

GENDER ANALYSIS

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Inter-Agency
Coordination
Lebanon



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Summary/Key points

- **After having risen dramatically between 2019 and 2020, in 2021 the proportion of households under the SMEB¹ (88%) remained the same as in 2020 with no difference between male-headed households (MHH) and female-headed households (FHH).** The gap in economic insecurity between the two, which was starker prior to 2019, appears to have remained closed as MHH became more vulnerable during Lebanon's economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Livelihoods and income

- **More members of FHH than before were working, likely in response to economic necessity and the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.** The rate of FHH with at least one member who had worked in the past 7 days also increased since 2020. About half (47%) of FHH had at least one member who was working, an increase from 35% in 2020. This remains far lower than MHH where 70% had at least one member who had worked in the previous 7 days.

- **It appears the household gender gap in average monthly per capita income returned in 2021 after having closed in 2020, with FHH earning 39% less than MHH on average.** The average per capita monthly income for FHH rose from LBP 52,258² in 2020 to LBP 80,782 in 2021 and from LBP 65,240 to LBP 133,398 for MHH. This increase, however, is only nominal given that the monthly income from employment of all households was still only one-fifth of the SMEB value in both 2020 and 2021.

- **Similar to 2020, the small number of women in the labor force were mostly employed in the agriculture (47%) and service sectors (34%).** It is also worth mentioning that women were almost twice as likely to be unemployed than men: 27% of men were unemployed compared with 42% of women, representing a large decrease for men from 38% in 2020 and a slight decrease from 45% in 2020 for women.

- **Young women remained largely inactive in employment, education, and training.** Consistent with previous years, 80% of young women aged 15-24 were not in education, employment, or training (NEET) compared to 52% of young men.

- **Almost all households were borrowing money to buy food, but FHH were more dependent on borrowing to survive.** FHH (54%) were more likely than MHH (38%) to say they borrowed food or relied on help

from friends or relatives because of a lack of food, which can create potential for exploitation.

Education

- **Consistent with previous findings, older boys and girls were not being sent to school for different reasons.** One third (33%) of boys aged 15-18 were not attending school due to work compared to 9% of girls in the same age range, and this rose significantly to 57% of young men aged 19-24 not attending due to work compared to 5% of young women. On the other hand, around half (46%) of young women were not attending school because they were married.

Child protection

- **Consistent with previous years, approximately one fifth (20%) of females aged 15-19 were married at the time of the survey.** This was true for less than 1% of males in the same age category.

- **Child labor among boys has increased steadily since 2019.** In 2021 approximately 5% of children aged 5-17 were engaged in child labor, an increase from 4% in 2020 and 3% in 2019. A higher proportion of boys (8%) than girls (2%) were engaged in labor.

Protection

- **Rates of legal residency continued declining for both Syrian men and women in 2021 and, as in previous years, rates of legal residency for women were 4 percentage points lower than for men.** This year's findings showed women with legal residency declined from 18% in 2020 to 14% in 2021 and that men with legal residency declined from 23% to 19%.

Shelter

- **There was a slight increase in FHH living in informal settlements.³** High concentrations of FHH remained in non-permanent informal settlements in Baalbek-El Hermel and Bekaa, where more than half (57% and 51% respectively) lived in informal settlements, and the number of FHH living in such accommodations has increased slightly since 2020. Nationally, the share of FHH living in tents increased slightly from 27% in 2020 to 32% in 2021 compared with 19% of MHH in both 2020 and 2021.

¹ S/MEB categories are the following:

1. $\geq 125\%$ MEB (\geq LBP 692,191)
2. MEB - 125% MEB (LBP 553,753 – LBP 692,191)
3. SMEB - MEB (LBP 490,028 – LBP 553,753)
4. $<$ SMEB (LBP 490,028)

² The average market rate during the time of data collection registered at LBP 16,060 to the US\$. Source: www.lirarate.org

³ Overwhelming majority of people in informal settlements live in tents made mostly of timber and plastic sheets.

Gender analysis overview

This chapter was developed based on the sex-disaggregated results of each indicator included in the VASyR assessment.⁴ The VASyR is designed so that some survey questions are posed at the household level (i.e. the head of household was asked a question regarding the entire household) while others are posed at the individual level per each household member. This means full gender disaggregation is available for some findings while disaggregation only by the gender

of the head of household is available for others. Wherever possible, disaggregated findings at the individual level are reported throughout this chapter.

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

Table 20: Categories of indicators gathered at the individual and household level

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

A note on female-headed households

An FHH is a household in which an adult female is the sole or main decision-maker, whereas an MHH is led by an adult male. In the VASYR, the head of household is self-identified, where enumerators ask the first person they encounter upon visiting the household to designate the main decision-maker of the household. If the head of the household is not available, information about this person is gathered and enumerators interview another adult in the family capable of conducting the interview. Hence in some cases, the sex of the head of household and that of the respondent is different. Similar to 2020, in 2021, 68% of respondents were male and 32% female suggesting a male bias in the survey results.

It should be noted that in many cases, women are not considered as heads of households unless no adult man is living permanently in the household, as the patriarchal assumption is often that the head of a household is always an adult man, even if a woman’s economic contribution to the household’s maintenance and/or decision-making power is the same or greater.⁵

Demographics

Since the VASyR began in 2013, there has been an even split between Syrian men and women in the Syrian population. Although, overall, there is an even split between men and women in all age groups, there is some regional variation in the gender ratio. It is notably lower in Baalbek (.88) and Akkar (.94) and higher in Beirut (1.08) and El Nabatieh (1.07). Hermel district in Baalbek has the lowest gender ratio of all at .84.

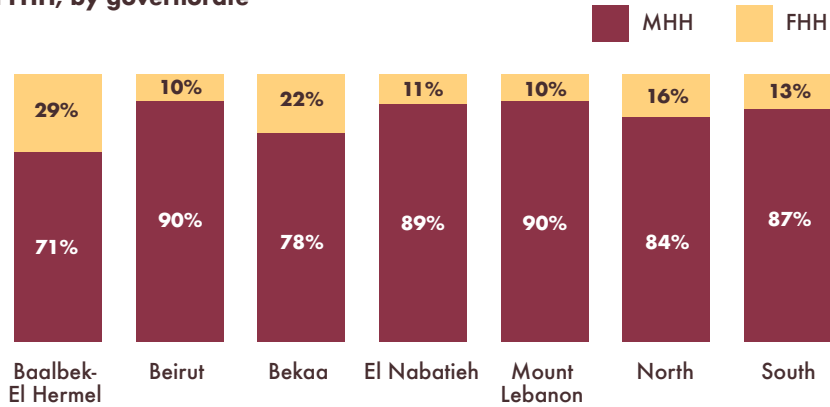
Over the past few years, between 16% and 19% of households have self-identified as FHH. In 2021, FHH constituted 18% of households. The VASyR has also consistently captured regional variation in the gender of the heads of household. In 2021, FHH remained most common in Baalbek-El Hermel

(29%), Akkar (26%), and Bekaa (22%) and least common in Beirut (10%), Mount Lebanon (10%), and El Nabatieh (11%). Notably, twice as many FHH (11%) were headed by women over the age of 59 than MHH (5%) and these were mostly concentrated in Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel.

⁴ Gender Analysis was conducted by UN Women, in partnership with UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP

⁵ <https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/gender-statistics/series/SP.HOU.FEMA.ZS>

Figure 1: MHH and FHH, by governorate

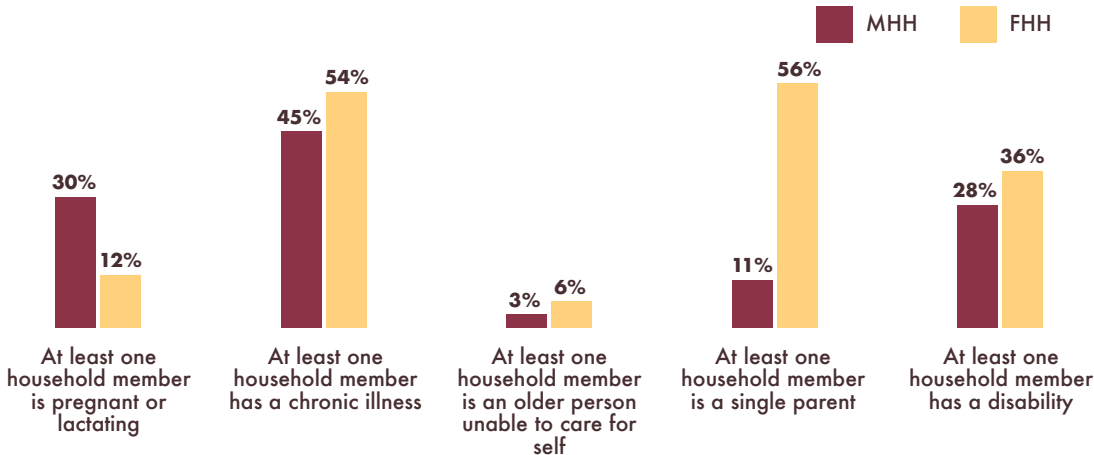


Household size and composition among male and female-headed Syrian families have seen little change over the past 3 years. Since 2019, FHH have been smaller than MHH on average, and MHH more frequently included young children. In 2021, MHH consisted of 5.2 people on average compared with FHH at 4.2 people on average, and 66% of MHH had young children (under 5 years old) compared to 40% of FHH. The fact that MHH had more children meant they had a higher dependency ratio (.98) than FHH (.86). Almost twice as many FHH (45%) had no dependents or only one dependent compared with MHH (26%), and MHH reported having more dependents overall. Consistent with findings from 2020, these demographic differences are potentially related to a smaller proportion of FHH with women who are bearing children. This is borne out by the fact that 27% of households had pregnant or lactating women, with MHH (30%) far more frequently than FHH (12%).

On the other hand, and also consistent with previous years, FHH more commonly had members over 59 years of age and members with disabilities. Overall, 10% of households had members over 59 years, with more FHH (17%) including older members than MHH (9%). Likely because FHH are more commonly headed by older people and/or include older people, FHH (54%) more often had members with chronic illnesses than MHH (45%). Although there was no major difference between the proportion of men and women with disabilities in the overall population (9%), FHH (36%) more commonly had members with disabilities than MHH (29%).

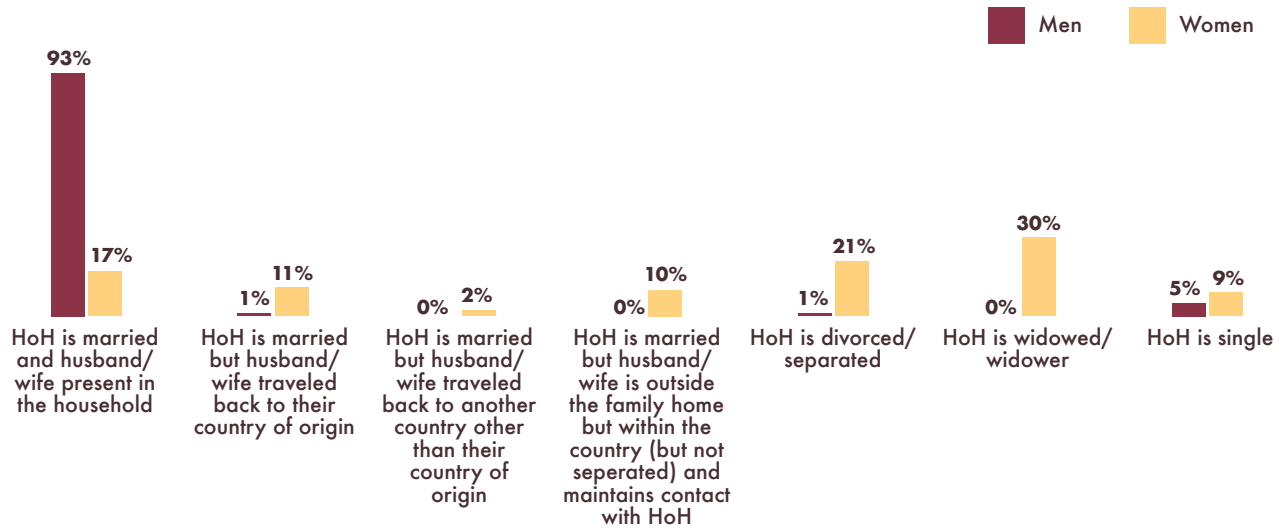
FHH were also far more likely to include single parents than MHH. Overall, 19% of households had at least one household member who was a single parent, and FHH (56%) were five times more likely to have single parents in their households than MHH (11%). These findings are all consistent with VASyR data since 2019.

Figure 2: FHH and MHH with specific needs



Nearly one sixth (15%) of women (aged 18+) were widowed, divorced, or separated compared to just 1% of men. On the other hand, men (23%) were more often single than women (14%). The vast majority of FHH (83%) were either single, divorced, or widowed or had no partner present with them in the household, compared to just 7% of MHH in the same categories.

Figure 3: Head of household (HoH) marital status, by gender

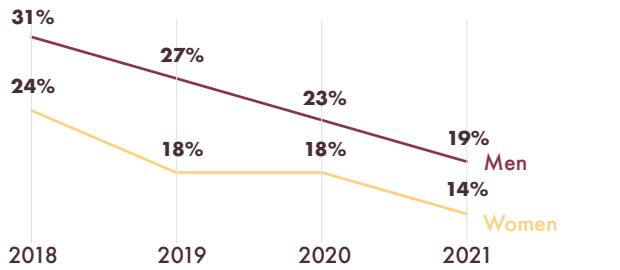


Protection

Rates of legal residency continued to decline for both Syrian men and women in 2021 and, as in previous years, rates of legal residency for women were lower than for men. This year’s findings showed the rate of women with legal residency declining from 18% in 2020 to 14% in 2021, and for men from 23% to 19%. Fewer FHH (16%) had at least one member with legal residency than MHH (25%). While there was little difference between men and women in terms of the main reasons for not having legal residency, it is worth

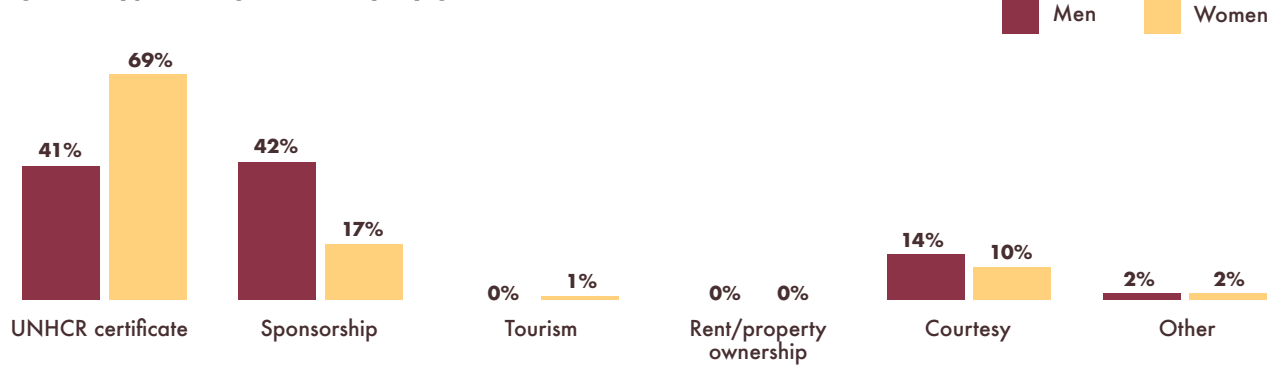
noting that women (20%) and members of FHH (28%) more often reported they had entered through an unofficial border and the General Security Office (GSO) had not allowed them to regularize for this reason. Men being prioritized for legal residency in Syrian refugee households is likely that they are seen as far more likely to work and perceptions that men are more likely to be arrested or detained without legal documentation compared with women.

Figure 4: Rates of legal residency since 2018, by gender



Types of legal residency differed between men and women. Women with legal residency most commonly had UNHCR certification (69%) compared with 41% of men. On the other hand, men (42%) more often had legal residency in the form of sponsorship than women (17%), which is likely because they participate in the paid workforce at higher rates. Most women (64%) reported to have never even attempted obtaining legal residency at the GSO compared to 50% of men, similar to 2020.

Figure 5: Types of legal residency, by gender



Declining rates of legal residency continues exposing both women and men to risks such as arrest, detention, deportation, or extortion. Women who lack residency are also less likely to approach police or justice mechanisms to report incidents of harassment or violence. This means a lack of legal recourse and justice for gender-based violence against Syrian women, which is highly prevalent. Without valid residency permits, refugees are also unable to complete important administrative processes to obtain civil documentation such as registering marriages or births of children. In fact, children born in Lebanon since 2011 into FHH are less likely to have completed the birth registration process (13%) than children in MHH (33%).⁶ Similarly, members of FHH who had been married in Lebanon fell behind MHH in all stages in the process for registering

marriages. The main reason FHH respondents provided for not completing the birth registration process was not being aware of how to go about the process (48%) compared with 33% of MHH reporting the same. The second most prevalent reason for both FHH (37%) and MHH (48%) was due to the prohibitive cost.

Response rates for safety and security questions were low overall,⁷ yet members of MHH (9%) were slightly more likely than members of FHH (5%) to report having been victims of community violence/disputes. There were few differences between men and women in terms of the frequency, quality, and nature of community interactions, except FHH (36%) were slightly more likely than MHH (30%) to report perceived or real discrimination in the provision of aid.

Child protection

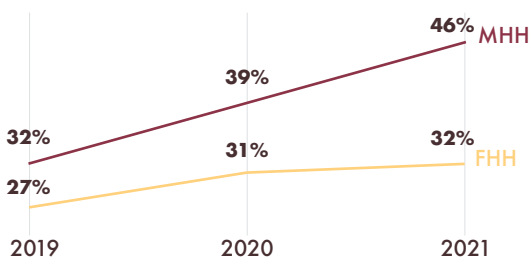
The VASyR consistently reports child labor⁸ as the main protection risk faced by boys, and child marriage as the main protection risk for girls. In 2021, approximately 5% of children aged 5-17 were engaged in child labor, an increase from 4% in 2020 and 2% in 2019. A higher proportion of boys (8%) than girls (2%) were engaged in child labor, and older boys (14-17) were more often working long hours. On the other hand, high proportions of girls and young women were exposed to child marriage. Approximately one fifth (20%) of females aged 15-19 were married at the time of the survey. This was true for less than 1% of males in the same age category.

Shelter

High concentrations of women and FHH remain in substandard, non-permanent settlements in Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel governorates, and the number of FHH living in such shelter types has continuously increased since 2019. FHH continue to be overrepresented in these areas: they constitute 22% of households in Bekaa and 29% of households in Baalbek-El Hermel compared with the national

average of 18%. Similar to 2020, FHH (33%) were almost twice as likely as MHH (19%) to be living in non-permanent shelter and almost all FHH in non-permanent shelters were in tents. The share of FHH living in tents increased slightly from 27% in 2020 to 32% in 2021. Relatedly, the proportion of FHH in substandard housing also increased from 39% to 46%, a concerning trend.

Figure 6: MHH and FHH in substandard housing



Findings also suggest that many of those living in informal tented settlements, particularly FHH, are comprised of specific families and social networks. Half (50%) of FHH in informal settlements and 35% of MHH had chosen their place of residence to be close to family and relatives. The share of FHH in tents reporting proximity to friends and family as their main consideration when selecting a shelter was more than double the total of 24% who reported this as their main consideration across all shelter types.

⁶ This process involves notifications issued by a doctor, obtaining a birth certificate from a mukhtar, obtaining a certificate registered with the Noufous, registering the birth with the Foreigners' Registry, getting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stamp on the birth certificate as well as a stamp from the Syrian Embassy.

⁷ Results from the safety and security questions were not included in this analysis due to limitations around the data collection methods. In efforts to improve response rates, the method and approach for these questions are under reconsideration for next year's survey.

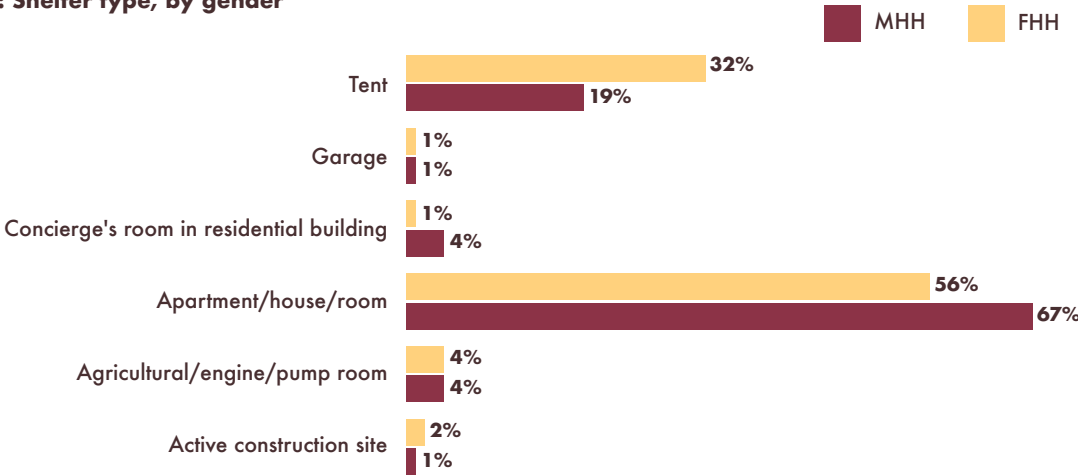
⁸ Child labor is defined by UNICEF and the ILO as a child having performed either economic activities or household chores during the last week for more than the age specific number of hours. Economic activities: aged 5-11: 1 hour or more; aged 12-14: 14 hours or more; aged 15-17: 43 hours or more. Household chores: aged 5-14: 28 hours or more; aged 15-17: 43 hours or more.

Living in substandard, non-permanent shelter is associated with a number of vulnerabilities, such as increased poverty, health, and protection risks. Almost all (95%) of households in non-permanent shelters were below the MEB compared to 87% in other shelter types. They also more often shared toilets which can pose protection risks, especially for women. Overall, 19% of households shared toilets, with those in non-permanent shelters (27%) more represented than other forms of shelter. In addition, FHH (17%) were slightly more likely than MHH (11%) to be hosted in tents for free.

MHH were more commonly residing in residential settings where they paid more than FHH for accommodation and higher numbers had seen their rent increase since 2020. Rental accommodation was the most common shelter type

overall (65%), but MHH (67%) were more commonly living in rented apartments, houses, and rooms than FHH (56%). The monthly median rent for MHH was LBP 300,000 and LBP 250,000 for FHH. Rent had increased for everyone since 2020 but more so for MHH. Fifteen percent of households reported their rent had increased since 2020, with little gender difference. However, for those reporting increased rent, MHH reported an average annual increase of LBP 167,082 compared to LBP 110,802 for FHH. In addition, the proportion of MHH paying above LBP 375,000 increased by 14% since 2020 while it only increased by 5% for FHH, suggesting FHH have been more able than MHH to retain their inexpensive or free accommodations during Lebanon’s economic crisis.

Figure 7: Shelter type, by gender



Possibly because they usually have larger families, MHH tend to live in more crowded accommodations than FHH, but it appears accommodations have become less crowded since 2020. Overall, 23% of respondents were living in overcrowded conditions with slightly more MHH (24%) than FHH (19%) represented, compared to 30% and 25% respectively in 2020.

More MHH moved or were evicted in 2020-2021 due to being unable to pay rent. Sixteen percent of MHH and 10% of FHH had moved accommodation in the past 12 months, with MHH (39%) far more likely than FHH (24%) to report moving because the rent was too expensive. Of those who had changed accommodation, 21% had been evicted with

little gender difference. Inability to pay rent was the most common reason for being evicted overall, but MHH (75%) were more likely than FHH (53%) to report inability to pay rent as the reason for changing accommodation. Similar to 2020, 5% of households were under threat of eviction by their landlords at the time of the survey with no notable gender difference.

There were no important gender differences in terms of the types of rental agreements (verbal vs. written), whether lease agreements were registered with the municipality, payment of municipal taxes, periods of rental agreements, reported damages to shelters, or households that were planning to move in the coming 6 months.

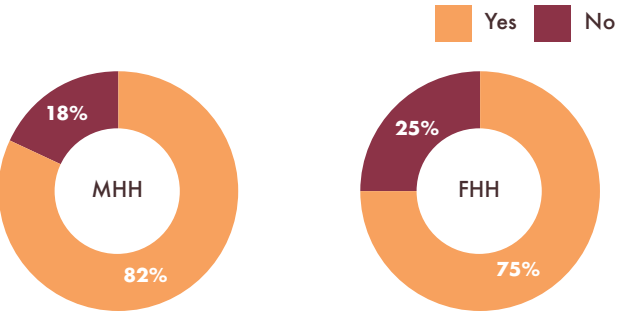
Health

Like in 2020, members of FHH (66%) were slightly more likely than members of MHH (59%) to have required primary health care (PHC) in the last 6 months. Of those who required PHC, almost all (91%) were able to access it, with little difference between MHH and FHH. For those who were unable to access PHC, most (88%) quoted consultations as the service they could not access.

Seventeen percent of respondents required hospital care in the 6 months prior to the survey, with members of MHH (18%) needing hospital care at slightly higher rates than members of FHH (12%). Of households with at least one member who required hospital care, 18% of MHH did not receive it compared to 25% of FHH, up from 13% and 16% in 2020 respectively. The main barrier to receiving hospital care

was the cost of treatment (90%) with no gender difference. Concerningly, 31% of households had members who needed malnutrition treatment, with no gender difference. There was also little difference between MHH and FHH in how respondents paid for hospital treatment and in their knowledge of where to seek emergency services.

Figure 8: MHH and FHH that received the hospital care they needed



Fifty-nine percent of households had required medications the 3 months prior to the survey with little gender difference. Of those who needed medications, 48% had acquired some of the needed medication but not all, 42% had acquired all or most of the needed medication, and 9% had not acquired any of the necessary medication with no notable difference between MHH and FHH.

The majority (73%) of respondents knew how to access medical services in case a household member is suspected to have COVID-19. However, FHH (69%) were slightly less likely to know how to access assistance in case a household member contracts COVID-19 than MHH (74%).

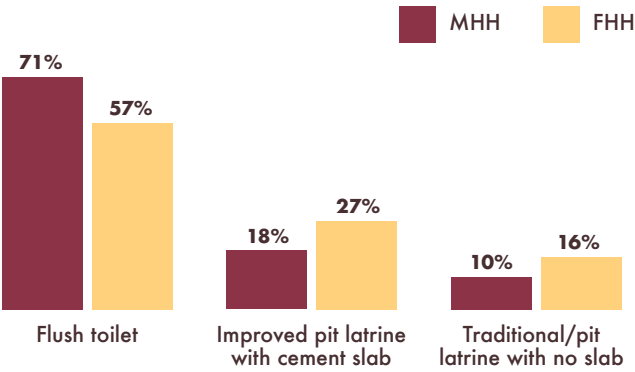
Eight percent of households had children under 2 years old who had gotten sick in the previous 2 weeks with no difference between FHH and MHH. Girl infants (79%) were slightly more likely to suffer from at least one disease than boy infants (74%), and less likely to suffer from respiratory infections (15% and 25% respectively), which often requires hospitalization or a doctor’s consultation. For births that occurred in Lebanon, 93% of the children were born in a hospital with no difference between MHH and FHH.

WASH

Similar to 2020, more FHH reported limited access to basic sanitation facilities, namely flush toilets and bottled water. Three quarters (76%) of respondents overall had access to basic sanitation services, with FHH access at 64% compared to 77% of MHH. Similarly, FHH (84%) had less access to improved sanitation facilities than MHH (90%). FHH (57%) less commonly had flush toilets than MHH (71%) and more

often used pit latrines. Of the small number of households (10%) that used protected wells for their improved water, FHH (16%) were more represented than MHH (9%). Seventeen percent of FHH and 11% of MHH also got their water for cooking from a protected well. These differences are likely due to the types of WASH systems available in the informal settlements where FHH are over-represented.

Figure 9: Access to basic sanitation, by gender



There were no major gender differences in main types of unimproved water sources used, in access to improved sources, and availability of drinking water, nor in the sufficiency of water for washing and domestic purposes. However, FHH (82%) had slightly less access than MHH (87%) to improved drinking water sources either in their dwelling, yard, or plot or within 30 minutes round trip collection time. Overall, the most common type of improved water source was bottled water (38%). However, FHH (29%) reported to have less access to this source than MHH (40%). More MHH (50%) reported paying for drinking water than FHH (40%), and MHH spent more on their drinking water. On average, MHH spent LBP 65,730 for drinking water in the month prior to the survey compared with LBP 50,245 for

FHH, possibly because MHH have larger families on average and higher per capita monthly incomes. The majority (85%) of households with members with disabilities reported they had disability-adjusted facilities, but FHH (79%) had less access than MHH (87%).

There were no major differences between FHH and MHH in household access to all types of hygiene items. It is worth noting that one in ten households reported that members did not have access to female hygienic items, almost one quarter (23%) of households that needed baby care items did not have access to them, and that there were no major gender differences in COVID-19 prevention measures used.

Energy access

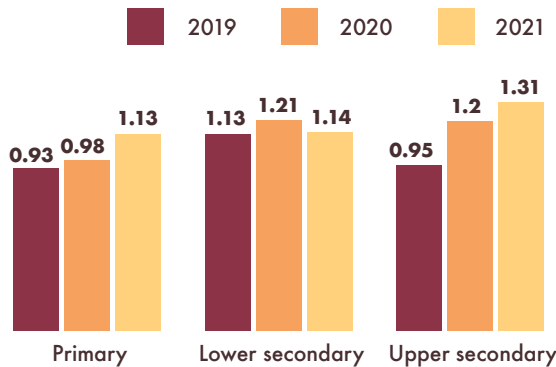
There were few notable gender differences around energy access. However, MHH (72%) more often reported having less than 6 hours of electricity per day than FHH (63%). Potential reasons for this are yet unclear. There were a few differences between FHH and MHH in usage of energy for heating. Overall, 41% of households used furnace oil for cooking and heating, with 49% of FHH using this energy

compared to 39% of MHH, and 21% of FHH used wood compared to 15% of MHH. More MHH (15%) had access to an electric powered heater than FHH (10%). There were no notable differences between MHH and FHH in average expenditure by household on state-generated electricity, but the average amount MHH (LBP 50,903) spent on private generators was far more than FHH (LBP 31,785).

Education

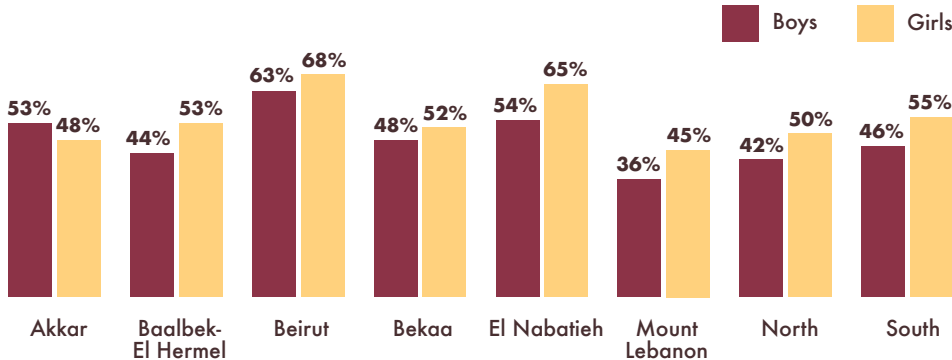
Consistent with findings in 2020, about half (48%) of Syrian children of school age were in school during the 2020-2021 school year. The gender parity index⁹ indicates that the proportion of girls in school increased since 2020 compared to boys' attendance at the primary level. The share of girls was reported to be slightly higher than that of boys at the lower secondary (1.14) and upper secondary (1.31) levels.

Figure 10: Gender parity index since 2019



There were significant variations across governorates in terms of boys' and girls' attendance. Overall, school attendance was highest in Beirut (70%) and lowest in Mount Lebanon (47%). In most governorates, there was a clear gap between boys and girls in school, where girls were more often attending than boys. In all governorates, except Beirut and Bekaa, there was an 8-9 percentage points difference between the enrolment of girls and boys. Akkar was the only governorate where boys (53%) were attending at a higher rate than girls (48%). Syrian girls were also far more likely to attend upper secondary school in some governorates. For example, in El Nabatiyeh, twice as many girls aged 15-17 (39%) were attending school as boys (19%) and in the South, 41% of girls 15-17 were attending school compared to 17% of boys.

Figure 11: School attendance of children 6-17, by gender and governorate

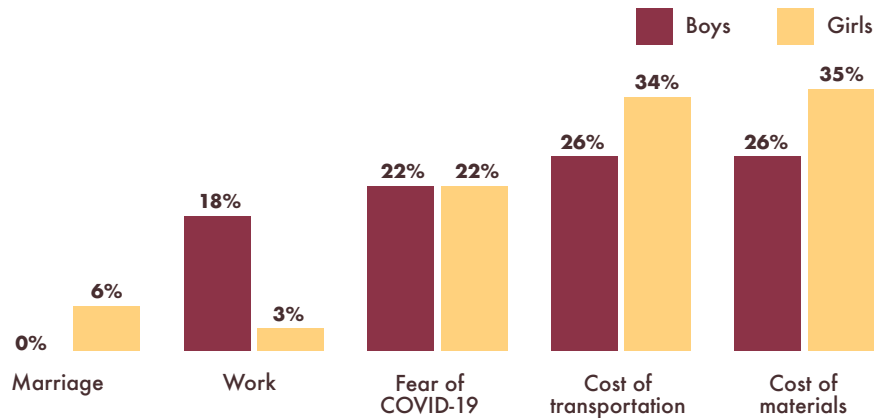


Younger children, especially girls, were not being sent to school due to costs. Overall, the most common reason for not sending children aged 3-17 to school was the cost of educational materials (30%) followed closely by the cost of transportation (29%). More girls were not attending for both reasons than boys: 35% of girls aged 3-17 who were not

in school were not attending due to the cost of educational materials compared to 25% of boys, and 34% and 26% respectively due to transportation costs. About one in five (22%) respondents said they did not enroll their children due to fear of COVID-19, with no gender difference.

⁹ The gender parity index is the number of girls enrolled in school over the number of boys enrolled in school. If the gender parity index is over 1, it means that school enrollment is higher for girls than boys.

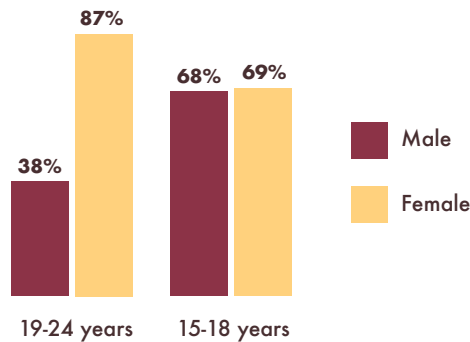
Figure 12: Main reasons for not sending children aged 3-17 to school, by gender



Consistent with previous findings, older boys and girls were not being sent to school for different reasons. Boys aged 15-18 were not attending school due to work (33%) compared to 9% of girls in the same age range, and this rose significantly to 57% of young men aged 19-24 not attending due to work compared to 5% of young women. On the other hand, of the reasons for girls 15-18 not attending school marriage was 22% compared to 0.1% for boys. This was even higher for young women aged 19-24, where 58% were not attending due to marriage compared

with 14% of young men. Women in this age category were generally neither enrolled in education nor participating in the labor market. Eighty percent of young women aged 15-24 were not in education, employment, or training (NEET) compared to 52% of young men. It is worth noting that the NEET gap rose dramatically after age 18: 69% of both girls and boys aged 15-18 were NEET, but for the 19-24 age group, the share of young women who were NEET rose to 87% and dropped to 38% for young men.

Figure 13: NEET rate, by age group

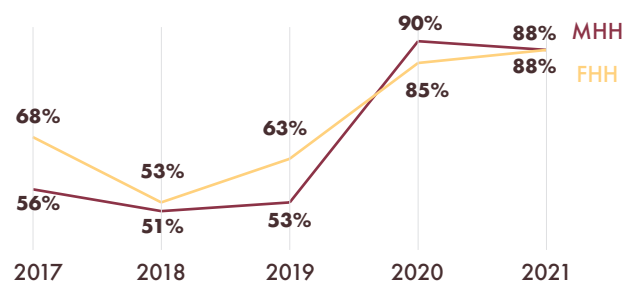


The NEET gender gap for the 19-24 years age group was very high in all governorates, but particularly striking in the South and Mount Lebanon with a 61 percentage points gap between young men and women, in the North (56%), and in Beirut (55%). The NEET gender difference was smaller in Akkar, Baalbek-El Hermel, and Bekaa because the NEET rate for boys was also very high. Baalbek-El Hermel and Mount Lebanon had the highest NEET rates in the country at 91% and 90% respectively.

Food security and economic vulnerability

Having risen dramatically between 2019 and 2020, the proportion of households under the SMEB (88%) remained the same in 2021 with no difference between MHH and FHH. The gap between extremely poor FHH and MHH, which was starker prior to 2019, remained closed as MHH became more vulnerable during Lebanon’s economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. There were no major differences between MHH and FHH in how households reported spending money, except FHH (12%) were slightly more likely than MHH (7%) to be spending more than 75% of their expenditures on food.

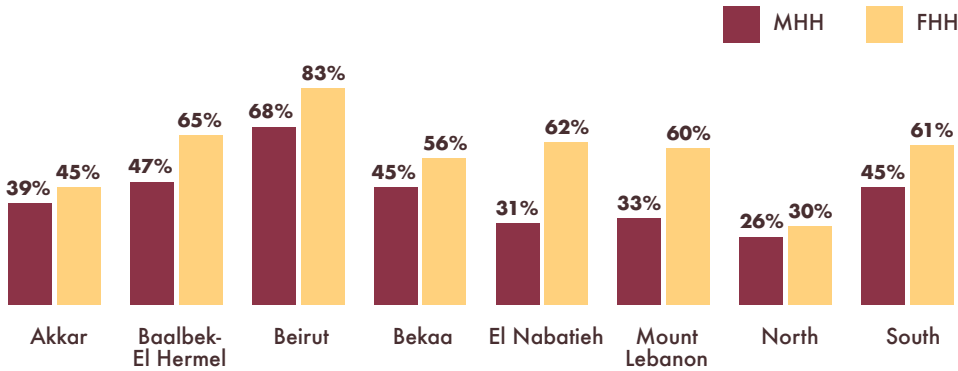
Figure 14: MHH and FHH under the SMEB since 2017



Due the dire economic conditions prevailing in Lebanon, households have been forced to resort to coping strategies in order to survive, with some differences between FHH and MHH. FHH (54%) were more likely than MHH (38%) to borrow food or rely on help from friends or relatives because of a lack of food, which is concerning because it could create potential for exploitation. Rates of FHH that relied on help from friends or relatives were high across all governorates, but in Beirut they reached 83% for FHH

compared with 68% of MHH. The rates of FHH that relied on food from others in Mount Lebanon and El Nabatieh were almost double the rate of MHH. FHH in non-permanent shelters (65%) were more often relying on this coping strategy than those in residential (49%) and non-residential (53%) shelters. In addition, FHH (11%) were slightly more likely than MHH (6%) to have school-aged children involved in income generation, particularly in El Nabatieh (31%) and the South (24%).

Figure 15: MHH and FHH reliance on borrowed food, by governorate



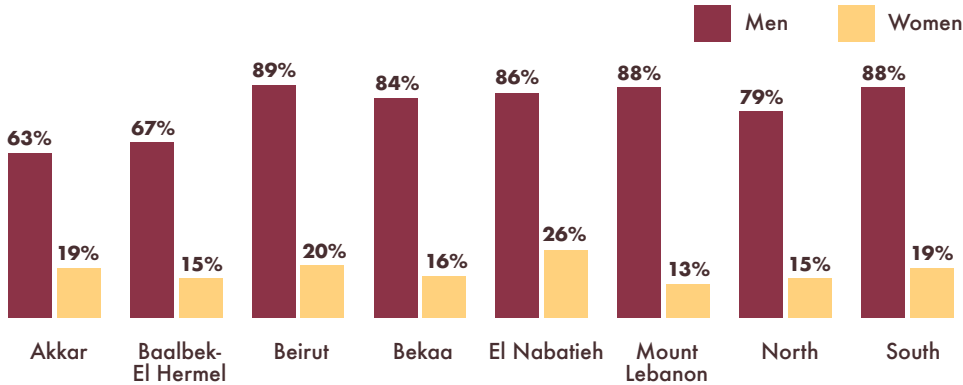
On the other hand, more MHH (72%) reported reducing the portion of meal sizes than FHH (67%) and doing so more often. This was particularly common in Beirut where 91% of MHH reported they were reducing the portions of meals. MHH (30%) reported reducing education expenditures to cope with the lack of food or resources to buy food more often than FHH (24%). There were no other major differences between MHH and FHH in the other coping strategies assessed. MHH and FHH were adopting stress, crisis, and emergency coping strategies at similar rates. Likewise, there were no important gender differences in food consumption categorization, number of meals per day, number of meals consumed by children under 5, household weekly diet diversity, and types of food consumed on a weekly basis.

Findings suggest that Syrians are surviving the economic crisis by taking on debt, and MHH in particular owed very high amounts. Almost all (92%) households had borrowed money in the past 3 months, with no gender difference. Three quarters (75%) of households reported having debt of more than LBP 900,000, and more MHH (77%) owed this amount or above than FHH (67%). MHH were in more debt than FHH, owing an average of LBP 823,545 per capita compared with LBP 688,128 for FHH. Almost all (93%) households reported taking on debt to purchase food, with little gender difference. Likely because MHH more often lived in rented accommodations, MHH (51%) more commonly took on debt to pay for their rent than FHH (43%). While friends or family in Lebanon were the main sources of debt for all households, FHH were also borrowing from supermarkets at very high rates. Almost two-thirds (62%) of FHH owed money to supermarkets compared to 47% of MHH.

Livelihoods and income

Women’s labor force participation increased slightly from 14% in 2020 to 16% in 2021, but remained at one fifth of the rate for men (81%). Women’s labor force participation was lowest in Mount Lebanon (13%), and highest in El Nabatieh (26%) and Beirut (20%). There was no difference in labor force participation of women with disabilities compared with the general population of Syrian refugee women, whereas a significant difference was noted among men with disabilities. Eighty-six percent of men were participating in the labor force overall compared to 54% of men with disabilities.

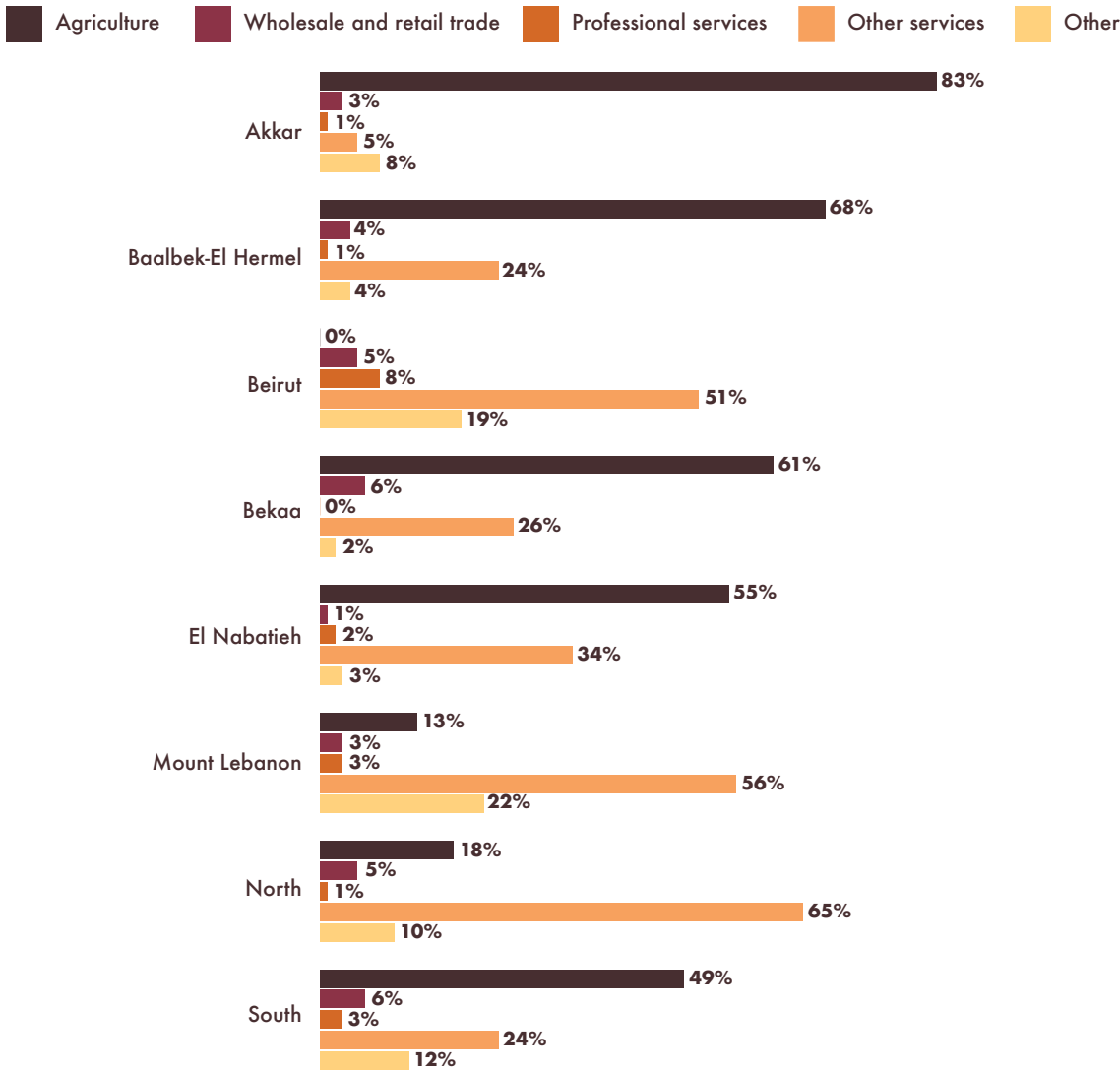
Figure 16: Labor force participation, by gender and governorate



Unemployment rates remained nearly double for women (42%) than for men (27%), and particularly high in Beirut and El Nabatieh governorates. Almost three-quarters (72%) of unemployed women said they were not working due to needing to care for dependent family members or children. Syrian women’s low economic participation can underpin wider inequality in living standards and rights.

Similar to in 2020, the small number of employed women were mostly working in agriculture (47%) and in the service sector (34%). There was notable variation among governorates in main types of jobs women were in: In Akkar (83%), Baalbek-El Hermel (68%), Bekaa (61%), El Nabatieh (55%), and the South (49%), most working women were in agriculture. However, in the North (65%), Mount Lebanon (56%), and Beirut (51%) women were mostly employed in the hotel, restaurant, transport, and personal services industries.

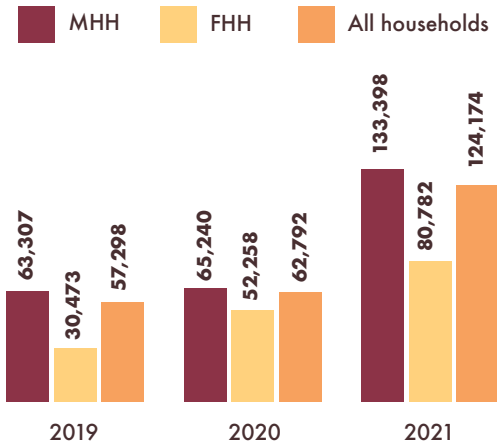
Figure 17: Main sectors of employment for women, by governorate



The rate of FHH with at least one member who had worked in the past 7 days increased from 35% in 2020 to 47% but remained far lower than the rate for MHH at 70% in 2021. It appears that the gender gap in average monthly per capita income returned in 2021 after having closed in 2020, likely due to the effect of COVID-19 and the economic crisis. The

average per capita income for FHH increased from LBP 52,258 in 2020 to LBP 80,782 in 2021, while it rose from LBP 65,240 to LBP 133,398 for MHH. However, this increase is only nominal, as the high rate of inflation means that the monthly income from employment of all households was still one-fifth of the SMEB value in both 2020 and 2021.

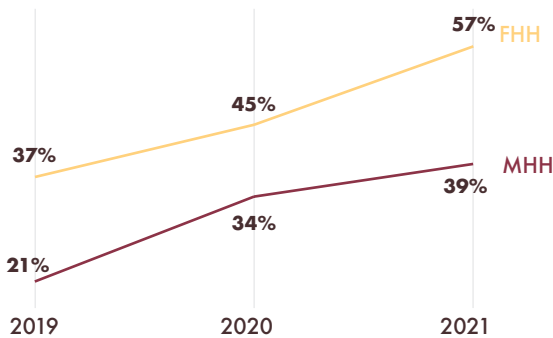
Figure 18: Per capita monthly income for all households



The trend of FHH dependency on WFP e-cards and ATM cards from UN or humanitarian agencies for their main source of income continued to increase in 2021. In 2021, 57% of FHH reported that their main source of income was either WFP

e-cards or ATM cards from humanitarian organizations, an increase from 45% in 2020, and far higher than for MHH (39%). FHH in Baalbek-El Hermel (81%) and Bekaa (89%) were particularly dependent on cash assistance.

Figure 19: Dependency on e-cards and ATM cards for main source of income since 2019, by gender



As in all previous VASyR studies, gender inequality remains a defining factor in all realms of life for Syrian refugees and is only becoming more pronounced during Lebanon’s economic crisis.