



INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Nine years into the Syria conflict, Lebanon remains at the forefront of one of the worst humanitarian crises. The economic downturn, steep inflation, COVID-19 and finally the Beirut blast have pushed vulnerable communities in Lebanon - including Syrian refugees - to the brink, with thousands of families sinking further into poverty.

The Government of Lebanon (GoL) estimates that the country hosts 1.5 million¹ of the 6.6 million² Syrians who have fled the conflict since 2011 (including 879,529 registered with UNHCR as of end of September 2020³). The Syrian refugee population in Lebanon remains one of the largest concentration of refugees per capita in the world.

The 2020 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) was the eighth annual survey assessing the situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon to identify changes and trends in their vulnerabilities. Given the COVID-19 pandemic in Lebanon, most assessments and other activities requiring in person visits were either cancelled or postponed. Considering the prolonged socio-economic status in Lebanon and COVID-19, it was crucial to provide needs-based estimates on Syrian refugees in the country. Thus, the VASyR 2020 was one of the few assessments that were conducted face-to-face; the implementation was accompanied by a comprehensive protocol to ensure the safety of families and field workers (see Methodology for more details). The criticality of conducting the VASyR 2020 was to provide insights about Syrian refugees impacted by the political and economic crisis that hit Lebanon in late 2019 and by the COVID-19 outbreak.

PURPOSE

The VASyR is an essential tool for planning, decision-making and needs-based program designing. Results of the VASyR are used by ten sectors under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) to understand the evolving situation in Lebanon and to advocate for funding from donors. The VASyR has also been used to build targeting models, for instance to predict the socio-economic vulnerability. Results of the VASyR are used to show the geographical differences in vulnerabilities at governorate and district levels, which feed into the situation analysis.

The key objectives of the VASyR are:

1. To provide a multisectoral overview/ update of the vulnerability situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon through an annual household survey. This assessment offers an understanding of the economic situation, food security, shelter living conditions, coping strategies, access to services, the situation specifically for women and children, and more. The information feeds into the situational analysis of the LCRP and informs the planning processes of local government agencies, donor countries and NGOs.

2. To enhance targeting for the provision of assistance.

The VASyR is used to build or revise targeting models like the targeting formula to predict socio-economic vulnerability, which in turn is used for targeting for cash and food assistance. The results of the VASyR also inform other targeting approaches, for instance on protection risks or shelter vulnerability, and identify most vulnerable areas.

3. To contribute to the LCRP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework. the VASyR results are used to measure whether sector objectives (outcomes) have been achieved. The VASyR is also used in the formulas to calculate LCRP impact indicators (e.g. protection risks).

4. Provide an overview of the additional needs of Syrian refugees impacted by the ongoing crisis. VASyR 2020 aims to provide insights on how the Syrian refugees have been impacted by the political and economic crisis that hit Lebanon in late 2019 and by the COVID-19 outbreak.

ASSESSMENT ORGANIZATION AND SCOPE

UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP are the VASyR technical leading agencies, and form the VASyR steering committee together with the Inter-Agency Coordination unit. The Inter-Agency Coordination Unit is responsible for implementing the assessment, providing technical insights and ensuring quality control. The inter-agency unit coordinates the VASyR process, ensuring linkages between the VASyR and the LCRP, as well as communication and feedback from the different sectors.

Development of the analysis plan and questionnaire began in January 2020 through rounds of feedback with the Core Group and sector experts. Due to COVID-19 and the resulting national lockdown in Lebanon from mid-March onward, the original 2020 VASyR data collection initially planned for the end of March was postponed till August 2020. Preliminary data analysis occurred from September through December 2020, and full analysis and report writing took place from December 2020 through January 2021.

The figure on the following page reflects the scope and contents of the VASyR.

The analysis for this report was conducted by the three above-mentioned UN agencies with the support and coordination of the Inter-Agency. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the lead for demographics, protection, shelter, health and assistance, while the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is the lead for WASH, youth, education, child protection, child health, child nutrition and children with disabilities. The World Food Programme (WFP) is the lead agency for economic vulnerability, livelihoods, food consumption, coping strategies and food security. All agencies conducted the data analysis and wrote-up internally based on the breakdown of responsibilities per section. UNWOMEN conducted the analysis of the gender chapter. Coordinators from the three agencies oversaw the relevant chapters in the VASyR.

For additional details on the implementation of the survey, see the Methodology chapter.

¹LCRP 2017-2020 (2020 update)

²<https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2019/>

³UNHCR registration data as of 30 September 2020

