# DEMOGRAPHICS

The VASyR tracks key demographic indicators over time to better understand the population of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. This includes household composition, profile of the head of household, dependency, prevalence of disabilities, and other specific needs. A household is defined as a group of people that live under the same roof, share the same expenses, and eat from the same pot. The head of household is the main decision maker.

Key findings

– Household size remained stable with, on average, five individuals in a typical Syrian refugee household in Lebanon.
– The share of female-headed households was 17.5%.
– There were no major shifts noted in the overall population composition, with an even split between male and female. More than half of the population was under the age of 18.
– Among the population, 9% of individuals were found to have a disability. At the household level, 30% had at least one member with a disability.

Population profile

Figure 1: Age distribution by sex
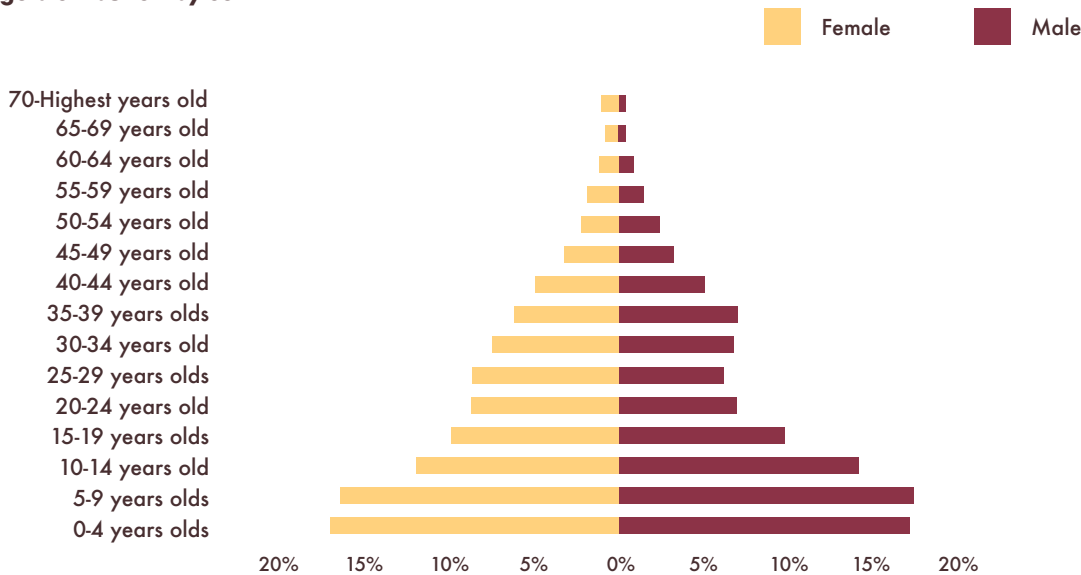
Examining the distribution of the population by age and sex, there was an overall even split between male and female. The exceptions were in the age group between 10-14 years, with more boys than girls, and in the age group of 25-29 years where there was a notably smaller proportion of men than women. Over half (51%) of the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon was below the age of 18 years.

Refugee households

The average Syrian refugee household size remained stable at five individuals per household. On average, households were composed of 2.3 adults (18-59 years), 1.5 children aged between 6 and 17 years, and 1 child aged 5 years or younger.

Most commonly, households had between one and four members (41%), 35% had five or six members, and 24% had seven household members or more. Eighty-seven percent of households had at least one member under the age of 18, and 61% had at least one child under the age of

5. Ten percent of households had a member aged 60 years or above.

The share of female-headed households has remained stable over the years and was recorded at 17% in 2021 compared to 19% in 2020. Beirut and Mount Lebanon had the lowest share at 10%, while Baalbek-El Hermel and Akkar had the highest rate with one quarter of households in these governorates being headed by a woman.

**Figure 2: Share of female-headed households, by governorate**
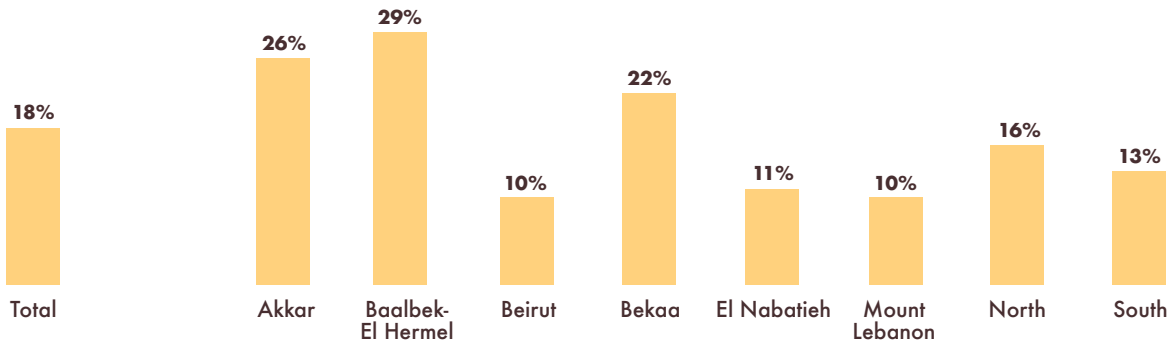
Dependency

Dependents: Household members aged 14 or younger, or 60 years or above.

Dependency ratio: Number of dependents in the household divided by the number of non-dependents in the household.

Figure 3: Average number of dependents within households

- No dependent
- 1 or more dependents
- 2 or more dependents
- 3 or more dependents
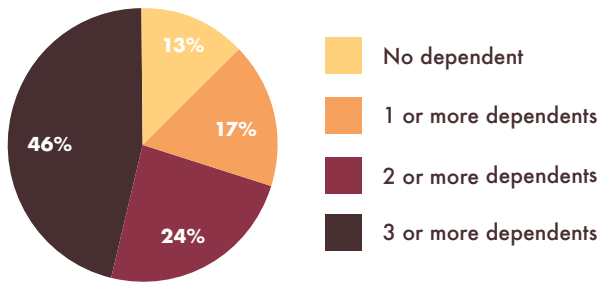
The average dependency ratio in Syrian refugee households remained stable at 0.96 in 2021, compared to 1 in 2020 and 1.2 in 2019, indicating an almost even distribution of dependents and non-dependents. Forty-six percent of households had at least three dependents, 24% had two, 17% had one, and 13 % had no dependents at all.

Disability

Disability was measured using an adapted version of the *"Washington Group Short Set of Questions (WGQ) on Functioning – Enhanced"[1]* for adults and children aged 5 and above, and the Washington Group/UNICEF *"Child-Functioning Module (CFM)"[2]* for children aged 2 to 4 years. The WGQ set of questions focused on measuring 10 domains and the CFM seven domains by looking into difficulties in functional limitations to determine the presence of a disability. Nine percent of the Syrian refugee population were found to have such difficulties, i.e. a disability. At the household level, 30% had at least one member with a disability. The percentage of people with a disability was higher among male (10%) than female (8.5%) respondents.

The prevalence of disability varied from one Lebanese governorate to another. El Nabatieh governorate ranked first with the highest disability prevalence of 16%, while Mount Lebanon ranked last with the lowest prevalence of 7.5%

Figure 4: Disability prevalence per governorate

% of individuals with a disability
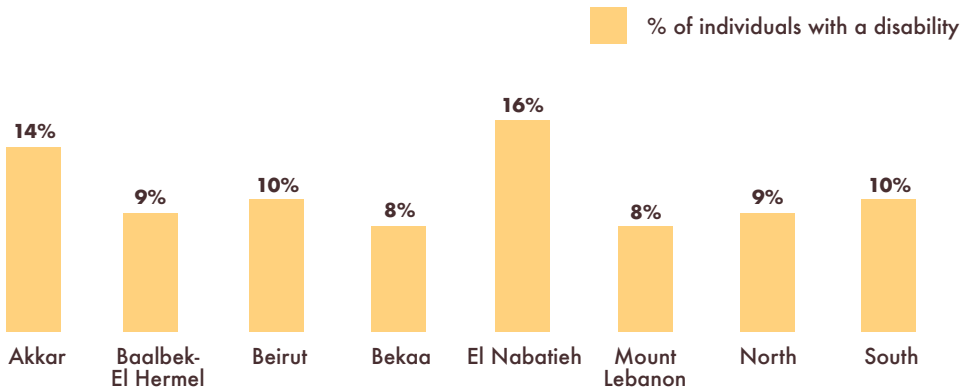
Examining specific domains of difficulty among individuals above the age of 5, 2% reported some level of difficulty seeing, 0.5% reported some difficulty hearing, and 3% reported that they had a lot of difficulty walking or climbing stairs, or were unable to do so at all.

Among those aged 5 or above, 30% reported feeling worried, anxious, or nervous, and 24% reported feeling depressed on an at least monthly basis. Respectively, 17% and 11% reported these on a daily basis.

[1] *Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Functioning (WGQ) - Enhanced measures 10 domains namely: vision, hearing, mobility, communication, remembering, self-care, upper-body, fine-motricity, anxiety, and depression.*
[2] *Child-Functioning Module measures seven domains namely: vision, hearing, mobility, understanding, cognition, learning, and upper-body fine-motricity.*

Figure 4: Proportion of individuals reporting difficulties in different domains, as per *Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Functioning - Enhanced*
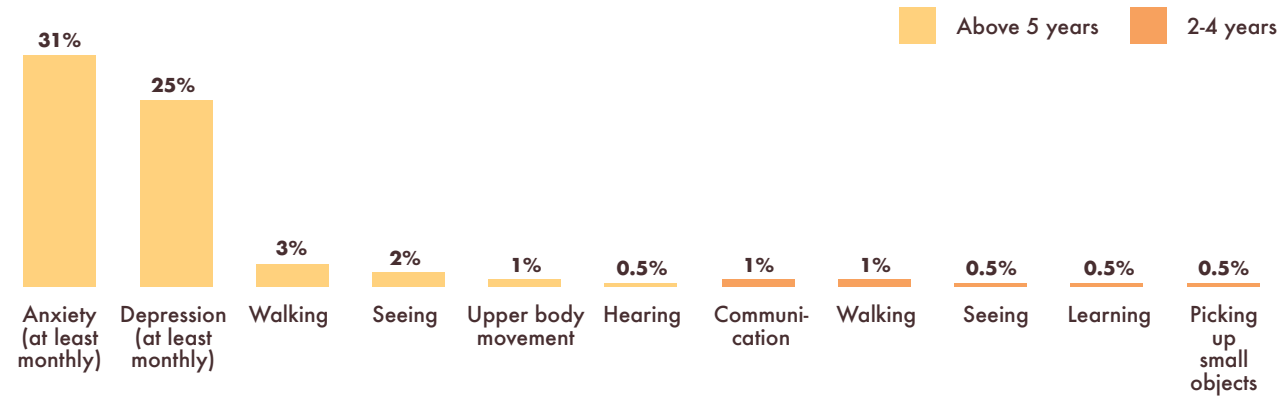
Looking at people living with a disability (aged 2 and above) and expressed difficulties doing basic universal activities, 21% reported difficulty seeing, 10% reported difficulty hearing, 34% reported difficulty walking/climbing stairs, 2% reported difficulty understanding, and 9% reported difficulty using hands and fingers.

Of people living with a disability (aged 5 years and above) and expressed difficulties doing basic universal activities, 9% reported difficulty speaking, 10% reported difficulty remembering or concentrating, 12% reported difficulty to care for self, and 14% reported difficulty raising 2kg of weight.

Of persons (5 years and above) living with a disability, 34% reported feeling worried, anxious, or nervous, and 20% reported feeling depressed on a daily basis.

Specific needs

Looking at other specific needs within households, just less than half (47%) reported that at least one household member had a chronic illness, 27% had at least one member pregnant or lactating, 19% had at least one single parent, 3% had at least one older person unable to care for him/herself, and 0.5% had at least one member aged 60 years or above as the sole caregiver for children. At the governorate level, the South had the highest rate of households with at least one member with a chronic illness (56%) and Baalbek-El Hermel had the highest proportion of families with at least one single parent (28%).

Figure 5: Proportion of households with at least one household member with a specific need, by governorate

Legend:
- Chronic illness
- Pregnant or lactating
- Single parent
- Older person unable to care for self
- Older person as the sole caregiver of a child

Total
- Chronic illness: 47%
- Pregnant or lactating: 27%
- Single parent: 19%
- Older person unable to care for self: 3%
- Older person as the sole caregiver of a child: 0%

Akkar
- Chronic illness: 47%
- Pregnant or lactating: 28%
- Single parent: 19%
- Older person unable to care for self: 5%
- Older person as the sole caregiver of a child: 1%

Baalbek-El Hermel
- Chronic illness: 51%
- Pregnant or lactating: 24%
- Single parent: 28%
- Older person unable to care for self: 3%
- Older person as the sole caregiver of a child: 0%

Beirut
- Chronic illness: 41%
- Pregnant or lactating: 27%
- Single parent: 23%
- Older person unable to care for self: 4%
- Older person as the sole caregiver of a child: 0%

Bekaa
- Chronic illness: 52%
- Pregnant or lactating: 33%
- Single parent: 16%
- Older person unable to care for self: 3%
- Older person as the sole caregiver of a child: 0%

El Nabatieh
- Chronic illness: 45%
- Pregnant or lactating: 31%
- Single parent: 8%
- Older person unable to care for self: 3%
- Older person as the sole caregiver of a child: 0%

Mount Lebanon
- Chronic illness: 40%
- Pregnant or lactating: 24%
- Single parent: 22%
- Older person unable to care for self: 3%
- Older person as the sole caregiver of a child: 0%

North
- Chronic illness: 45%
- Pregnant or lactating: 25%
- Single parent: 15%
- Older person unable to care for self: 4%
- Older person as the sole caregiver of a child: 1%

South
- Chronic illness: 56%
- Pregnant or lactating: 26%
- Single parent: 16%
- Older person unable to care for self: 3%
- Older person as the sole caregiver of a child: 0%

Annex 1: Gender and Share of household members

	Gender		Gender of Head of Household		Share of household by number of members				Number of dependents in the household			
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Average household size	4 or less members	5-6 members	7 or more members	No dependent	1 or more dependent	2 or more dependents	3 or more dependents
Total	50%	50%	82%	18%	5.1	41.53%	34.89%	23.57%	13%	17%	24%	46%
Governorate												
Akkar	49%	51%	74%	26%	5.2	40%	34%	26%	12%	17%	24%	47%
Baalbek-El Hermel	47%	53%	71%	29%	5.1	41%	32%	26%	11%	19%	21%	49%
Beirut	52%	48%	90%	10%	4.7	48%	33%	19%	20%	16%	23%	40%
Bekaa	49%	51%	78%	22%	5.1	39%	36%	25%	14%	17%	21%	48%
El Nabatieh	52%	48%	89%	11%	5.7	31%	39%	30%	7%	12%	23%	59%
Mount Lebanon	51%	49%	90%	10%	4.9	44%	37%	19%	15%	15%	25%	45%
North	50%	50%	84%	16%	4.9	47%	33%	21%	13%	18%	26%	43%
South	50%	50%	87%	13%	5.6	34%	33%	33%	10%	17%	25%	48%
Gender of the head of household												
Women					4.2	57%	27%	16%	21%	24%	20%	35%
Men					5.2	38%	37%	25%	11%	15%	25%	49%
Shelter type												
Residential	51%	49%	85%	15%	5.0	43%	35%	22%	13%	17%	25%	44%
Non-residential	50%	50%	83%	17%	4.8	45%	34%	21%	18%	16%	20%	45%
Non-permanent	48%	52%	73%	27%	5.4	36%	35%	29%	10%	15%	21%	54%