WASH

Throughout Lebanon's history, the issue of water supply and quality has been a constant challenge. The influx of Syrian refugees, and the associated rise in demand for clean and safe water and wastewater services, has increased the burden on an already overwhelmed resource management system. Families living in non-residential and non-permanent structures, without access to appropriate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, are among the most vulnerable populations in Lebanon.

This chapter examines the WASH situation of Syrian refugee households in Lebanon, including the variations in WASH indicators across shelter types and governorates.

Key findings

– In terms of access to drinking water, 89% of household members had access to an improved drinking water source, similar rates to 2020 (87%). Bottled mineral water (38%) remained the main drinking water source that households rely on.

– Seventy-three percent of household members had the water source available on their premises, a 4 percentage points improvement from last year.

– The majority (89%) of household members had access to an improved sanitation facility, a slight decrease from 2020 (87%). Access to an improved sanitation facility decreased significantly to 67% for non-permanent shelters and was slightly lower (84%) for non-residential shelters. The use of basic sanitation service, which is an improved sanitation facility that is not shared, was found to be at 76%, which decreased to 52% for non-permanent shelters.

Access to drinking water

Improved drinking water sources
- Household water tap/water network
- Bottled mineral water
- Water tank/trucked water
- Protected borehole
- Piped water to yard/lot
- Protected spring
- Protected well

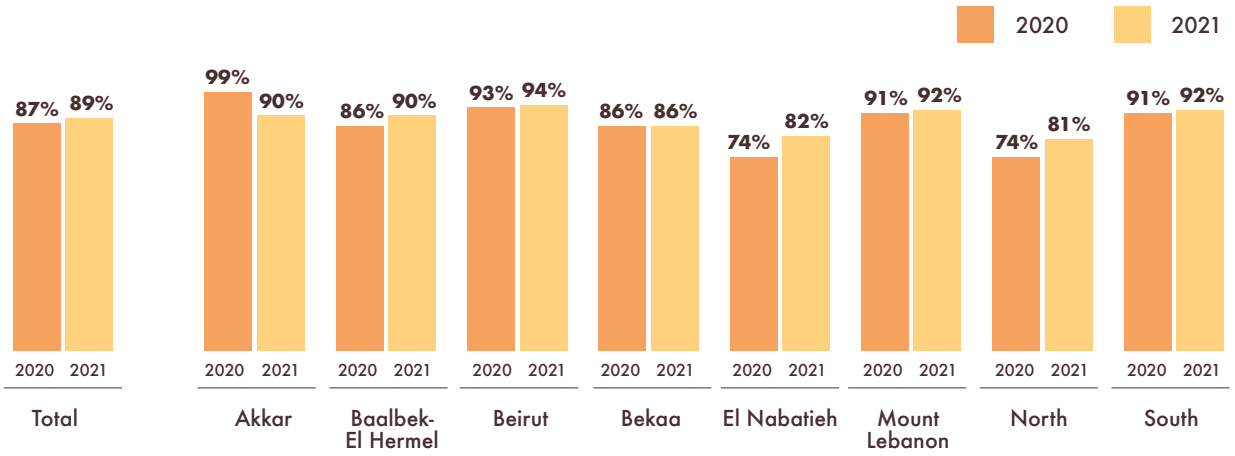
Unimproved drinking water sources
- Public/shared water stand/taps
- Unprotected borehole/well/spring
- Rainwater

Basic drinking water sources
- Water source in dwelling/yard/plot
- Water source within 30 minutes round trip collection time

The majority (89%) of Syrian refugee households had access to improved drinking water sources, a similar result to last year (87%). At a governorate level, El Nabatieh improved 8 percentage points in 2021 (82%) after a consistent decrease in the previous years. Similarly, the North showed an increase from 2020 by 7% percentage points, whereas households in Akkar saw a decrease in access to improved drinking water sources from 99% in 2020 to 90%.

It should be noted that the VASyR does not measure the quality of the water provided.

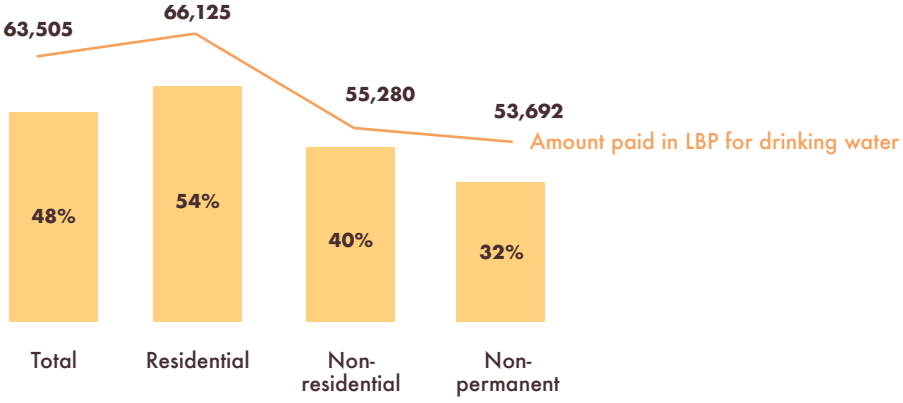
Figure 1: Access to improved drinking water sources, by governorate



Financial burden of access to safe water

The economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have pushed almost the entire (88%) Syrian refugee population to below the SMEB, a huge increase from 55% in 2019. Almost half (48%) of households pay for drinking water, with the majority (54%) living in residential shelters.

Figure 2: Percentage of households who paid for drinking water last month

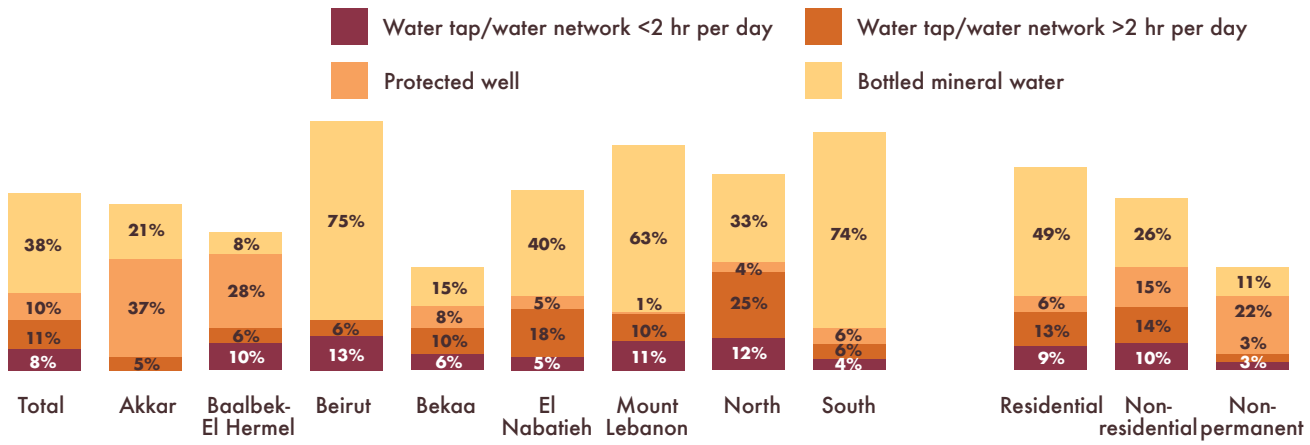


Sources of drinking water

Similar to 2020, the main source of drinking water was bottled mineral water (38%), followed by tap water/water network (19%).

The distribution varied widely across governorates. For example, while the South and Beirut showed the highest rates of use of bottled water (75% and 74% respectively), Baalbek-El Hermel households reported a relatively low use of bottled mineral water (8%), down from 14% in 2020.

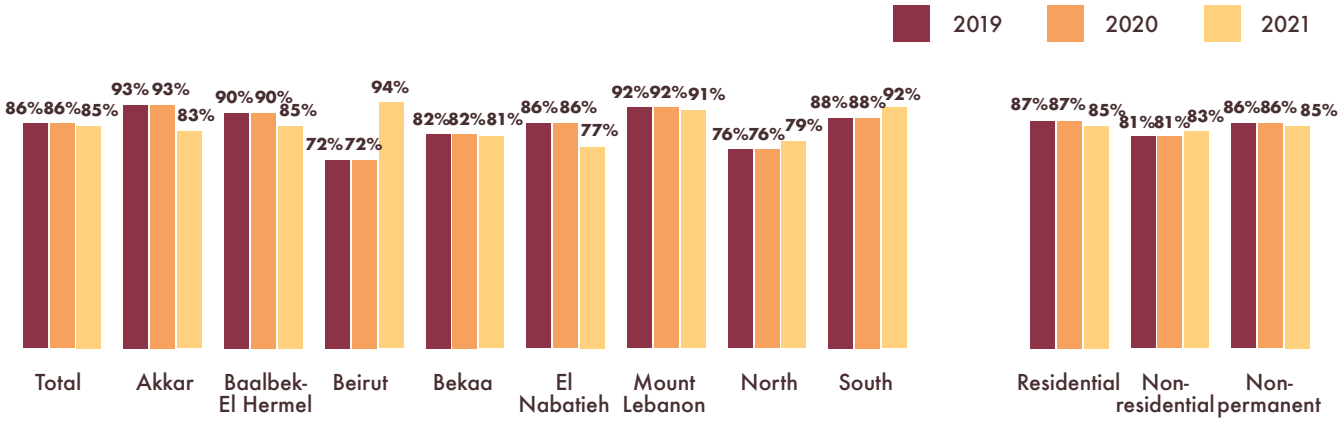
Figure 3: Sources of drinking water, by governorate and shelter type



The main source of drinking water also varied considerably among different shelter types. Nearly half (49%) of households in residential shelters relied on bottled mineral water, whereas the same proportion (49%) of households in non-permanent shelters got their drinking water from tanks or trucks through UN/NGO or private providers.

The use of basic drinking water sources remained stable at 85% in 2021 compared to 86% in 2019 and 2020. Notably, the 11 percentage points decrease in Akkar corresponds to the recorded increase in access to improved drinking water sources noted above, whereas Beirut households recorded a steep increase in use of basic drinking water sources from 72% in 2019 and 2020 to 94% in 2021.

Figure 4: Use of basic drinking water sources, by governorate and shelter type



Sanitation facilities

Improved sanitation facilities
- Flush toilets
- Improved pit latrines with cement slabs

Unimproved sanitation facilities
- Traditional/pit latrine with no slab
- Bucket

Eighty-nine percent of Syrian refugee households had access to improved sanitation facilities, a relatively small decrease from the previous year (91%). Of these, the majority used flush toilets (69%), compared to 66% in 2020, while 20% used improved pit/latrine with cement slabs. However, the percent of improved sanitation data does not consider the treatment of the wastewater collected in the sanitation facilities, which is considerably low.[1]

A variation of improved sanitation across governorates was noted, with the lowest percentage of improved sanitation in Bekaa (74%), dropping significantly from 89% in 2020. The South recorded the highest improvement from 89% in 2020 to 98% in 2021.

Figure 5: Improved sanitation facilities, by governorate

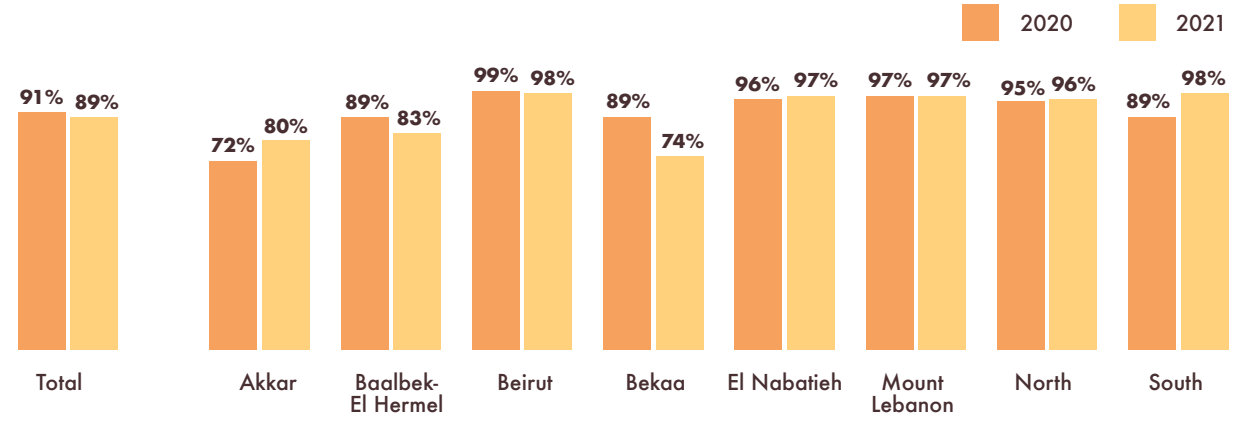
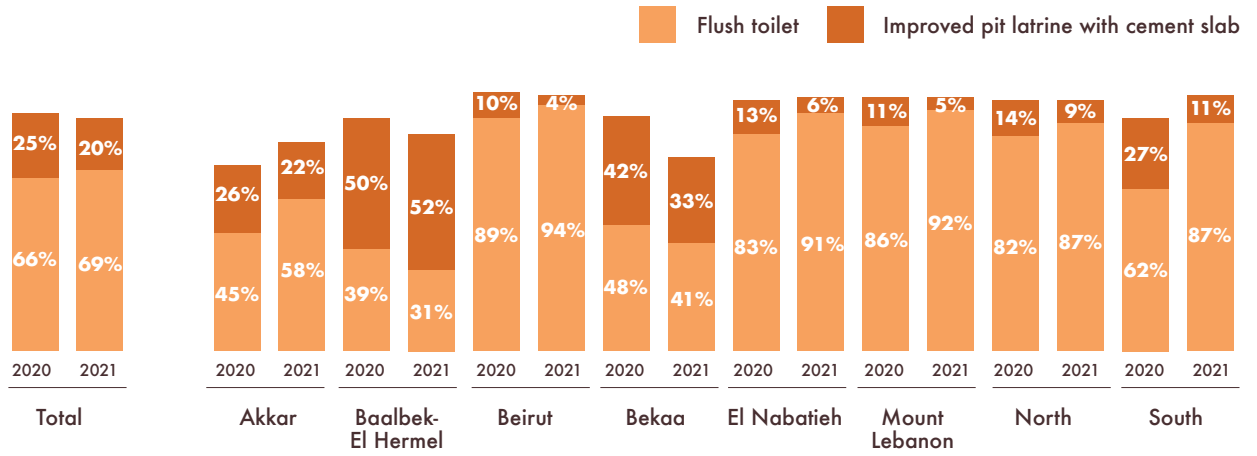


Figure 6: Types of sanitation facilities, by governorate



[1] *8% of wastewater is treated according to the National Water Sector Strategy, 2010*

Table 1: Types of sanitation facilities

	Flush toilet	Improved pit latrine with cement slab	Traditional/pit latrine with no slab	Bucket	Open air
Total	69%	19%	11%	0%	0%
Akkar	58%	22%	20%	0%	1%
Baalbek El-Hermel	31%	52%	14%	0%	2%
Beirut	94%	4%	2%	0%	0%
Bekaa	41%	33%	26%	0%	0%
El Nabatieh	91%	6%	3%	0%	0%
Mount Lebanon	92%	5%	2%	0%	0%
North	87%	9%	3%	0%	0%
South	87%	11%	2%	0%	0%
Sex of the head of household					
Men	71%	18%	10%	0%	0%
Women	57%	27%	16%	0%	1%
Shelter Type					
Residential	89%	7%	3%	0%	0%
Non-residential	62%	22%	15%	0%	1%
Non-permanent	12%	55%	31%	0%	1%

Improved sanitation facilities also varied by shelter type, with residential shelters showing a 96% rate of use of improved sanitation facilities, while non-residential stayed the same at 84% in 2020 and 2021. Meanwhile, non-permanent shelters dropped significantly from 79% in 2020 to 67% in 2021.

In addition, non-permanent shelters had the highest use of improved pit latrines (55%) as compared to non-residential (22%) and residential (7%). These findings are likely due to the significant support from the humanitarian community to provide improved latrines to Syrian refugees living in informal settlements.

Utilization of sanitation facilities by individuals with a disability

Among the household members with a disability, 85% had access to a sanitation facility adjusted for disabilities, a decrease from 2020 (90%). Similar to findings of all Syrian refugee households, household members with a disability living in residential and non-residential shelters had notably higher rates of accessing improved sanitation (95% and 90% respectively) compared to non-permanent shelter (50%).

Figure 7: Household members with a disability with access to improved sanitation facilities, by governorate and shelter type

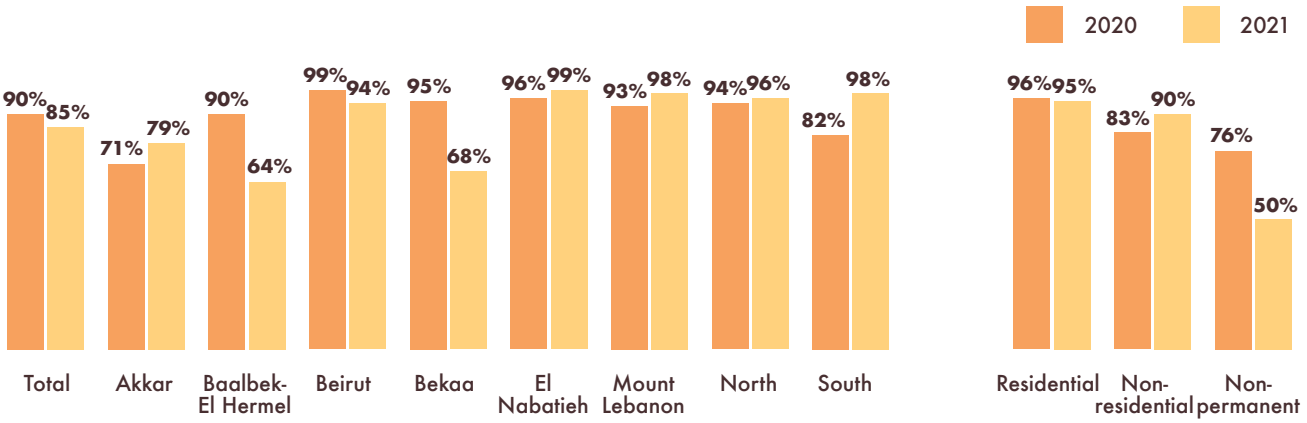


Figure 8: Access to basic sanitation facilities, by governorate and shelter type