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METHODOLOGY

SAMPLING

Sampling for the VASyR followed a two-stage cluster approach, in keeping with the methodology of previous years. The UNHCR database of known Syrian refugees as of April 2022 served as the sample frame. Households with missing addresses were excluded. Sampling was based on a "30 x 7" two-stage cluster scheme initially developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). This method outlines a sample size of 30 clusters per geographical area, and 7 households per cluster, which provides a precision of +/- 10 percentage points. Districts were considered as the geographical level within which 30 clusters were selected. There are 26 districts in Lebanon, including Beirut and Akkar which each represent both a district and a governorate. As such, to ensure similar representativeness with other governorates, an additional two strata samples were considered for each of these, yielding 90 cluster selections apiece. 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 software, villages were selected with a probability proportionate to size, meaning villages with a larger concentration of refugees were more likely to be selected; 30 clusters/villages were selected with four replacement clusters per district.

In order to determine the sample size needed to generate results representative at district, governorate and national levels, the following assumptions were used:
- 50 per cent estimated prevalence
- 10 per cent precision
- 1.5 design effect
- 5 per cent margin of error

Using these 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 the VASyR and other household level surveys, a 40 per cent non-response rate was considered. In the final sample, 8,337 cases were targeted across all districts, of which 5,090 households were visited.

TRAINING AND FIELDWORK

Enumerator training was carried out in person from 19 to 26 May 2022. Separate enumerator trainings were carried out in person for each operational region (Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon and South Lebanon) covering the data-collection tool, contextual background, methodology and ethical considerations. The bulk of the training was administered by UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF staff. Training on the questions on disability in the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning was provided by Humanity and Inclusion. Data were collected and entered on electronic tablets by the enumerators during the interviews using KoBo toolbox software. The data were then sent to the UNHCR Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS) platform.

Data collection took place between 7 June and 7 July 2022 through face-to-face interviews at refugee homes in each region by one of four partners, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Partners that conducted interviews for the VASyR

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

COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES DURING DATA COLLECTION

With the support of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan Health Working Group and WHO, the detailed guidelines put in place in 2020 were updated 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 was exhibiting COVID-19-related symptoms, and to inform respondents of the measures to be taken during the interview. UNHCR field offices and partners liaised closely with local authorities to inform them of the exercise and the measures taken to ensure access to specific areas. During the data-collection activity, enumerators were provided with personal protective equipment such as masks and sanitizing equipment, which were also provided to refugees participating in the interviews. Interviews took place with one household member at a safe social distance, and in an outdoor or a well-ventilated area. If these conditions could not be met, or if any household member was showing COVID-19-related symptoms, the interview was called off.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The 2022 VASyR questionnaire consisted of around 690 conditional and unconditional questions that collected data at the household and individual levels, including on demographics, legal documentation, safety and security, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, energy, 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, and AAP.

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://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/96732

DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE

The following steps were taken to monitor the quality of collected data.

1. Using a harmonized checklist, each VASyR core agency conducted frequent spot checks on each of the data-collection teams across Lebanon.[1] Feedback was provided to enumerators directly after the interview was completed, and reports were drafted and shared with the respective area coordinator and core group members. No interviews were interrupted unless crucial intervention was needed in events such as violation of the ethical regulations. Important feedback was shared with all enumerators through field coordinators via WhatsApp groups.

2. Agencies conducted follow-up phone calls for randomly selected households each week, to verify a few questions from the interview and get feedback on the enumerators' performance.

3. At the end of each week, a data-collection summary report was shared with all agencies to check on the progress of data collection.

4. A WhatsApp group was created among the enumerators, and general feedback was shared daily.

5. A dynamic dashboard was created to monitor the progress of data collection in real time. The dashboard included tools to monitor the accuracy of data collected, and to identify outliers during data collection.

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 wn is the normalized weight, Ns is the total sample frame of the district, N is the total national sample frame, ns is the number of households visited in the district, and n is the total visited households.

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

LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

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

1. The VASyR relies primarily on self-reported data which may give rise to bias. To minimize the impact of this bias, enumerators were trained in providing survey participants with a comprehensive explanation of the purpose, risks and benefits of participating in the VASyR survey, and reassuring them of the confidentiality of their answers, so that their comprehensive informed consent could be given.

2. The VASyR sampling frame excluded Syrian refugees who had never approached UNHCR (unless they were within a targeted

household). It is worth noting that this population is a consistent gap in data on Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

3. The VASyR questionnaire and respective indicators were subjected to adjustments and changes in order to ensure that the most accurate definitions or calculations were being used. This caused some results not to be directly comparable with previous years.

4. The VASyR is a household survey, and the interview was usually conducted with the head of household or any other adult household member. As such, individual interviews were not carried out with each family member, and obtaining accurate information on particularly sensitive topics such as child labour or harassment may be a challenge.

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[1] *For a detailed description of the spot checks procedure and tools used, see http://ialebanon.unhcr.org/vasyr.*