



# 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 in household affairs.

## 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 18 per cent, in line with last year.
- 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, 14 per cent of individuals were found to have a disability. At the household level, 32 per cent had at least one member with a disability.



# POPULATION PROFILE

Figure 1: Age distribution of Syrian refugees, by sex



Examining the distribution of the population by age and sex, there was an overall even division between male and female, across all age groups. Over half (51.2 per cent) of the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon was below the age of 18.

# REFUGEE HOUSEHOLDS

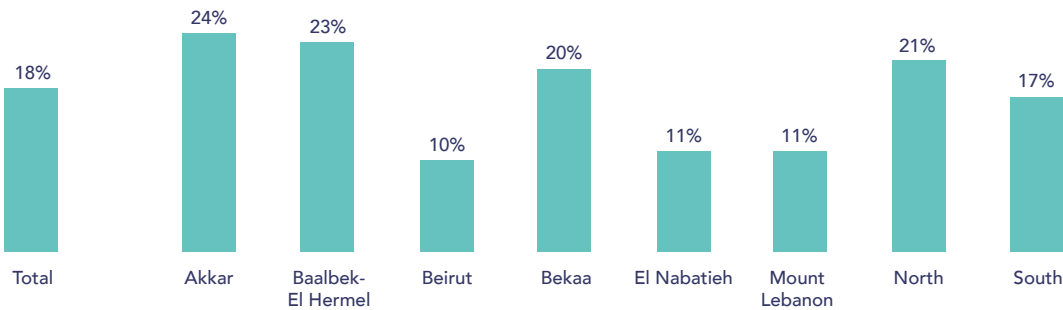
The average Syrian refugee household size remained stable at five individuals per household. On average, households were composed of 2.27 adults (18–59 years), 1.49 children aged 6–17, and 0.9 children aged 5 or younger. The average household size was higher among male-headed households (5.2 individuals) compared to female-headed households (4.1 individuals).<sup>1</sup>

Most commonly, households had between one and four members (43 per cent), 36 per cent had five or six members, and 21 per cent had seven household members or more. A total of 86 per cent of households had at least one member under the age of 18 years

old, and 59 per cent had at least one child under the age of 5. A total of 10 per cent of households had an elderly member aged 60 or above.

The share of female-headed households has remained stable over the years, and was recorded at 18 per cent in 2022, which is similar to 2021. Beirut had the lowest share at 10 per cent, while Akkar and Baalbek-El Hermel had the highest rates, with 24 and 23 per cent of households in these governorates being headed by a woman, respectively.

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



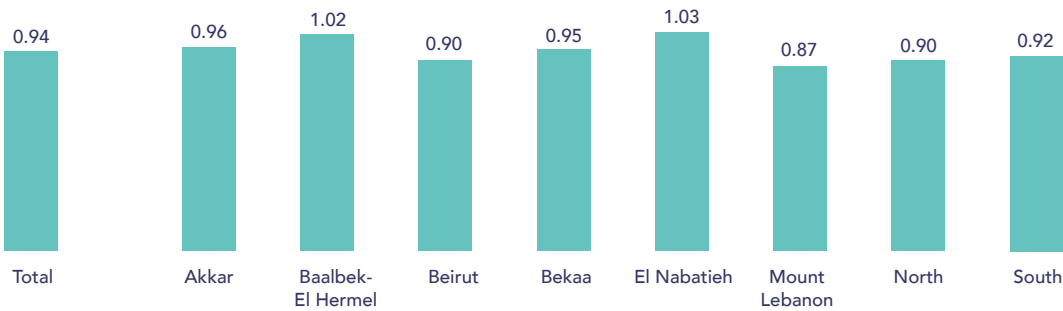
<sup>1</sup> Female-headed households are households where a woman is the main decision maker.

# 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.

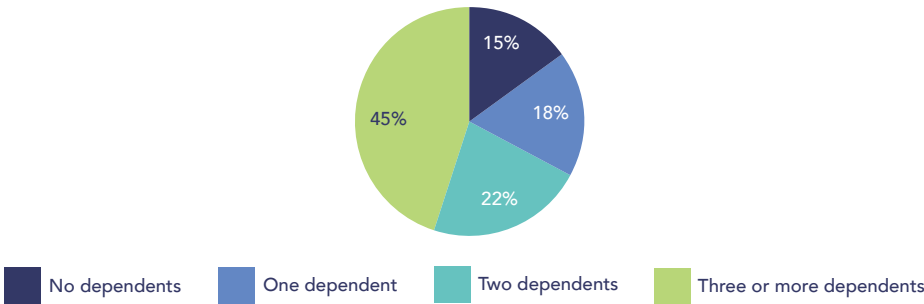
The average dependency ratio in Syrian refugee households was 0.94 in 2022, compared to 0.96 in 2021 and 1 in 2020, indicating an almost even distribution of dependents and non-dependents within a household. The dependency ratio was lower among female-headed household (0.84) than male-headed households (0.95), which reflects a higher proportion of dependents among male-headed households.

Figure 3: Dependency ratio by governorate



A total of 45 per cent of households had at least three dependents, 22 per cent had two, 18 per cent had one and 15 per cent had no dependents at all.

Figure 4: Average number of dependents within households



# DISABILITY

WHO defines disability as the interaction between individuals with a health condition (e.g. cerebral palsy, Down’s syndrome or depression) and personal and environmental factors (e.g. negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social support).<sup>2</sup> Disability was measured using an adapted version of the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning – Enhanced for adults and children aged 5 and above,<sup>3</sup> and the Washington Group/UNICEF Child-Functioning

Module for children aged 2–4. The Washington Group Short Set focuses on measuring 10 domains (vision, hearing, mobility, communication, remembering, self-care, upper body function, fine motricity, anxiety and depression) and the Child-Functioning Module seven domains (vision, hearing, mobility, understanding, cognition, learning and upper body fine motricity) by looking into difficulties in functional limitations to determine the presence of a disability.

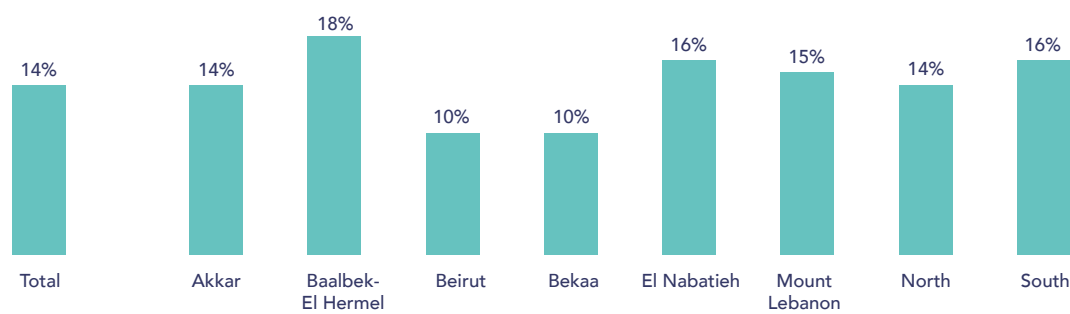
<sup>2</sup> WHO, “Disability” (2022). Available from [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health).  
<sup>3</sup> Available from [www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-enhanced-wg-ss-enhanced/](http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-enhanced-wg-ss-enhanced/).

# Disability among individuals

Around 14 per cent of the Syrian refugee population were found to have difficulties which indicate a disability. The percentage of people with a disability was higher among male individuals (15 per cent) than female individuals (12 per cent). The disability prevalence was the lowest among individuals aged 2–4 (5 per cent) and the highest among individuals aged 60 and above (56 per cent).

The prevalence of disability varied from one Lebanese governorate to another. Baalbek-El Hermel had the highest disability prevalence of 18 per cent, while Beirut had the lowest prevalence of 10 per cent.

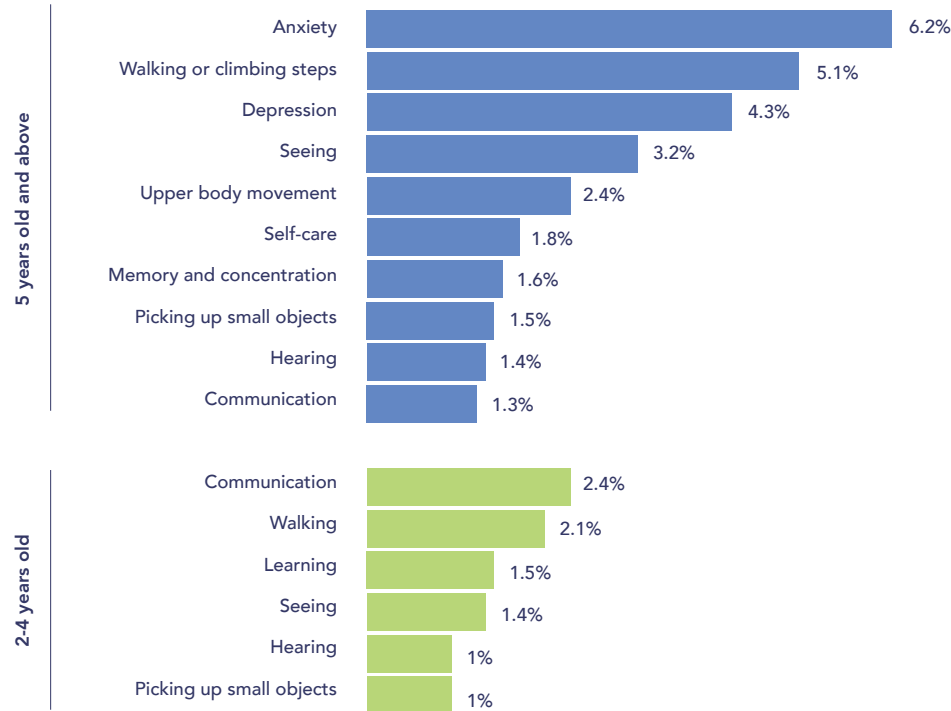
Figure 5: Disability prevalence per governorate



Examining specific domains of difficulty among individuals aged 5 and above, the most commonly reported disability types are the following: 5.1 per cent reported that they had significant difficulty walking or climbing stairs, or were unable to do so at all; 3 per cent reported inability or a high level of difficulty in seeing; and 1 per cent reported inability or a high level of difficulty in hearing.

Among those aged 5 and above, 6 per cent reported having high anxiety levels on a daily basis, while 4 per cent reported being highly depressed on a daily basis. About 1 per cent reported inability or a high level of difficulty or in communicating; 2 per cent reported inability or a high level of difficulty in concentrating; and 2 per cent reported inability or a high level of difficulty in caring for themselves.

Figure 6: Proportion of individuals reporting disabilities in different domains, as per the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning – Enhanced



# Disability within households

As per the heads of household, 21 per cent had disabilities themselves. The proportion of female heads of households with disabilities (26 per cent) was higher than among the male heads of households (20 per cent).

Around 32 per cent of households had at least one member with a disability. The average household size for families including members with a disability (5.4 individuals) was higher than for families without members having a disability (4.7).

## ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC NEEDS

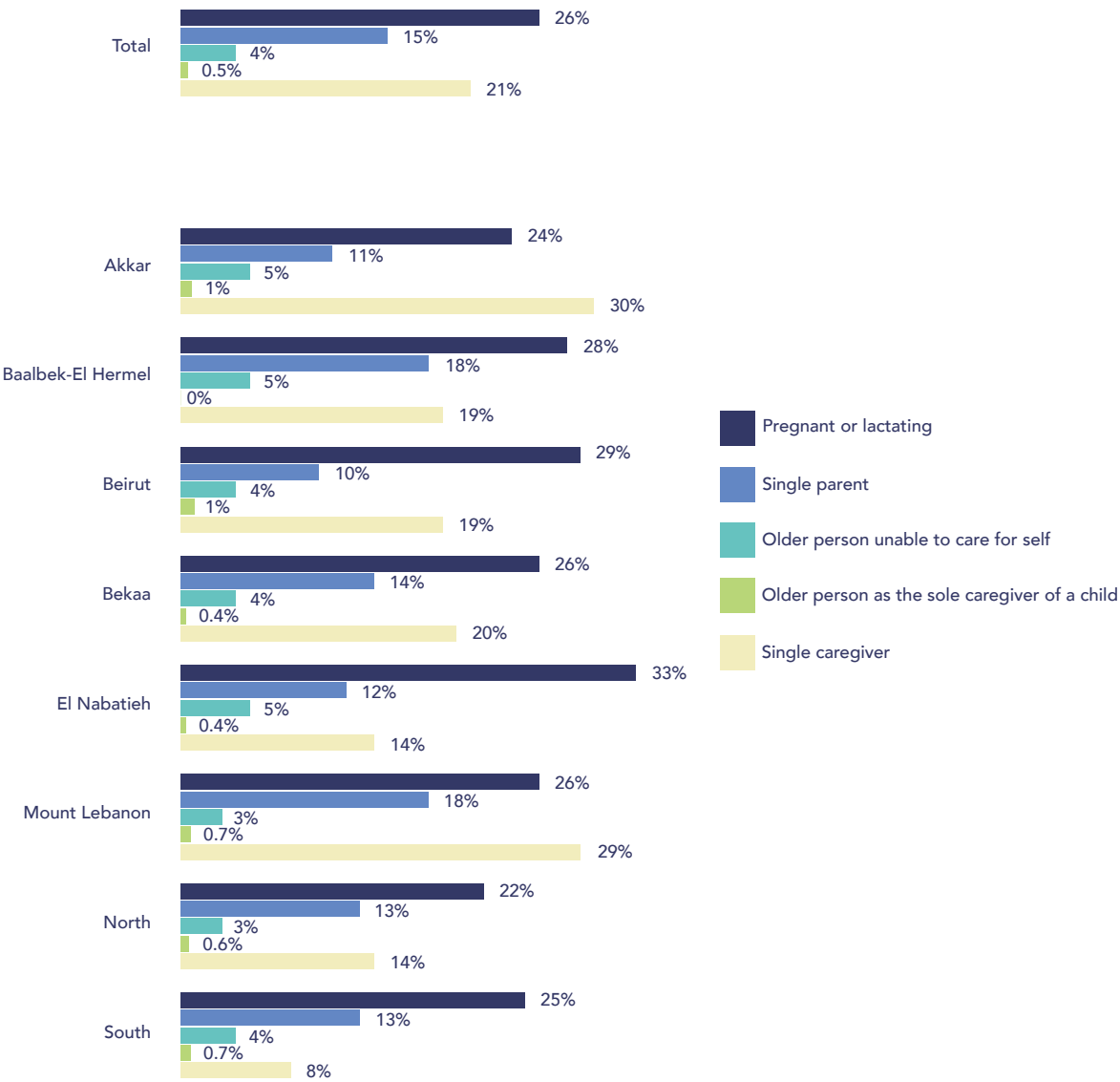
About 36 per cent of elderly individuals reported being unable to take care of themselves (of which 80 per cent had a disability), and 4 per cent of households had at least one older person unable to care for themselves.

Meanwhile, 27 per cent of women of menstruating age reported being pregnant or lactating in the last two years. A total of 26 per cent of households had at least one member who was currently

pregnant or lactating, with the highest proportion of households (33 per cent) in El Nabatieh.

A total of 15 per cent of households had at least one single parent,<sup>4</sup> and 0.5 per cent had at least one member aged 60 years or above as the sole caregiver for children. At the governorate level, Akkar has the highest percentage of households with at least one member being a single caregiver (30 per cent).<sup>5</sup>

Figure 7: Proportion of households with at least one member with an identified specific need, by governorate



<sup>4</sup> Single parent (male or female) household, with one or more child(ren) all under the age of 18. The single parent is the biological and/or legal caregiver of the child(ren).  
<sup>5</sup> Single caregiver (male or female) household, with one or more dependents other than biological children. These could be non-biological children, siblings, or older parents requiring protection and care.

Annex 1: Gender and share of household members

	Gender		Gender of head of household		Share of household by number of members				Other			
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Average household size	4 or less members	5-6 members	7 or more members	No dependent	One dependent	Two dependents	3 or more dependents
<b>Total</b>	50%	50%	83%	17%	5.0	43%	36%	21%	15%	18%	22%	45%
<b>Governorate</b>												
Akkar	48%	52%	76%	24%	5.0	42%	35%	23%	14%	18%	23%	46%
Baalbek-El Hermel	49%	51%	77%	23%	5.2	36%	40%	24%	11%	19%	22%	48%
Beirut	52%	48%	90%	10%	4.6	49%	34%	18%	20%	18%	22%	40%
Bekaa	50%	50%	80%	20%	5.1	38%	40%	22%	11%	19%	21%	49%
El Nabatieh	50%	50%	89%	11%	5.7	31%	38%	30%	8%	12%	22%	57%
Mount Lebanon	50%	50%	89%	11%	4.9	48%	34%	19%	18%	17%	25%	41%
North	50%	50%	79%	21%	4.7	47%	35%	18%	19%	17%	21%	42%
South	51%	49%	83%	17%	5.1	43%	34%	23%	12%	21%	19%	47%
<b>Gender of the head of household</b>												
Male					5.2	39%	38%	23%	13%	16%	23%	48%
Female					4.1	61%	28%	11%	23%	25%	21%	31%
<b>Shelter type</b>												
Residential	50%	50%	84%	16%	4.9	45%	35%	20%	15%	18%	24%	42%
Non-residential	50%	50%	84%	16%	4.9	42%	38%	20%	16%	16%	19%	49%
Non-permanent	49%	51%	77%	23%	5.4	34%	38%	28%	12%	18%	17%	52%