

From:
Emergency Team
SOLIDARITÉS
INTERNATIONAL



Rapid Needs Assessment in North Lebanon Minieh-Dennieh and Zgharta Districts



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1. Main Findings

According to UNHCR, 13,959 Syrian refugees were registered in Minieh-Dennieh and 2,230 in Zgharta as of 22 January 2013. During the assessment, SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL (SI) teams identified between 1,600 and 2,000 Syrian refugee families (i.e. between 9,600 and 12,000 people) in 20 villages across the two districts.

The number of Syrian refugees in these two districts is likely to increase significantly in the coming month due to (i) the increased influx of Syrian refugees in Lebanon in general and (ii) the fact that the Akkar district, which is a major entry point for Syrians in Lebanon, as well as Tripoli, are becoming increasingly saturated in terms of housing opportunities, resulting in an increasing number of refugees moving further into more remote areas. Meanwhile, housing opportunities are likely to decrease in both Zgharta and Minieh-Dennieh as many Lebanese families in Tripoli have a summer house in the mountains and usually spend the summer months in this second house. At the moment, many Syrian refugees are staying in these summer houses, but when winter ends, they will either have to move out, or they will move to another part of the house.

Meetings with various INGOs and UN agencies working in the sectors of WASH and Shelter indicate that WASH and Shelter needs are not covered in the two assessed districts. The field assessment conducted by SI confirms these major gaps.

SHELTER:

The housing conditions of Syrian families living in Minieh-Dennieh and Zgharta vary greatly. Five broad categories of dwelling were identified during the assessment:

1. Summer house of a Lebanese family: housing conditions are good and usually, the refugee family does not have to pay a rent; however, in summer, the refugee family will have to move to another part of the house (basement, balcony) or to another house.
2. Rented houses with adequate housing conditions: the main problem is the expensive rent. Some refugee families can no longer pay the rent. They are taking increasingly large debts and risk being evicted.
3. Rented houses with inadequate insulation: absence of windows, holes and leakages in the ceiling, barren cement floor, no plastering on the walls, etc. The main issues are the unhealthy conditions due to the cold and humidity, as well as the cost of the rent.
4. 'Informal' dwellings: these are usually stock/storage facilities, basements, hangars or shops. The living conditions are precarious with poor insulation, no access to WASH facilities and no access to the water network, and refugee families have to pay a rent for these dwellings.
5. Unfinished buildings: this is by far the most precarious type of dwelling. Unfinished buildings leave the families completely unprotected from the cold and the humidity. Usually, families staying in this type of buildings do not pay any rent.

Households staying in categories 3, 4 and 5 types of accommodation urgently need support to improve the insulation of their dwelling. Most families staying in dwellings listed in categories 2, 3 and 4 need urgent support to pay their rent. Finally, people staying in summer houses (category 1) will need support to find an alternative place to stay in the coming months.

WASH:

Sanitation: Families staying in 'informal' types of dwellings and in unfinished buildings are deprived of access to the water network and deprived of access to basic sanitation facilities such as latrines and bathrooms. A majority of the families living in houses usually have access to latrines in their dwelling but these are not always connected to the sewage system. Latrines are often connected to a simple pit which

needs to be emptied on a regular basis. This operation being costly, families need financial support for safe and regular sludge disposal.

Access to water and water quality: 70% of assessed households are connected to the water network while 30% have to get water from other sources (e.g. public fountains). The main issue affecting water quality is the low quality and poor cleanliness of the reservoirs as they are not maintained regularly and as most of them are not properly covered and protected from external sources of contamination. 55% of the roof tanks are old and need to be cleaned while 17% of households had no water tank, or water tanks which were too dirty and damaged to be utilized.

Hygiene: Insufficient access to hygiene products was reported by all respondents. Lack of access to hygiene products combined with the lack of access to bathing areas and limited access to water lead to inadequate hygiene practices.

Cases of diarrhea, skin infections and fever were reported by a large number of respondents. These probably result from a combination of factors including: poor quality of water used for drinking, poor hygiene practices, and inadequate sanitation in and around some of the dwellings.

FOOD SECURITY:

To meet their food needs in order to live a productive and healthy life, a Syrian family (of 6 members on average) must disburse on the local markets in Lebanon 15,000 to 16,000 LBP¹ (10 to 11 USD) a day for 3 meals without meat. These figures compared to the incomes earned (5 to 25 USD per day) and the frequency of work for Syrians in Lebanon (people can only find work for a few days each month, if at all), indicate that refugee families are not able to fulfill their needs in food without external support.

To cope with this situation, the Syrian families use livelihood strategies that are either unsustainable (dependence on humanitarian assistance or on host communities, taking jobs with low wages) or negative such as running into high debts, using savings, selling assets, limiting the expenses on health and education and reducing the number of meals per day.

2. Methodology and Location

1) Methodology

From the 18th to the 31st of January 2013, SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL (SI) conducted an assessment in Lebanon. The assessment team was composed of a WASH expert, a food security and livelihood expert and a head of mission. The mission consisted in two different steps:

(i) Secondary data review and coordination:

- Secondary data review: Danish Refugee Council Livelihood assessment in Bekaa valley (May 2012), Danish Refugee Council Livelihood assessment in Akkar district (Feb. 2012), World Vision needs assessment (Nov. 2012), Action Contre la Faim WASH assessment in the Bekaa (Dec. 2012), PU-AMI Rapid assessment report in South Lebanon (Oct. 2012), the latest Syria Regional Response Plan, minutes of WASH sector coordination meetings, minutes of inter-agency meetings and lists of registered Syrian refugee families from UNHCR.
- Attendance to WASH sector coordination meetings and inter-agency meetings

¹ LBP: Lebanese Pound, 1 USD = 1500 LBP

- Interviews with key informants amongst INGOs staff, UN agencies and donors.

Following discussions with the main WASH actors operational in the country, and in particular in North Lebanon, two districts were identified as uncovered in terms of WASH and to some extent shelter: Minieh-Dennieh and Zgharta. Some gaps were also identified in the Bekaa, and in particular, in the district of Hermel. Therefore, SI team decided to conduct two field assessments: one in the Bekaa and one in North Lebanon.

(ii) *Field assessment:*

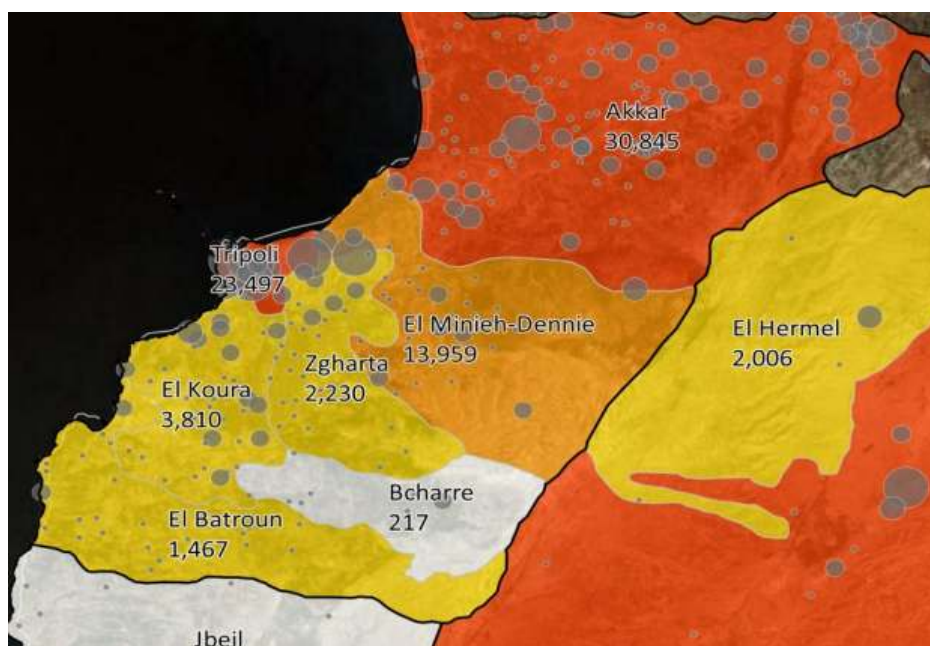
Field assessment from the 19th to the 22nd of January (in the Bekaa) and from the 24th to the 27th of January (North Lebanon):

- Interviews with key informants: Lebanese civil servants in the municipalities, Lebanese leaders in charge of the Syrian refugees
- Interviews with Syrian refugees at household level
- Focus group discussions refugee households (separately with men and women)
- Rapid price market survey
- Direct observation

2) Location

During the field assessment, the team identified significant gaps in the sectors of WASH and Shelter in the districts of Zgharta and Minieh-Dennieh, in North Lebanon. Therefore, the present report will focus on the findings related to these two districts only, and not on findings related to the Bekaa.

The assessment team focussed on the central and eastern parts of Zgharta and Minieh-Dennieh districts, i.e. the mountainous parts, as these areas are more remote and have been largely unassisted by INGOs so far. As indicated in the below map (source: UNHCR Lebanon), 13,959 Syrian refugees were registered in Minieh-Dennieh and 2,230 in Zgharta as of 22 January 2013. In comparison, the local population is 101,424 for Minieh-Dennieh and 105,255 for Zgharta². The total number of unregistered families in these two districts is unknown.



² According to the 2008 population census and demographic growth projections.

The field assessment covered 20 villages across the two districts. The number of Syrian refugee families in each of the villages is displayed in the below table. The figures were provided by the municipalities and the Lebanese focal points in charge of relief for Syrian families. The figures comprise both registered and unregistered refugee families.

District	Village Name	# of Syrian refugee families
Minieh-Dennieh	Kfar Habou	30
	Bakhaoun	180
	Sir ed Danniye	175
	Bqaa Safrine	94
	Assoun	211
	Es Sfire	45
	Izal	30
	Tarane	40
	Kersayda	45
	Nemrine	37
	Kfar Chillane	10
	Mrah es Sreij	15
Zgharta	Aalma	Between 705 and 1100
	Zgharta	
	Miryata	
	Al Fouwar	
	Achach	
	Ardeh	
	Deir Nbouh	
	Rachaaïne	
TOTAL		1617 to 2012

3. Assessment Findings

I- SHELTER

The housing conditions of Syrian families living in Minieh-Dennieh and Zgharta vary greatly. Five broad categories of dwelling were identified during the assessment:

1. Summer house of a Lebanese family: housing conditions are good and usually, the refugee family does not have to pay a rent. The main problem is that in summer, the refugee family will have to move to another part of the house (basement, balcony) or to another house.
2. Rented houses with adequate housing conditions (adequate isolation, etc.): the main problem is the expensive rent. Some refugee families came to these locations and managed to pay for the first few months (thanks to savings, work opportunities in summer/autumn, etc.) but can no longer pay the rent. They are taking increasingly large debts and risk being evicted.
3. Rented houses with inadequate insulation: absence of windows, holes and leakages in the ceiling, barren cement floor, no plastering on the walls, etc. The main issues are the unhealthy conditions due to the cold and humidity, as well as the cost of the rent.

4. 'Informal' dwellings: these are usually stock/storage facilities, basements, hangars or shops. In one case, five families were living in tents, under a hangar. Refugee families have to pay a rent for these dwellings.
5. Unfinished buildings: this is by far the most precarious type of dwelling. Unfinished buildings leave the families completely unprotected from the cold and the humidity. Usually, families staying in this type of buildings do not pay any rent.

The team did not see any tented settlement in the districts of Zgharta and Minieh-Dennieh. The characteristics of the five different shelter categories are summarized in the below table:

Category	Monthly Rent	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Summer house of Lebanese family	no	Fairly good conditions of the dwelling Usually: no rent to pay	The Syrian families will need to move out during the summer, or will need to move to another part of the house (basement)
2. Rented house / adequate	200 to 400 USD	Fairly good conditions of the dwelling	Very expensive Risk of being expelled and high indebtedness
3. Rented house / inadequate	150 to 200 USD	Lower rent	Unhealthy living conditions; cold; humidity
4. Rented 'informal' dwelling	100 to 200 USD	Lower rent	Very precarious living conditions; cold; humidity No access to latrines No dedicated space for bathing No dedicated space for the kitchen No connection to the water network
5. Unfinished building	no	No rent to pay	Extremely precarious living conditions; cold; humidity No access to latrines No dedicated space for bathing No dedicated space for the kitchen No connection to the water network





Left: families staying in a stock; above: broken window in a rented house

Rent is the main post of expenditure for most of the families interviewed. It ranges between 100 and 400 USD per month, depending on the type of dwelling, as detailed in the below table. According to the respondents, rents have increased over the past months, and it is becoming increasingly challenging to find any kind of accommodation in the assessed districts.

Village	Type of building	Nb. of room	Rent (USD)
Bakhaoun	Average rent		100 to 150
Sir ed Danniye	Average rent unfurnished room/house		150 to 200
	Average rent furnished house		300
Assoun	Average rent unfurnished room/house		100 to 200
	Average rent furnished house		400
Miryata	Stock	1 room	130
	Tent under hangar (each)		100
Aalma	Average rent for 80 m ²		300
	Stock	1 room	100 to 200
Al Fouwar	Stock	1 room	100 to 200
Kfar Habou	House (2 rooms + Bathroom + kitchen)		200

II- WASH

I. Access, availability and quality

a. Availability:

The average altitude of the area assessed is about 1000 meters. Given this physical configuration, most of the towns or villages located in the area are equipped with local boreholes to pump ground water at approximately 100 to 130 meters depth. Boreholes are equipped with generators of high power (e.g. 27 KvA) and submersible pumps. Water distribution is ensured through PVC pipes networks connected to houses. At house level, water is stored in underground tanks which then feed the roof tanks (usually one tank of 1000 liters in each house) by electric pumps. From the roof tanks, water is then distributed in the different taps of the house by gravity.

During the assessment, SI conducted water tests (Bactoscope rapid tests) at the boreholes and water network. No bacteriological contamination was detected. However, contamination takes place at other levels, as indicated in section c. below.

The yield of the borehole and of the ground water has not been measured, but according to the local population, ground water is available throughout the year in the same quality and quantity. The only constraint as far as yield is concerned is the capacity of the municipalities to ensure a constant fuel supply for the generators. Fuel shortages, and consequently, interruptions in the water supply, have been reported by the respondents in several remote villages.

b. Water access

70% of the households surveyed are connected to the water network while 30% have to get water from other sources. Households which are not connected to the water network collect water from neighbouring houses or from public water points such as fountains (at a maximum distance of 200 meters from the house). In terms of access to water, the situation varies depending on the family's housing conditions. There are three different categories:

- (i) Families staying in a rented house have access to 'regular' WASH facilities: they are connected to the water network and have access to a latrine and a shower within the house
- (ii) Families staying in shops or stocks are sometimes connected to the water network and may have access to a latrine facility (although, of lower standard). They never have access to a shower or bathroom.
- (iii) Families staying in unfinished buildings, hangars, tents and basements are not connected to the water network. They do not have access to latrines or bathrooms.

For households connected to the water network, the cost of water is included in the rent of the house. Households which are not connected to the network can usually get free access to water, either from public water points or from a neighbour's connexion. Only a few respondents explained that they had to purchase drinking water from time to time.

c. Storage at household level

Families staying in rented houses with connection to the water network have sufficient storage capacity. However, the quality and cleanliness of the reservoirs is an issue as they are not maintained regularly and as most of them are not properly covered and protected from external sources of contamination. According to SI observations, 55% of the roof tanks are old and need to be cleaned while 28% are recent and clean. In 17% of the cases, water tanks are too dirty and damaged and need to be replaced.

For households which are not connected to the water network, storage facilities are inadequate both in terms of quantity and quality/cleanliness. A small percentage of households do not have any storage tank. Tanks are usually damaged (with holed and rust) and dirty. The below pictures display a water reservoir serving 35 families in Miryata village. It is connected to a neighbour's network.



All households surveyed had water containers at home. They are used to fetch and transport water, to store water for cooking and drinking, and to store water for the shower and the latrines. The quantity and quality of containers vary greatly. Although they are clean for the most part, their sustainability is limited given the type of material (e.g. plastic bottles). Many of them are not covered; some are broken.

To sum up, storage capacity is limited at household level both in terms of quantity and quality. SI water tests revealed the presence of bacteriological contamination at reservoir level.



Two different types of containers used at household level

d. Drinking water

In general, households use water from the water network for all purposes (cleaning the house, personal hygiene / shower, laundry, washing dishes) except drinking and cooking. However, some families also use this water for drinking as they do not have any other option. Others reported drinking this water when they arrived in Lebanon but have now found alternative sources of water (such as the public fountains) for drinking and cooking purposes. All the families who reported drinking tap water (either now or in the past) also reported that children and sometimes adults in their households had been sick as a result. The illnesses reported were diarrhea, fever and skin infections. Some respondents explained that it was not the water itself which provoked the diseases, but the water tanks which were dirty and contaminated. The fact that people do not report being sick when drinking from the public fountains whereas they report illnesses after drinking from the household tap confirms the hypothesis that the contamination sources are at the water tanks level rather than in the boreholes or the network.

Households which are not connected to the water network and live in 'informal' housing facilities face greater health risks as far as water consumption is concerned. Indeed, the water system in these households presents several contamination risks: at pipe level, water tank level and container level (as demonstrated in the below pictures). Cases of diarrhea and skin diseases have also been reported and observed, in these households, particularly amongst children.

None of the households surveyed reported filtering or treating water before drinking it. Some families boil water before drinking it. A small number of families reported using snow for drinking and cooking purposes, after boiling it.



Inadequate water connection in a rented house and uncovered pots

II. Excreta, wastewater disposal and drainage

As far as sanitation is concerned, the same distinction has to be made between (i) families staying in rented houses, (ii) families staying in shops or stocks and (iii) families staying in unfinished buildings, hangars, tents, etc.

a. Latrines

In rented houses, bathrooms (including toilets and shower) are functional and are either connected to the public sewage system, or connected to a simple single pit. In the case of single pits latrines, inhabitants reported the need to empty them. Toilets are generally equipped with Oriental or European slabs, and are well maintained, even if some of the refugees (30%) reported a lack of cleaning products and detergents.

In shops and stocks, households usually built a separate room for the toilet and shower. These 'bathrooms' are usually well maintained, however, they are not properly equipped: there is no slab (only a simple hole), and there is limited access to water (please see the picture opposite). Latrines are connected to simple pits which need to be emptied on a regular basis.



People living in unfinished buildings and tents do not have access to any latrine facility and have recourse to open defecation as a result.

b. Shower and wastewater

In proper houses, showers are located in the same room as the toilets, and are usually well maintained. Wastewater from shower is evacuated through the same system as for the latrines.

In 'informal' types of houses, there is no bathroom as such and people take their shower in a corner of the house (e.g. at the entrance of the house in the below picture). Wastewater is not properly evacuated: people dig holes in the walls to facilitate water evacuation, and then dig a hole at the entrance of the building thereby creating pools of stagnant wastewater.



Improvised shower and inadequate wastewater pit – household living in a stock

Refugees living in 'informal' houses do the laundry and wash the dishes outside. Since there is no dedicated space for this activity, with a proper platform and drainage, small pools of stagnant water were observed near the dwellings.

III. Waste disposal and environmental cleanliness

A waste management system is in place at the level of the municipalities. However, at household level, once more the situation varies between families staying in houses (where the surroundings are usually



clean) and those living in 'informal' types of dwellings, where garbage was observed around the premises (please see pictures above). In some cases, solid waste is gathered and burned in a dedicated improvised place, close to the house.

IV. Hygiene practices

Overall, knowledge related to hygiene seems satisfactory in most of the households assessed, with variations depending on the type of dwelling (i.e. it is easier to maintain cleanliness in a house compared to an unfinished house) and the resources of the families (and consequently, their access to hygiene products). The assessment team observed a few cases of skin infections (mainly children) and respondents reported a few cases of diarrhoea amongst children. These are likely to be the result of a combination of factors: lack of access to hygiene items (especially for non-registered households), lack of water, absence of latrine and poor quality of the water used for drinking.

Most respondents, whether they were registered or non-registered, reported that they did not have enough hygiene items, especially detergent, soap and menstrual cloth.

Finally, hygiene practices are disrupted by the lack of dedicated space for bathing. Respondents indicated taking a shower once or twice a week only, mainly due to the cold temperature, the lack of hygiene products and the difficulty to warm water (people do it on firewood or on the stove).

Refugees who are not registered (and who do not benefit from monthly distributions of hygiene items) cannot afford adequate hygiene items. Some of them have no other choice than to use only water for body hygiene or to clean the premises.

III- FOOD SECURITY

I. Sources of income

Work in Syria

Back in Syria, most of the refugee households interviewed had, as a main source of income, the employment of men in unskilled work (agricultural labourer, shepherd and unskilled worker in construction) or semi-skilled work³ in construction (ceramic, painting, bricklayer, electrician) or other sectors such as driving, mechanic or trading. Very few households had members employed in skilled work (civil servant, office work for instance) or women earning incomes. The very few women working were employed as casual worker in agriculture.

Work in Lebanon

In the areas assessed, work opportunities for Syrians are rare to very rare. There are more work opportunities in the urban settings (Western Bekaa district) than in the rural settings (Northern Bekaa and the eastern part of Minieh-Dennieh district). However, in an urban context, the skills required and the number of people looking for a job are higher, thus leading to more competition to get a job.

Some respondents reported finding work opportunities in Lebanon, occasionally. The type of work and the wages are displayed in the below table:

³ Unskilled labour is generally defined as work people can learn to do in 30 days or less. Semi-skilled labour consists of professions that take at least 30 days to learn, but the scope and variety of semi-skilled professions can vary from low to high skills level. Source: Danish Refugee Council Livelihood assessment – Bekaa – May 2012 from U.S. Department of Labour.

Description	Type of work	Unit	Wage in USD
Unskilled work in construction	Casual	Day	5 to 6
Semi-skilled work in construction	Casual	Day	10 to 25
Seasonal work in agriculture / agricultural labourer	Casual	Day	15 to 20
Unskilled work in mechanic	Casual	Day	10 to 15
Unskilled work in pastry-making	Casual	Day	5 to 10
Unskilled work in tire repair	Casual	Day	3 to 5
Unskilled work in market	Regular	Week	100
Unskilled work in supermarket	Regular	Month	200
Car renting company salesman	Regular	Month	300

There is no regular pattern in the work frequency for the casual workers. Depending on the local needs, some of them work once or twice a week, others work over a period of 5 to 10 days and then won't find any job for one month or more. Therefore, it is difficult to get an income average for displaced families with members involved in casual work.

The employment rate among the Syrian refugees is very low. In Kfar Haber, a local representative reported that only 25 % of the 60 Syrian families living in the village had one of their member involved in work (mainly casual labour). In most of the cases, the families involved in casual work mentioned that the wages were lower for Syrian people than for Lebanese people with longer working hours. This situation can create tensions with the host communities that see the Syrians as people "taking away their jobs".

In the Bekaa Valley, there is an important agricultural production (fruits such as apricot, apple, wine production, vegetables such as cabbage, potato, carrot, tomato, eggplant) requiring manpower during the season of production (from April to October), especially for the fruit harvest period from June to September. In Miryata, Aalma and Al Fouwar villages in Minieh-Dennieh district, there is a need of daily workers for the harvest of olives in November – December. This seasonal work might bring perspectives of employment for the Syrian refugees, though the competition will be high among themselves and with the host population.

II. Expenses

Food

Food is available in all the areas assessed with functioning markets, supermarkets, butcheries and fruit and vegetable shops. In the urban and peri-urban areas, the network market is more developed than in the rural areas.

The access to food varies according to the vulnerability of the displaced households. Among the registered families, the very poor and poor households rely on the WFP food voucher distribution (31 USD / person / month for 2100 Kcal intake a day) to meet their food needs while struggling and better off households are

able to diversify their diet with the incomes they earn or the savings they brought with them from Syria. Households with a pending registration rely on one-shot distributions from local organizations and support from the host communities. Some households take loans with shops or live on their savings. The Syrian families find it more difficult to cover their food needs in Lebanon because food item prices are reported to be 4 times higher than in Syria.

The rapid price market survey carried out in the assessed areas does not show, for the time-being, any significant impact of the Syrian crisis on the food item prices though there was a reported increase in the price of bread in Jdeida, Northern Bekaa district. Before the crisis, 1 USD could buy 12 pieces of bread while now it buys 9 pieces.

Accommodation

The expenses for accommodation differ from families living in rural settings and the ones living in peri-urban and urban settings.

In Bet Haoui, Nfer Bebnim (rural context in Minieh-Dennieh district), the Syrians usually don't pay a rent as they stay in the summer house of host families living in Tripoli during winter. In return, they take care of the house and do small maintenance and construction. When the host families come back, the Syrian families will move in the basement or on the balcony.

In a peri-urban and urban context, all Syrian families, with a few exceptions, pay a rent. According to the location and availability of accommodation, the rent ranges from 55 to 400 USD (see the table below for details). Please see section I – Shelter for more details.

Payment of the rent is a burden for the Syrian families and is increasing their level of indebtedness, especially for poor and very poor households. Several families visited during the assessment had more than one month delay in the payment of their rent.

Education and health

The children in most of the families visited are not attending school. Although the financial aspect is important to understand this issue (no money for buying the books and stationeries or for the transport), other factors have to be considered such as the impossibility for children from new comer families to join school in the middle of the school year.

Covering the health costs seems to be problematic for Syrian families. For minor cases, the families buy drugs from the chemist without seeing a doctor because of too high outpatient's department fees (15000 LBP = 10 USD in a government hospital). Although some local organizations cover part of Syrian families' medical expenses, their capacity to face the increasing influx of refugees is limited.

III. Food consumption

Most of the displaced families used to have 3 meals a day in Syria. The typical diet was the following:

- Breakfast: bread, eggs, cheese (labneh, jebneh), tea
- Lunch: bread, rice or bulgur, tomato, eggplant, beef meat (once a week), chicken (once a week)
- Dinner: same meal as breakfast

Better of families would improve their breakfast with mortadella and full (fava beans).

The quantity of food items to prepare the 3 meals of a day for a 6 to 10 - person household and their prices in the assessed areas are shown in the table below.

Food item	Quantity	Unit price in the local market (LBP)	Total price (LBP)	Origin
Bread	3 sacks	1500	4500	Local / Lebanon
Egg	10	217	2170	Local
Cheese (Labneh, Jebneh)	0.5 kg	700	3500	Lebanon / Local
Tea	6 bags	80	480	Import
Mortadella	1/7 tin	6000	860	Lebanon
Full (Fava beans)	1 can of 260 g	1000	1000	Lebanon
Rice	1 kg	1750	1750	Import
Bulgur (crushed wheat)	1 kg	1500	1500	Lebanon / Local
Tomato	0.285 kg (2 kg a week)	1500	430	Local during summer, from Jordan or Syria during winter
Eggplant	0.285 kg (2 kg a week)	1500	430	Local
Beef meat	1 kg a week	15000	15000	Local / Lebanon
Chicken	2 kg a week	6000	12000	Local / Lebanon
Cooking oil	0.25 l	5000	1250	Import / Lebanon
Fuel (gas, mazut, firewood)			1500	Import / Lebanon / Local
TOTAL			46370	

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 to 16000 LBP (10 to 11 USD) a day for 3 meals without beef meat and chicken. A day with chicken or beef meat costs 27000 to 31000 LBP (18 to 21 USD). A better off family will spend an additional 2000 LBP (1.3 USD) each day to improve their breakfast with full and mortadella.

These figures compared to the incomes earned and the frequency of work for Syrians in Lebanon, indicate that they are not able to fulfill their needs in food only with the work opportunities. To cope with this situation, the Syrian families use strategies presented in the below section.

IV. Coping mechanisms

To meet their basic needs, most of the Syrian families rely on assistance from local relief organisations and from UN/INGOs. Registered families benefit from monthly distribution of hygiene kit and food vouchers. New comers get a starting kit with a food box, unregistered families and families with a pending registration can have a one-shot aid from local organizations or religious charities.

In terms of food, the very poor and poor households with very low incomes and not yet registered tend to reduce the number of meals per day to 2 and to have a less diversified diet. During the assessment, an unregistered household in Nfer Bebnim (mountainous area of Minieh-Dennieh district) stated that they had only bread, olive and tea the last three days. Another coping mechanism for food is to put the emphasis on the feeding of children.

As far as the other essential needs (accommodation, sanitation and hygiene, health, education) are concerned, the very poor and poor households rely on the solidarity of host communities (no payment of rent), run into debt or limit their expenses in education and health for instance.

Struggling and better off households will rely more on their savings and work in Lebanon to meet their basic needs and to get a similar diet to the one they had in Syria. On rare occasions, they can get food supply from their family in Syria at a cheaper price. A rapid depletion of the savings of Struggling and better off households is observed. Examples are given in the table below:

Village	Duration of stay (months)	Size of the household	Savings at the arrival (USD)	Savings left
Rashaya	3	5	2000	400
Kamed El Loz	2	14	2800	700
Saouiri	1.5	11	1400	25

V. Needs

The main needs expressed by Syrian families during the assessment are:

1. Accommodation: which is the main post of expenditure for most households which are often unable to pay their rent and thus get into debt (especially the very poor and poor households).
2. Work opportunities: they are extremely rare; households have no access to incomes to meet basic needs
3. Food and other essential needs (winter items, hygiene and sanitation, health) for very poor and poor new comers and households with a pending registration. These categories of Syrian families benefit from a one-shot distribution with a starting kit comprising a food box but they have to wait for 2 to 3 months before being registered and receiving the food vouchers (31 USD / person / month).

To cope with this situation, the Syrian families use livelihood strategies that are either unsustainable (dependence on humanitarian assistance or on host communities, taking jobs with low wages) or negative (livelihood erosion) such as running into high debts, using savings, selling assets, limiting the expenses on health and education and reducing the number of meals per day.

In the coming months, it is expected that more refugees will come from Syria into the assessed areas that are almost at the point of saturation in terms of accommodation. This influx of refugees will lead on the one hand to an increase in the prices of rent for unhygienic and crowded accommodation and on the other hand to a higher competition for sources of incomes.

The Syrian crisis also has a negative impact on the host communities with vulnerable households facing competition for work opportunities and for rents.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

SHELTER:

- In priority: improve the living conditions of households staying in 'informal' dwellings (such as basements, stocks and hangars) and unfinished buildings with the distribution of shelter kits

comprising isolation materials, windows, doors, plastic sheeting, etc., in line with the shelter sector strategy.

- Improve access to suitable dwellings and/or ensure continued access to existing rented accommodation for the Syrian refugees through a voucher for rent activity, in line with the shelter sector strategy.

WASH:

- Improve access to clean drinking water and storage capacity with the distribution of clean water reservoirs and containers, as well as the distribution of ceramic water filters
- Improve sanitation conditions through (i) the rehabilitation / improvement of latrine facilities in houses which are already equipped with latrines and (ii) latrine construction for households which do not have access to latrines at the moment
- Provide access to latrine emptying facilities to all households. As this can be a costly operation, it is recommended to provide vouchers to vulnerable households equipped with pit latrines, in line with what other WASH actors are doing in North Lebanon. It is crucial to carefully select the companies which will be in charge of dislodging latrines and to identify the sites where the sludge will be disposed of.
- Improve access to bathing facilities; this is crucial both to improve hygiene practices and to support refugee families' dignity. As part of the latrine construction and rehabilitation activities, latrines need to be equipped with water connections and shower extensions.
- Improve drainage for wastewater, especially in 'informal' types of dwelling. This can be done by digging small drainage channels and creating improved soak away pits to facilitate the evacuation of the water.
- Conduct additional distributions of hygiene kits for new arrivals and unregistered families. For registered families, the distribution of complementary hygiene items is recommended to help people improve the cleanliness of their dwelling.
- Conduct hygiene promotion sessions, mainly for children. Sessions can be conducted at household level and potentially in schools.

FOOD SECURITY:

Short term strategy

- Monitor the capacity of INGOs involved in the food assistance (food box with the starting kit and food voucher distributions) to include all the new comers and registered households in their caseload of beneficiaries. If the influx of refugees increases and if gaps are not filled, Solidarités International could take care of starting kit distribution and food voucher distribution in some areas of the Bekaa and / or Northern governorates.
- Reduce the indebtedness of the most vulnerable households via a cash for rent activity with a targeting based on a livelihood profiling. A few INGOs, including DRC, are implementing this activity for vulnerable households benefiting from 150 USD / month.
- Prevent the use of negative livelihood strategies by enabling vulnerable households to earn incomes through a cash based project. This kind of project should target the host communities as well and needs an in-depth livelihood assessment to identify the different socioeconomic categories and their needs as well as the activities to develop. Cash For Work (CFW) activities seem difficult to implement in the areas assessed because of the lack of basic community work requiring a high need in manpower. For instance, the road condition is good and the maintenance is ensured by the

municipalities or the government. Cash For Training (CFT) could be an appropriate activity provided that there is a practical application of the training received. Unconditional Cash Grant (UCG) should be considered for the most vulnerable households unable to take part in potential CFW activities.

Mid-term strategy

- The mid-term strategy could focus on the livelihood improvement of the most vulnerable and vulnerable households from the refugees and host communities through:
- The development of income generating activities for women: women benefiting from this project would get technical, material and organizational training to run their activities. The income generating activities carried out could be home-based and could include for example food processing.
- A vocational training project aiming at increasing skills and resources of semi-skilled workers in the targeted population. The sectors covered could be construction, mechanics and tailoring.

The relevance of these propositions must be confirmed with an in-depth livelihood assessment that will give insights on the existing skills in the targeted population, the needs in terms of skills buildings and livelihood improvement and the potential market and career prospect for the beneficiaries of such livelihood projects.