



Minutes of Meeting Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG)

Meeting Location	Remotely Via Zoom	Meeting Date	15 December 2023
Chairperson(s)	Camilla Jelbart Mosse, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNHCR – Inter-Agency)	Meeting Time	10:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m.
Minutes Prepared by	Jana Nasr, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Assistant (UNHCR)	Meeting Duration	2.00 hrs.
Participants	300+ partners have participated from the Government of Lebanon (GoL), UN Agencies, and NGOs.		
Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening Remarks 2. Introduction to Recent Needs Assessments 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overview of Needs Assessments 2023 & Different Data Sources ○ VASyR ○ MSNA ○ UNDP/ARK 3. Needs Analysis 2023: Key Trends and ‘Cross population’ Analysis by Thematic Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protection Risks Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender Highlights ○ Access to Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health ▪ Nutrition ▪ WaSH ▪ Shelter ▪ Education ▪ Municipal Services ○ Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities (Food Security) ○ Social Tensions 4. AOB 		

1. Opening Remarks

Camilla Jelbart, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNHCR – Inter-Agency)

In her opening remarks Camilla welcomed the participants and acknowledged the efforts of response partners in maintaining the humanitarian and stabilization response in Lebanon. She presented the agenda, and highlighted the following points:

- The importance of various needs assessments in informing the situation and needs analysis.
- The delayed start to the planning process due to emergency responses and contingency planning.
- Sector-level consultations are ongoing with updated strategies being rapidly developed. The plan is to reconvene in January to discuss the overall response plan, cross-cutting themes, and the comprehensive response strategy for 2024.
- Government discussions between ministries are ongoing, leading to a collaborative approach in shaping the response plan.



2. Introduction to Recent Needs Assessments 2023

Overview of Needs Assessments 2023 & Different Data Sources

Raffi Kouzoudjian, Assistant Information Management Officer (UNHCR – Inter-Agency)

Raffi shared a general overview of the various assessments conducted during the year including the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR); the Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA); the Regular Perception Surveys on Social Tensions in Lebanon; the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC); the WFP Market Monitor for updated figures on Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) and Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) prices; and the Lebanon Integrated Anthropometric, Micronutrient, and Child Development Survey (LIMA). Raffi presented a more detailed overview about VASyR followed by an overview on MSNA & UNDP ARK Perception Survey by REACH and UNDP respectively.

VASyR

Raffi Kouzoudjian, Assistant Information Management Officer (UNHCR – Inter-Agency)

- The VASyR key areas include protection, food security, economic vulnerability, shelter conditions, water access, health, and education.
- The assessment serves as a cornerstone for the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), guiding sector strategies and informing programming and contributes to intersectoral discussions, log frames, and targets.
- Data collection occurred in May and June, taking five weeks and involved visiting 5,078 households by 69 teams.
- Harmonized indicators and aligned timelines with other assessments has been ensured.

MSNA

Nicola Mendes, Country Coordinator (IMPACT Initiatives)

- The MSNA has been ongoing for three years and aims to expand the scope and improve precision each year.
- Covers major population groups: Lebanese households, displaced Syrian, PRL, PRS, Migrants.
- There is a need to improve findings for migrant populations and mentioned a collaboration with IOM to identify two groups of migrant populations based on residential status: living with employers and not living with employers.
- Face-to-face data collection started in July and concluded in October.

UNDP/ARK

Mohammad Nasser, Information Management Officer (UNDP)

- The ARK Perception Survey focuses on social tensions and covers the entire population in Lebanon.
- Sampling size: 5,000 surveys per wave; currently at Wave 17 since 2017 stratified sampling across all districts.
- Two key indicators: vulnerability weight (40%) and population proportion to size (60%).
- The survey characteristics represents different gender and age perspectives and uses a Probability Proportion to Size (PPS) system for geographical clustering.
- Random distribution of geographical clustering allows anyone to be calculated as a sample. Cluster allocation involves field surveyors selecting buildings with random Global Positioning System (GPS) points.
- There is a minimal margin of error: plus or minus 2.5 per cent.



3. Protection and Tensions Trends Overview (Q3) Needs Analysis 2023: Key Trends and 'Cross population' Analysis by Thematic Area

Protection Risks Analysis

Josiane Noun, Protection Sector NGO Co-Coordinator (NRC)

- 20 per cent of displaced Syrians and 46 per cent of live-out migrants lack legal residency, mainly due to increased costs and unofficial border entry, with women having a higher percentage without legal residency.
- A triple increase (4% to 12%) in mentioning curfew as a restrictive measure, particularly imposed on Syrian refugees in the south regions. There is also an increased reporting of being targeted by restrictive measures due to no legal residency.
- 3.8 per cent of children born to Syrian parents lack birth certification; 3.4 per cent of Lebanese children lack official documents. Live-out migrants have the highest reporting of no marriage documentation (9.5%). There is an increase in children completing the birth registration process at the Foreign Ministry.
- 60 per cent of PRL report safety and security concerns, with verbal harassment, kidnapping, and robbery as main issues. Deportation risks are mentioned only by Syrian refugees (low reporting), and there is higher reporting of sexual harassment by PRL and Lebanese girls.
- The Syrian cohort receives the most aid but reports the least satisfaction (75% dissatisfaction), while Lebanese and migrants report higher satisfaction with received aid (95% and close second).
- Increase in child labor (7% from 2% in 2019) and a 4 per cent rise in child marriage rate from 2021 to 2023. Highest child labor reported in Mount Lebanon, notable decrease in Beirut for child marriage.
- Shrinking space for refugee protection noted, considering deportation, fear of detention, and trafficking. Increased potential for sexual exploitation and abuse towards girls and women, with child exploitation for inability to pay rent highlighted.
- Fear of kidnapping is about the fear reported in surveys, not individual incidents. Workshops discussed contextual factors such as deportation, fear of detention, and trafficking. There is an increasing potential for sexual exploitation and abuse reported qualitatively.

Gender Highlights

Simona Pari, Inter-Agency Gender Specialist (UNDP)

- Data related to diversity and disability is being processed. A more comprehensive analysis, including diversity and disability, is under development for each sector and will be integrated into the LRP sectoral analysis.
- Women and girls, over 50 per cent in permanent shelters, face increased vulnerability. Exploitation concerns with 18 per cent in rent-free humiliated houses, linked to GBV perpetrators among landowners.
- Nearly half of females are food insecure; 25 per cent lack dietary diversity due to economic constraints. Majority unable to afford medications. 22 per cent of humiliated houses share toilets, exposing to GBV. Females can't afford hygiene products, impacting school attendance.
- Gender space is shrinking; increased targeting based on gender and diversity.
- Operational impact on GBV and reproductive health programs, prompting changes or suspension.
- The focus in 2024 should be on diversifying opportunities for women and only 18 per cent of females are employed compared to 77 per cent of males.



Access to Services

Stephanie Laba, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR – Inter-Agency)

Stephanie opened the Access to Services session and introduced the sub-themes under Access to Services and handed over to colleagues to provide insights. In her opening remarks Stephanie mentioned that:

- The economic situation in Lebanon remains dire.
- Soaring prices pose substantial challenges for individuals and families to access basic services.
- Restrictive measures and fear of deportation are significant concerns, shrinking the protection space and affecting access to services.
- Rising trends in the exploitation and harassment of women and girls.
- Spike in anti-gender rhetoric affecting advocacy for people's rights and partners operations.
- Lebanon faces a combination of economic, security, and social challenges.
- These issues impact various facets of society, exacerbating access difficulties faced by individuals and families.

Health

Dr. Shajib Hossain, Health Sector Coordinator (WHO)

- 26 per cent of both Lebanese and migrant populations report unmet health needs, with access to medication identified as a critical issue (84% of Syrians facing barriers).
- Funding challenges for subsidized medication are acknowledged.
- In 2023, 56 per cent of consultations are from the Lebanese population, with a geographic breakdown provided by Alia Abou Daya.
- Subsidized primary healthcare consultations show a slight decrease compared to 2022.
- Economic crisis and displacement increase health needs while diminishing resources.
- Rising security risks impact public health, increasing the risk of outbreaks.
- Challenges include affordability, availability, and social stigma as barriers to healthcare access.
- Recommendations include supporting the Primary Healthcare Centers (PHCs) approach, expanding mobile units to reach remote areas, advocating for free vaccination services, and focusing on a comprehensive healthcare package.
- Attention is needed for expensive and privatized hospitalization, especially for the Lebanese population.
- Integration of peripheral pathways is recommended for a seamless continuum of care.
- Emergency responses should go through existing channels to avoid parallel structures.
- The importance of respecting national policies and guidelines is highlighted for effective support to Lebanon's health system.

Nutrition

Amirhossien Yarparvar, Nutrition Sector Coordinator (UNICEF)

- The ongoing LIMA survey indicates fresh evidence for better insights.
- An alarming increase in stunting prevalence across Lebanon, affecting various population groups. The statistical explanation may exist, but the widespread occurrence is concerning.
- Stunting is considered as an indicator of chronic malnutrition, particularly in Palestinian camps.
- Increasing wasting trends in 7 out of 10 strata, with notable spikes in Palestinian camps is concerning.
- Rise in admission rates for malnutrition, up by over 80 per cent in 2023 compared to 2022.



- There are ongoing data analysis, including a child food poverty analysis, revealing a significant number of children facing dietary challenges.
- The underlying causes of the situation include increased demands for nutritious diets, limited access to nutritional services, and challenges in caregiving practices.
- Complications arising from the situation in South Lebanon are contributing to various bottlenecks.
- Key barriers include availability, accessibility, and affordability of nutritious diets, adequate nutrition services, and caregiving practices.
- Recommendation to stay committed to four guiding principles which are part of the 2024 unified response plan: prevention as a priority, a life cycle approach, focus on services and diet access, and the importance of treatment when prevention fails.

WaSH

Jakub Pajak, WaSH Sector Coordinator (UNICEF)

- The assessments this year revealed a persistent issue of water insufficiency, particularly noteworthy due to a graph illustrating the percentage of households lacking adequate water.
- It's evident that the difficulty is most pronounced among displaced Syrians living in informal settlements.
- Interestingly, migrants reported the most favorable water access compared to other population groups.
- The overarching challenges in water access were attributed to both dysfunctional water sources and the notable cost of water in the region.
- The cost of water in Lebanon surpassed global standards, with household spending averaging 4 per cent for Lebanese households and 5 per cent for migrants.
- Additionally, households incurred extra expenses on hygiene items, compounding the overall challenges related to water access.
- Shifting focus to wastewater management, Jakub highlighted a concerning statistic: only 26 per cent of household wastewater in Lebanon is considered safely managed.
- Lebanon's global ranking in wastewater management is notably low, securing the 28th position out of 133 countries assessed.
- The severity of the issue becomes apparent with the revelation that over 100 million cubic meters of wastewater are discharged directly into the environment.
- Jakub acknowledged potential data underreporting, particularly in areas with missing information.
- Conclusively, he underscored the imperative for substantial efforts in addressing the challenges within the wastewater sector.

Shelter

Nadine Najjar, Shelter Sector NGO Co-Coordinator (NRC)

- Majority of households live in residential structures in urban settings.
- Over 99% of Lebanese and PRs live in residential shelters, while 9 per cent of Syrians live in non-residential shelters.
- Conditions of shelters are worst for displaced Syrians, with 52 per cent living in dangerous, substandard, or overcrowded shelters. For other groups, over 56-57 per cent live in shelters with no damage.
- Lebanese mostly own their shelters (70%), while Syrians predominantly rent (83%).
- Migrants, both living out and Syrian, often rent accommodation.
- A small percentage of families are hosted for free, especially Syrians (69%) in exchange for work.



- Renting population: 78 per cent of Syrian households, 74 per cent of Lebanese, and 97-98 per cent of migrants and PRs pay in USD.
- Rent has increased since 2022, with the highest increase (84%) reported by live-out migrants. Rent amounts vary based on shelter type and nationality.
- Lebanese pay the highest rent in USD (average \$159), followed by PRs (\$146).
- Urban areas, particularly Beirut and Mount Lebanon, have higher rent rates.
- In non-permanent shelters (tents), the highest rents are in South Governorate for Syrians and in specific camps for PRs.
- Lowest rents reported for Syrians are in Nabatiyeh, and for migrants in South and Nabatieh governorates.

Education

Talin Sahakian, Education Sector Coordinator (UNICEF)

- Continuous quality education is impacted by school closures, and there's an assessment gap for children attending schools.
- Non-formal education faces supply issues, especially in the transition to formal education, requiring ongoing reform efforts.
- Key findings: 2 per cent increase in enrollment for the academic year, with pressure noted in Grade One.
- Approximately 27 per cent of children are out of school, including 7 per cent of Lebanese children and 40 per cent of Syrian children.
- Primary school enrollment increased, linked to the ministry's removal of administrative barriers.
- Common barriers include economic challenges, transportation costs, materials, administrative hurdles, and child labor.
- Despite an increase in child labor, it hasn't become a barrier to education, with 14 per cent for boys and 4.2 per cent for girls.
- Barriers for Lebanese include uncertainty of school reopening, education costs, transportation, and support to cash for education.
- For displaced Syrians, barriers include transportation and education material costs.
- The estimated number of people in need for the current year is around 1.3 million, covering public and semi-public school children.
- Private schools don't necessarily provide advantages, and Syrian, Palestinian, and immigrant children are considered extremely vulnerable.

Municipal Services

William Barakat, Shelter Sector Coordinator (UNDP)

- Resource shortages and the economic crisis have had severe impact on municipal services.
- The regular perception survey indicates a significant drop in trust in municipalities, reaching 18 per cent in October 2023 from 63 per cent in July 2017.
- Positive sentiments are influenced by functioning services and external support but negatively affected by security concerns and increased competition for services.
- Key challenges for municipalities are highlighted, emphasizing human resources issues (number, presence, and technical capacities) and operational management concerns, particularly regarding equipment maintenance, repair, and functionality.

Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities (Food Security)

A session on Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities is planned for early next week and an invitation will be shared in due time. Elise Barakat, WFP presented on IPC.



Elise Barakat, Research Program Associate (WFP)

- IPC is a global scale used to classify disability, food security, and malnutrition, identifying key drivers.
- The analysis covers Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian refugee populations, conducted at district or area levels.
- Acute food insecurity analysis spans from October 2023 to March 2024, with a projection period from April to September 2024.
- The classification scale ranges from Phase 1 (non or minimal food security) to Phase 5 (catastrophe).
- In the current period, 19 per cent (1.05 million individuals) are classified at Phase 3 and above, with 1 per cent at the emergency phase.
- Detailed population-level classifications for Lebanese residents, Syrian refugees, and Palestinian refugees are provided.
- Comparisons across three rounds (September 2022, May 2023, and October 2023) show a decrease in the population classified at Phase 3 and above.
- Key drivers of food insecurity include inflation, economic vulnerability, reliance on humanitarian food assistance, unemployment, and conflict.
- Projections for the future (April to September 2024) indicate a 2 per cent increase in the population classified at Phase 3 and 4 (21% of the total analyzed population).
- Population-level projections for Lebanese residents, Syrian refugees, and Palestinian refugees are presented, with varying percentage point increases in food insecurity classifications.

Social Tensions

Nisreen Jaafar, Conflict Analysis and Reporting Officer (UNDP)

- Intercommunal tensions are at an all-time high, particularly driven by economic factors and anti-refugee sentiments.
- Negative sentiments peak in March and October, with 45 per cent reporting negative intercommunal relations.
- Economic competition, especially for lower-skilled jobs, is a significant driver of tensions among both Lebanese and Syrian populations.
- Intra-communal tensions among the Lebanese community remain volatile, fluctuating based on the country's context.
- Economic tensions are the main drivers of both intercommunal and intra-communal tensions.
- As of October 2023, negatively perceived intercommunal tensions are at 32 per cent, with 31 per cent positive perceptions.
- In West Bekaa, tensions are notably high at 95 per cent.
- Services-related tensions have increased, negatively impacting public perception of the quality of services, with specific service peaks in different regions.
- Safety perceptions show an alarming increase in feeling unsafe during the night, reaching 71 per cent.
- Safety concerns are analyzed at the governorate level, and the latest wave of data will be published in January 2024.

4. AoB

Jana Nasr, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Assistant (UNHCR – Inter-Agency)

Jana reminded Inter-Agency partners on the Inter-Agency Photo Repository Tool mentioning:

- The repository is organized by partner and sector, includes captions, and credits, and considers specific conditions for donor visibility.



- A collection link and a comprehensive guidance note on uploading images are available on slide 53 of the presentation [here](#).
- Diverse and comprehensive representation of sector work, ensuring equal representation of all population groups is encouraged.