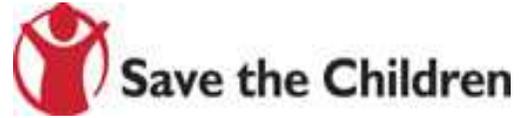




Humanitarian Aid  
and Civil Protection



# **Rapid Assessment of Syrian Refugee Needs, Priorities and Coping Strategies in Lebanon**

## **Report of Findings**

December 2014

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## Acknowledgements

The following Save the Children Lebanon staff members contributed to the design and implementation of the assessment and production of the assessment report, in alphabetical order: George AbiRizk, Jason Andrews, Mais Balkhi, Jorge Bica, Joe Collenette, Camille Donnat, Danielle Fares, Marta Passerini, Thomas White, Thomas Whitworth, Myriam Zmeter.

The assessment was made possible with funding from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO). Save the Children Lebanon is grateful to Maureen Philippon for supporting this research work.

## Research Team

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## List of acronyms

ATM	Automated Teller Machine
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HH	Household
KII	Key Informant Interview
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MSCA	Multi-Sector Cash Assistance
NFIs	Non-Food Items
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
SC	Save the Children
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VASyR	Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Health
WFP	World Food Program

# Executive Summary

As the winter of 2014-2015 approaches, the registered Syrian refugee population has grown from approximately 700,000 individuals during the 2013-14 winter to over 1.1 million.<sup>1</sup> In addition, there are thought to be approximately 100,000 to 200,000 unregistered individuals and between 170,000 and 200,000 Lebanese individuals are considered likely to fall below the poverty line.<sup>2,3</sup> Inter-agency assessments indicate that the basic needs of the affected population are severe in nature and large in scale. Inter-Agency coordination also indicates that funding is considerably lower than last winter relative to these needs. Consequently, it is even more likely that the most severely vulnerable families and their children are likely to be affected by unmet needs this winter.

Year round, the needs of Syrian refugees are both diverse and inter-related. However, during winter increasing costs elevate basic needs and vulnerabilities brought on by the season, not to mention the winter-specific needs that this vulnerable population must bear. Within this context, this qualitative assessment by SC aims to describe and analyse the main winter vulnerabilities, coping strategies and priority needs of the most vulnerable families in Lebanon in the run-up to the 2014-2015 winter season. Accordingly, the recommendations of this assessment will form the basis of SC's 2014-2015 winter assistance programming and should be seen as a contribution to the humanitarian community's wider response to winter needs in Lebanon. Given the time-critical nature of winter assistance, this exercise was designed as a rapid assessment in order to provide timely input into program design.

Research activities examined vulnerable communities' winter basic needs, priorities, concerns and coping strategies using research tools such as focus groups, interviews with refugees, home-visits, and key informant interviews. As much as possible, this assessment also took into account differences on the basis of age, gender, location, shelter type, time of arrival in Lebanon and whether refugees had received previous winter-specific assistance from SC.

Researchers also specifically probed for negative coping strategies, particularly those related to women and children. Focus was also placed on identifying coping capacity at the household level that could be strengthened in order to limit the use of negative coping mechanisms. Accordingly, a set of evidence-based recommendations aimed at

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<sup>1</sup> UNCHR-Inter-agency Syria Refugee Response Information Sharing Portal–Lebanon. Accessed on November 11, 2014. Available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>

<sup>2</sup> Regional Analysis for Syria: Quarterly Report, 03 July 2014. Accessed on November 11, 2014. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/regional-analysis-syria-quarterly-report-03-july-2014>

<sup>3</sup> Host Community Vulnerabilities in Lebanon: Secondary Data Review – September 2014. Available at: [data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=7172](http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=7172)

tailoring winter programming for humanitarian agencies was developed to assist refugee households and vulnerable communities to successfully withstand the winter season.

## Key findings

While refugees' winter needs are diverse, they are also interdependent. For example, physical protection from climate exposure is comprised of the need for shelter and warmth that, in turn, can be addressed by accommodating for the lack of income, income generating abilities or debt accumulation. As such, the prioritization of needs and coping strategies should be seen in this light, rather than as a straightforward ranking of priorities during the winter season.

Accordingly, the key findings of this assessment can be summarized in descending order of descending priority as follows:

1. **Physical Protection from Climate Exposure:** Many Syrian refugees remain incapable of keeping themselves or their shelters warm during the winter season. The lack of sufficient income to provide heating supplies pushes many to employ, among others, coping strategies such as burning scrap wood or hazardous materials in barrels or tin boxes outside their shelters, as well as using blankets to cover their bodies and wearing several layers of light clothing.
2. **Income & Expenditure:** The possibility of gaining formal waged labour or informal permanent work is deemed as almost impossible for most refugees and the majority depend on both cash assistance and debt to meet expenditure requirements. Furthermore, lack of income is compounded by the simultaneous fall in income generation capacity caused by the seasonal fall in demand for temporary labour and the increase in household expenditure relating to winter needs. Following rent, refugee households' largest expenditure item in winter is the purchase of fuel, particularly diesel, in order to heat their living spaces.<sup>4</sup> Refugees feel that during the winter their ability to find work falls by around 60 per-cent on average. At the same time refugees estimate that they have on average 50 per-cent more expenditure in winter

Access to income, whether through assistance or employment, also has wider effects on Syrian refugees' living conditions in Lebanon. Researchers found that when refugees have cash to spend, they are more respected in their host communities because of their purchasing power. However, refugees are still perceived as the main competitors for local jobs among host community residents, something refugees also sympathise with and acknowledge. Some refugees cited

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<sup>4</sup> The role of food assistance is explained below.

joint cash-for-work or casual labour programmes by humanitarian actors such as SC as something which both increased income and improved social cohesion.

3. **Shelter:** A significant number of Syrian refugees living in Informal Settlements are unable to ensure the structural integrity of their shelters during the winter season. The lack of both the ability and capacity to build durable structures is related both to restrictions on permanent structures at the national and local levels, as well as an inability to acquire quality materials to increase the condition of tents and living spaces. Major problems related to structures letting in water, collapsing under the weight of snow or flooding during storms are the main issues facing Informal Settlement dwellers. Coping strategies employed to deal with these problems include using scrap materials such as plastic bags for improving weather-proofing and insulation, relocating to dry areas within one's shelter or sharing with other households when shelters flood or during storms.
4. **Debt & Rationing:** Refugee Households' main coping strategies to deal with reduced income and rising expenditure remains the acquisition of debt coupled with rationing consumption, especially food. Many refugees are able to acquire debt without interest from both Syrians and Lebanese in host communities, meaning that debt is both an essential and accessible need as well as coping strategy. A large portion of their debt is acquired directly from local shops, especially food sellers. Refugees are also able to reschedule their debts with creditors, at least as far as the end of the winter season, and have not yet resorted to taking out loans from loan sharks.
5. **NFIs:** Due to quality concerns, most refugees express that they prefer to purchase high-thermal blankets directly instead of through in-kind assistance. The majority of interviewees also preferred to use diesel for fuel in place of wood. However, many families are concerned about being able to access sufficient diesel throughout winter. Also, the availability, quality and quantity of winter clothing, is deemed greatly insufficient by refugees, especially with regards to children's winter clothing.
6. **Food:** Most households consider food supplies to be the fourth most important element for winter-specific preparations behind the need to stay warm, dry and the integrity of their shelter.<sup>5</sup> This is mainly seen to be the result of the widespread availability of WFP food vouchers. Even so, food vouchers were not deemed sufficient to cover refugees' basic food needs during winter and would run out around the middle of each month for most households. To cope with lower access to food, the majority of refugees rely on debt renegotiation with local shop

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<sup>5</sup> Note: This assessment was conducted prior to the potential reduction of WFP food assistance announced on December 1, 2014.

owners or changing dietary habits to consume more carbohydrates such as rice, potatoes, bread and sugar. Many Syrian refugees also resort to gathering wild plants and mixing them with other staples in order to maintain nutrition as well as mixing tea with pieces of bread during times of extreme rationing.

7. **Education:** The 2014-2015 school year has already witnessed relatively high dropout rates among Syrian refugees as many have been turned away from schools, not to mention that recent arrivals who have entered the country since the end of the last school year are being denied entry. Syrian students continue to be refused admission to the 2014-2015 school year for inability to pay tuition and/or as school principals await MEHE's circular and decision to re-allow Syrian children into second shift schooling. Refugees partially cope with the lack of education through some unofficial and inadequate home schooling, thus increasing the risk that children engage in child labour.
8. **Health:** Refugees are seen to suffer from several ailments directly related to their lack of heating, damp living-conditions and continuous inadequate sanitation during winter. Children reported suffering from influenza, throat inflammation and increased instances of diarrhoea. Many refugees also reported suffering intestinal inflammation, kidney stones and stomach ailments, which they attributed to lack of proper sanitation and the drinking of un-treated water. An increase in skin rashes and boils, especially among children, were also attributed to a lack of sewage treatment as well as an inability to maintain sanitary conditions at reasonable costs.

Access to adequate healthcare is also seen to be a major issue. While primary healthcare is available to some degree for registered refugees, the majority of secondary and tertiary care is paid for by refugees out-of-pocket, particularly through debt. Expenditure on medicines is also consistently cited as a major income burden and source of income depletion, which is also addressed by taking out debt or enduring sickness.

## Summary of Needs & Coping Strategies

The table below is a summary of refugee needs and coping strategies arranged in descending order of priority according to the assessment of researchers. Again, while these needs are arranged by order of priority, they should be interpreted as a whole in terms of the interdependency between needs and coping strategies employed by Syrian refugees during the winter season.

Needs by Priority	Associated Coping Strategy <sup>6</sup>	Facets of Coping Strategy (Type, Reversibility) <sup>7</sup>
<b>Diesel fuel</b>	Wood, Blankets, multiple layers of clothing, burning scraps outdoors, huddling together, relocating to other shelters, electric heaters.	Positive, Reversible
	Debt	Mixed Positive-Negative, Partially reversible
<b>Income &amp; Income Generating Capacity</b>	Debt	Mixed Positive-Negative, Partially reversible
	Child labour	Negative-Partially reversible
<b>Heating stoves</b>	Wood, blankets, multiple layers of clothing, burning scraps outdoors, huddling together, relocating to other shelters, electric heaters.	Positive, Reversible
	Debt	Mixed Positive-Negative, Partially reversible
<b>Shelter materials</b> [Informal Settlements: wooden planks, nylon, tarps, waterproofing material, Non-Informal Settlements: insulation and waterproofing materials]	Alternative materials, such as: plastic bags, refuse nylon, burlap, scrap cloth, materials from greenhouse, scrap metal or wood, cut up tires, old blankets and scrap wood, cleaning out water into ditches.	Positive-Reversible

<sup>6</sup> Multiple coping strategies listed are at times coping strategies employed by some refugees

<sup>7</sup> Type refers to either 'Positive' coping strategies defined as those that reduce adverse effects over short and medium terms without direct negative consequences. 'Negative' refers to coping strategies that have long term adverse effects short and medium terms with direct negative consequences. 'Mixed Positive-Negative' refers to coping strategies that can provide relief in the short term but also increase medium-to-long term vulnerability to adverse effects direct negative consequences. Reversibility, while somewhat dependent on different circumstances, refers to whether short, medium and long term effects can be reversed.

<b>Rent</b>	Debt	Mixed Positive-Negative, Partially reversible
	Non-payment	Negative-Irreversible
<b>Blankets</b>	Huddling together	Positive-Reversible
	Sharing of Blankets	Positive-Reversible
	No Coping Strategy	Negative-Irreversible
<b>Winter Clothes</b> [Especially shoes, winter jackets and children's clothes]	Blankets, Multiple layers of clothing [No effective coping strategy for lack of shoes]	Positive-Irreversible
<b>Flooring</b> [Concrete, gravel]	No Coping Strategy	Negative-Irreversible
<b>Floor covering</b> [Plastic flooring, plastic sheets, foam mattresses]	No Coping Strategy	Negative-Irreversible
<b>Food</b> [Daily consumption]	Rationing, changing diets, eating wild plants	Negative-reversible
	Debt	Mixed Positive-Negative, Partially reversible
<b>Food</b> [Winter food stocks]	No coping strategy	Negative-Irreversible
<b>Education</b>	No coping strategy	Negative-Irreversible
	Child labour	Negative-Partially reversible
<b>Utilities</b> [Water and Electricity]	Taking from Lebanese [consensual]	Mixed Positive-Negative, Reversible
	Purchase from private sector	Mixed Positive-Negative, Reversible
<b>Access to healthcare and medical supplies</b>	Debt	Mixed Positive-Negative, Partially reversible

	No coping Strategy	Negative-Irreversible
<b>Sanitation</b> [Infrastructure]	Open defecation	Negative-Reversible
	Digging of canals and defecation holes	Positive-Reversible
<b>Sanitary Supplies</b> [Materials, Sub-Standard Structures: Cleaning Products, Disinfectants (including chlorine for water)]	No coping strategy	Negative-Irreversible
<b>Sanitary Supplies</b> [Materials: Diapers and feminine hygiene]	Using cloth items	Positive-Reversible
<b>Cooking gas</b>	Campfire	Positive-Reversible

## The needs of children

The needs of child refugees are particularly elevated in the winter. As such, the needs and negative coping strategies of this assessment should be seen, in general, to affect children more than adults during winter. However, children also have specific needs, fears and requirements that should not be overlooked by any humanitarian response to the winter season.

Many children fear that their shelters are un-safe during the winter due to severe weather. Children are fearful of the winter season because they know they will feel cold as they lack winter clothes and will be less able to play because of the weather. Accordingly, children express their needs much more from the perspective of being exposed to the elements. On the other hand, adults describe their needs from a perspective of being able to cope with winter if certain needs are met.

During this assessment, researchers noted several instances of child labour, children being at risk of child labour and related labour exploitation of children. Because sending children to school is becoming less viable due to the costs of registration, transport and school supplies, refugee children have limited options for human capital accumulation

and thus resort to child labour. Finally, both children and adult refugees cite a lack of suitable winter clothing for children was a major cause of an increase of winter-related health issues.

## Recommendations

### Cash basis

Based on previous research into winter assistance in Lebanon, post distribution monitoring results, as well as this assessment's findings and analysis, it is recommended that unconditional cash assistance form the basis of winter programming for humanitarian agencies. The rationale for this approach is rooted in the diverse and inter-related nature of refugee winter needs coupled with their ability to access goods and manage finances.

### NFI assistance

In addition to unconditional cash assistance, it is also recommended that in-kind NFI and shelter assistance be provided to recent arrivals<sup>8</sup> and other vulnerable families in order to assist them to prepare their living-conditions for the oncoming winter. As such, any in-kind winter assistance should focus on quality as well as quantity.

### Assistance modalities

Cash assistance was seen to have both direct and indirect effects on refugee's capacity to cope with the winter and increase their status within their host communities, respectively. Ergo, basic assistance programming such as cash assistance should be complimented by separate livelihood interventions that support both host community and refugee communities. This would address basic needs whilst simultaneously increasing social cohesion, enabling economic development, improving physical infrastructure and psychosocial outcomes.

### Technical assistance

Finally, while refugees have manpower, they sometimes lack the technical ability to construct appropriate shelters or take measures that mitigate the effects of winter on their households. Thus, some level of technical assistance is recommended in order to allow refugees to stay as warm, dry and healthy as possible this winter.

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<sup>8</sup> The term "recent arrivals" refers to those refugees who arrive after the completion of the Inter-Agency winter program for 2013-2014 and therefore did not receive and winter assistance during the 2013-2014 winter season.

## 1. Research Objectives

In order to identify the research areas of this assessment, researchers had to qualify its main objectives. Hence, three key research objectives were identified in order to frame the scope of the assessment, namely:

1. Understand vulnerable Syrian refugee communities' 2014-2015 core winter needs, priorities, preparedness, and coping strategies in Lebanon;
2. Understand how vulnerable Syrian refugee communities in Lebanon prioritize coping strategies as well as perceive the effects coping strategies are having on their livelihood decisions at present and in future; and
3. Recommend strategies to enhance the design of winter assistance programmes in Lebanon.

To achieve these ends, researchers conducted a thorough assessment of SC's previous winterization activities and potential beneficiaries' opinions as well as attitudes relating to winter preparedness through a battery of participatory research methods. This allowed data from the assessment to be collated, coded and analysed in order to produce actionable evidence-based analysis and recommendations that meet the research objectives outlined above.

### 1.1. Research Methodology:

This qualitative assessment employed a participatory mixed-methods approach in the Northern Akkar and Central Bekaa governorates of Lebanon over the period spanning October 15, 2014 to November 7, 2014. Qualitative data acquired was analysed according to grounded theory method, also known as Glaser-Strauss method. The method is a systemic methodology in social sciences, which operates in reverse fashion from traditional qualitative research methods where the collected data is extracted, coded and marked. Ergo, the creation of theory is based on ordering of these data into various categories and concepts which then inform the research findings and allow for ascertains to be made. These assertions, combined with existing data, formed the basis of the final report's recommendations.

Accordingly, the main elements of this Assessment's research methodology is comprised of:

- A desk review of internal documents, primary qualitative and quantitative data provided by SC as well as relevant secondary data from developmental, academic and journalistic sources in either Arabic or English;

- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with internal SC staff, and local authorities and one-to-one interviews with refugee community leaders, known as *Shawish* in Arabic.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with potential SC beneficiaries in Akkar and Bekka;
- Home visits in each area to validate, verify and probe information obtained during FGDs.

## 1.2. Sampling Strategy

This assessment targeted a stratified purposive non-random sample of beneficiaries to participate in FGDs. The FGDs took place in order to probe Syrian refugees' opinions and perceptions with regards to their priorities and winter preparedness as well as their corresponding needs and coping strategies. Home visits to refugees living in different types of shelters were also selected in a non-random fashion to provide deeper insight into refugee living conditions prior to the onset of winter. In addition, researchers also based their sampling strategy on SC's Coping Strategy Index and the 2013 UNHCR/WFP/UNICEF Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR).<sup>9</sup>

### *Key Informant Interviews*

Researchers conducted semi-structured KIIs with key internal and external stakeholders. KII candidates were identified in consultation with SC and included internal SC staff as well as local authorities and *Shawish* in each geographical location. Due to the time constraints of this project, Menapolis conducted KIIs with four internal SC staff members and local authorities in each sub-location where FGD participants are sourced.

### *Focus Group Discussions*

Focus group participants were selected in a stratified non-random fashion by SC staff in consultation with researchers. Focus group participants were further stratified according to location and sub-location, whereby sub-locations were identified as villages/towns areas within Lebanon's Akkar and Bekaa governorates. Moreover, FGDs were further disaggregated according to gender, age and, when possible, and whether participants were recent arrivals or residents of informal settlements or other sub-standard shelter. The total size of each FGD was set at between nine and 12 participants. The FGD research activities disaggregated responses from participants according to gender, age of majority, location and sub-location and, when possible, whether they have received previous winter assistance.

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<sup>9</sup> Researchers employed the 2013 VASyR and the preliminary results of the 2014 VASyR because complete 2014 version is not yet completed at the time research activities were conducted.

### Home Visits

An equal number of home visits per location were conducted as part of the sampling strategy. Home visits to various refugee households consisted of one-to-one interviews with various members of the household, including women and children. Homes were selected in a non-random fashion to accommodate for different types of sub-standard shelter (Informal Settlements, unfinished homes, converted buildings), in order to verify information collected during FGDs. Accordingly, the research team employed a home-visit checklist resembling a proxy-means test survey to verify existing assets and issues relating to household structure.

The total sample size of this assessment consisted of 112 Syrian refugees in Bekaa and Akkar interviewed using the research activities described in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Breakdown of research activities by geographical location

Governorate	FGDs	Home Visits	KIIs
Bekaa <sup>10</sup>	4	4	4
Akkar <sup>11</sup>	6	4	4
<b>Total</b>	10	8	8

N.B. KIIs with SC staff and one-to-one interviews with refugee were not included in the table.

### 1.3. Limitations

This rapid nature of this assessment posed several key limitations on research activities, which should be taken into account when interpreting its findings. Moreover, the findings of this assessment should be seen as complementing the extensive quantitative assessments already performed by various organizations working on the humanitarian response to the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon. As such, while qualitative findings are significant in their own right, numeric results should not be seen to be statistically significant, as the research methodology does not incorporate quantitative methods. Secondly, because logistical issues precluded similar profiles of FGD participants in all locations and sub-locations, exact comparative samples in Bekaa and Akkar were not possible. This principle also applies to the lack of an exact comparative sample that would have allowed greater disaggregation on the basis of shelter type, altitude and previous assistance. Accordingly, the qualitative findings documented in this assessment should be interpreted as a summary of sentiments and perceptions deduced by researchers across these subdivisions.

<sup>10</sup> Locations: Ali al-Nahri and Bar Elias.

<sup>11</sup> Locations: Kwashra and Hishi

## 1.4. Ethical considerations

The research activities also adhered to normative ethical standards of qualitative research, especially with regard to Syrian refugee children, in line with SC's Child Safeguarding Policy. All of the subjects who participated in research activities did so of their own volition and consent. Researchers made a clear and concerted effort to explain to all those involved the purpose of this assessment and also that answers would have no bearing on any future assistance. Furthermore, researchers assured subjects that their identities would be kept anonymous in the final report. Children who took part in research activities did so with their full consent as well as the consent of their parents and/or guardians.

## 2. Desk Review

### 2.1. Winter in Lebanon

Winter in Lebanon is typified by falling temperatures from the months of November to April. During this time rainfall considerably increases throughout the country and snowfall occurs at higher altitudes<sup>12</sup>. Winter has a particular effect on refugees and their vulnerability, especially those living at higher altitude and in poor living conditions. Temperatures regularly drop below zero at higher altitudes in many areas with high concentrations of Syrian refugees and economically vulnerable Lebanese such as the Bekaa and Akkar governorates. Parts of Eastern Akkar and the Northern Bekaa are relatively more remote than others and physical access to markets is lower thus limiting capacity to generate income or consume products to meet basic needs.<sup>13</sup>

Every winter in Lebanon also poses a risk of extremely cold winter storms blowing in from Europe and Russia, as has been the case in recent years. During the last winter season (2013-2014) a storm from Russia caused widespread deterioration of refugee shelters and living conditions, not to mention its effect on access to humanitarian assistance.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.2. Winter humanitarian response

Winter assistance is defined as providing refugee and vulnerable Lebanese families with resources to stay warm, dry, and healthy through the winter months. It is delivered

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Collelo, Lebanon: A Country Study. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1987. Last accessed: November 11, 2014. Available at: <http://countrystudies.us/lebanon/31.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Interviews with SC staff, Bekaa/Akkar

<sup>14</sup> Storm threatens Syria refugees in Lebanon, Alarabiya English, December 10, 2014. Available at: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/12/10/Storm-threatens-Syria-refugees-in-Lebanon.html>

through a combination of in-kind, vouchers and cash assistance including shelter improvements goods and services.<sup>15</sup> Agencies, including SC, work within the inter-agency coordination mechanisms led by UNHCR at national and local level.

During the 2013-2014 winter-period, UNCHR oversaw the implementation of a country-wide winterization programme covering 450,000 individuals, nearly 60 per-cent of total persons of concern. The combined assistance package comprised of NFIs including shelter kits for weather proofing, child protection and education activities as well as cash transfers.<sup>16</sup> The total budget for operations during the 2013-2014 winter season was US\$68 million.<sup>17</sup>

However, given the winter was in general relatively warm, only 250,098 refugees received assistance with 135,630 refugees in substandard buildings receiving sealing off kits, 94,970 refugees in informal settlements receiving weather-proofing, and 19,498 refugees receiving site improvements of their flood-prone informal settlements.<sup>18</sup>

The winter of 2013-14 also saw the implementation of the first large-scale inter-agency cash transfer programme. This programme was rolled out following the Lebanese government granting permission to humanitarian agencies to provide cash assistance to Syrian refugees. The programme ran from November 2013 until April 2014 and provided monthly cash transfers of \$575 USD via ATM cards to some 90,000 registered refugees in Lebanon.

Various evaluations and research from the previous humanitarian response for winter have shown that unconditional cash is the preferred and more applicable form of assistance for Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon. In fact, as a result of the cash transfer programme some 80 per-cent of refugees reported being able to buy the items they require for the winter season.<sup>19</sup> This figure is particularly relevant given that only around 20 per-cent of refugees are able to generate income during the season.<sup>20</sup> Without sufficient income, purchasing items on credit was seen to be the most common coping strategy for refugees receiving previous winterization assistance from SC.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Minutes of Interagency Meeting, Beirut, 7 November 2014. Available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=7474>

<sup>16</sup> UNHCR- Regional Winterization Programme for Syrian Refugees 2013. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=3835>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Save the Children International, Interagency Winterization Programme, September 30, 2014

<sup>19</sup> UNHCR- Winterization 2013-14 Baseline Report. Last accessed November 11, 2014. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-winterization-2013-14-baseline-report>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Save the Children, Save the Children Winterization programme Baseline and Post-Distribution Monitoring

### 2.3. Winter 2014-2015

In the run-up to the 2014-2015 winter season, funding relative to the level of needs and the population of concern is significantly lower than the previous winter.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, the registered refugee population has increased from around 700,000 to 1.1 million from the winter of 2013-2014 to November 2014.<sup>23</sup>

Lebanese government policy towards refugees is also changing. The Government of Lebanon is now placing greater restrictions on which Syrian refugees can enter the country: The government no longer permits new refugees to enter unless they are using Lebanon as a transit country, are in need of medical treatment, or have the financial means to support themselves.<sup>24</sup> While no formal refugee camps for Syrians have been sanctioned in Lebanon, Syrian refugees are not permitted to erect permanent structures, local landlords dictate what can and cannot be built on their property, and shelter assistance is negotiated with them accordingly.<sup>25, 26</sup>

As of October 2014, UNHCR resources allocated to planned winter assistance was amounted to \$6.8 million worth of fuel vouchers for 34,000 households (\$100 USD / HH / month), 4,000 stoves in-kind and cash for stoves of \$700,000. UNHCR also possesses blankets for around 420,000 persons and \$6.4 million for Cash-for-Winter (\$80 USD / HH / month).

The winter programming described above will run in parallel to the year-round Multi-Sector Cash Assistance (MSCA) programme. The MSCA programme is designed to provide 10 per-cent of the registered refugee population with unconditional cash grants worth \$175 USD / HH / month in order to support them to meet their basic needs. Households will be selected based on a multi-sector household questionnaire to verify that they are amongst the 29 per-cent most severely vulnerable registered refugee households. There will be no overlap between Multi-Sector Cash Assistance and Cash-for-Winter (or vouchers). If qualified and eligible, households will be referred out of cash-for-winter assistance and into the year-round Multi-Sector Cash Assistance.<sup>27</sup>

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Comparative Analysis, 2014 (Unpublished)

<sup>22</sup> Interview with SCI staff, Bekaa, October 23, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Save the Children International, Interagency Winterization Programme, September 30, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Executive Magazine, The new lens, October 29, 2014. Available at: <http://www.executive-magazine.com/economics-policy/refugee-the-new-lens>

<sup>25</sup> UNHCR- Interagency Shelter Sector Working Group-Lebanon Shelter Strategy for 2014. February 2014, Beirut. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=4582>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Inter-Agency Winter Meeting - Minutes of Meeting (UNHCR, November 2014), Please refer to Annex C for a summary of the different Inter-Agency winter assistance packages and respective selection criteria

## 2.4. Refugee profile

Interagency PDM cycles also provide an indicative view of refugee needs, priorities and coping strategies. Among the items identified by the monitoring cycles food, rent, fuel, clothing, hygiene items, and health costs were cited by 40 per-cent of households as unmet needs.<sup>28</sup> The greatest concern identified by refugee households in the latest winterization PDM cycles drafted before this study were ability to keep living spaces warm during the winter season followed, to a lesser degree, by lack of adequate clothing, food, shelter and blankets.

PDM results also reveal how refugees attempt to cope with the oncoming winter. While around a quarter of those surveyed said they have items available to meet their winter needs, around a 40 per-cent are planning to borrow money or sell assets to acquire these needs. Interestingly, only 15 per-cent expect to receive winter necessities from humanitarian actors in Lebanon.

Already, PDM results show that the most prevalent coping strategies are the purchase of food on credit followed by a reduction of expenditures on non-food items and the selling of assets. These results confirm that taking out debt is undoubtedly the most prevalent coping strategy for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. According to PDM results, over half of refugees surveyed have more than US\$200 of debt, around a quarter to a third have more than US\$600 and mean debt among refugees amounted to US\$674 dollars. For refugees who did receive cash assistance, around half claimed that they used the money to pay off debts.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, preliminary vulnerability assessments by the WFP<sup>30</sup> show that 82 per-cent of households in Lebanon have recently taken out debt to, specifically to buy food (73 per-cent), pay rent (50 per-cent) or pay for healthcare (31 per-cent).

Also, despite efforts by the Lebanese government and international agencies to provide Syrian refugee children with access to education, high dropout rates of 70 percent have been documented in 2014.<sup>31</sup> The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), assisted by aid agencies, have opened up “second shifts” for students in 79 schools during 2013-2014 school year, whereby Syrian students are taught after Lebanese

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<sup>28</sup> Corresponds to 2,773 households surveyed as part of the IA Winterization Programme: Winter of 2013-2014 Post Distribution Monitoring Data Analysis / Preliminary findings

<sup>29</sup> Save the Children Winterization programme Baseline and Post-Distribution Monitoring Comparative Analysis, 2014 (Unpublished), op. cit

<sup>30</sup> World Food Program- WFP, Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees- VASyR 2014 Preliminary results. July, 2014. Available at: [data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=6276](http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=6276)

<sup>31</sup> UNICEF Lebanon, Syria Crisis Programme Factsheet, 16 May 2014, Available at: [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Programme\\_Factsheet.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Programme_Factsheet.pdf)

students finish their school day. During the 2013-2014 school year it was estimated that over 27,550 children were enrolled in the program.<sup>32</sup>

In September 2014, the 2014-15 school year commenced in Lebanon. Yet, most Syrian refugee children have not enrolled, pending a circular from the MEHE that would allow them to enrol in public schools for the school year.<sup>33</sup> According to recent reports, only 6,105 students between six and 15 years of age out of a total of 144,000 have enrolled in basic education.<sup>34</sup>

## 2.5. SC Winterization

SC's previous winter response consisted of a combined assistance package of shelter, in-kind NFI and cash assistance for a total budget of US\$17 million. Assistance primarily targeted refugees living in inadequate shelters and those who had not registered with UNHCR. During the response period, SC distributed blankets to 22,000 children, shelter kits to 50,000 individuals and winter cash to 35,000 individuals. SC's cash assistance programme provided monthly payments (with the first monthly payment higher or the same as subsequent payments) targeting three beneficiary profiles according to shelter-type and altitude.

# 3. Findings

## 3.1. Macro and Context

In the run-up to the 2014-2015 winter, Syrian refugees living in different areas of Lebanon have to contend with various contextual factors that affect their ability to cope with the season. First and foremost, **the conditions within Informal Settlements are both negotiated with local landowners and dictated by local authorities.** In cases where refugees build their own shelters, landowners dictate what can and cannot be built on their land—which makes a significant difference in terms of the structural stability and integrity of shelters to withstand the effects of winter.

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<sup>32</sup> UNHCR Lebanon, Education update, Jan. 2014. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=4666>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> RRP6 monthly update on education, September 2014. Available at: [data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=7398](https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=7398)

#### *Informal Settlement in local communities*

Many tents and temporary shelters have concrete floors that reduce water ingress and allow for more hygienic conditions. The pouring of concrete floors is typically agreed in advance with landlords, who often also dictate what kind of materials can be used to build structures and how amenities such as toilets can be built/located.

Despite a general government policy which dictates that refugees cannot build permanent structures (e.g. concrete floors, block-work walls, as well as corrugated galvanized iron or metal roofs) in practice local authorities say the central government has not informed them of specifications relating to 'permanent structures'. Moreover, local authorities and Syrian refugees add that **there is no practical problem with Syrians building permanent structures as long as there is an agreement to do so between refugees and landowners.**

*"I work all month long. I get paid around 7,000 [LL, US\$] a day, and I have to pay the rent. My month's worth of work all goes towards rent for my tent."*

*Syrian adult in Informal Settlement, Bekaa*

**Once refugees have agreed with landowners on the type of structure they are permitted to build, they must agree on rental prices.** According to local authorities, in some areas where social cohesion is higher, local residents and landowners completely discount rent. This also apparently applies to utilities such as water and electricity. However, according to both refugees and local authorities, even in these areas this policy is coming to an end—rent is starting to be charged for all types of shelter and utilities on refugees who previously did not carry this financial burden

#### *Local perceptions on access to income and assistance*

In addition to increased demand for public services, **Syrians typically settle in areas where there is already relatively low local economic development and find difficulty generating income in the local market.** Perceptions of Syrian refugees are also dependent on the area in which they reside. Areas that have more long-standing historical relationships with population centres in Syria relatively close to the Lebanese border are noticeably more cohesive than those that do not, according to local authorities. These realities also affect the perception and living situations of Syrian refugees, especially with regards to receiving humanitarian aid.

**Refugees continually state that Lebanese feel assistance provided to refugees is unfair because many local residents are also economically vulnerable and suffer from the effects of the refugee crisis.** However, Syrians generally view this sentiment as

*"We are not prepared for this winter. We are barely living day-by-day. I don't have a stove and can't pay the rent. I might end up begging. I am serious!"*

*Female Syrian refugee, Bekaa*

imbalanced because they perceive that the Lebanese do not understand their living situations, specifically because they do not typically enter their living spaces. At the same time, **refugees are thankful to many Lebanese that have donated supplies to them and permit them to reside in their communities. Syrian refugees also believe aid, including winter-specific assistance, should be offered to both Lebanese and Syrians.**

**Between Syrian refugees, there is a perception that those residing in Informal Settlements receive disproportionately more humanitarian assistance than those with comparable needs living outside of the Informal Settlements.** Refugees living in sub-standard buildings feel that they are equally or more vulnerable than their Informal Settlement-dwelling counterparts because rents are generally higher compared to Informal Settlements.

*Basic winter needs and preparations*

**All of the Syrian refugees who participated in this assessment felt they were not prepared for the winter season, even though they were all expecting a harsh winter.** The main reason for the low level of preparation cited was the lack of resources to procure items needed for winter, principally those related to shelter, food stocks, clothing and heating of shelters. **Rudimentary preparations that have been made** include purchasing some weather-proofing materials for sub-standard shelters, as well as the minimal traditional winter food stocks, or *mouni* in Arabic.<sup>35</sup> The items that comprise a typical *mouni* are not a standard set of items but do normally consist of pickled produce and/or other foodstuffs that are out of season during winter, something that ultimately saves households money because they do not need to buy imported items or those cultivated in greenhouses.

Children are especially worried about the oncoming winter. **Children are fearful of the winter season because they know they will feel cold and will be less able to play because of the weather.** Children also said that their shelters did not feel safe during the winter because of severe weather. This was particularly the case for children living in Informal Settlements who were most worried about their shelters collapsing under the weight of snow cover.

**Overall, the main basic winter needs identified by refugees are the ability to keep their shelters warm and generate income during the winter to pay basic expenses, specifically rent. Refugees stated that they feel there is less work in general during the winter season.**

### 3.2. Physical Protection from Climatic Exposure & Shelter

#### *Physical Protection from Climatic Exposure*

**The incapacity of refugees to keep their shelters warm was cited as the main winter related concern and winter-specific financial burden.** FGD Participants also state that warmth is strongly linked to keeping their shelters dry as well as maintaining the structural integrity and stability during winter wind, rain and snow. In order of descending priority, **the main requirements identified by refugees to enable warm and dry living-conditions are: diesel, heating stoves, roof coverings, water-resistant floors, blankets, winter-clothing for children and winter-clothing for adults.** Informal Settlement dwellers and recent arrivals are particularly vulnerable to flooding from both beneath and around their living spaces as well as collapsing structures and loss of warmth due to inadequate insulation.

*“We prefer diesel to wood. Where are we going to get wood from? Our men cannot go fetch wood because of army checkpoints.”*

*Syrian female refugee, Akkar*

**Syrian refugees prefer to use diesel over wood in order to generate warmth.** Wood is considered hard to source, expensive and inappropriate for Informal Settlements. Several participants cited **smoke generated by burning wood in enclosed spaces was believed to lead to allergies and asthma,**

**especially amongst children.** In addition, sparks from wood fires are identified by refugees to constitute a fire hazard to tents and improvised shelters built from flammable materials.

Where households lack sufficient diesel for fuel, **Informal Settlement dwellers employ various coping mechanisms to heat their shelters.** These include the ‘barrel method’, which involves burning various kinds of wood, paper, plastic and other hazardous inflammable material outdoors using a small tin box or barrel as an ad-hoc a fireplace. While some children said they gather wood from neighbouring Lebanese households, adults who were afraid to be accused of theft deemed this problematic. **Refugees are particularly concerned about access to diesel fuel throughout the winter. Diesel represents a significantly greater expenditure than an actual heating stove for refugees** [see Income, Expenses & Livelihoods].

**Refugees require high-thermal blankets and floor coverings to sustain body temperatures and cope with the absence of adequate heating.** In order to cope with the cold, refugees expressed the need for more floor coverings such as carpets, mats and woollen cushions that retain heat.

**The majority of refugees have not installed any form of heating system in their dwellings previous to winter.** This was the case for both recent arrivals and those who had received previous assistance. Recent arrivals state that they did not have the

financial capacity to purchase stoves, while many of those who previously had acquired a heating stove (through assistance or purchase) had sold theirs during the warmer seasons.

**Due to quality concerns, most refugees expressed that they prefer to acquire high-thermal blankets and home coverings on their own instead of receiving them through direct in-kind assistance.** Many refugees cited the low-thermal quality of blankets distributed by aid agencies and made the point of showing the researchers the difference between blankets provided by agencies and those acquired in the market.

### *Clothing*

**Lack of winter clothes, poses a challenge to staying warm, specifically for children. The main needs for winter clothes are long winter jackets, footwear and thick sweaters.** Children are particularly susceptible to lack of adequate winter clothing, as many opt to leave the narrow and dimly lit homes, either because of fear or claustrophobia, and venture outside during winter. **Children and adult refugees stated that a lack of suitable winter clothing for children was the main reason behind high instances of winter related health issues** [see Food, Nutrition and Health].

*“This is a very rough winter. We don’t have clothes or stoves. We cover ourselves during the night because of cold weather.”*  
*Syrian child refugee, Akkar*

**Recent arrivals in Lebanon over the summer and autumn months are considered to be particularly vulnerable to winter due to lack of clothing.** Many recent arrivals attested to traveling to Lebanon without winter clothes, have not yet been able to acquire them.

**In order to cope with falling temperatures and inadequate living conditions, refugees employ a host of coping strategies.** In the absence of heating systems, households resort to using blankets and sleeping with extra layers of heavy winter clothing. Those who do not possess such garments opt to wear multiple layers of summer clothing and use plastic bags to protect their feet. Further **coping strategies include huddling together and sharing a bed between several people in order to maximize body warmth.** In extreme cases, adult household members send their children to neighbours who possess a stove or **offer their children remaining blankets** and endure the cold themselves.

*“The sweaters the humanitarian agencies bring us are not good. We need jackets, and woollen sweaters, socks and shoes”*  
*Syrian child refugee, Akkar*

### *Shelter*

**Many tents and improvised shelters are considered insufficient to maintain physical protection from climatic exposure and structural integrity throughout the winter.** Refugees in Informal Settlements perceive cladding materials (i.e. the roof and wall covers) provided by aid agencies as low in quality and durability and the majority reiterated the need for better quality cladding materials and **greenhouse tarps**<sup>36</sup> in order to insulate their shelters and stop water from penetrating the structure's roof. They also consider the construction timber provided by agencies to be of generally inadequate quality and wanted larger planks to support their shelters. When cladding materials are not sufficient, some refugees insulate their roofs and walls with old clothes and/or scrap pieces of cloth.

**Many refugees living in Informal Settlements worry that strong winds and snowstorms could damage their shelters or cause them to collapse.** Refugees in Informal Settlements also point out that heating stoves, especially when used to heat water, produce humidity and condensation. In turn, moisture from vapourisation collects on the tent ceiling and causes various kinds of moulds and mildew in the shelter.

**In order to prevent wind and rain from entering their living spaces, Informal Settlement residents state that they must resort to completely sealing off doors and windows, which results in living spaces that are dark and humid.** As a consequence, occupants of Informal Settlements must open up a part of the tent to the outdoors to provide ventilation and light, which, in turn, reduces their ability to keep shelters warm.

**In order to prevent roof coverings from being damaged by wind, Informal Settlements residents anchor structures to the ground, place used tires on the roof to weigh down their tents, and latch tires/buckets onto rooftops.** To remove snow from tents roofs, refugees periodically scrape away what they can during storms, thus exposing them to the elements once again.

**Tents and temporary structures in Informal Settlements often have poor quality floors that are susceptible to flooding due to the lack of drainage systems and the low level of the floors.** As a result, refugees dig ditches to divert water away from their homes. However, these ditches are typically of low quality and often overflow into shelters. Refugees in Informal Settlements who do not have concrete floors spread gravel on the ground and cover them with carpets and floor coverings in order to insulate the ground as best they can from cold and moisture. **Few refugees are aware of the**

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<sup>36</sup> The majority of refugees mentioned a specific type of greenhouse plastic cover, which is used in greenhouses across Lebanon. Those types are sufficiently thick to insulate crops from rain and cold temperatures. Many consider it beneficial to acquire those thick covers which could provide sufficient insulation for the Informal Settlements.

**need to raise floors as well as sleeping and sitting areas.** The lack of materials such as concrete and plywood and inadequate tools were also cited as a reason for not raising floors.

**Those living in sub-standard buildings mainly suffer from flooding due to the fact that many live in structures below ground level or unfinished buildings that are not adequately protected.** As in Informal Settlements, occupants of sub-standard buildings need to seal their living spaces to protect against wet and cold conditions but understandably complain about darkness and the accumulation of humidity. Some FGD participants also stated that they have built storm drains around buildings, but many said they were unable to do so for financial reasons.

### **3.3. Income, Expenditure and Livelihoods**

**For many Syrian refugees the ability to generate adequate income is one of their greatest challenges, particularly during the winter season.** As such, the vulnerability of refugees tends to increase during this period when expenditure rises

*“We prefer to cash assistance because it allows us to be flexible and organise our household expenses.”*  
*Syrian female refugee, Akkar*

because of the need to keep warm, dry and healthy. The relatively low economic development of many Lebanese communities where refugees have settled makes income generation even more difficult. This, coupled with refugees’ perception that basic needs and prices will rise during the winter season, create a situation where the dynamics of income and expenditure greatly affect the ability of refugees to meet their basic livelihood requirements.

**The vulnerability of recent arrivals is exacerbated by not being registered with UNHCR.** By nature the needs of recent arrivals are greater because they do not enjoy the benefits registered refugees do, and the fact that most of the expenditures they need make in order to cope with the winter season have not yet taken place. As a result, recent arrivals need to invest in building up the capacity to withstand the winter is significantly greater than refugees who can rely on previous expenditure to cope with the season. In addition to larger capital costs, recent arrivals must also bear more current expenditures because they are neither entitled to WFP food vouchers nor UNHCR-sponsored education and healthcare coverage.

#### *Labour and Income*

**The possibility of gaining formal waged labour or informal permanent work is deemed almost impossible for most refugees.** As such, the vast majority of work available for men, women and children is daily labour. **Refugees feel that during the winter their ability to find work falls by around 60 per-cent.** At the same time refugees estimate that they have to spend 50 per-cent more in the winter to cover

their need than they do in the warmer months. Refugees mainly attribute the rise in winter expenditures to the increased costs of fuel, children's clothing and medical costs.

*“The food vouchers are not nearly enough. We pay three times their amount over and above them”  
Syrian refugee child, Wadi Khaled*

The refugees who took part in this assessment all stressed that their **ability to find work in host communities is greatly strained by a general lack of jobs in the local market.** Across all regions of this study, forms of

labour are usually stratified according to age and gender. Men are typically employed in sectors such as construction and given tasks that require lifting and physical strength. Women and children typically engage in domestic labour or agriculture, whether in the fields during the harvest, or in food preparation and storage warehouses during the winter.<sup>37</sup>

Even if refugees do find some temporary informal employment, **wages are often too low to provide them with access to enough income to maintain their livelihoods.** Refugees recognise that large influx of labour into areas that already suffered from relatively **high unemployment has increased the burden of the crisis on Lebanese and Syrians because wages have fallen.** However, refugees also feel that they suffer disproportionately more from falling wages because they are more susceptible to labour exploitation. **On several instances refugees describe employers promising to pay a certain amount and actually paying less, particularly in cases of child labour.** This reality is compounded by the fact that refugees feel they have no recourse to address this issue because of the informal nature of their work, the lack of employment opportunities and a general reticence to make demands in their host communities.

*“Aid agencies stopped giving us money for rent. They want to send us back to Syria.”  
Syrian child refugee, Wadi Khaled.*

According to several statements by refugees across different geographical areas, **daily wages can be as low as 2,000 Lebanese Lira (LL, US\$1.32) for child agricultural work, 5,000LL (US\$3.30) for female domestic work, and around 7,000LL**

**(US\$4.63) for male daily labour.** These figures correlate with maximum income estimates by refugees during the winter season which came to 90,000LL (US\$60) per month for men and 25,000LL (US\$16.52) per week for women. In comparison, some refugees estimate that 100,000LL (US\$66.07) per person per month would be sufficient to cover the bare minimum of basic needs during the winter season.

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<sup>37</sup> International Labour Organization, Assessment of the impact of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and their employment profile, 2014

**There is also a stated intention to work among men, and to a certain extent women and children, in order to support the household.** Some men are primarily concerned with attaining work as daily labourers or conducting farming activities, while others who practiced more white-collar professions in Syria are seeking employment in similar professions in Lebanon.

**Many female refugees are also open to employment outside the home, while others see their role as caretakers in the home as something that prevents them from generating income outside of it.** For female refugees that are willing and able to practice gainful employment outside their homes, the preferred sectors were domestic work, factory work, and teaching. Women who were not physically able to leave their homes were also open to practicing some form of home-based employment.

#### *Rent and household establishment*

**By and large the largest expense item for refugees remains their rent.** The burden rent places on refugee households is also somewhat dependent on the type of domicile they reside in. **With regards to Informal Settlements, plot prices are normally uniform across settlements and can range anywhere from US\$25 to US\$100 per month, the latter of which being the most cited price for a plot to build a tent.**

**The proportion of income spend on rent was stated to be higher for those not living in tents.** Refugees living in sub-standard buildings have to carry a larger financial burden from rent than those in Informal Settlements. **The most commonly sub-standard building occupied by Syrian refugees is a basement where rents were stated to be about US\$200 per household, for shared living spaces.**<sup>38</sup> These costs also correlate with previous assessments.<sup>39</sup>

**Some local authorities in Lebanon have set a ceiling price for Informal Settlement plots in their jurisdiction, but this regulation has not been applied in practice,** according to refugees. This regulation, or at least the intent to impose such a regulation, was not observed in sub-standard buildings either. What's more, refugees believe landlords are exploiting their situation by adopting 'take-it or leave-it' attitude to renting out their property. **Refugees state that many landlords are not flexible when it comes to paying rent. Landlords also do not repair basic problems with rented living spaces, as would customarily be the case in Lebanon.** Furthermore, at times

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<sup>38</sup> The price per person was not possible to attain given that many families are comprised of different sizes. Moreover, some households contain more than one family, whether in informal settlements or other types of shelter.

<sup>39</sup> Increasing Security of Tenure through Relationship Building and Written Lease Agreements, NRC, August 2014 Available at: [http://www.nrc.no/arch/\\_img/9185426.pdf](http://www.nrc.no/arch/_img/9185426.pdf) and A Precarious Existence; The Shelter Situation of Refugees from Syria in Neighbouring Countries (NRC, June 2014).

refugees must also bear the financial burden of separating their homes with partitions, which many conduct in phases as they settle.

Establishing a shelter incurs additional costs that are typically not included in the calculation of expenditure baskets. These include the cost of constructing a tent or temporary shelter in Informal Settlements. **The initial rent payment can include the actual construction of the tent by the landlord, or the burden of construction costs can be transferred to the household who must then acquire the materials.** According to refugees, this issue is also the case with regard to municipality fee allocated to waste collection and drainage (*Arsifa wa Majarir* in Arabic), which is at times levied on refugees living in Lebanon.

**The cost of utilities and the manner they are paid varies considerably for refugees. In some cases the price of utilities is included in the rent; in others it is either negotiated with landlords or set by local authorities.** When water is freely available from local springs, refugees travel to collect the water and use it for all their water needs including cooking, cleaning and sanitation. Yet, when free spring water is not available, refugees must buy it from the private market at fluctuating costs. In total, refugees estimate that the minimum cost of utilities per month amounts to around 50,000LL (US\$33.04), which is roughly in accordance with the findings of VASyR.<sup>40</sup>

**Refugees also state that agencies, which previously offered rental assistance, have ceased to do so.** This support was said to amount to some US\$100 per month for a certain contract period in Akkar. In addition, several refugees claimed that landlords are evicting them from their homes even before rental contracts have expired, leaving them more vulnerable to the oncoming winter.

#### *Heating and protection against cold*

**After rent, refugees stated that their next largest expenditure item in winter was the purchase of fuel, particularly diesel, to heat their living spaces.** According to various accounts from refugees, around US\$100 per month is needed to provide sufficient diesel fuel to keep domiciles warm throughout the winter.

**Most refugees have not yet acquired a heating stove for the winter season, either because they had not bought one or had sold the stove they previously purchased.** Those who sold their stoves were driven by the perception that they would obtain new stoves, either from aid agencies or donations from residents, and thus chose to sell in return of much needed cash. At the same time, **refugees seemed more concerned about fuel costs than the cost of acquiring a heating stove.** Accordingly,

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<sup>40</sup> Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) in Lebanon (WFP, July 2014)

refugees believe they will be able to procure one either through a donation from a local Lebanese citizen or buy a stove at a price of around 100,000LL (US\$66.07).

**Winter clothing is also an expenditure concern for refugees, especially with regards to children.** Even though refugees do manage to acquire winter clothes through donations, **clothes that fit children of different sizes are a concern** and typically must be bought from markets, usually at second hand stores. Refugees state that they commonly need two sets of winter clothes per child amounting to about 80,000LL (US\$52.86) on average.

***“I send my son to work in a salon in order to get us some money. But he has low blood pressure and can only work every other day because he is so weak and malnourished.”***  
**Syrian female refugee, Bekaa**

#### *Food & Health*

**While food was identified as a major need by all refugees, it was by far not the most prominent expenditure concern.** This is understandable given that approximately 70% of refugees who are registered with UNHCR benefit from monthly food vouchers, which cover their basic food needs. Yet, **most refugees said that food vouchers could not cover their basic food needs during winter and that they run out around the middle of the month.** With the announcement by WFP in December 2014, this finding may change dramatically during the 2014-2015 winter season.

However, **food price fluctuations were identified, as a problem, as refugees felt food prices rise during the winter season.** Even though WFP monitors food price rises in their partner stores on a periodic basis, refugees fear that shop owners are already increasing food prices, particularly on fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes and potatoes as well as other staples such as oil and sugar. Refugees and local authorities both attested to shop owners unfairly raising prices at WFP partner stores. However, when probed refugees say that price rises are still in line with local markets.

In theory, primary healthcare for registered refugees should be covered by UNCHR. However, **in practice many refugees are not able to access primary healthcare and medicine** [see Food, Nutrition and Health]. In general there seemed to be more access for refugees to free primary healthcare visits but medicines were widely not available for free. Thus, refugees whose household members needed medicine felt greatly burdened by this expenditure.

#### *Child labour*

Several instances of child labour or children being at risk of child labour were observed during this assessment. **In general there was a feeling that most children were ‘too young’ to work in gainful employment and that the age at which children could go**

**to the marketplace would be from the age of 10 onwards.** While many children do not currently work, they are at risk of child labour because there is a stated intention by child refugees and their parents to send them to the market when a job becomes available. That said, **children who are working were expected to bring home an average of around 20,000LL per week in take home pay (US\$13.21).**

**Sending these children to school instead of the market is becoming less of an option due to a variety of factors** [see Education section]. From an economic perspective, refugees state that they are not able to afford to send their children to school because of registration costs of 90,000LL per child (US\$59.46) allocated to funding parents' committee in local schools. Other prohibitive costs of education identified were transport and school supplies.

#### *Debt*

Male, female and child refugees insisted that they **do not have any savings to tap into in order to cope with current and capital expenditures required during the winter season.** As a result, they cited **debt as the coping strategy employed the most to address economic and livelihood issues related to winter.** At present, **most refugees seem to have access to debt and are able to use it to cope with expenses that arise.** Accordingly, the need to access debt is deemed to be essential during winter because **refugees feel they will have to take out relatively more debt due to higher expenses and lower incomes.**

***“We take cash from the store and he discounts it from our food vouchers. We have to, because many a time we need to pay for medication, rent and other items.”  
Syrian female refugee, Akkar***

Even so, **many who have been present in Lebanon for over a year are accumulating a debt burden that is far above their monthly income capacity.** While the amount of debt is different for each person or household, some refugees who have been in the country for over a year stated that their debt burden has now reached more than 10 times their monthly income.

Even so, **many who have been present in Lebanon for over a year are accumulating a debt burden that is far above their monthly income capacity.** While the amount of debt is different for each person or household, some refugees who have been in the country for over a year stated that their debt burden has now reached more than 10 times their monthly income.

Interestingly, **none of the debt taken out has interest attached to it and refugees are not sourcing this debt from formal channels or from loan sharks.** Rather, **most refugees take out debt either from their neighbours, locals they are acquainted with or directly from local stores, typically those selling foodstuffs.** Refugees also said that they have the ability to reschedule debts they do not pay on time, which gives them some ability to cope during the winter months.

**During times of economic shocks or urgent need, refugees also engage in selling all or part of their food vouchers at a discount.** Commonly, refugees ask WFP store partners to take out a certain amount of debt from their food voucher cards and give

them a lower amount of cash in return. Refugees employed this coping strategy chiefly to pay for healthcare costs (specifically medicine) as well as rent.

**Other coping mechanisms employed by refugees include rationing of food** [see Food, Nutrition and Health section] **and diesel in order to reduce costs.** In the case of diesel rationing, heating stoves were only used at the beginning of the evenings and early in the morning.

### 3.4. Food, Nutrition, WASH

#### *Food*

**Syrian refugees have no winter preparatory food storage plan and live on a day-by-day basis.** Traditional winter food stocks—referred to as *mouni* in Arabic where households typically stock rice, wheat, olive oil, olives and shortening—was mostly absent from refugee households.

Those who managed to stock some food

had received food assistance from their Lebanese neighbours. Any remaining food items present in refugee households were purchased on a daily basis from local stores via food vouchers or by accumulating debt from storeowners. Stocking food is generally practiced starting mid-September and lasts until the end of November with the end of the olive harvest.

*“In the summer, we would go with my mother and other women. We pick potatoes and vegetables. The landowner got angry and there was a problem”*

*Syrian child refugee, Bekaa.*

**In summer, refugees are more able to acquire food because they can secure employment and collect agricultural produce from neighbouring estates.** Refugees who work the land, repeatedly mentioned collecting potatoes from plains and storing them for winter. Since refugees tend to congregate in agricultural areas where demand for agricultural labour rises during the summer season, the availability of such work also allows them to take home some of the food they harvested as part of their working arrangements. Such coping mechanisms were generally practiced with the consent of landowners who would give produce un-fit for market to Syrian families. However, several quarrels between local farmers and Syrian refugees were seen to have taken place, when Syrian refugees ventured to the plain without the consent of landowners, refugees said.

**Refugees in mountainous areas pick wild plants at the end of summer and beginning of winter for sustenance.** To secure food and diversify their consumption of foodstuffs, several refugee families pick wild plants from hills and mountaintops. This practice is well known in the Levant as *sliqa* where men, women and children go around the countryside to pick wild plants that are used for cooking, salads and other delicacies. The plants that are most desired are *hendbeh* (dandelions), *qurra* (watercress), and

*khebeyzi* (mallow). Some of these plants are cooked with onions, and served with rice. **It is important to note that such practices were more prevalent amongst families from rural Syria who employed such practices previously.** Such coping strategies were less present among refugees coming from Syria's urban centres. Refugee children in Akkar also pointed out that they assist their mothers in gathering mushrooms during the fall season.

**Food vouchers are successful in creating a base-level of subsistence for many Syrian refugee families.**

Food vouchers were seen to offer Syrian families a safety net that allows them to purchase basic grain, oil and bread to survive. However, many

refugees considered the food vouchers insufficient to fully provide their family needs of foodstuffs. While food vouchers offer refugees the full range of options to purchase goods from local stores, the majority seem to use food vouchers to buy necessary items such as legumes (lentils, beans, chickpeas, and rice), cheeses and bread. Because they prioritise such items, refugees said they incapable of purchasing other items they deem essential for their households such as cleaning material—cited as an essential need to ensure hygiene—or other protein rich foodstuffs.

*“We need more sugar because we use lots of sugar for tea. We also need olives, olive oil and shortening.”*

*Syrian female refugee, Akkar*

**Refugees ration their food supplies by eating less and consuming more carbohydrate-rich diets.** Faced with lack of essential foodstuffs, many refugee families opt to ration food. The rationing process centres on consuming as much carbohydrates as possible. Refugees reiterated that their winter food consumption centres around rice, bread and potatoes. **Households also mentioned that meat and chicken are becoming a delicacy, which they consume around once a month. By far bread is the largest dietary household item and the largest portion of debt for food goes towards financing the purchase of bread from local markets.** For instance, an average family of seven said they consume up to three loaves of bread per day.

Such a diet might be adequate for short-term subsistence, but its consequences on long-term survival and nutrition is understudied and is well beyond the parameters of this research. However, it is important to mention that many families were regularly citing sugar as an important substance in their diets. **The over-consumption of sugar seems to be associated with the rationing process, as many refugees stated that tea, sugar and bread were regularly given to children and adults in order to ration food and preserve food supplies.** The rationing process also involves eating less. **Many families have pointed out that they opt to eat once or twice a day.** Children are generally given priority over adults, and breakfasts tend to be eliminated or substituted with bread and tea.

**Refugee parents were most concerned about the nutrition and survival of their children rather than themselves.** Adult refugees also change their diets to

accommodate the needs of their children for better quality foodstuffs. Parents claimed to ration their consumption in order to be able to afford more nutritious meals for young children. The **majority of parents also identified a number of food items which they considered hard to obtain and were considered essential.** These included milk for toddlers as well as fruits and meat for youngsters to maintain nutritional diversity.

**To cope with diverse food needs, many refugees admitted selling food vouchers or exchanging them in order to medicine or get needed cash.** Refugees were dismayed by what they perceived as a general sentiment in host communities, which regard them as 'destitute refugees' who are not entitled to consume items such as meats and/or fruits.

#### WASH

Although municipalities are trying to better organize Informal Settlements, **systemic problems such as garbage collection, drinking water shortages, and informal sewage systems persist.** According to

***“We pay a lot to buy water. My children have problems in their kidneys due to polluted water.”***  
***Syrian female refugee, Akkar***

local authorities, the inflow of refugees has exerted tremendous pressure on local infrastructure, which was already below the required pre-crisis capacity. The lack of adequate sewage systems in Informal Settlements was also seen by refugees to pose serious health hazards to refugee population's and public health at large.

Informal Settlements are rarely equipped with a functional sewage system, which can absorb the growing number of refugees and **home visits verified that sewage is accumulating around Informal Settlements.** Refugees claim that sewage problems are the cause of several diseases affecting children and adults. Skin rashes and stomach infections were specifically mentioned as a direct result of the unregulated sewage problem.

Likewise, refugees feel **toilets installed by humanitarian agencies are insufficient and continuously overcrowded.** Informal Settlement residents were found to cope with the absence of a sewage network by digging holes in the ground which overflow during times of high rainfall. The influx of thousands of refugees has also increased demand for water in host communities and exerted tremendous pressure on an already dwindling water supply systems, which were already plagued by shortages and endemic cuts before the arrival of refugees. **The lack of sufficient supply of water has led many Syrians to share water tanks and ration water use.**

**Water contamination** was specifically mentioned as **a root cause of diarrhoea, stomach-aches, inflammation of the intestines and kidney ailments** while several refugees reiterated the need for systemic water treatment. Water available to refugees is also said to possess traces of many different contaminants, refugees claim.

To cope with the lack of adequate sanitation and water, **many refugees report treating their water tanks with chlorine tablets in order to disinfect water before use.** Others have opted to fill barrels and buckets with what they perceive to be disinfected water from local springs and use it for drinking purposes. Several refugees have also mentioned that hygiene kits, which were previously distributed by humanitarian agencies and were sufficient to disinfect water, have been discontinued following the inter-agency transition to MSCA.

**Refugees living in sub-standard buildings or/and in rented homes experience similar problems, since many are prohibited from accessing municipal wells and/or have to buy water from private sources.** It is important to note that Lebanon already faces systemic problems with water provision and many local households opt to buy drinking water from markets as a result.

**Refugees in Informal Settlements also cited issues related to an increase in certain types of pests and vermin during winter, both of which regularly enter their shelters.** The lack of adequate sanitation and colder temperatures seems to elevate the intensity of the problem. Refugees claim they need special pesticides to disinfect camps along with provision of adequate sanitation. In fact, refugees consistently mention the need for more hygiene assistance from aid agencies.

#### *Disease & Access to Healthcare*

**Syrian refugees generally suffer from a range of winter related infections and other ailments such as influenza, asthma, diarrhoea, inflammation of the intestines, kidney related ailments and skin rashes.** The main causes cited for such diseases included: Water contamination, lack of suitable sanitation, as well as lack of winter preparedness and protection from the cold. Unconfirmed claims of tuberculosis cases and cirrhosis of the liver have been documented in Akkar. The research team has also documented claims that cases of low blood pressure have been on the rise in Bekaa.

**Syrian refugees seem to be un-informed about health service provision in their communities.** When probed, refugees exaggerated the lack of access to primary health care services and, to some degree, the extent of coverage. After being repeatedly challenge by researchers, refugees reneged on previous statements and admitted that many clinics operate in their areas and require a minimal fee, which they still cannot afford. However, refugees reiterated that free medical services neither cover secondary or tertiary care nor relatively expensive medications, which they have to purchase out-of-pocket. **To cope with economic shocks related to health needs, debt is either taken out or food vouchers are sold at a discount to purchase required medication.**

### 3.5. Education

The majority of Syrian children are not attending schools, something that was both stated by refugees and witnessed by researchers. Feelings of seclusion and uncertainty predominate, as Syrian parents explain their painstaking enrolment procedures and the contradictory directions and opinions given to them by principals.

*“Children are not going to school. We went to register them, and the school administration told us to wait. Until now we haven’t heard any news from them.”*

*Syrian male refugee, Akkar*

The majority of refugees explained that principals refused to enrol students who have not been registered in previous years. However, many of those who were previously registered were also sent back and were asked to wait for the respective schools to call. Syrian refugees have also not received any indication or clear guidelines from schools or aid agencies as to when schooling can resume. Accordingly, many Syrian parents sustain the notion that Syrians will have no access to schools during the 2014-2015 school year.

Syrian children were generally enthusiastic about school, especially those who attended during previous years and were still waiting to return. Yet, Syrian children and parents were doubtful about the usefulness of schooling, especially second shift schooling. Many said that, as it stands, education in Lebanon has been a waste of time and effort because second shifts are too short and the quality of teaching is low. Several parents also claimed their unwillingness to send their children to school due to financial demands such as a parent committee fee of 90,000LL (US\$59.47). Households that have many children said they prefer to invest this amount in purchasing food and various other commodities.

The majority of Syrian children and adults have repeatedly expressed that the need for education is trumped by the need to provide food and income. Moreover, most children were considered ready to contribute to family income through child labour from the age of 10 onwards. Many children also considered education as either a luxury item that might be unaffordable or of too low quality and relevance given that second shift schooling in Lebanon was deemed to be insufficient [See Income, expenditure and livelihoods section].

## 4. Recommendations

### *Cash assistance*

It has become increasingly clear that the provision of **cash assistance to Syrian refugees has yielded positive results, particularly with regards to targeted winter assistance.** This is especially true given the reduction in funding levels relative to the scale of needs.<sup>41</sup>

**“Cash transfers gave rise to more market activity and actually increased the acceptance of Syrians among people in this area. Particularly because they were purchasing consumer items, the Lebanese felt they gained from this.”**  
**Local Authority, Akkar**

**Cash assistance allows both humanitarian agencies to reduce support costs associated with in-kind distribution and is well suited to address the diverse needs of Syrian refugees during the winter season in Lebanon, as highlighted in the findings of this report.**<sup>42</sup> Since the Lebanese government allowed humanitarian agencies to distribute cash to Syrian refugees, **studies have shown that cash assistance during winter was the preferred method of assistance among recipients, met a wide range of basic needs, increased access to education, decreased child labour and did not cause inflation in local markets.**<sup>43</sup> This qualitative assessment provides further evidence to support these findings.

**The injection of cash assistance last winter played an intrinsic part in catalysing local economies that have suffered greatly from the refugee influx.** According to recent studies, every dollar of cash spent into the local economy from cash assistance generated US\$2.13 of economic output.<sup>44</sup> This finding was confirmed by qualitative discussions with local authorities who went further to say that the spending of money by Syrian refugees in host communities actually increased social cohesion and improved perceptions of refugees among residents.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, to a large extent the provision of cash assistance through ATM cards have proven to be both feasible and effective.<sup>46</sup> As such, **it is recommended that cash form**

<sup>41</sup> See UNCHR Inter-agency Syria Refugee Response Information Sharing Portal– Lebanon. Accessed on November 11, 2014: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>

<sup>42</sup> Danish Refugee Council Lebanon-UNHCR, Winterization Cash Program Post Distribution Monitoring Report, September 2014.

<sup>43</sup> An Impact Evaluation of the 2013-2014 Winter Cash Assistance Program for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, International Rescue Committee, August 2014.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Key Informant Interview, Akkar, November 2014.

<sup>46</sup> See Danish Refugee Council Lebanon-UNHCR, op. cit.

**the basis of humanitarian interventions during the 2014-2015 winter period in line with the Inter-Agency winterization programme.**

*Combined assistance for recent arrivals*

While it is recommended that cash remains the central component of future humanitarian response, **providing vulnerable recent arrivals with cash as well as NFIs and shelter assistance should also remain part of the overall response.** This assessment highlighted that households who have arrived after the completion of last winter's Inter-Agency program were seen to be especially vulnerable to winter conditions for a variety of reasons. Home visits confirmed qualitative information obtained during focus groups, which pointed to a severe lack of shelter preparedness, fixed assets, and income generation capacity.

Since recent arrivals are not yet registered with UNHCR, they are not entitled to benefits registered refugees receive such as primary healthcare coverage and food vouchers. Thus their vulnerability to winter, income poverty and child labour is naturally exacerbated. Accordingly, **it is recommended that a combined cash and non-cash assistance package be offered to recent arrivals in order to address their particular situation.** The proportion of such need would have to be based on a vulnerability assessment which should include the ability of households to acquire and build its own livelihood capacity, for instance by taking into consideration common aspects such as female headed households being less able to generate income or build structures in Informal Settlements.

Also, the **findings of this assessment show that refugees perceive in-kind assistance provided by humanitarian agencies to be of low quality**, which contributes to their increased preference for cash assistance to buy goods on their own. While the confirmation of such a sentiment is outside the scope of this assessment, **humanitarian actors should consider the different modalities (e.g. cash or vouchers) of assistance available and review the specifications of in-kind assistance items, particularly those cited by refugees such as being of low quality such as blankets, roof coverings and toolkits.**

*Social cohesion and livelihoods*

**As the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon enters its fourth year, social cohesion between refugees and host community residents in Lebanon continues to deteriorate, predominately because of economic issues.**<sup>47</sup> Thus, assistance that can effectively have an impact on livelihoods as well as address the root causes of conflict is

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<sup>47</sup> See Dialogue and local response mechanisms to conflict between host communities and Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Search for Common Ground, May 2014.

recommended. **It is therefore recommended that basic assistance programming (e.g. multi-sector cash assistance) is complemented by livelihoods programming.**

**Livelihood programming has the potential for positive local economic development, social cohesion and psychosocial outcomes.** At SCI in Lebanon, these outcomes have been realised among Syrian refugees and Lebanese host community residents through SCI's Casual Labour Initiatives, which build community services targeting men, and SCI's Home-Based Skills Development Programme targeting women. In order to be sustainable, **the expansion of such programmes should take into account competitive advantages in the host communities that can spur local economic development in key employment sectors such as agriculture and local industries.**<sup>48</sup>

#### *Resilience information*

For the most part, refugees are knowledgeable of how to manage winter assistance provided to them. However, **many could gain from technical assistance on how to keep their domiciles warm and dry during winter, especially more vulnerable households and recent arrivals.** For instance, many refugee households do not raise sleeping or sitting areas off the floor nor do they have proper ventilation slits to allow fumes to exit the structures. Since Syrians certainly do have the manpower to engage in construction activities, **some technical assistance and sensitisation sessions from humanitarian agencies to fine tune their preparations—including input from host community residents on how to cope with the oncoming winter—could go a long way towards making sure they are warmer and safer during the winter season.**

## **END OF ASSESSMENT**

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<sup>48</sup> Already, such economic value chain development programmes are beginning to take place in the Akkar governorate at the UN-level to develop the region's agriculture sector. See: Enabling Job Resilience and Protecting Decent Work Conditions in Rural Communities Affected by Syrian Refugees Crisis in Northern Lebanon, ILO: [http://ilo.org/beirut/projects/WCMS\\_234666/lang--en/index.htm](http://ilo.org/beirut/projects/WCMS_234666/lang--en/index.htm)

## 5. Annexes

### Annex A: Focus Group Discussion Questionnaire – Adults

#### Discussion Guide for Adults SCI, October 2014

##### Introduction:

- i. Inform participants of the purpose and scope of research.
- ii. Inform that session is recorded and their participation is anonymous and voluntary
- iii. Information collected is used solely for research purposes.
- iv. Structure of the conversation:
  - a. Needs
  - b. Priorities
  - c. Coping Strategies

##### Questions:

[Icebreaker question- Around the Room]

Go around the room and ask each participant where they come from in Syria, where they are currently living and how they expect this winter to be?

##### Core winter needs & coping strategies:

[Put up a flip chart]- Brainstorm core needs on paper, the things that you can't survive in winter without? What are they?

[Following brainstorming the facilitator will organize them in a list, then probe for priorities, and then assign coping strategies to each]

Do you these issues differ between one season and another? Why?

Are there differences between children and adults' needs? How?

##### Warmth, Dryness, Shelter:

**Warmth:** [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]

How did you get your heating system? Is it sufficient?

Do you think you will have enough fuel/wood during winter? If not, how will you cope?

What changes to the household structure would allow you to make it warmer?

What kind of winter clothes do you have? What about your children? Where did you get those from? What is missing?

**Dryness:** [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]

How do you insulate your house?

What changes to the household structure would allow you to make it dryer?

**Shelter** [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]

What changes to the household structure would allow you to make it stronger?

**Food** [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]

What are your main food related needs for this winter?

Did you constitute any food stocks (*mowni*) for the winter? What were the main produce you got? What do you still need?

Are there differences between children and adult's food needs? Why?

**Health:** [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]

What are the major health related problems you are expecting over the winter?

What specific diseases, specifically related to children?

Do you have access to any medical facilities and how much do they cost?

What health related items do you feel you are missing in your homes?

### **[Coffee break]**

**Education:** [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]

How many of your school-aged children are regularly going to school/informal learning centers currently?

Do you think you will be able to maintain them in school during winter? Why?

If not, what will these children be doing instead of going to school?

Could you do something else than taking your children away from school? [list examples]

**Income/Debt/Work:** [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]

How much of your income are you using during winter on: Flipchart: [Percentage/Proportion of items listed]

Do you think you will be able to generate HH income during winter? (income generation, spend savings, underage employment, selling assets, borrowing, begging etc.)

Comparing to summer/spring, how much can your HH make?

How much money per month do you require to satisfy all your HH upcoming winter related needs?

Do you foresee an increase in prices during winter? Which products?

### **Assistance**

Do you prefer to be given direct assistance (items) or food vouchers or cash? Why?

What is your preferred method of receiving cash and non-cash assistance [probe: ATM use/access, transport, distribution centre, access to information.]

Are you able to reach shops to buy winter material easily?

What do you expect from the international community and humanitarian agencies?

If you were given the chance to give an advice for Organizations on how to give assistance for Syrians during winter? Please state 3 recommendations. [Probe each participant]

## **Annex B: Focus Group Discussion Questionnaire – Children**

### **Discussion Guide for Children SCI, October 2014**

#### **Introduction:**

Inform participants of the purpose and scope of research.

Inform that session is recorded and their participation is anonymous and voluntary

Information collected is used solely for research purposes.

Structure of the conversation:

Needs

Priorities

Coping Strategies

## **Questions:**

[Icebreaker question- Around the Room]

Go around the room and ask each participant where they come from in Syria, where they are currently living and how they expect this winter?

### **Core winter needs & coping strategies:**

[Game]: Ask participants to draw or write the things they need this winter on a piece of paper?

[Put up a flip chart]- I Brainstorm what they wrote and other core needs on paper, the things that you can't survive in winter without?

[Following brainstorming the facilitator will organize them in a list, then probe for priorities, and then assign coping strategies to each]

Do you these issues differ between one season and another?

Are there differences between children and adults' needs?

### **Warmth, Dryness, Shelter:**

**Warmth:** [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]

What do you think of your heating system? Does it keep you warm?

What changes to the household structure would allow you to make it warmer?

What kind of winter clothes do you have?

What about your parents?

Where did you get those from?

What is missing?

**Dryness:** [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]

How dry is your home during winter? Do you have floods or water coming in?

What changes to the household structure would allow you to make it dryer?

**Shelter** [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]

Do you feel that you are protected in the house?

What changes to the household structure would allow you to make it stronger?  
Food [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]  
What are your main food related needs for this winter?

How many times do you eat per day?

What do you eat in other months but not in winter?  
Do you eat less during winter or more?

Did you constitute any food stocks (*mowni*) for the winter? What were the main produce you got? What do you still need?

Are there differences between children and adult's food needs?

**Health:** [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]

What are the major health related problems you are expecting over the winter?  
What specific diseases, specifically related to children?  
Do you have access to any medical facilities and how much do they cost?  
What health related items do you feel you are missing in your homes?

### **[Coffee break]**

**Education:** [Probe for severity, reversibility of coping strategy, probe for specific consequences on children and women]

How many of you go to school?  
What kind of school is it?  
Do you feel like you learn there?  
Do you think you will go to school more or less during winter?

**Child labour:** [Probe for income and worst forms of child labour]

Do you sometimes work to assist your parents? Do you know anyone who does not go to school and helps his/her parents?  
What do you think your parents would need for them not to take you out of school during winter?

### **Assistance**

Do you prefer to be given direct assistance (items) or food vouchers or cash?  
What is your preferred method of receiving cash and non-cash assistance?

What do you expect from the international community and humanitarian agencies?

If you were given the chance to give an advice for Organizations on how to give assistance for Syrians during winter? Please state 3 recommendations. [Probe each participant]

## Annex C: Inter-Agency Winterization Meeting Minutes

Minutes of INTER-AGENCY MEETING

Beirut, 7 November 2014

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – Lebanon Branch Office, Ramlet el-Baida

Lea Bldg, Cheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah Str, P.O. Box 11-7332 Tel.: +961 1 849 201  
Fax: +961 1 849 211 E-mail: lebbe@unhcr.org

Summary of discussions and action points

Meeting Location UNHCR-Lea Bldg-1

1st floor conference room Meeting Time 10:00 A.M

Chair person Kerstin Karlstrom

Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator/ David Welin  
Senior Protection Coordinator

Meeting Duration 2 h

Minutes Prepared by Lara Techekirian – Inter-agency Coordination Associate

Purpose of Meeting

1. Registration Update
2. Protection Update and Recent Development
3. IOM Findings of Livelihoods Survey on Lebanese Returnees
4. IA Winter Plan Update
5. Progress on Planning for 2015
6. AOB

1. Registration Update by Rana Ksaifi-Registration Officer-UNHCR

- Total registered as of 5 Nov. 2014: 1,133,822 26 days waiting period
- In October 17,660 Syrian individuals registered
- 35% decrease from September (around 27,000) due to Restrictions at border, Continued high no show rate as a result of security situation in Aarsal, Participation of registration staff in re-entry interviews.

- 24,000 individuals verified- Since January 2014, over 400,000 individuals have been verified.
- 55% decrease in request for appointments, 16,230 in October vs. 36,023 in September Mainly due to restrictions at the border.
- More than 23,700 individuals inactivated through the five verification methodologies.
- Total registered of Non Syrians to date: 11,663 with 1,537 awaiting registration.
- Methodologies of the verification process were highlighted
- Revised Projections for 2014-2015: 1.2 million for 2014, 1.5 million in 2015
- UNHCR Lebanon Registration Team has received a Global Field Service Award for Best Achievements in the Field- the Award for Team Achievements in Field Operations was shared jointly with the Somalia Team.
- Re-entry assessment took place-negotiations are taking place re-GOL policy on registration, to be announced after finalization

## 2. Protection Update and Recent Development by David Welin- Senior Protection Coordinator-UNHCR

- Progress against 2014 targets was highlighted
- Gratis Regularization- GOL waiving fines for Syrians and PRS with irregular status in Lebanon, until 31 December
- Regularization undertaken at all GSO offices in Lebanon
- Challenges lay ahead:
  - o Many refugees remain unaware - procedures, timeframe
  - o Some refugees unwilling to approach GSO
  - o Long waiting times
- To tackle the challenges PWG are initiating different activities such as individual conducting counseling and legal awareness sessions, developing Mass information campaign/tracking tool, measuring progress, offering short-term institutional support , analyzing impediments to accessing the regularization process
- 3RP / LCRP: 34 Protection partners appealing (3RP / LCRP total: 76) - Protection Appeal (incl CP+SGBV): 183 million (8%)
- Priority protection areas: Advocacy on refugee right in general- 2 areas were added :Prevention and response to forced evictions, Security of the person

- Question was raised on the percentage of evictions conducted- efforts to centralize the info
- Request was made on the percentage of people with specific needs affected by evictions

### 3. IOM Findings of Livelihoods Survey on Lebanese Returnees by Martina Iannizzotto- Livelihood officer -IOM

- A Livelihoods Assessment of Lebanese Returnees from Syria was conducted by IOM, cooperation with HRC with Consultation with Research Institute (CRI) in comparison with Syrian refugees (Vasyr, 2014)
- Methodology: 313 HHs – random sampling per geographical areas, with focus on Bekaa and Akkar data was collected from 13/6 till 21/7- interviewed Government officials, NGOs, municipalities, etc...
- Report shall be finalized by next week, to be shared with partners
- Question was raised concerning inclusion of LR in the NPTP Programme-plan to include on temporary basis -procedure to be finalized
- Conclusion and Recommendation:
  - o LRs: Have Lebanese nationality but face similar living conditions as Syrian refugees do in Lebanon
  - o Second round of registration and/or roll out of referral system
  - o Humanitarian assistance (eg cash, food, subsidies) for newly arrived or extremely vulnerable
  - o Better coordination of assistance (particularly in cases of mixed families)
  - o Better access to Lebanese services and institutions (many LRs have been in Syria for decades and are not familiar with processes)

### 4. IA Winter Plan Update-Chadi Ghajar-Assistant Distribution co-ordinator-UNHCR

- Winter assistance is defined as providing refugee and vulnerable Lebanese families with resources to stay warm, dry, and healthy through the winter months. It is delivered through a combination of in-kind, vouchers and cash assistance including shelter improvements goods and services.
- Shelter: 70% of the 55% estimated to be in substandard housing will need weatherproofing materials.
- Cash-for-Winter assistance: 70% of the population (using VaSyr 2014 data) living at high altitudes (USD 100 for households living above 1,100m and USD 80 for households living between 500 and 1,100 m),

- Child protection i.e. winter clothing vouchers: Economic vulnerability/location of housing/altitude.
- School heating: list approved by MEHE
- Fuel: Above 1,000 meters + School criteria
- Core Relief Items for those who arrived after March 31st, 2014, and therefore did not receive assistance during last year's winterization programme

This translates to the following population figures in need:

- o Above 1,000 = 275,000 (55,000 HH)
- o 500-1,000 meters = 410,000 (82,000 HH)<sup>3</sup>

- 55% per cent of the total refugee caseload live in substandard shelters. However 70% of those benefit from shelter assistance. This is based on socio-economic vulnerability, shelter vulnerability, and shelter conditions.
- Currently standard activities most agencies are planning on implementing (or already implementing) are:
  - o Cash-for-winter (\$100 USD above 1,100 meters or \$80 between 500-1,100 meters)
  - o fuel vouchers (\$100 USD above 1,100 meters)
  - o Winter clothing for children (kits and vouchers value?)
  - o core relief items (blankets, stoves, carpets, adult clothing)
  - o site improvements (informal settlements),
  - o Weatherproofing kits for shelter (and vouchers?)
  - o heating fuel for households and schools
  - o weather proofing of tents serving as child friendly spaces/schools etc
  - o All agencies ensure margins for referrals within their programs, ensuring that families in need that may not be captured by the current criteria can be referred for assistance at the discretion by/identification of field officers
  - o Fuel vouchers: 70% of the population living at high altitudes (vouchers worth USD 100 for households living above 1,100m calculated on fuel market prices and household consumption needs in those altitudes). However it is encouraged that other HHs not receiving Winter assistance are prioritized for Cash for winter

5. Progress on Planning for 2015 by Kerstin Karlstrom- Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator- UNHCR

- LCRP Status summary: Sector chapters are complete and to be shared with HCT, GoL comments are being incorporated, LCRP chapeau and sector chapters sent to HCT for final comments, Submission to Amman due today, November 7th
- Strategic shifts: Cost efficiencies – bigger focus on cash, Targeting – cash, shelter, it's a Government led response. Stabilization – linked to the GoL road map, institutional support
- Total Budget: USD2,145,796,509 with total 77 appealing agencies
- Governance structure as per chapeau- a generic template was presented-Next steps will be undertaken to review the situation and provide more details.

## 6. AOB

- David Addams from UNICEF distributed pins of the national Polio immunization campaign- for more information on the campaign access <http://endpolio.uniceflebanon.org/>

### Document Location

IA Presentation <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/admin/download.php?id=7473>

## Annex D: Focus Group Discussion Consent Form

### بيان الموافقة

#### غرض البيان

نحن أعضاء مؤسسة مينابولس وهي مؤسسة بحثية مستقلة لبنانية تعمل في مجال البحوث النوعية والكمية. نحن هنا اليوم لنقوم بدراسة تقدير الحاجات الشتوية والأولويات واليات التكيف للاجئين السوريين لمنظمة انقاذ الطفل- Save the Children. ويهدف هذا التقييم لفهم أولويات العائلات السورية المحتاجة في ما يخص فصل الشتاء الحالي. وسيقوم هذا البحث بمساعدة المنظمة على تحسين خدماتها للعائلات والأطفال السوريين.

ان مشاركتك الطوعية عبر الاجابة على مجموعة من الاسئلة المعدة من باحثينا سوف تساعد فريقنا على تحليل وتقدير التحديات التي تواجه البرنامج الاغاثي. مشاركتك في هذا البرنامج هي أمر طوعي وتشير مشاركتك الى موافقتك. ومن نيتنا التسجيل الكتابي والصوتي لهذه المناقشات المركزة.

ان كافة المعلومات التي نستحصل عليها من حضرتكم سوف سيتم تقديمها في دراستنا وسنحرص على اصالها الى المنظمة في نهاية هذا التقرير. إن مينابولس تلتزم السرية التامة فيما يتعلق بالتسجيلات المرافقة ولن تقوم بتسليمها الى أي كان وسيتم اتلافها خلال سنة من تسجيلها. لن يتم ذكر اسماءكم في التقرير او في أي نقاش واذا تم نقل كلامكم فسيكون ذكره كمجهول المصدر.

## بيان الموافقة

بعد توضيح نية هذا البحث وأساس الموافقة، بمشاركتك في هذه الجلسة، تكون قد أعلنت ضمناً عن موافقتك على ما تقدم. شكراً لاستعدادك للمشاركة في هذا التقدير ونحن نقدر وجهات النظر التي ستقوم بتزويدنا إياها.