WFP shows that there was still a major shortfall of USD 108 for refugees to meet their needs in term of food per month.

Figure [5]: Food expenditure versus WFP assistance for Syrian refugees



In terms of assistance from INGOs, Handicap International's assessment found that although a lot of INGOs are working in Lebanon, providing assistance in all the necessary sectors, the humanitarian needs are massive and funding is too limited for such a crisis. Local and regional associations are also involved with the refugees but their actions are hard to quantify and locate. They seem to be mostly distributing household essential items (HEI), food or providing cash assistance and distributions are mainly one off and targeted to certain areas.

The VASyR 2013 found that most of the refugees surveyed relied on the assistance of either friends or family, or humanitarian organisations to meet their basic needs. The percentage of households that receive food vouchers increased in accordance with the length of stay in Lebanon. The table below shows the types of food assistance in percentage:

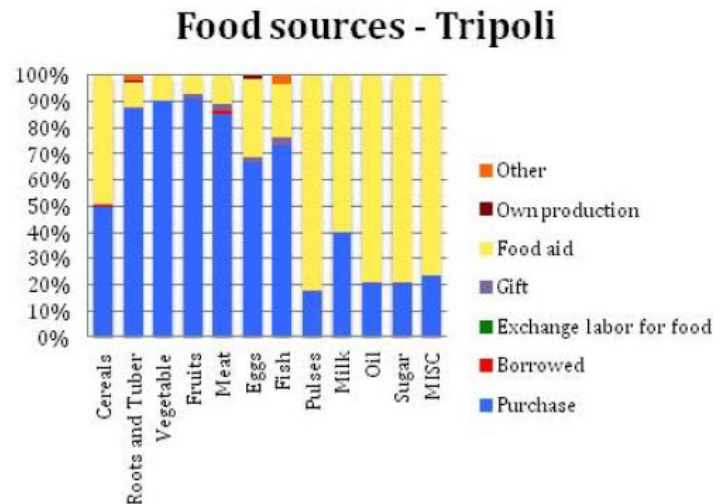
Table [7]: Food assistance for Syrian refugees by type

	Awaiting registration (N=358)	Registration 0-3 months (N=351)	Registration 3-6 months (N=355)	Registration after 6 months (N=358)	Total (N=1422)
Food voucher	19.6%	81.5%	97.5%	91.1%	73.6%
Food assistance (in kind)	30.4%	30.2%	31.3%	34.4%	31.2%
Food assistance(subsidy)	2.8%	4.0%	5.6%	5.6%	4.3%

The VASyR also revealed that nearly all registered households reported that they receive food vouchers on a regular basis. Regarding in-kind food assistance, 86% of households claimed they have received it at least once. The report explained that this percentage is due the fact that WFP provides food parcels for refugees awaiting registration. A fifth of the households surveyed received non-WFP food assistance at least once, while 73% of households received food assistance on a regular basis.

Handicap International's assessment looked at the food source of different food items by geographic area. For Syrian refugees in Tripoli, pulses, milk, oil and sugar were mostly acquired through food aid, while cereals, roots, vegetables, fruits, meat, eggs and fish were generally purchased.

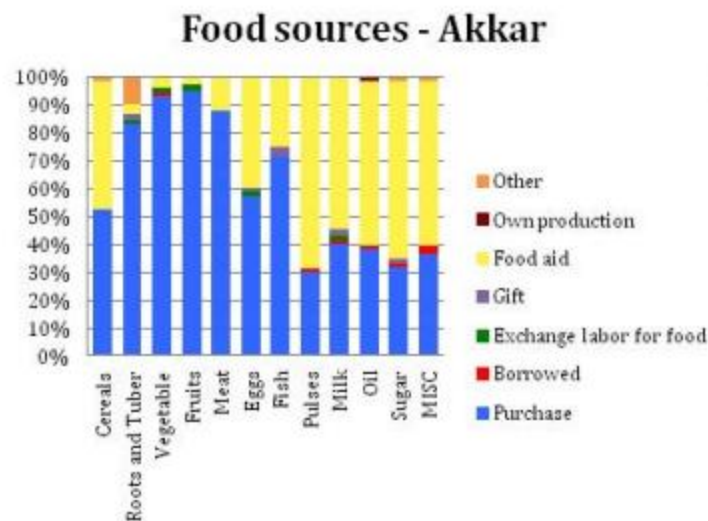
Figure [6]: Food items by source for Syrian refugees in Tripoli



Akkar

Similar to Tripoli, pulses, milk, oil and sugar were mostly acquired through food aid.

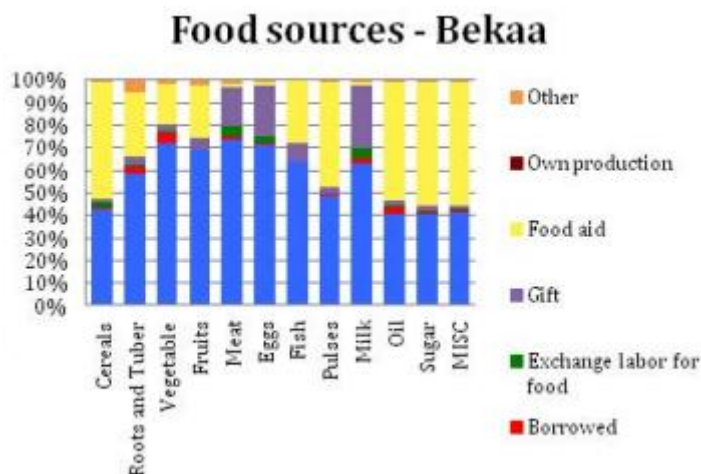
Figure [7]: Food items by source for Syrian refugees in Akkar



Bekaa

In Bekaa, however, food sources were more diversified than in Tripoli or Akkar. Around 10-20% of meat, eggs and milk were acquired through gifts.

Figure [8]: Food items by source for Syrian refugees in Bekaa



South

A needs assessment carried out by World Vision in Saida and Tyre in January 2013 showed desperate conditions for many Syrian refugees since their arrival in Lebanon led them to credit money from shops and other sources (62% in Saida and 12% in Tyre) in order to buy food for their families. Another significant source of food for refugees is personal resources such as savings, selling assets or daily work, for up to 84% of households assessed in Tyre. Financial or in-kind assistance from charities (20% in Saida) and sharing with host families were other significant sources of food mentioned. Begging was reported as a source of food by 7% of households in Saida and 2% in Tyre.

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process on food sources for Mount Lebanon and Beirut

Palestinian Refugees from Syria:

National

According to ANERA's March 2013 needs assessment of Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon¹³, 82% of families reported receiving food aid from various sources. However, only 3% said their primary source of food came from aid. The report stated that this could be attributed to the fact that food aid is not provided on a regular basis to PRS families.

ANERA's needs assessment also reported that the majority of PRS families (77%) depend on their own resources to buy food for their families; 18% depend on host families; 3% rely on aid; and 2% on loans.

Movement for Peace Lebanon's assessment on persons with specific needs and their households (December 2013) identified PRS as priority target group. The assessment showed that they were getting less frequent food support compared to Syrian refugees, which is resulting in poorer food security conditions among PRS.

¹³ The assessment focused on a sampling of 669 households of Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) within and outside nine Palestinian refugee camps across Lebanon.

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process on food sources of PRS in the North, Akkar, Bekaa, the South and Mount Lebanon and Beirut (although the ANERA assessment focused on a sampling of 669 households of PRS within and outside nine Palestinian refugee camps across Lebanon, the report did not give detailed data on these specific areas).

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process on food sources of vulnerable local communities and Lebanese returnees.

4.5 Food Prices

Summary of assessment findings: Several studies have found that food is the biggest expense for Syrian refugees and PRS. For Syrian refugees, it ranges from USD 151 to USD 275 per household per month. Food expenditure is largely influenced by food prices, and the Syrian crisis has led to food prices increases. WFP's latest prices survey monitoring reports found that the value of the commodity basket differs between North Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley, and Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon, with prices higher in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon.

For more information on expenditure data for Syrian refugees, please refer to the Expenditure section of the Basic Needs chapter.

Table [8]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
Legend					
	Section not applicable			Data available	
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

Syrian refugees

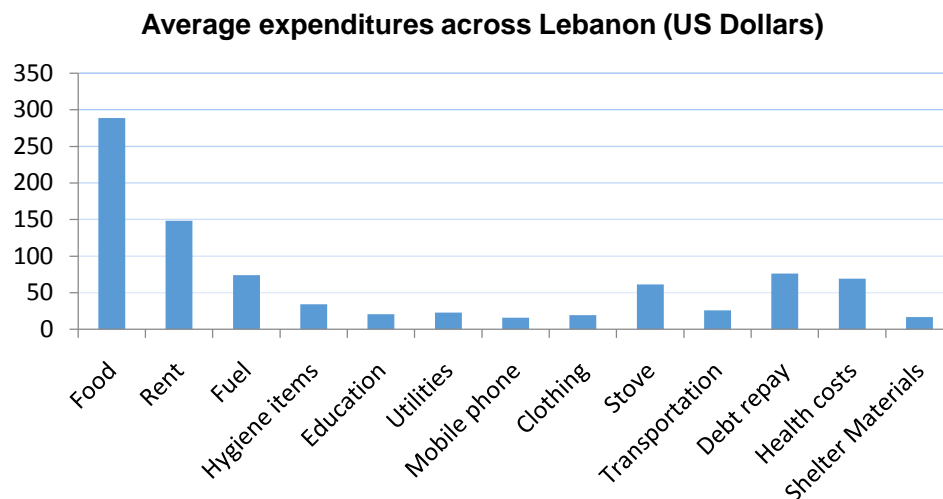
National

According to several assessments, food is Syrian refugees' largest expense. Oxfam's survey on the livelihoods of Syrian refugees in Lebanon (November 2013) showed that the largest expenses consist of food (USD 275 per month), rent (USD 225 per month) and medical services. The report noted that the high level of expenditure on food and rent consequently impacts spending on other essentials like education. Handicap International's Livelihoods assessment (August 2013)¹⁴ also reported that one of the main expenditures for Syrian refugee families is food. On average, food costs USD 227 per month.

The VASyR found that the average monthly expenditure per household was approximately USD 774, half of which was spent on purchasing food. Rent accounted for USD 200. Oxfam's Winterisation Baseline (February 2014) study across Lebanon reported that households spend USD 151 to USD 200 on food.

¹⁴ The average family expenditure is difficult to compile; each NGO uses a different way to calculate it, some NGO will relate on MEB (Minimum Expenditures Basket) but the items monitored will vary from one NGO to another. HI has chosen to relate on an average expenditures to the main type of expenditures such as rent, food, HEI, health, transportation, clothes, education and other (which include communication, water, electricity).

Figure [9]: Average expenditure by Syrian refugees by type



A WFP secondary literature and data desk review on Syrian Refugees and Food Insecurity in Lebanon (March 2013) specified that the consumer price index¹⁵ (CPI) for Lebanon in July 2011 was 115.6 and increased to 129.5 in December 2012. The CPI is one of the most important economic and social indicators in a country. It gives an overall picture of the evolution of prices of goods and services consumed by households. CPI is also used to measure the impact of price evolution on the living standards of individuals and households and other social and economic indicators.

A consolidated price monitoring report providing an overview of WFP price monitoring activities of the food voucher programme in Lebanon, from May to July 2013, highlighted that prices remained the highest in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon. On average, prices in these locations were 3% higher than in North Lebanon and 6% higher than in the Bekaa Valley. However, prices have been decreasing in Beirut since January 2013 and seemed to be converging with those in other regions. The lowest prices were found in the Bekaa Valley and overall remained steady over the reporting period (May to July 2013).

¹⁵ A measure that examines the weighted average of prices of a basket of consumer goods and services, such as transportation, food and medical care. The CPI is calculated by taking price changes for each item in the predetermined basket of goods and averaging them; the goods are weighted according to their importance. Changes in CPI are used to assess price changes associated with the cost of living.

The VASyR provided a comprehensive price list of essential items (see table below).

Table [9]: Prices of essential items by type and geographical area

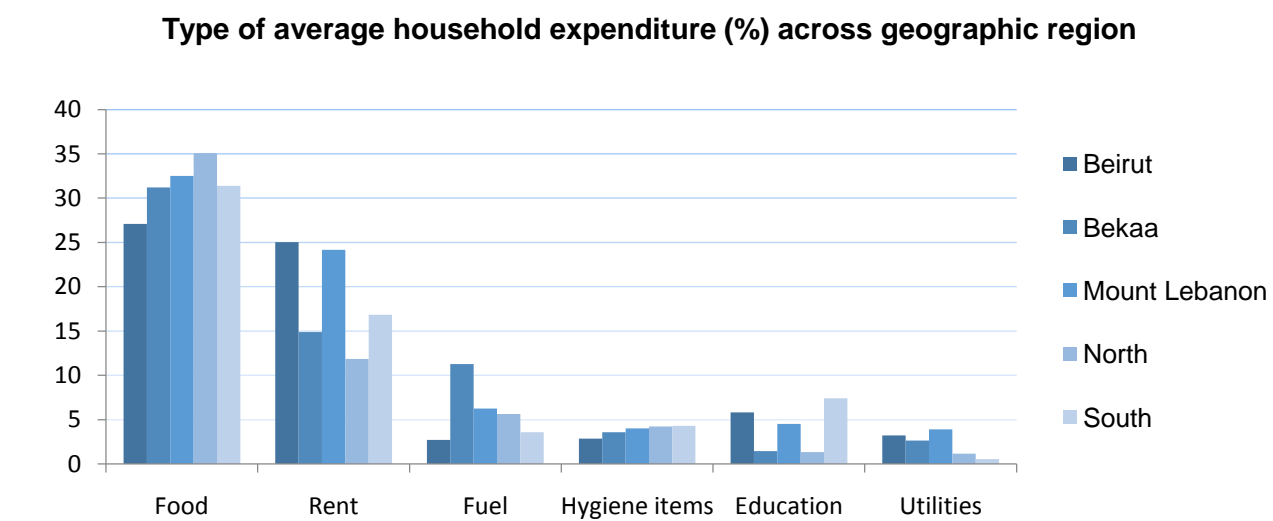
			Tripoli, Beirut, the South and Mont Liban	Akkar	Bekaa area	Areas north of Tripoli
Food basket	Quantity	Item	LBP	LBP	LBP	LBP
Vegetables	0.9 kg	Lemon	900	900	900	900
	1.95 kg	Leaves/green vegetables	1,950	1,950	1,950	1,950
Proteins	0.6 kg	Eggs	2,544	2,544	2,544	2,544
	1.6 kg	Beans	4,374	4,374	4,374	4,374
	1.14 kg	Canned meat	1,254	1,254	1,254	1,254
Carbohydr- rates	2.1 kg	Bread	3,150	3,150	3,150	3,150
	3 kg	Egyptian rice	4,650	4,650	4,650	4,650
	3.9 kg	Bulgur wheat	4,876	4,876	4,876	4,876
	1.5 kg	Pasta	2,265	2,265	2,265	2,265
	1.5 kg	Sugar	1,950	1,950	1,950	1,950
Other	0.99 kg		2,475	2,475	2,475	2,475
	0.6 kg		5,906.	5,906	5,906.25	5,906.25
	0.15 kg		77.55	77.55	77.55	77.55
Nonfood items		Per person	476568	476568	476568	476568
		Per households 5 members	238284	238284	238284	238284
		Communication costs	37,500	37,500	37,500	37,500
Fuel		Cooking gas 1 kg	750	2,000	2,000	1,375.
		Petrol 20 L unleaded	8,175	34,700	37,000	21,437.50
Hgiene basket		Toilet paper 4 packs of rolls	3,965	4,200	4,700	4,825
		Tooth paste 2 pcs of 75ml	4,625	4,500	9,000	4,562.50
		Laundry soap 1kg/1 liter (Bubbles)	7,437.50	7,437	7,000	7,437.50
		Dishes detergent 750 ml (Golden)	3,550	2,500	2,500	3,025
		Sanitary napkins (pads) 3 packs of 20	2,678.50	3,750	3,700	3,214
		Individual soap 5 pieces of 125 g (6pcs)	3,937.50	6,000	5,000	4,970
		Shampoo 1 bottle 500 ml	4,750.0	3,900	5,500	4,325
		Diapers	22,625.00	18,000	20,000	20,315
Other services		Education	13,500	124,625	64,854	69,062.50
		Health	116,667	79,621	81,758	98,145.50
Utilities		Water (cost per month)	34,667	41,347	35,089	38,007
		Electricity (cost per month)	81,667	46,350	39,022	64,008.50
		Households 5 members	1,146,954.	927,144	793,063	1,037,049

According to WFP's secondary literature and data desk review, in the Northern area, total living expenses before the crisis were LBP 1,207,000 or USD 793, compared to LBP 1,275,000 or USD 842 after the crisis, with a general inflation rate of 6% to 12%¹⁶ for food prices, 34% for medicines, and 6% for water and utility bills.

North/T+5, Beirut, Bekaa, Mount Lebanon and South

The Winterisation baseline survey has been recently updated within the first of two post-distribution monitoring (PDM) cycles.¹⁷ The chart below provides recent figures on the main types of expenditure by region. It shows that Syrian refugees in the North have the highest household expenditure of all regions assessed (the North, Beirut, Bekaa, Mount Lebanon and the South).

Figure [10]: Household expenditure by type and geographical region



Palestinian refugees from Syria

National

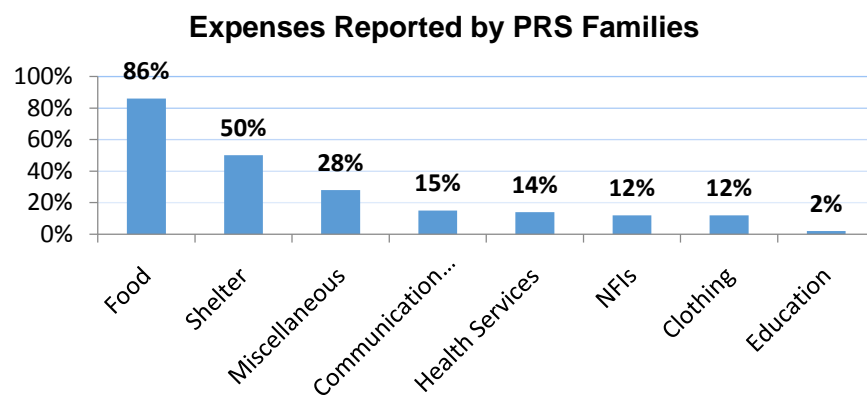
The ANERA assessment (March 2013) indicated that food was the most burdensome expense for PRS families. This need was demonstrated by the inability of PRS families to purchase adequate quantities of food, forcing many to skip meals and/or reduce food portions.

In fact, the assessment showed that 86% of the families interviewed cited food as their greatest expense (see chart below) and food ranked as the highest expense regardless of family size. The majority (98%) of families also indicated that food prices were much higher in Lebanon than in Syria.

¹⁶ A 'healthy' inflation rate should be in the range of 2 to 5% per year.

¹⁷ Solidarities (2014) Wave 2 of the Post Distribution Monitoring. March

Figure [11]: Expenses by type for Palestinian refugees from Syria



There was no specific data available during the MSNA process vulnerable local communities in the North/T+5, Akkar, Bekaa, South, Mount Lebanon and Beirut.

For more information on cash and non-food items as they relates to food, please refer to the Basic Needs chapter

4.6 Coping Strategies

Summary of assessment findings: Available data shows that many Syrian refugees rely on coping strategies when they are not able to meet their basic needs, especially food, through employment or assistance. These strategies can be food consumption-based or assets depletion coping mechanisms. Assessments generally show that the main food-related coping mechanisms used by Syrian refugees are to buy less expensive food and reduce the number of meals per day. WFP's PDM showed that there were differences between regions, with those in the North resorting more frequently to coping strategies.

In terms of the depletion of assets – an important indicator which reveals possible declining access to food – spending savings and buying on credit were identified as the two most common coping mechanisms among Syrian refugees. Other studies found that PRS were also resorting to coping strategies. ANERA's needs assessment survey on PRS found that the inability of PRS families to purchase adequate quantities of food often forces them to skip meals and/or reduce food portions.

There was no data or recent data available on the coping strategies of Lebanese returnees and vulnerable communities at the time of the MSNA.

Table [10]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
Legend					
	Section not applicable			Data available	
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

Syrian refugees

National

The VASyR found that nearly 70% of the households assessed had some degree of food insecurity, with the majority falling under the mild food insecurity classification. Of the three indicators considered in the score (food consumption, food expenditure share and coping strategies), coping strategies was the indicator that showed the worst situation, and therefore was the main determinant of food insecurity in Lebanon.

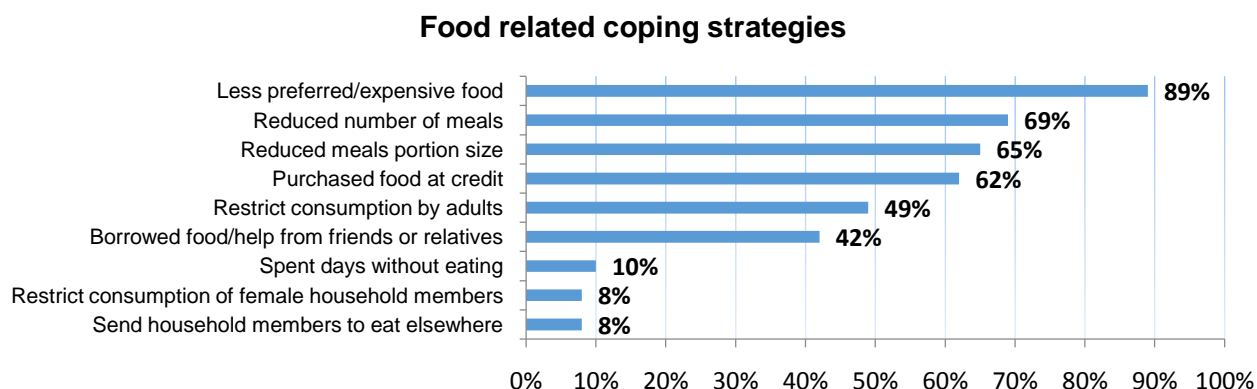
Figure [12]: Refugee food security status by length of registration



As shortage of food is common in Syrian refugee households (half of households assessed during the VASyR experienced a shortage of food in the month prior to the assessment), resorting to coping strategies is a widespread practice. Indeed, among households experiencing a shortage of food, some 90% applied coping strategies related to their food consumption. The most common food-related coping strategies were:

- Relying on less preferred or inexpensive food (89% of households)
- Reducing the number of meals and portions sizes per day (69% of households)
- Reducing portion size of meals (65% of households)
- Restricting women's or adults' food consumption so that children may eat (8% and 49% respectively)

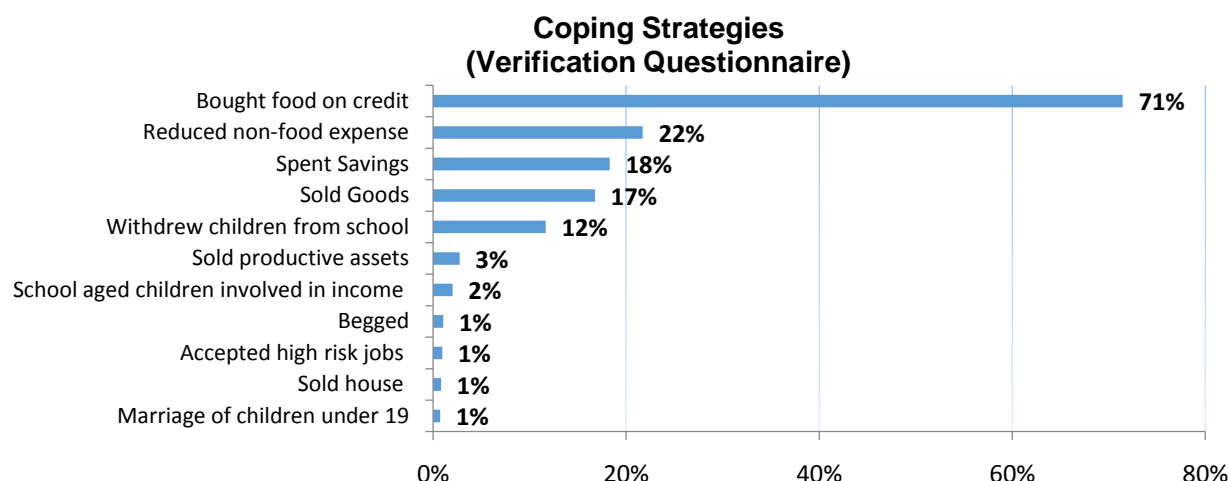
Figure [13]: Use of food-related coping strategies by type



*Source: VASyR 2013

The verification questionnaire which was answered by 30,000 refugees who appealed the VASyR's results found that respondents' most common coping strategy was to buy food on credit (71%). This coping strategy was by far the most common and was then followed by reducing non-food expenses (22%) and spending savings (18%).

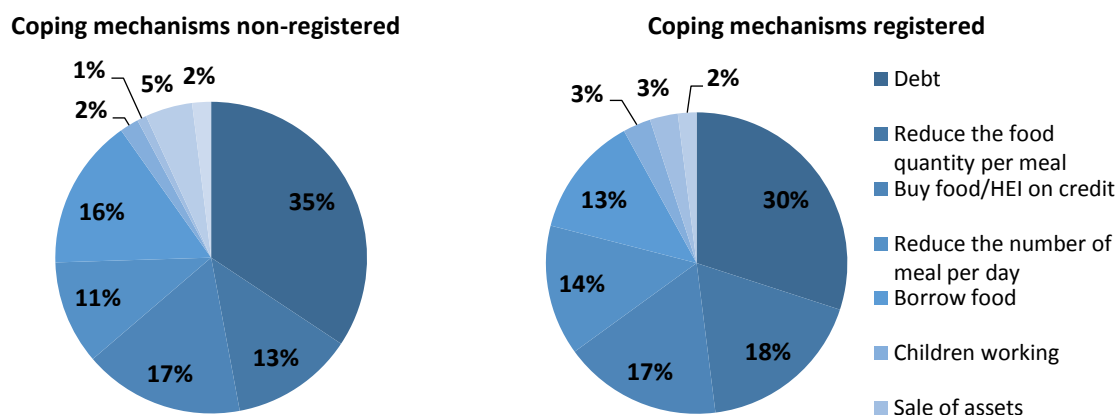
Figure [14]: Coping strategies cited by refugees in VASyR verification questionnaire



*Source: VASyR 2013

In August 2013 Handicap International's Livelihoods assessment identified the coping mechanisms of registered and non-registered refugees. The charts below show that both registered and non-registered refugees are relying on the same coping mechanisms. However, non-registered refugees will tend to rely more on debts, while registered refugees will use more food-related coping mechanisms. The report notes that non-registered refugees must remain a focus for INGO's assistance and that registration with UNHCR must be encouraged.

Figure [15]: Coping mechanisms by type and registration status



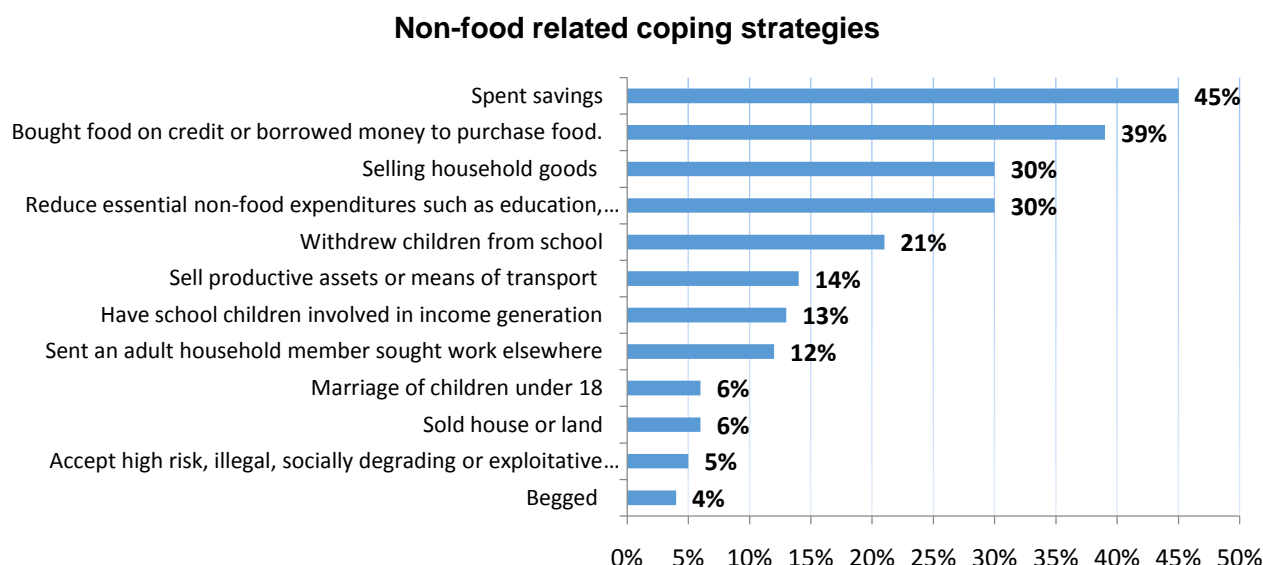
*Source: Handicap International Livelihoods Assessment August 2013

The LSESD Food Aid Project report on Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon (July-December 2013) showed that the following coping strategies were used: buying on credit (36%), having smaller meals (30%), having fewer meals (24%), borrowing or sharing food (18%) and sending children to work (9%).

The VASyR found that many non food-related coping strategies were also common. Nearly half (45%) of households reported spending their saving, 39% said that they were buying food on credit or borrowing money to purchase foods, 30% were selling households goods such as furniture, radios, televisions and jewellery. To

a lesser extent, although significant, the VASyR found that 21% of households withdrew their children from school.

Figure [16]: Non food-related coping strategies by type



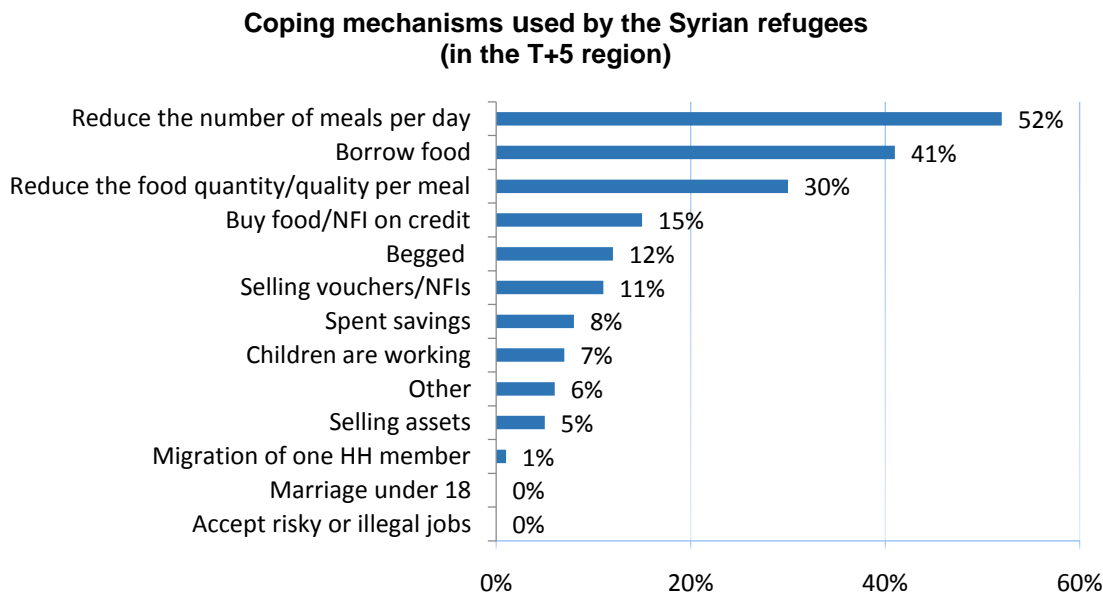
*Source:
VASyR 2013

Research shows that running into debt is one of the main non food-related coping strategies Syrian refugees resort to. The VASyR 2013 found that 75% of households had debts and 70% reported borrowing money or receiving credit during the three months before the survey. The average amount of debt was USD 600, but half of the interviewed households owed USD 200 or less. Loans were mainly provided by friends or relatives to buy food (81%), pay the rent (52%) or cover health expenses (25%). Households registered longer ago were significantly more likely to have higher amounts of debts.

North/T+5

According to Solidarités International's assessment (January 2014), 92% of Syrian refugees in T+5 were relying on coping mechanisms, and the main ones were directly related to food. As a matter of fact, 52% of the respondents were reducing the number of meals per day, 41% were borrowing food, 30% were reducing the food quantity per meal, 15% were buying food/NFI on credit and 11% were selling their vouchers/NFI (see chart below).

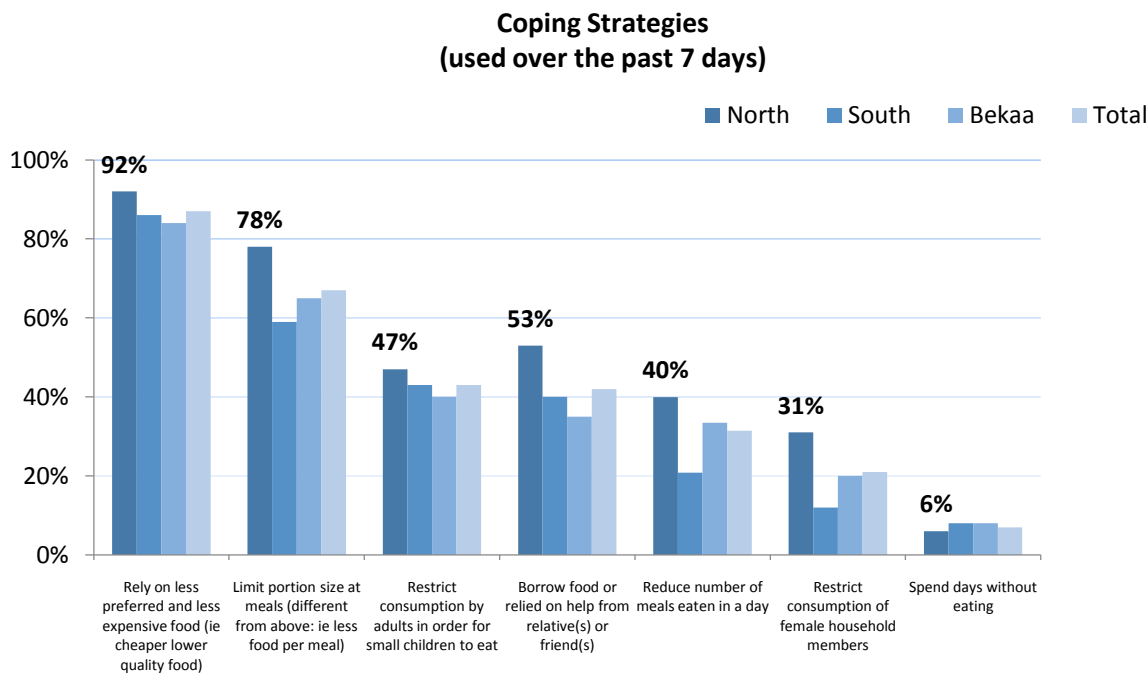
Figure [17]: Coping mechanisms used by Syrian refugees in the T+5 region



* Source: Solidarités International assessment - January 2014

WFP's Assistance (E-card/Food) Post Distribution Monitoring survey showed that relying on less preferred and less expensive food (87%) and limiting portion size at meals (67%) were the two main coping strategies overall. Additionally, the PDM showed that households in the North tended to resort to coping strategies more frequently than other regions (South and Bekaa).

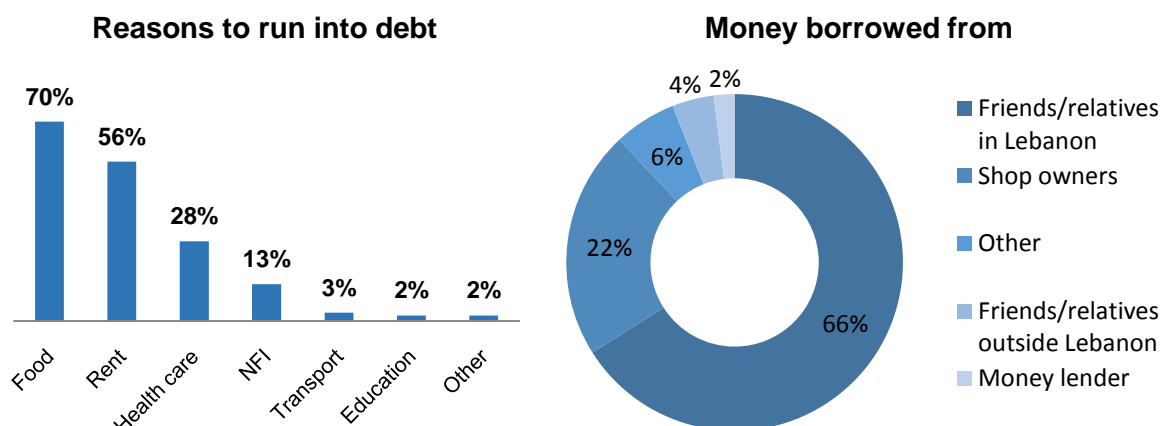
Figure [18]: Coping strategies by geographic area



* Source: WFP's Food Assistance (E-card/Food parcels) Post Distribution Monitoring survey

Solidarités International's January 2014 assessment found that running into debt was also an important coping mechanism used by Syrian refugees to buy food in T+5. The assessment revealed that 70% of Syrian refugees have run into debt to buy food, 56% to pay their rent, 28% to fund healthcare, 13% to buy NFI, 3% for transportation, 2% for education and 2% for other purpose such as bringing their family to Lebanon or fixing their dwelling. Moreover, the assessment revealed that 22% of the Syrian refugees who have run into debt have borrowed money directly from shop-owners.

Figure [19]: Reasons for debt and sources of borrowing



* Source of both graphs: Solidarités International assessment – January 2014

The assessment found that 81% of refugees run into debt in the five surrounding districts compared to 71% in Tripoli. The average debt is USD 694, with 32% of the refugees having a higher debt. The average debt is slightly different in Tripoli than in the other districts (USD 665 and USD 725 respectively), which could be due to the fact that expenditures are lower in Tripoli and by the fact that it could be harder to borrow money from relatives or Syrians in an urban area than in the surrounding districts, where refugees are gathered and creating a stronger network.

Bekaa

WFP's Food Assistance (E-card/Food parcels) Post Distribution Monitoring survey showed that the main coping strategies used in Bekaa were to rely on less preferred and less expensive food (84%) as well as limiting portion size at meals (65%).

South

During World Vision's needs assessment in Saida and Tyre, carried out in January 2013, several main coping mechanisms were reported. On a daily basis, most assessed families limited the portion sizes of meals, relied on less expensive or less preferred foods (70% of households in Saida and 50% in Tyre), or reduced the number of meals eaten per day (70%). More than half of families reduced daily adult consumption so children could eat (50% in Saida and 27% in Tyre) and purchased food on credit daily (50% in Saida and 16% in Tyre).

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process on coping strategies of Syrian refugees in Akkar and in Mount Lebanon and Beirut.

Vulnerable local communities including Lebanese host communities and Palestinians

National

An American University of Beirut (AUB) socio-economic survey of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (2010) showed that 56% of households were considered vulnerable to food insecurity, reporting inability to afford more food when food was insufficient. The survey indicated that 35% of Palestinian refugee households reported at least one member of the household reducing meal size (classified as mild food insecurity in the survey), 28% reported a member skipping meals (classified as moderate food insecurity), and 15% reported a member going without eating for a whole day in at least two to three of the last six months (classified as severe food insecurity). Other coping strategies included households resorting to buying cheaper food, borrowing money (27%) and sacrificing on food quality (36%).

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process on coping strategies for vulnerable local communities in the North/T+5, Akkar, Bekaa, the South and Mount Lebanon and Beirut.

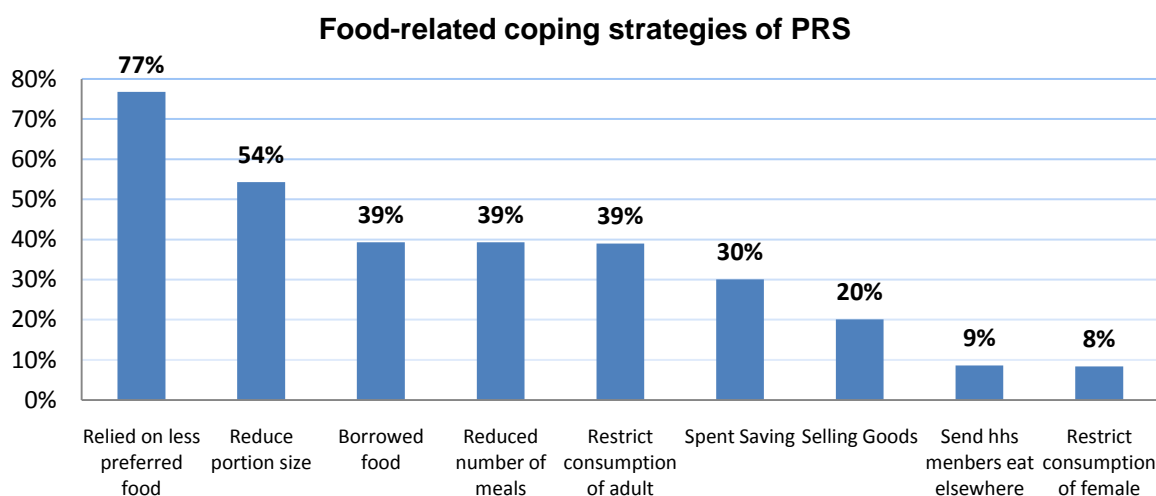
Palestinian refugees from Syria:

National

The UNWRA October 2013 survey found the following food-related coping strategies to be most common among PRS households:

- Relying on less preferred or inexpensive food (77% of households)
- Reducing portion size of meals (54% of households)
- Reducing the number of meals, borrowing food and restricting adult consumption so that children may eat (39% of households)
- Spending savings and selling goods (30% and 20% respectively)
- Sending household members to eat elsewhere and restricting female consumption (9% and 8% respectively)

Figure [20]: Food-related coping strategies among PRS by type



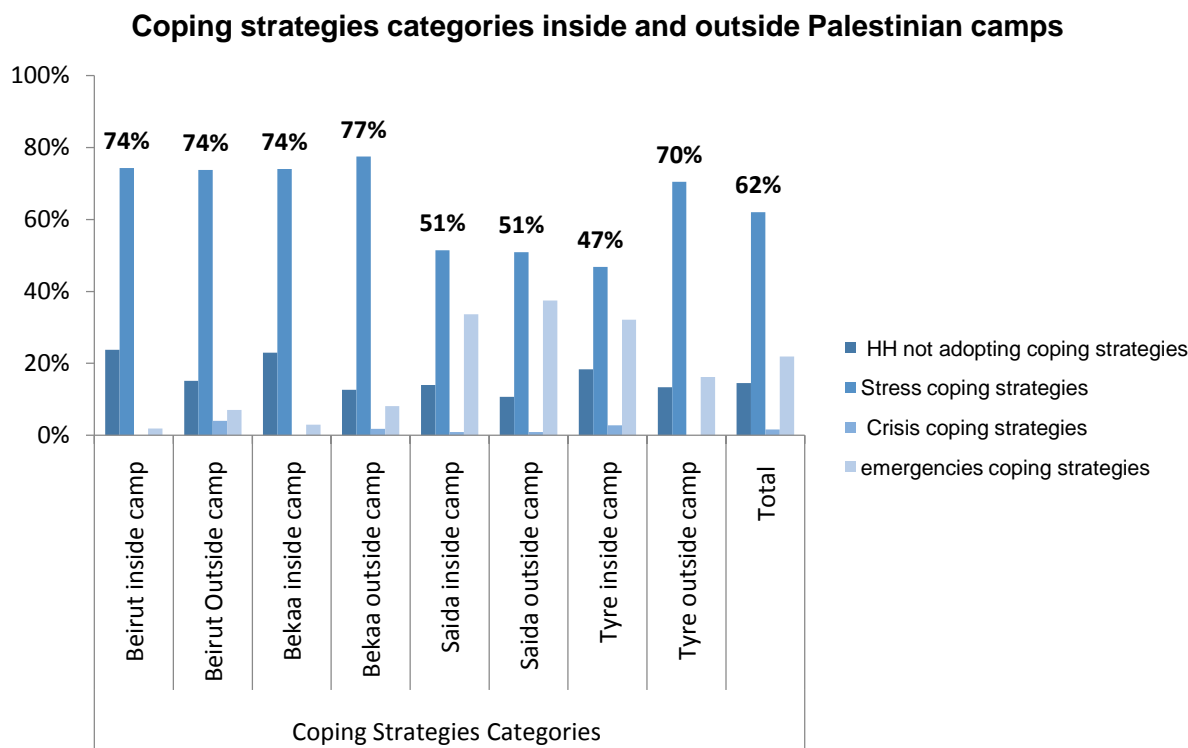
*Source: UNWRA's survey of registered PRS (October 2013)

In terms of non food-related coping strategies, the UNWRA survey found that the most common ones were:

- Buying food on credit or borrowing money to purchase food (70% of households)
- Spending savings (30% of households)
- Selling household goods: radio, furniture, television, jewellery etc. (20%)
- Accepting high-risk jobs (12%)
- Sending households members to seek work elsewhere, regardless of the usual seasonal migration (11%)
- Withdrawing children from school (21.4 % of households)
- Having children (6-15 years old) involved with income generation (3%) and selling productive assets (2%).

UNWRA's survey classified coping strategies into different categories: stress coping strategies¹⁸, crisis coping strategies¹⁹ and emergency strategies²⁰. The report found that the majority of PRS resorted to stress coping strategies. Emergency coping strategies, however, were prevalent inside Saida camp (34%), in Saida outside the camp (38%) and inside Tyre camp (32%).

Figure [21]: Categories of coping strategy inside and outside Palestinian camps



*Source: UNWRA's survey of registered PRS (October 2013)

¹⁸ **Stress coping strategies:** these mark the first stage of food insecurity where changes in the diet and frequency of daily meals consumed are observed. Spending savings, selling goods, and buying food on credit or debts are observed.

¹⁹ **Crisis coping strategies:** these mark a state of moderate food insecurity and see the sales of productive assets. With the sale of all assets, current survival is ensured, but the future security of the livelihoods system of the household is at risk.

²⁰ **Emergency strategies:** these mark severe food insecurity and represents destitution. School children are often involved in income generating activities; begging, and taking on high risk jobs are also observed.

In January 2013, Caritas' assessment among elderly Syrian and Palestinian refugees indicated that reducing meal sizes, skipping meals, as well as skipping fruits, vegetables and meats were common. In fact, there was a tendency for older persons to eat less quantity or less quality food in order to provide better meals to younger members of the family.

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process on coping strategies for PRS in Akkar, Bekaa and the North/T+5.

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process on the coping strategies of Lebanese returnees.

4.7 Access to Water for Cooking

Summary of assessment findings: There was no specific data on access to water for cooking use available during the MSNA process. The VASyR does not cover this question specifically but asked refugees their reasons for not cooking. The main reason was lack of food (64%). Lack of safe water was only a reason for 2% of the Syrian refugees surveyed. There was no data for any other target group in any other region.

Table [11]: Assessment coverage by geographic area and target population

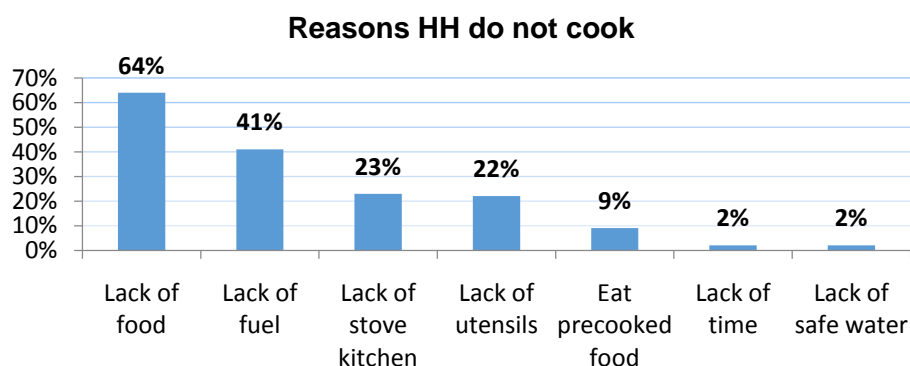
	Vulnerable Local Communities (Lebanese and PRL)	Lebanese Returnees	PRS	Syrian refugees	
				Registered	Unregistered
National					
North/T+5					
Akkar					
Mt. Lebanon and Beirut					
Bekaa					
South					
Palestinian Camps					
Outside Palestinian Camps					
Legend					
	Section not applicable			Data available	
*NB – Grey cells indicate that there is at least one assessment available on the specific area or target group. However, the data may not cover the situation for the entire geographic area or target group.					

Syrian refugees

National

The VASyR showed that only 2% of households cited the lack of safe water as a reason why they were not able to cook (see chart below). The main reasons why households were not able to cook were lack of food (64%) and lack of fuel (41%).

Figure [22]: Reasons cited by Syrian refugee households for not being able to cook



*Source: VASyR 2013

There was no specific data available during the MSNA process on access to water for cooking for Syrian refugees in the North/T+5, Akkar, Bekaa, the South and Mount Lebanon and Beirut. Additionally, there was no specific data on access to water for cooking for vulnerable local communities, PRS and Lebanese returnees.

5. PERSONS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS (PwSN)

The available data and MSNA SWG workshop feedback showed that the following groups are either vulnerable across sectors or particularly vulnerable with regards to the food security sector:

- **Newcomers:** Handicap International's Livelihoods Assessment report (August 2013) identified newcomers as particularly vulnerable with regards food security as, when they arrive, they often do not know about assistance systems. Handicap International states that it is very important to assist them with some household essential items/food items (HEI/FI) but also with advice and information about assistance systems. It recommends giving them a first assistance kit to help them focus on other priority needs.
- **Host communities:** host communities were identified by workshop participants as being particularly vulnerable to food insecurity in Lebanon as they refuse any assistance in order to avoid being seen as refugees. Providing assistance to host communities through different distribution sites or via the government instead of humanitarian actors could be a solution for acceptance.
- **Families excluded from assistance:** some families that have been excluded from assistance following targeting have reported not being able to afford food anymore. They are becoming more vulnerable as they are also running out of savings.
- **Elderly Palestinian refugees from Syria:** the January 2013 Caritas assessment "Forgotten Voices: An insight into older persons among refugees from Syria in Lebanon" surveyed 220 households and showed that dairy, fruit and vegetable consumption among elderly Palestinian refugees was lower than that of their Syrian counterparts. Older Palestinians from Syria consumed dairy, fruits and vegetables on average two days a week, compared to three days a week for elderly Syrian refugees. Five days a week, elderly Palestinian refugees only consumed bread, compared to one day a week for elderly Syrian refugees.
- **PRL female-headed households:** Palestinian women are significantly more likely to report severe food insecurity. The 2010 AUB socio-economic survey of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon found that 19% of female-headed households experienced severe food insecurity, and 30% of households reporting severe food insecurity were female-headed households.
- **Refugees affected by impairment, injury or chronic disease:** a study carried out by Handicap International and HelpAge International (2013) assessing the situation of vulnerable refugees (in the study this included refugees affected by impairment, injury and chronic disease) in Jordan and Lebanon found that families including a person with specific needs face some additional challenges. The study showed that:
 - Older people with specific needs (such as impairment, injury or chronic disease) will have specific needs related to nutrition due to a number of factors such as dental problems, nutritional problems and changes in requirement for general food and micronutrient intake.
 - Insufficient food intake can have severe health repercussions for older family members or those with chronic diseases. They may see their health condition degrade as food intake becomes irregular.
 - People with disabilities might require additional calorie intake (e.g. for persons with stroke or spinal cord injuries who may be less able regulate their body temperature, or persons with injuries to facilitate the healing process).
 - Some people with disabilities need a special diet to facilitate the healing process and avoid complications. For example, some need food in a liquid form.
 - Healthcare prevention and nutritional messages are not always accessible to all (i.e. persons with visual or hearing impairments, low mobility or older people).

6. INFORMATION GAPS

6.1 Target Groups

- **Vulnerable Lebanese communities:** there is extremely limited data on how the Syrian crisis is affecting the food security situation of vulnerable Lebanese communities.
- **Newcomers:** the MSNA SWG workshop pointed out that there is no data available on the food security situation of newcomers and there is also a need for follow-up of their situation. The lack of follow-up and monitoring for this population can also lead to duplication of arrival food assistance (parcels).
- **Unregistered refugees:** there is very limited data available on the food security situation of those who are not registered with UNHCR.
- **Populations excluded from assistance due to targeting:** the MSNA SWG workshop expressed the need for a surveillance system of the populations who have been excluded from assistance.

6.2 Geographical Focus

- **Disaggregation by geographic area:** most data available covers multiple areas of Lebanon but does not capture the existing geographical diversities or the situation in urban versus. rural areas. There is a scarcity of information on the situation in other geographic areas. VASyR data at the regional level would be extremely useful.

6.3 Themes

- **Food consumption score:** there is no available data on food habits and how food is distributed within households or within families. The food consumption score²¹ does not give information on trends within families and trends in consumption patterns.
- **Coping strategies:** the data available generally focused on negative coping strategies but offered limited information on the illegal and risky jobs that target populations take up in order to meet their food needs.
- **Access to water for cooking:** although the WASH sector chapter discussed access to water and drinking water, access to water specifically for cooking is not addressed.
- **Social cohesion:** a topic that is not addressed in assessments is how access to food assistance affects social cohesion.
- **Reasons for refusal of food assistance:** the MSNA SWG workshop participants mentioned that some target groups refuse to queue up to receive food assistance at distribution centres as they do not want to be associated with Syrian refugees.
- **Food Sources:** updated data on food sources is necessary due to the rollout of targeted assistance in October 2013.

²¹ The FCS is a composite score based on dietary diversity, food frequency, and relative nutritional importance of different food groups.

6.4 Persons with Specific Needs

Generally, there was very little data that provided insights into the unique food security challenges faced by vulnerable groups. Vulnerable groups must be included as unique sub-populations within assessments.

6.5 Planned Assessments

Planned Assessment	Date planned for
Food Security and Livelihoods assessment of the Lebanese population (FAO)	May/June 2014
Emergency Needs Assessment of South Lebanon on labour markets for Syrian refugees (World Vision)	n/a
Registration exercise of Lebanese returnees (IOM)	Upcoming months
Inter-Agency VASyR 2014	May 2014
Market Assessment for Aarsal (WFP)	Ongoing
Assessment on Newcomers (WFP)	Upcoming months
Cash Working Group Market Assessment on Food and NFIs in Lebanon	n/a

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DATA COLLECTION

After reviewing the information needs and the data available for each of them, several recommendations for data collection stood out:

- The following themes and specific questions should be present in future assessments:
 - As there was no specific data on access to water for cooking, it is necessary to include a question on access to water for cooking in the VASyR 2014, for example. There is a need for information on the sufficiency of water for cooking and of its quality.
 - Assessments should include information on type of consequences (health, nutrition, economic, etc.) of a reduction in the size of meals, and who is most likely to be affected within the household.
 - Gathering additional data on positive coping strategies should also be considered.
 - If possible, future assessments should gather data on the diversity of illegal and risky jobs and the extent to which target populations resort to them in order to meet their food needs.
 - Future assessments should gather data on the proportion of target populations who refuse to receive food assistance in order to measure the extent of the problem, and ask the populations in question what the possible ways to address this issue are.
 - For IYCF practices, there is a necessity to include questions related to whether mothers are exclusively breastfeeding or supplementing with bottle-feeding and the reasons why. In addition, this should be measured at the infant level as there may be several infants fed in different ways in the same household.
- Food security assessments should be geographically representative at the operational level (i.e: UNHCR sub-offices).
- According to the MSNA SWG workshop participants, data analysis of data collected by agencies should be systematic.
- Reviewing all past assessments on food security and nutrition before starting a new assessment should be systematic.
- Establishing a list of key definitions to use across the sector (e.g: number of warm/cooked meals and number of meals consumed) should be envisaged.

ANNEX A

ASSESSMENTS/REPORTS CONSULTED AND REVIEWED

Organisation	Name of Report	Data Collection Date	Area	Methodology
CARE International/DPNA/ACA	Integrated Rapid Assessment Report	Aug-13	Mount Lebanon: Barja, Chhime, Dalhoun, Katermay, Mazboud and Mghairiye)	Proportional random sampling; 240 households, FGDs; 6 Municipality KIs
MSF	Misery beyond the war zone: Life for Syrian refugees and displaced populations in Lebanon	Jun-12	Beqaa, Tripoli, Saida – Syrian refugees (registered/unregistered)	Representative sample survey (N=2,124 HH)
WFP-UNICEF-UNHCR-GoL	VASyR	May-June 2013	Countrywide	Representative random sample stratified by registration date (and pending registration). Over 1,400 households interviewed.
Movement for Peace Lebanon (MPDL)	Assessment on Persons with Specific Needs and Their Households	Dec-13	Beirut, Mount Lebanon, South Lebanon	For triangulation reasons the Assessment was designed to follow 3 methods;1) Household interviews, (465 in 7 districts), 2) Focus group discussions, (45 with 6 different categories), 3) Key informant interviews. (20 meetings)

World Vision	Needs Assessment Report Syrian Refugees	Jan-13	South Lebanon ,Saida & Tyr Caza	A total of 511 surveys with heads of households were completed. Sampling was conducted on a random basis. In addition, key informative interviews, with targeted focal persons in the community who worked in municipalities or NGOs.
Handicap International	Livelihoods Assessment Report	Aug-13		A combination of primary and secondary sources and methods were used. Secondary sources included feedback from sectors coordination meetings, reports published by a range of humanitarian actors, meetings with relevant UN bodies, local and international NGOs. Primary sources and methods included key informant interviews (mainly with the municipalities), focus group discussions with both males and females (FGD), household interviews as well as site visits and observation.
UNHCR/UNICEF/WFP/WHO/IOCC	2013 JOINT Nutrition Assessment Syrian Refugees in LEBANON	Oct-13	National, North, Bekaa, South and Mount Lebanon and Beirut.	Nutritional analysis - children 6-59 months and WRA, SMART-UNHCR SENS
CARITAS	Forgotten Voices: An insight into older persons among refugees from Syria in Lebanon	Mar-13	Lebanon: Baalbeck, Saida, Sin el Fil, Taalabaya, Tripoli, and Zahleh, Bourj el-Barajneh, Mar Elias, and Shatila	Stratified random sample with regards to geographic distribution and date of arrival to Lebanon. A total sample size of 220 of 175 older Syrian refugees and 45 older PRS was selected. Quantitative data was gathered through individual surveys. Qualitative data

				was gathered through open-ended interviews with older refugees as well as humanitarian organizations providing aid to refugees in Lebanon were added to provide a qualitative component to the study
FAO	Agricultural Livelihoods and Food Security Impact Assessment and Response Plan for the Syria Crisis in the Neighbouring Countries of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey	Mar-13	Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey	Desk Review and KI
IOM	The Situation & Needs of Lebanese Returnees from Syria	Jul-13	Countrywide	Data from registration and profiling exercise conducted across all six governorates by HRC with technical support from IOM. Outreach conducted through municipalities. Questionnaire designed by HRC and IOM.
ANERA	Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon -A Needs Assessment	Jan-13	Within and outside nine Palestinian refugee camps across Lebanon.	HH surveys, 669 households of Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) within and outside nine Palestinian refugee camps across Lebanon.

Solidarités International	Living Condition Assessment Report (not yet published)	Jan-14	North/T+5	Key informants interviews with NGOs (e.g. UNHCR, WFP, Save the Children, Handicap International and the Danish Refugee Council). 269 households representing a total of 1,689 individuals were interviewed through a household assessment. 38% were females and 62% were males. The UNHCR Registered Syrians refugee per village database was used to select randomly all villages to be assessed in each district. From this database, 28 villages were selected and visited. Then, in each village, individuals interviewed were selected using a basic random selection method.
Islamic Relief Lebanon	Assessment on the Needs of the new comers of Syrian refugees	Feb-14	Mount Lebanon in Aramoon and Barja	IRL conducted a need assessment in Mount Lebanon in Aramoon and Barja of new comers of Syrian refugees during February 2014. IRL staff as well social workers has conducted the household visits for 259 Syrian families.
Oxfam/BRIC/LCSR	Survey on the livelihoods of Syrian refugees in Lebanon	Oct-13	Nationwide	KI interviews with Lebanese officials; FGDs; detailed survey among 260 households, representing 1,591 individuals, cluster sampling
UNRWA/WFP	Vulnerability Assessment of Palestinian Refugees from Syria	Oct-13	8 Palestinian camps and gathering	Household assessment among 848 households.