



METHODOLOGY

SAMPLING

Sampling for the VASyR followed a two-stage cluster approach, keeping with the methodology of previous years. UNHCR database of known Syrian refugees as of June 2020 served as the sample frame. Cases with missing addresses were excluded. Sampling was based on a “30 x 7” two-stage cluster scheme initially developed by the World Health Organization. This method outlines a sample size of 30 clusters per geographical area and seven households per cluster which provides a precision of +/- 10 percentage points¹. Districts were considered as the geographical level within which 30 clusters were selected. There are 26 districts in Lebanon, where Beirut and Akkar each represent a district and a governorate. As such, to ensure similar representativeness with other governorates, an additional two strata samples were considered for each, yielding 90 cluster selections for each. The governorate of Baalbek- El Hermel is made up of only two districts, and thus to ensure an adequate sample in that governorate, one additional cluster sample was considered.

The primary sampling unit was defined as the village level (i.e. cluster) and UNHCR cases served as the secondary sampling unit. A case was defined as a group of people who are identified together as one unit (usually immediate family/household) under UNHCR databases. Using the Emergency Nutrition Assessment (ENA) software, villages were selected with a probability proportionate to size where villages with a larger concentration of refugees were more likely to be selected and 30 clusters/villages were selected with four replacement clusters, per district.

In order to determine the sample size needed to generate results representative at a district, governorate and national level, the following assumptions were used:

- 50% estimated prevalence.
- 10% precision.
- 1.5 design effect.
- 5% margin of error.

Using the above parameters, 165 cases per district/cluster selection were required, leading to a target of 5,115 cases nationally. Due to the known high level of mobility of the Syrian refugee population and based on experience in previous rounds of VASyR and other household level surveys, a 40% non-response rate was considered. In the final sample, 8,662 cases were targeted across all districts of which 4,563 households were visited.

TRAINING AND FIELD WORK

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, enumerator training took place remotely. Separate enumerator trainings were carried out online for each operational region (Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, North and South) covering the data collection tool, contextual background, methodology and ethical considerations. Additionally, enumerators were required to attend a two-hour online COVID-19 training, provided by

the Lebanese Red Cross, which covered key information about the virus, transmission and precautionary methods. The bulk of the trainings were administered by UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF staff. Trainings on the Washington Group Question Set of Functioning was provided by Humanity and Inclusion. Data was collected and entered on electronic tablets by the enumerators during the interviews using KoBo toolbox software. The data was then sent to UNHCR Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS) Platform.

Data collection took place between the 19th of August and the 17th of September through face-to-face interviews at refugee homes by four partners in each region, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Partners that conducted VASyR interviews

Akkar	Caritas
Baalbek-El Hermel	World Vision International
Beirut	Makhzoumi Foundation
Bekaa	World Vision International
Mount Lebanon	Makhzoumi Foundation
El Nabatieh	SHIELD
North	Caritas
South	SHIELD

COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURE DURING DATA COLLECTION

With the support of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan Health working group and WHO, detailed guidelines were put in place to ensure the safety of enumerators and refugee families during the face-to-face data collection. Firstly, prior to the visit, households were screened over the phone to ensure that no member in the households was exhibiting COVID-19 related symptoms and also to inform households of the measures that would be taken during the interview. UNHCR field offices and partners also liaised closely with local authorities to inform them of the exercise and measures taken to ensure access to specific areas. During the data collection activity, enumerators were provided with Personal Protective Equipment which included masks and sanitizing equipment. These were also provided to refugee individuals who participated in the interviews. Enumerators were also equipped with digital thermometers in order to measure body temperature of individuals prior to beginning the interview. Interviews took place with one person in the household with safe social distancing and in an outdoor or a well-ventilated area. If these conditions were not met or if any household member was showing COVID-19 related symptoms, the interview was called off.

¹Using the Emergency Nutrition Assessment (ENA) Software.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The 2020 VASyR questionnaire consisted of around 580 questions that collected data at the household and individual level including demographics, legal documentation, safety and security, shelter, WASH, health, food security, livelihoods, expenditures, food consumption, debt, coping strategies and assistance, as well as questions specifically relating to women, children and people with disabilities.

The VASyR questionnaire is a household survey administered with either the head of the household or any other adult household member.

The full questionnaire can be downloaded via the following link: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/84558>

DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE

On a weekly basis, five percent of the weekly target number of households were contacted to verify a few questions from the interview and to receive feedback on the enumerators' performance. Additionally, At the end of each week, a data collection summary report was shared with all agencies to check on the progress of data collection. Team leaders and field focal points followed up closely with enumerators and general feedback was shared on a weekly basis.

DATA PROCESSING

Data weighting was necessary to ensure that the geographical distribution of the population was reflected in the analysis and to compensate for the unequal probabilities of a household being included in the sample. The normalized weight was calculated for each district using the following formula:

$$w_n = \frac{(N_s/N)}{(n_s/n)}$$

Where w_n is the normalized weight, N_s is the total sample frame of the district, N is the total national sample frame, n_s is the number of households visited in the district and n is the total visited households.

The data was cleaned from any significant outliers and consistency checks were applied to spot any data errors. Results were disaggregated by district, governorate, gender of the household head, shelter type, food security and economic vulnerability, when deemed necessary. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 20.

LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

As in any survey, limitations were expected. Key limitations of the VASyR were as follows:

1. While previous rounds of the VASyR occurred during the same time of the year (May-June), in 2020, the data collection was delayed till August-September, due to the COVID-19 Outbreak. Data collection in Beirut was also slightly delayed due to the August 4th Beirut port blast.

This may have had implications on indicators that concern behaviors with eventual seasonal variations.

2. The VASyR relies primarily on self-reported data which may give rise to bias. To minimize the impact of this bias, enumerators were trained on providing a comprehensive informed consent to reassure confidentiality, purpose, risks and benefits.

3. Sample sizes for specific age groups may have been be small as the sampling strategy was not conducted for this purpose. Thus, results for such age groups were either not reported (e.g., cases below 25), not segregated by geography (e.g., IYCF) or reported but with caution.

4. The VASyR sampling frame excluded Syrian refugees who have never approached UNHCR (unless within a targeted household). It is worth noting that this population is a consistent gap in data on Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

5. The VASyR questionnaire and respective indicators were subjected to adjustment and changes in order to ensure that the most accurate definition or calculation was being used. This has caused some results not to be directly comparable with previous years.

6. The VASyR is a household survey and the interview is usually conducted with the head of household or any other adult household member. As such, there are no individual interviews carried out with each family member and obtaining accurate information on particularly sensitive topics is a challenge (i.e. child labor or harassment).

7. Due to the geographical level sampling methods, families that have moved to a different governorate or whose address was not updated with UNHCR were not captured in the survey.