

LCC

LEBANON CASH CONSORTIUM
الإتحاد النقدي اللبناني



Humanitarian Aid
and Civil Protection

Lebanon Cash Consortium

*MEB and SMEB Revision: Community
Consultation*

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Acronyms

AC	Advisory Committee
BAWG	Basic Assistance Working Group
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HH	Household
HoHH	Head of Household
HVSV	Highly Vulnerable and Severely Vulnerable
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ITS	Informal Tented Settlement
LCC	Lebanon Cash Consortium
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
MCA	Multi-purpose Cash Assistance
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
MEB	Minimum Expenditure Basket
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NFI	Non-food Items
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PMT	Proxy Means Test
SCI	Save the Children
SI	Solidarites International
SMEB	Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket
SRRR	Syria Regional Refugee Response
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WFP	World Food Program
WVI	World Vision International

Executive Summary

The Lebanon Cash Consortium (LCC) is comprised of six INGOs that provide severely socio-economically vulnerable refugees with \$175 worth of Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MCA) per month. The LCC uses a formula called the Proxy Means Tests (PMT), which generates a composite score representing economic welfare, to target households eligible for MCA. In addition, the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) and the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), which are baskets containing the food and non-food items, with their expenses, that are needed by a Syrian refugee household of five members over a one-month duration, are then used to determine the amount of cash given and to set the eligibility threshold. The MEB and SMEB were developed by the Cash Working Group in June 2014, but have not been revised since then. As such, an Advisory Committee (AC) of several INGOs led by the LCC was formed to lead on the revision of the two baskets. As a core part of this revision process, 33 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted across eight governorates to gauge the community's perspective on what items the MEB must include and the costs implied. Furthermore, the current study aimed at exploring the community's disagreement and/or agreement with the content of the existing baskets. Both of the aforementioned objectives were also investigated on gender and location level. The study resulted in the following key findings and recommendations:

Key Findings:

- The most important basic needs reported by refugees were food, (mainly bread, potatoes, and tomatoes), shelter, and health, especially for children.
- Both the existing MEB and SMEB were perceived as an inadequate representation of what a Syrian refugee household require as basic needs. Food items, namely bread, and non-food items, namely cleaning products and diapers, need further revision as they are underestimated in terms of price and quantity.
- Health and hygiene items, such as toothpaste and anti-allergenic soap, were not considered essential items and would be the first items to be disregarded under limited resources.
- Communication was found to be overpriced, while transportation was found to be underpriced and did not factor in education transportation costs.

Recommendations:

- Update the price of food items and non-food items in line with more recent price monitoring and expenditure data beyond PDMs;
- Health expenditure per capita requires further investigation, especially on age range, to take into consideration children (5-18) and the elderly (>59);
- Rent expenditure should be weighed against shelter type and location to account for differences;
- Greater awareness is needed around communicating the importance of hygiene items in preventing illness and mitigating healthcare costs;
- A gendered analysis could serve to show if and how female and male headed households organize expenditures differently.

Introduction

With the high influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon, humanitarian agencies strive to provide the most vulnerable with appropriate services to help them meet their basic needs and live in dignity. With that aim, local and international NGOs (INGOs) have been providing a variety of assistance, ranging from assets, conditional cash (e.g. food voucher, cash for shelter, and cash for work), and social support amongst others. However, since 2013 Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MCA) has become a prominent modality for the provision of support in the Syria crisis response in Lebanon.

The Lebanon Cash Consortium (LCC) is one of the entities that provides cash assistance to Syrian refugees throughout the country. The LCC is a body of six INGOs, namely Save the Children (SCI: Consortium Lead), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Solidarites international (SI), ACTED, Word Vision International (WVI), and CARE. These six agencies work in harmony to cover Lebanon nationally and provide vulnerable refugees with multi-purpose cash assistance (MCA) that is equivalent to \$175 (or 260,000 L.L). Based on the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) 2015, 69% of the refugee population are living on less than the MEB and a further 52% are living below the SMEB threshold (details on the MEB and SMEB are included in the following section). To date, the LCC assists around 18,496 Syrian refugee households, making around 129,472 individuals. Additionally, the LCC participates in the Basic Assistance Working Group (BAWG), which is chaired by the Lebanese MoSA and UNHCR. The LCC directly contributes towards the achievement of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), by contributing to meeting Outcome 1 of the BAWG plan: 'Targeted severely economically vulnerable populations have improved access to essential goods and services of their choice in a safe, dignified, and empowered manner without increased negative coping mechanisms'.

The BAWG is constituted of several INGOs (see SRRR¹ for more details) working together to assist socio-economically vulnerable refugees in meeting their basic needs, while preventing refugees' reliance on negative coping strategies. In addition to multi-purpose cash assistance, other BAWG agencies provide in-kind assistance of standard core relief items and/or winterization assistance. So far, the BAWG, including the LCC, is assisting approx. 43,000 HHs with MCA, a further 190,000 HHs with seasonal vouchers, and an estimated 26,000 HHs with core relief items.

Background

To be able to clearly understand the basic needs of the displaced population, in 2014, in consultation with affected-persons, the Cash Working Group (17 agencies) developed an expenditure basket that includes the food and non-food items (NFIs) that a household requires in order to meet basic needs, along with the average cost of each item. This allowed for the development of the Minimum Expenditure (MEB) that provided for an average household size of five, for the duration of one month. The MEB includes food items, both macro and micronutrients, constituting of a set of items with their average quantity needed and price, which was collected by WFP. All the food items in the MEB cover the per person energy needs of 2100 Kcal/day. As for the NFIs, such as toilet paper, toothpaste, diapers, and others, the items chosen with their respective quantities and prices were provided by the NFI Working Group, representing the required minimum. Furthermore, the basket also included education, clothing, transportation, and communication costs, all of which were calculated based on Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) data. Moreover, rent was calculated as an average regardless of shelter type, water supply was based on the normal standards of 35L per person/ per day for one person, and health

¹ <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>

that was provided by the health sector while taking into consideration number of visits and prices for adults and children. The MEB is estimated to be \$571 for a household of five, or \$114 per capita.

In addition to the MEB, a Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) was developed to demonstrate the amount needed to meet minimum survival needs under limited resources. The SMEB contained almost identical food items to the MEB, and in line with nutrition best practice/sphere standards, supplied the daily requirement of 2100 Kcal/day- however, not all nutrients were included. NFIs, clothes, communication, and transportation costs remained in the basket at the same price and quantity as the MEB. However, rent was calculated based on the average monthly rent of informal tents (ITS) and water was calculated on 15L/day for one person (instead of 35L/day/person). Since the SMEB represents the needs under limited resources, debt repayment was added as another element and an average was calculated based on field visits. In total, the SMEB is calculated at \$435 for a household size of five, \$87 per capita.

Aside from the items listed above and falling outside of the baskets, residency permits and winterization expenses were also added. The cost of renewing a permit for an individual above 15 years old is \$200 per year; thus, it was estimated that a household would require permit renewals for two individuals, a total of \$400 per year. Whilst winterization costs included a 100L of petrol was allocated for one month, costing around \$49 (see Annex I for complete MEB and Annex II for the SMEB).

Not only does the SMEB serve as a framework of expected minimum expenditures for the average household, but also plays a critical role in determining the MCA transfer amount and eligibility into the MCA program. As such, the SMEB is used to calculate the amount of assistance that should be provided to socio-economically vulnerable households. Specifically, the household average monthly income capacity (\$110) and WFP food assistance (\$150/HH) are deducted from the SMEB (\$435) and the remaining amount (\$175) accounts for the amount to be provided through MCA, and in turn, the LCC. Furthermore, a Proxy Means Test (PMT), assessing several HH elements, such as HH size, shelter, income generation, and others, is used to determine eligibility for cash assistance. The PMT generates a composite score for each household, representing the socio-economic vulnerability level of that household. Relying on the MEB and SMEB, four different categories were developed, each having a definite PMT range. The following table illustrates the four categories with their respective PMT range, based on the per capita value of the MEB (\$114) and SMEB (\$87).

Socio-Economic Vulnerability Level	PMT Score Range
Least Vulnerable	> 143
Moderately Vulnerable	113 -142
Highly Vulnerable	114 –87
Severely Vulnerable	< 87

Objectives

Since their original development in 2014, neither the MEB nor, by extension, the SMEB have been revised or included the affected community's input. Consequently, humanitarian actors delivering cash assistance found the need to revise and update the methodology, and the calculation of the (S) MEB. Considering the strategic and programmatic implications of such a revision, the process was undertaken in coordination and collaboration with all sectors and with interested parties from the Inter-Agency forums, namely the LCC, UNCHR, UNICEF, WFP, Oxfam, NRC, DRC, and MoSA. The listed agencies formed an Advisory Committee (AC) in 2016 to lead the revision of the MEB and SMEB. The revision of the MEB and SMEB is an inter-agency effort,

for the use of all interested agencies. A core part of this revision involved extensive consultation with Syrian refugees in the review process and the development of the new baskets.

The study aimed to achieve the following:

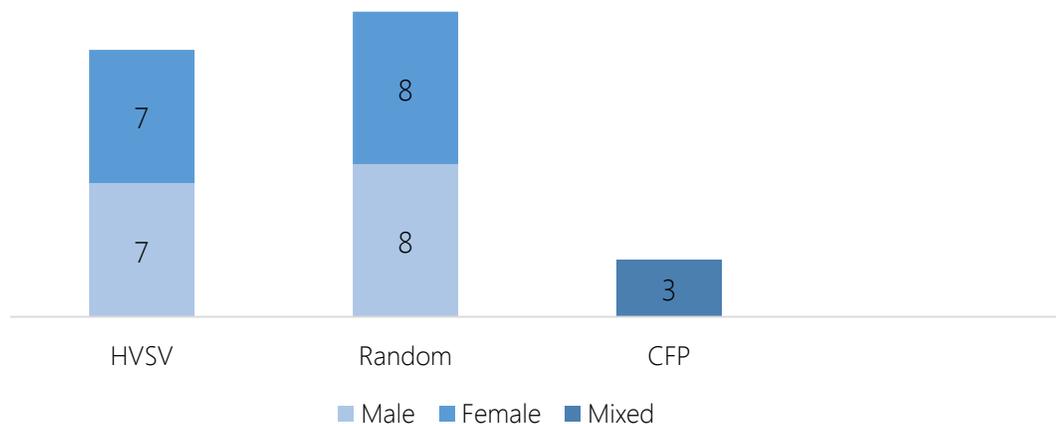
- Explore the community’s specific basic and survival needs;
- Approximate community’s expenditure on basic/survival needs;
- Gather sufficient feedback and input from the community on regular monthly expenditures;
- Gauge whether the content of the current baskets aligns with actual household expenditures;
- Investigate any differences across regions (rural vs. urban); and,
- Exploring differences regarding basic/survival needs between female HoHH and male HoHH

Method

Participants

Along with UNHCR, the LCC agencies conducted 33 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) across the eight governorates of Lebanon. The sample consisted of 14 FGDs (50% Females) with refugees who are classified as highly or severely socio-economically vulnerable (HVSV) and a further 16 FGDs (50% Females), with a random sample of refugees regardless of their vulnerability level. The selection of a Highly/Severely vulnerable sample is to utilize the purposive sampling approach; thus, recruiting “information rich” participants. In addition, a random sample was also chosen to explore what is needed to live in dignity, regardless of vulnerability level. Having an equal split between female head of households and male head of households allows us to identify any significant gender differences. In addition to refugees, mixed gender FGDs were conducted with community focal points, such as the “Shaweesh” (Informal Settlement’s Leader), who are familiar with their surrounding settlement. Due to the absence of community focal points in other areas, only three FGDs were conducted in Beirut, Minnieh (North), and Zahle (Bekaa).

Number of FGD per Gender, in each sample



Based on the highest number of refugees in each governorate, two districts were chosen to conduct the FGDs in. The following table details the number of FGDs per governorate:

Governorate	District	Highly and Severely		Random		CFP
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Mixed
Nabatieh				1	1	
South	Saida	1	1	1	1	
	Sour	1	1			
Bekaa	West Bekaa	1	1			
	Zahle			1	1	1
Baalbeck	Baalbeck			1	1	
	El Hermel					
Akkar	Akkar	1	1	1	1	
North	Tripoli	1	1			
	Minnieh			1	1	1
Mt. Lebanon	Baabda			1	1	
	Aley	1	1			
Beirut		1	1	1	1	1

Measures

The below table summarizes the themes and questions the interview protocols explored.

1 st Theme: Definition of Basic Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Participants were asked to define basic needs and to explain what they do in order to meet these needs
2 nd Theme: Basket Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Participants were split into two groups and each group developed an MEB •Participants were instructed to prioritize 5 items and remove items that they believed were of less importance
3 rd Theme: Comparing Baskets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •After each group developed a basket, the baskets were shared between the two groups for comparison.
4 th Theme: Current Baskets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Participants were asked to provide feedback on the existing MEB and SMEB

The FGD protocol/guideline was designed with support from the MEAL Coordinators of DRC and NRC, and reviewed by the AC composed of the agencies quoted above. The protocol consisted of 15 questions clustered into four main themes. The first theme (*Definition of Basic Needs*) asked participants to share what refugees do to meet basic needs, and then to explore the definition of basic needs in their perspective. The objective of the three questions in this theme was to introduce the topic and build rapport with the participants, while leading the conversation towards basic needs provision.

The second theme (*Basket Exercise*) entailed the basket development exercise. In the first instance, participants were asked to list all the items that they perceive to fulfil their basic needs, including the quantity and expenditure needed per a specified HH size (an average of five) and duration (an average of one month), which led to the development of an ideal MEB. Next, participants were asked to rate the top five items in order of importance, before finally being instructed to remove some items or reduce expenditures. These items were removed or reduced on the assumption that resources were limited and income sources scarce thus developing the SMEB. Additionally, participants were asked to list how the expenses of some items might differ between brands, before finally being requested to list the durable items that they purchased on a one off basis/annually, given that all other items were calculated per month.

Upon completion of the exercise, the two lists developed by each group were then compared and differences were discussed as part of the third theme (*Comparing Baskets*). In the third theme, participants were shown the baskets developed by each group separately, and asked to discuss the different results to reach an agreement, when possible. The fourth and final theme (*Current Baskets*), explored the community's agreement and disagreement levels with the contents of the MEB and SMEB that are currently being used by the agencies. Participants were asked if any items were to be removed/added from/to the current MEB and SMEB.

Furthermore, they were asked if the expenditures currently reported are high or low. Lastly, they were asked if the baskets might differ between urban and rural areas (see Annex III for full FGD Protocol).

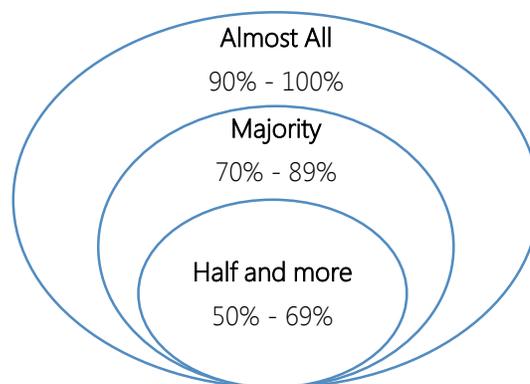
Procedure

Following a one-day training on the correct use of the tools, field teams conducted data collection activities for 14 days. All participants were invited to attend two days prior to the commencement of the FGD, and upon the participant’s consent, the FGD was conducted. During the discussion and upon reaching the second theme, participants within the FGD were split into two groups. Each group answered the questions under theme two separately and then the two groups were joined back together for the third and fourth theme. On average, each FGD lasted approximately 90 minutes.

Analysis

The qualitative data was analyzed by consolidating the answers across all the FGDs within each sample, while focusing on recurrent themes. For the quantitative section, namely the basket development, item ratings, and item removal, descriptive statistics were used. More specifically, the items reported by the whole sample in the basket development exercise were categorized and the frequencies were calculated for each product. Subsequently, the frequencies were categorized into three. The first category (*Almost All*) contains the products that were reported by all (100%) or at least 90% of the total number of FGDs in each of the samples. The second category (*Majority*) contains products that were reported by 70% to 89% of the sample and the third category (*Half and More*) contains those that were reported half (50%) up to 69%. Regarding the prices, an average expenditure was taken for each product after confirming that the average household size and average duration was five and one month, respectively, for each item. Furthermore, the scale used to measure the product was based on the most reported scale and others were converted to have one standardize scale for each item across the entire sample.

The same analysis approach was taken with each question on item removal, but the frequencies were collapsed differently. The *All* (100%) category includes the items that were removed by all of the FGDs that reported that item, the *Majority* category shows the items that were removed by 70% to 99% of those who reported it, *Half and More* shows 50% to 69%, *Several* 25% to 49%, and *Few* 10% to 24%. Lastly, the ratings of each item were calculated based on the items that got the highest proportion in each priority level.



Results

Definition of Basic Needs

Highly and Severely (N=14). The FGDs across the seven governorates achieved some consensus when defining basic needs. Their answers suggest that the fulfillment of basic needs would primarily entail being able to afford rent and food. Healthcare was also noted as an important need, followed by residency permits and education. Although there is a general agreement among focus group participants concerning the significance of these needs, some slight gender differences were observed. For example, male participants were more likely to express concerns with residency permits than female participants. Moreover, two female FGDs added children's needs, such as baby formula and diapers, to their lists of basic needs.

Random Sample (N=16). As with the severely and highly vulnerable, a diverse list of items emerged when participants were asked to define basic needs. Food, health, and shelter were mentioned by the majority of the groups. Additional items included baby formula, water, clothes, and paying off debt. Residency permits were more likely to be mentioned by men as a basic need. Only one female group, that of Saida, included residency permits in their understanding of basic needs. In the Minnieh region, men also included gas and communication costs. Additionally, some of the items that stood out among female FGDs were education and hygiene.

Community Focal Points (N=3). Mirroring the random sample, basic needs defined by the community focal points comprised both food items, and non-food items (e.g. health). The main items that were reported as being part of basic needs were food, rent, and medication, along with water and transportation. Other important needs, only highlighted in Zahle, were diapers and milk for young children. In addition, the Zahle and Minnieh FGDs both highlighted employment as a basic need because that would allow for a steady income, which in turn, fulfills food and shelter requirements. Finally, it is interesting to note that the Minnieh group equated 'basic needs' with *not* needing any humanitarian assistance.

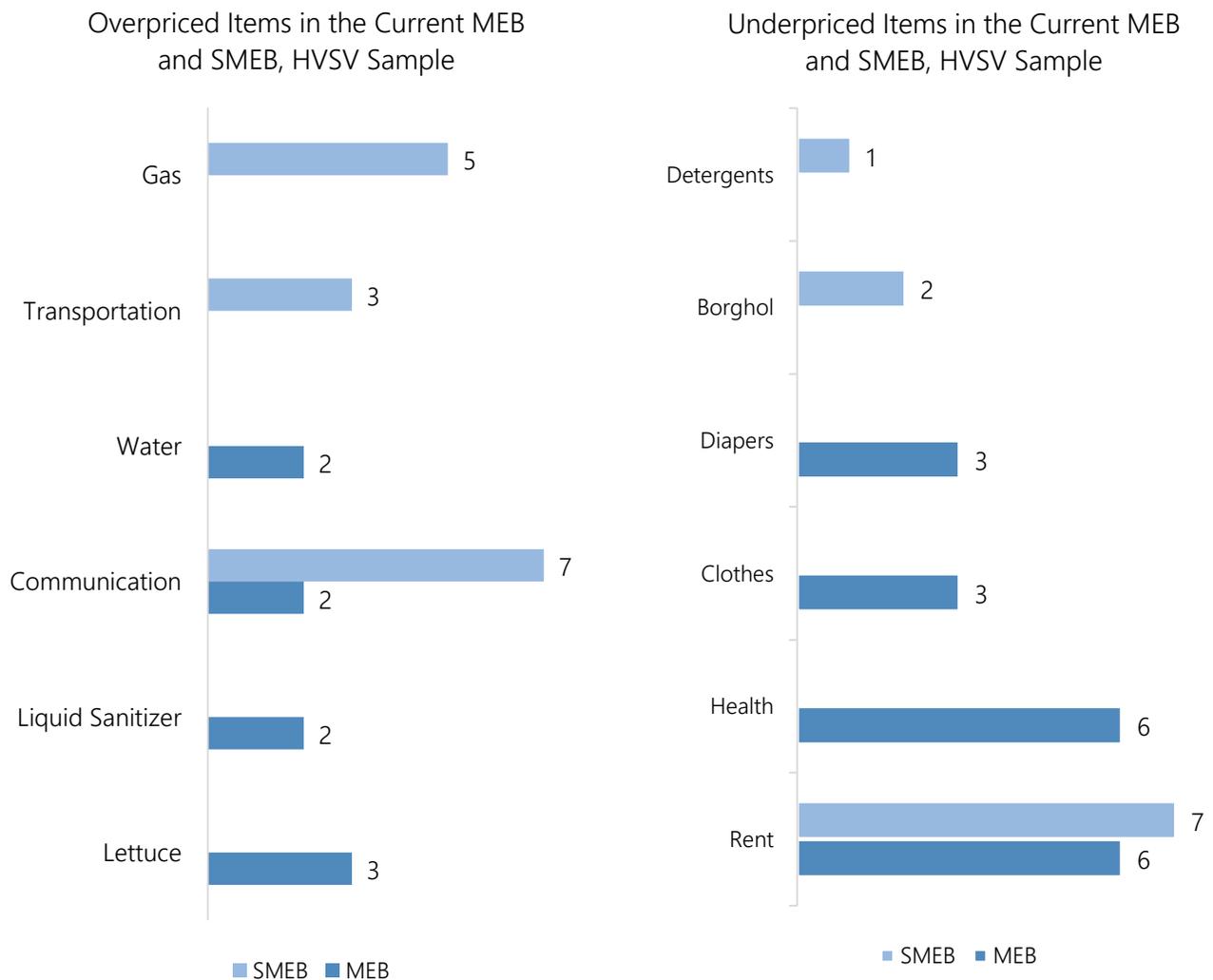
Consultation on Current MEB

Highly and Severely (N=14). Four FGDs found the MEB list to be an adequate representation of their minimum expenditures. Yet, the majority (10) reported that the MEB does not fully reflect the community's needs, in terms of quantity, items included/excluded, and expenditures. As for gender differences, the aforementioned results were common among both males and females. Nevertheless, one female FGD reported that the quantity of eggs, bread, rice, and pasta are insufficient while one male FGD reported the cost of healthcare as being insufficient and another one reported the cost of gas as being insufficient.

When asked what they would add to the MEB, only three FGDs reported nothing to add to the current MEB. Specifically, the male FGD in Beirut would not add anything, whereas the female FGD mentioned a need for water (without specifying whether it was for drinking or otherwise) and insecticides. Apart from those three FGDs, the items that most participants would have liked to see on the list are tea and vegetables, namely potatoes and tomatoes. In particular, seven FGD reported the need for tea and five FGDs reported potatoes, and/or tomatoes. As for removing items, the majority (9) would remove both canned meat and lettuce, and half (8) of the FGDs reported removing toilet paper. Furthermore, a considerable proportion removed lemon (6), toothpaste (5), and hypo-allergenic soap (4). There were no major gender or regional differences when it came to what items need to be removed.

All of the FGDs agreed that the prices included in the MEB are, in general, adequate, with minor changes needed for some of the prices and quantities. Specifically, rent (290,075L.L) and health (14,250L.L) were the main items for which the monthly value was perceived as being underestimated in the current MEB. Moreover, six FGDs reported that none of the items had high prices. Nonetheless, three FGDs reported expenditure on lettuce (4,608L.L) as being too high, with two FGDs also mentioning liquid sanitizers (3,891L.L), communication (34,095L.L), and water (71,259L.L). Only one FGD (female in Tripoli) reported that all of the prices are too high, whilst a mere three FGDs found that that none of the prices were too low. Rather, six FGDs reported that healthcare costs more than the price reported in the MEB. For instance, both the female FGD in West Bekaa and Sour recommend that the expenditure on health should be 50,000L.L. instead of 15,000L.L. Additionally, three FGDs reported that clothes and diapers are being underpriced, while recommending 100,000L.L. and 20,000L.L. respectively instead of 37,050L.L and 14,599L.L.

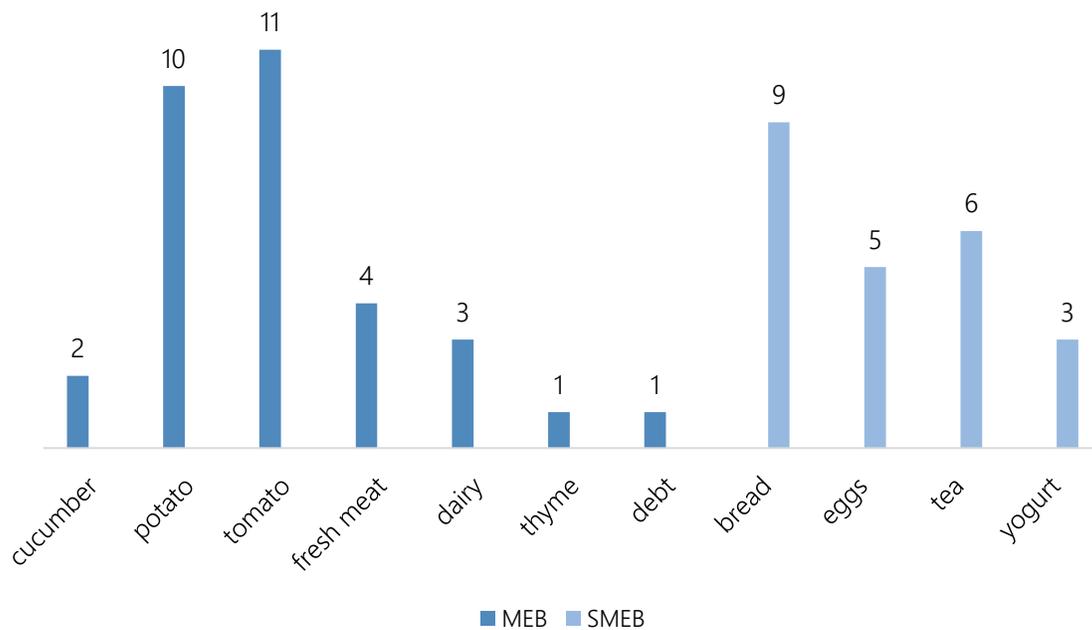
Random Sample (N=16). Half of the FGDs reported that the basket was mostly adequate. Either it covered most of the necessities that they would not give up, or they would only add a few extra items to render it more realistic. Specifically, this notion was reported among females and males in Akkar, Baalbeck, Nabatieh, and



Saida. However, in Zahle, both males and females preferred to add some items to the list and remove unnecessary ones, and argued that the quantities listed were inadequate. The two FGDs in Minnieh agreed that the quantity of bread and sugar was not enough. Four other FGDs reported that the prices on the list were cheaper than usual. For example, the female FGD in Beirut believed that rent was in fact greater than the one mentioned in the basket.

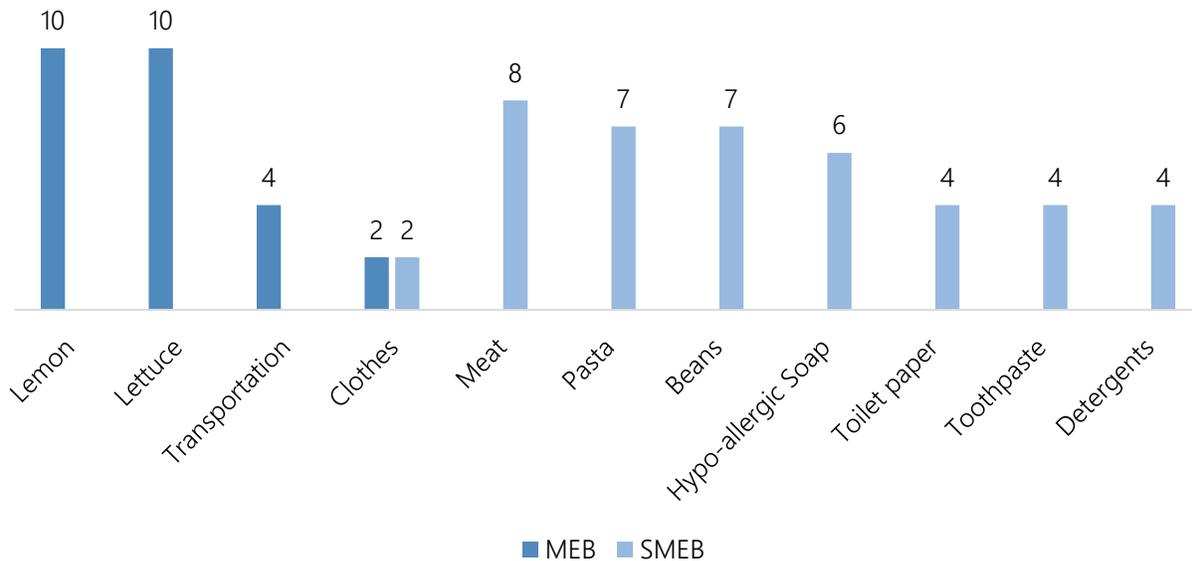
Only the two FGDs in Baabda did not find anything missing in this category. All of the others (14) reported that some of both food and non-food items are missing. Vegetables, such as cucumbers, tomatoes, and potatoes, were highlighted by males and females across all governorates. Additionally, dairy products, fresh meat, thyme, and tomato paste were reported. Four FGDs (Beirut and Akkar) reported healthcare, residency permits, shelter, debt repayments, and electricity as non-food missing items. A single male FGD (Baalbeck) added temptation goods (cigarettes) and fuel for winter.

Items to Add to the Current MEB and SMEB, Random Sample



The FGDs in Beirut did not wish to remove any item. Among the other FGDs (10), there was consistent agreement concerning the removal of some food items, mainly lemon, lettuce, canned meat, and pasta, and non-food items, mainly hypo-allergenic soap. Four FGDs (Akkar and Baalbeck) removed transportation costs. Two FGDs (female Baalbeck and male Zahle) removed clothes from the MEB. Furthermore, in Minnieh FGDs, the females removed chlorine and face wash, and the males removed telephone costs and electricity generators.

Items to be Removed from the Current MEB and SMEB, Random Sample



Regarding prices, nine FGDs reported them to be lower than they are in reality; these were mainly food, health, and cleaning products. Specifically, this was reported in Baabda (e.g., health, diapers and rent), Beirut (e.g., food and cleaning products), Zahle (e.g., salt, sugar, milk, and bread), Nabatieh (e.g., transportation and rent), along with the male FGD in Akkar (e.g., healthcare). The rest of the seven FGDs generally found the prices to be adequate, with some varying according to different conditions. For instance, two FGDs (Minnieh) indicated that the costs of clothes would differ according to the number of children and the costs of transportation (40,375L.L.) would differ according to the number of men.

Six FGDs (Beirut, Akkar and Minnieh) did not find the prices to be higher than usual. However, the other ten FGDs reported that the prices for several food and non-items are high. Food items mainly included lemon (1,000L.L.), milk (8,533L.L.), lentils (4,208L.L.), and eggs (2,331L.L.), while the non-food items mainly included liquid sanitizers, gas (2,733L.L.), rent, water, and cleaning products. These items were mentioned among the male and female FGDs in Baabda, Baalbeck, Nabatieh, and Saida.

Interestingly, the Zahle FGDs provided details as to what the prices of some items should be. In this regard, the following are the prices suggested for the reported items:

- Eggs: 2,000 L.L. instead of 2,500 L.L. (- 20%)
- Bread: For 2100g, 2,250 L.L. instead of 3,600 L.L. (- 37.5%)
- Sugar: For 1500g, 1,500 L.L. instead of 2,000 L.L. (- 25%)
- Communication costs: 16,000 L.L. instead of 34,000 L.L. (- 52%)

Furthermore, the same FGDs also increased the prices of some items:

- Diapers: 20,000L.L. instead of 15,000L.L. (+33%)
- Healthcare was raised from 15,000L.L. to 50,000L.L. by the female FGD (+23%)

- Healthcare was raised from 15,000L.L. to 100,000L.L. by the male FGD (+56%)

Community Focal Points (N=3). Across all FGDs, the MEB was not considered an adequate representation of basic needs. The quantities and the prices were not seen as realistic; the Beirut group said that the costs of rent and food were too low, and the Zahle FGD argued that the quantities per capita were inadequate. On one hand, the latter also indicated that some important items were missing from the lists that are potatoes, rice, eggs, thyme, and olive oil. On the other hand, the Minnieh FGD said that there were some items that they would eliminate namely lemon, lettuce, pasta, and canned meat.

As for missing items, the Beirut FGD stated that nothing was missing from the MEB. The Zahle FGD listed tea, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, yogurt, tomato paste, and garlic, as being missing in the current MEB. A third of the Minnieh group found the list comprehensive, whereas the remainder added potatoes and tomatoes primarily because they are cheap commodities.

Similarly, the Beirut FGD did not remove anything from the list. Both the Zahle and the Minnieh removed lemons from the list. The former also removed lettuce, and to a lesser extent pasta, powdered milk, and borghol. The Minnieh FGD removed canned meat because they believed those could be substituted with eggs. For non-food items, this group eliminated fuel, clothes, and transportation.

As for prices, the Beirut FGD thought the costs of rent and health care were too low, which might reflect regional differences in rent prices. Both Beirut and Minnieh FGDs found the costs of food items, such as oil (2,622L.L.), and sugar (1,993L.L.), to be insufficient. This was also reflected by the Minnieh FGD on non-food items, namely infant and hygiene products. Additionally, the Minnieh FGD reported that the prices of vegetables would vary when bought from local vendors. Interestingly, the same FGD also reported inflation of prices among WFP affiliated shops. Additionally, Zahle FGD increased the cost of health care from 15,000L.L. to 60,000L.L. and that of rent from 290,000L.L. to 500,000L.L. When asked if the prices are too high, two FGDs (Beirut and Zahle) did not find any of the prices to be too high. However, the Minnieh FGD believed that most items, for instance vegetables, are overpriced. It is also worth noting that participants mentioned variation in prices among shops.

Consultation on Current SMEB

Highly and Severely (N=14). Half (7) of the FGDs reported that the SMEB is an adequate representation of basic needs when resources are limited. The other half either perceived that the SMEB is missing some items (e.g., bread), including unnecessary items (e.g., lettuce and lemon), or the quantities and expenditures are inadequate (e.g., gas, rent, and health).

Reflecting specifically on missing items, only four FGDs agreed that there was nothing missing in the SMEB. Conversely, more than half (8) of the FGDs reported bread, four FGDs reported potatoes and/or tomatoes, and three FGDs reported tea as missing items. Furthermore, few (2) FGDs reported that eggs and water are also missing. The results were common across the governorates and between genders, with no major distinction.

As for removing items, a large portion of the FGDs (11) of both males and females reported removing either all or at least one of the following hygiene items, toilet paper, hypo-allergic soap, and liquid sanitizers. Furthermore, almost half of the FGDs (6) would remove canned meat and legal residency expenditures. This was followed by four FGDs suggesting the removal of pasta, beans, debt repayment, and clothes. Only one FGD reported the removal of transportation, and that was the male FGD conducted in Akkar.

The majority (10) of the FGDs found the prices to be somewhat acceptable; with others mentioning that, some prices are inflated. When asked about specific items, half of the FGDs reported communication particularly as being over estimated. Furthermore, two FGDs in West Bekaa mentioned that since the SMEB should capture basic needs under limited resources conditions, including coping strategies, they would not pay 34,000L.L. on communication. Even more, one of the FGDs (Female in Sour) reduced the communication cost to 25,000 L.L. . Five FGDs reported that the cost of gas was exaggerated, four of whom were male FGDs. In addition, four FGDs (3 Males) reported transportation as being overpriced, with the male FGD and female FGD reducing transportation to 30,000L.L. and 15,000L.L., respectively.

Conversely, rent was believed to be underestimated by 7 FGDs (5 male), each noting that 120,000L.L. is insufficient to cover the monthly outlay. Moreover, the male FGD in Sour specified 150,000L.L. for tents and 250,000L.L. for houses/apartments, with the females suggesting 200,000 L.L. as a midpoint between tents and houses/apartments. Few (2) FGDs reported that price of borghol (6,705L.L.) as low, those were both the female and male FGDs in Aley. In line with this regional difference and adding gender differences, three male FGDs in Akkar reported debt (Akkar and Saida) and oil (Akkar and Tripoli) as costing more than what is estimated in the SMEB. Other items, such as residency, detergents, and gas, were each mentioned by one FGD, all of which were females.

Random Sample (N=16). Most of the participants found the SMEB either limiting because the prices listed were too low or the quantities were insufficient. For example, four FGDs (Baabda and Beirut) reported that the cost of rent was not close to what people paid, which is around \$200. Four other FGDs (Akkar and Baalbeck) noted that they would replace a number of items with others of higher importance. Interestingly, only one female FGD (Minnieh) recommended factoring in household size and shelter costs.

Unlike the MEB, the items missing from the SMEB were mostly food products, while only two FGDs mentioned residency permit costs as missing. With regards to food, the majority of the FGDs reported that bread was an important missing item, followed by eggs and milk. Tea, yogurt, and vegetables were also mentioned, more commonly among the male FGDs than the female FGDs.

When asked to remove items from the SMEB, half of the FGDs (8) reported removing canned meat and almost half (7) reported removing pasta and/or beans. In addition, some non-food items were also removed. For instance, six FGDs would remove hypo-allergenic soap, four FGDs would remove toilet paper and/or toothpaste, and detergents, and only two FGDs reported removing clothes.

As for prices, eight FGDs (Akkar, Baalbeck, Nabatieh, and Saida) reported that the prices of the SMEB are generally acceptable. However, the remaining ten FGDs found the prices too low. In particular, one FGD (Baabda) mentioned that each market would have its unique prices, and that the costs of food and medical services were unrealistically low on the list. Four FGDs (Beirut and Minnieh) expressed concern over the low costs of rent (121,800L.L.) and paying off debt (108,600L.L.). Furthermore, one FGD (Zahle) decreased the quantity of rice, white bulgur, white beans, and the cost of communication (34,000L.L.), while it increased the cost of rent.

Contrary to low prices, only six FGDs (Beirut, Akkar, and Minnieh) did not consider the SMEB prices to be high. Two male FGDs in Saida and Nabatieh indicated that the prices were high for white beans (6,945L.L.), liquid sanitizers (3,891L.L.), and gas (2,733L.L.), while one female FGD reported high prices on rent, canned meat (10,274L.L.), and laundry detergents (4,000L.L.). In Baabda, the females clarified that they cannot meet the

Basket Developed – Highly and Severely

The below table illustrates the highly and severely vulnerable FGDs' (14 FGDs, 28 subgroups) most reported products, along with their average price and quantity with specific scale, for an average HH size of five and duration one month.

	Product	Price (\$)	Price (Lebanese Lira)	Quantity	Scale
Almost all	Bread	\$69.00	103,500 .ل.ل	81	Bags
	Gas	\$18.51	27,768 .ل.ل	2	Gallons
	Rent	\$199.52	299,286 .ل.ل	1	Monthly
	Rice	\$16.11	24,161 .ل.ل	13	Kg
	Sugar	\$16.48	24,714 .ل.ل	20	Kg
	Bulgur	\$9.57	14,356 .ل.ل	10	Kg
Majority	Cleaning Products	\$22.97	34,459 .ل.ل	1	-
	Potatoes	\$18.55	27,820 .ل.ل	27	Kg
	Diapers	\$21.27	31,906 .ل.ل	2	Bags
	Health	\$75.14	112,708 .ل.ل	1	Monthly
	Oil	\$18.19	27,292 .ل.ل	3	Liters
	Tea	\$10.90	16,354 .ل.ل	2	Kg
	Water	\$25.32	37,974 .ل.ل	23	Liters
	Milk	\$25.25	37,870 .ل.ل	3	Kg
	Electricity	\$39.55	59,318 .ل.ل	1	Monthly
	Lentils	\$8.40	12,595 .ل.ل	5	Kg
	Education Transportation	\$90.33	135,500 .ل.ل	1	Monthly
More than half	Eggs	\$11.45	17,171 .ل.ل	3	Packs
	Tomatoes	\$22.79	34,184 .ل.ل	23	Kg
	Transportation	\$48.89	73,333 .ل.ل	1	Monthly
	Meat	\$21.49	32,235 .ل.ل	3	Kg
	Cheese	\$15.94	23,906 .ل.ل	5	Kg
	Clothes	\$119.56	179,333 .ل.ل	1	Yearly
	Labneh	\$13.62	20,433 .ل.ل	4	Kg
	Vegetables	\$21.76	32,633 .ل.ل	5	Kg
	Pasta	\$5.81	8,714 .ل.ل	4	Packs

Basket Developed – Random Sample

The below table illustrates the random sample FGD's (16 FGDs, 32 subgroups) most reported products, along with their average price and quantity with specific scale, for an average HH size of five and duration one month.

	Product	Price (\$)	Price (Lebanese Lira)	Quantity	Scale
Almost all	Electricity	\$31.05	46,569 .ل.ل	1	Monthly
	Rice	\$17.33	26,000 .ل.ل	10	Kg
	Bread	\$72.00	108,000 .ل.ل	78	Packs
	Cleaning Products	\$23.16	34,733 .ل.ل	6	Monthly
	Gas	\$19.37	29,050 .ل.ل	3	Gallons
	Health	\$76.41	114,621 .ل.ل	2	Monthly
	Meat	\$27.07	40,601 .ل.ل	5	Kg
	Rent	\$231.84	347,759 .ل.ل	1	Monthly
Majority	Potatoes	\$23.12	34,679 .ل.ل	30	Kg
	Sugar	\$13.55	20,321 .ل.ل	16	Kg
	Bulgur	\$10.34	15,510 .ل.ل	7	Kg
	Lentils	\$7.85	11,780 .ل.ل	5	Kg
	Tea	\$10.67	16,000 .ل.ل	1	Kg
	Water	\$40.97	61,455 .ل.ل	31	Liters
	Tomatoes	\$27.40	41,104 .ل.ل	23	Kg
More than Half	Transportation	\$64.33	96,500 .ل.ل	3	Monthly
	Milk	\$31.75	47,619 .ل.ل	5	Kg
	Diapers	\$24.90	37,350 .ل.ل	3	Packs
	Oil	\$17.63	26,450 .ل.ل	12	Liters
	Clothes	\$412.99	619,479 .ل.ل		Yearly
	Eggs	\$13.46	20,184 .ل.ل	7	Packs
	Margarine	\$10.37	15,556 .ل.ل	4	Kg
	Shampoo	\$6.25	9,382 .ل.ل	2	Bottles

Basket Developed – CFP

The below table illustrates the community focal points FGD's (3 FGDs, 6 subgroups) most reported products, along with their average price and quantity with a specific scale, for an average HH size of five and duration one month.

	Product	Price (\$)	Price (Lebanese Lira)	Quantity	Scale
All	Transportation	\$42.22	63,333 .ل.ل		Monthly
	Rent	\$226.11	339,167 .ل.ل		Monthly
	Water	\$35.78	53,667 .ل.ل	211	Liters
	Bread	\$76.39	114,583 .ل.ل	80	Bags
	Rice	\$16.67	25,000 .ل.ل	11	Kg
	Electricity	\$25.00	37,500 .ل.ل	1	Monthly
	Health	\$58.89	88,333 .ل.ل	1	Monthly
Majority	Communication	\$34.13	51,200 .ل.ل	1	Monthly
	Sugar	\$12.67	19,000 .ل.ل	19	Kg
	Oil	\$24.00	36,000 .ل.ل	14	Liters
	Bulgur	\$11.07	16,600 .ل.ل	9	Kg
	Milk	\$29.60	44,400 .ل.ل	3	Kg
	Tea	\$10.33	15,500 .ل.ل	2	Kg
	Diapers	\$15.17	22,750 .ل.ل	3	Bags
	Potatoes	\$17.50	26,250 .ل.ل	25	Kg
Half	Clothes	\$55.56	83,333 .ل.ل	1	Yearly
	Education	\$85.56	128,333 .ل.ل	1	Monthly
	Gas	\$17.33	26,000 .ل.ل	14	Gallons
	Tomatoes	\$12.89	19,333 .ل.ل	12	Kg
	Lentils	\$7.00	10,500 .ل.ل	4	Kg
	Meat	\$28.89	43,333 .ل.ل	7	Kg

Item Ratings

The below tables shows the items top three items in order of importance as a basic need:

	Highly and Severely		Random Sample	
First	Bread	44%	Rent	44%
	Rent	41%	Bread	38%
Second	Bread	39%	Health	25%
	Water	14%	Bread	22%
	Rent	11%		
Third	Health	27%	Gas	19%
	Rent	19%		
	Gas	15%		

Item Removal

The following table shows the items that were reported to be removed, with the respective frequency category of each item. For example, the item “Fruit” was removed all the FGDs who initially reported fruits as a basic need.

Highly and Severely		Random Sample	
All	Fruits	All	Pasta
	Matte		Legal Papers
	Antiseptic		Labneh
	Biscuit		Vegetables
	Dairy		Zucchini
	Noodles		Cabbage
	Butter		Parsley
	Tahineh		Kaak
	Canned Corn		Shaving Cream
	Cooling Fan		Shelter
			Tahineh
	Soups		

			Fish
			Sweets
			Stock
			Oats
Majority	Beans	Majority	Canned Food
	Canned Food		Fruits
	Margarine		Coffee
	Olive Oil		Clothes
	Pasta		Heating
	Meat		Tobacco
			Hommos
			Transportation
			Beans
			Cucumbers
	Education		
More than half	Cheese	More than half	Olives
	Vegetables		Meat
	Clothes		Lentils
	Coffee		Fatty
	Olives		Cheese
	Hommos		Thyme
	Vermicelli		Onion
	Tissues		Education Transportation
			Debt
Several	Transportation	Several	Electricity
	Education Transportation		Diesel
	Garlic		Telephone
	Bulgur		Bulgur
	Lentils		Tea
	Labneh		Feminine Products
	Thyme		Stationery
	Tomato Paste		Milk
	Tomatoes		Drinking Water
	Chicken		
	Feminine Products		
Few	Eggs	Few	Tomatoes
	Telephone		Cleaning Products
	Electricity		Eggs
	Soap		Toothpaste

Heating	Rice
Diesel	Soap
Yogurt	Water
Legal Papers	
Onion	

Annual Costs

Highly and Severely. Eight FGDs revealed that they spend money on clothes once a year. Four FGDs reported residency permits and another for education. While five FGDs mentioned fuel or diesel for heating, three of those specified that this was a seasonal and not an annual cost. Three FGDs included rent and shelter material as annual costs. Finally, two FGDs from Sour included olive oil, and the female FGD from Saida included a cooling fan.

Random. From the entire sample, only few FGDs answered the question regarding items they spend on once a year. Among those who answered, the majority mentioned residency permits (7) and clothes (7) as annual costs. Other items that were budgeted annually were education and fuel, mentioned by four FGDs each. It is interesting to note that only 3 FGDs mentioned rent; the male FGD from Baalbeck, and both FGDs from Zahle. The two male FGDs from Nabatieh and Saida were the only FGDs to mention the cost of water for home usage, and only one female FGD (Zahle) mentioned transportation. There was a negligible difference across genders except in the case of Saida, where the female FGD only mentioned clothes, and the male FGD mentioned water for use and residency permits.

Community Focal Points. Of the three FGDs conducted with community focal points, only the FGD from Zahle listed items that they spent money on once a year. The group made annual payments towards the rent of their informal tented settlements and shelter material, and made seasonal payments for diesel to use for heating during winter.

Discussion

Definition of Basic Needs

Unsurprisingly, food, rent, and health were reported as the main elements that define basic needs. This finding was consistent across vulnerability levels, gender, and regions. Additionally, the same three items (rent, food, and health) were reported as the highest priority compared to other items. Having such a consistent and valid reporting of the aforementioned needs not only in the current study but also in previous ones, signals the importance of delineating those three needs when developing the basket. To a lesser extent, children's needs, namely milk, diapers, and clothes were also reported as being part of the basic needs definition. Interestingly, one of the FGDs emphasized the importance of having a stream of income to be able to cover all needs, and in turn suggesting that employment is a fundamental element of basic needs.



Consultation on Food Items

In general, the two current baskets were perceived as somewhat inadequate and an imprecise representation of basic needs along with their relative expenditures. As shown in the results, several food items and NFI's were reported to be missing from the current baskets, and some unnecessary items needed to be removed.

Important Food Items. On the food level, there was an explicit need across the entire sample to add tea, potatoes, and tomatoes in the baskets. Tea is a daily beverage that Syrian refugees drink, and is prominent in social settings. As for tomatoes and potatoes, they not only cost very little compared to other food items but are also staple ingredients that are consumed regularly. In the SMEB, bread was a significant missing item and in the MEB, the quantities are dramatically underrated. The community collectively agreed that bread is an item not to be removed or replaced; it is a key element used with all food items that leads to a faster feeling of fulfillment. Interestingly, only the random sample added fresh meat to the MEB, and dairy products in both of the baskets. This discrepancy can be attributed to the socio-economic differences between the HVSV and the random sample, where some HHs in the random sample may afford meat and dairy products on a weekly basis, making them a part of basic needs.

Unnecessary Food Items. Supporting the above, meat was the most reported item that needed to be removed from both the MEB and SMEB by the HVSV sample and only from the SMEB by the random sample. This shows that refugees, who are highly and severely socio-economically vulnerable, would abstain from eating meat due to its cost, and those who can afford it would eliminate it when resources are limited. Lettuce and lemon were obviously the two unnecessary items in the baskets as seen by the entire sample; that is due to their limited nutritional value, and their limited usage alongside other food items. Additionally, in the SMEB and developed baskets, there was an agreement across the sample regarding the insignificance of spaghetti and beans, as the expenditures on those under limited income would be used for more important items, such as bread and potatoes.

Prices and Quantity. The item that had the highest discrepancy between what is included in the basket and what is actually needed is bread. There was a large difference on both the quantity of bread and the expenditure. Additionally, sugar was stated as being required at double the the quantity listed in the current baskets, which aligns with the cultural importance of tea. Because lemon and lettuce were primarily considered as unnecessary items, their respective expenditures in the current baskets were seen as too high in the MEB. Furthermore, lentils were also reported to be used in smaller quantities, therefore accounting for a lower price.

Consultation on Non-Food Items

Important NFIs. In terms of NFIs, there was nothing to be added in any of the baskets. However, when developing the baskets, electricity was consistently listed as a need. Conversely, several items were removed with a clear distinction between the two groups on what items to be removed. On one hand, the HVSV did not see the necessity of having toilet paper, toothpaste, and hypoallergenic soap in the MEB. Furthermore, in the SMEB they additionally removed the liquid sanitizer and clothes. On the other hand, the random sample only saw transportation and clothes as unnecessary in the MEB. Whereas in the SMEB, the random sample removed the health-related items mentioned by the HVSV and cleaning detergents. This alarming finding calls for attention. As the results show, when refugees' income sources are scarce, hygiene items are the first to be removed as expenditures.

Prices and Quantities. Whether an adequate shelter, substandard building, or tent, results show that the current estimation of an average rent is low, specifically in the MEB. Following rent is the expenditure on health and diapers in the MEB. The total expenditure on food was seen to be low by the random sample, which echoes the notion that vulnerability level may impact dietary diversity. Additionally, the HVSV refugees spent less on communication and water, as those were reported to have high costs and low-income generation potential. The random sample reiterated this result. In the SMEB, transportation was perceived as being overpriced by both groups. Despite that, in the community developed baskets, transportation was reported to be higher than that of the MEB. This suggests that when refugees have limited resources they restrict their movement in order to save money for more important needs; this is also reflected in the consultation on the baskets and when removing items from community developed baskets.

Recommendations

The findings of the current study are part of a larger process that includes input from the various sectors involved, as mentioned in the introduction. Therefore, taking into consideration the aforementioned findings, several recommendations emerged from the study that can guide the revision process and allow for a baseline comparison. The following tables summarizes key recommendations, and it is followed by more details on each action.

Findings	Recommendations
Discrepancy between the food items reported by the community and those found in the basket.	Even though no incremental change might results from substituting food items, the baskets are designed to reflect what Syrian refugees actually consume, in turn, improving endorsement of the baskets by the different stakeholders.
Refugees consume almost eight times more bread than the amount mentioned in the basket, and spend around six times more on it. Other items, such as sugar, also showed disparity in terms of both price and quantity.	Recent data on food prices, from both the community and the market, needs to be extracted in order to update the total amount needed per month and the assistance provided.

Prices of non-food items are not representative, as the findings show high discrepancy.

The prices of the NFIs need to be updated by incorporating various data sources and ensuring coverage at the national level.

The cost of services, such as communication and transportation, was collected through PDM surveys. The data collected could be subjected to social desirability as the participants in the PDMs are programme beneficiaries. The cost of shelter was set too low to cover refugees' actual needs, and does not account for neither differences in shelter type nor regional variation.

Collecting data from a representative sample (e.g., VASyR), regardless of the assistance received, could yield more generalizable results. Moreover, the shelter component should include differences in shelter type and regional variation.

A much higher expenditure on health than the one in the existing baskets

Revising health expenditure per capita, while working with the health sector.

The results showed that hygiene items are quickly removed if resources are limited.

Given that poor hygiene may cause significant health problems, beneficiaries may benefit from awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of good hygiene in alleviating health-related costs.

The study revealed some gender differences in terms of expenditure. Male HoHHs tend to focus more on residency permits, communication, and transportation, whereas female HoHHs focus more on education and children's needs.

When developing the new baskets, an ad-hoc gender analysis could help identify more accurate expenditures on the aforementioned items.

Although there was a great discrepancy in food items reported by the community and the ones present in the current baskets, the substitution of the reported food items, namely potatoes, tomatoes, and tea by other less needed items, such as lemon and lettuce, may not have a substantial incremental change on the nutritional value (Kcal) or the total food expenditures. However, since the baskets are designed to reflect what Syrian refugees actually consume, including the food items mentioned by refugees could strengthen the baskets, and in turn increase the endorsement of the baskets by the different stakeholders.

With regards to prices and quantities, bread was the item that showed substantial difference between what the community reported and what is included in the MEB (bread is not included in the SMEB). Refugees consume almost eight times more than the amount mentioned, and spend around six times more. Other items, such as sugar, will also need a revision on the quantity and respective expenditures. This is of crucial importance since the prices of the food items were based on data collected by only one agency (WFP) in January 2014. Nonetheless, the total amount of food expenditure in the existing baskets was based on the amount of the WFP food voucher (\$31 per person), which fluctuated in the past year from \$13 to \$27. Recent data on food

prices, from both the community and the market, needs to be extracted in order to update the total amount needed per month and the assistance provided. Moreover, non-food items, such as hygiene products and diapers, also require revision. The current baskets relied on data provided by a few organizations and based only on price monitoring, and do not include any data from Beirut. As with food items, the prices of the NFIs need to be updated by incorporating various data sources and ensuring coverage at the national level.

The cost of services, such as communication and transportation, was collected through PDM surveys. The data collected could be subjected to social desirability as the participants in the PDMs are programme beneficiaries. Therefore, collecting data from a representative sample (e.g., VASyR), regardless of the assistance received, could yield more generalizable results. Moreover, there was a major disparity on shelter and health expenditures. The shelter component should be reviewed because the amount set was too low to cover refugees' actual needs, and does not account for neither differences in shelter type nor regional variation.

The existing baskets calculate health expenditures based on recommendations from the health sector, following the assumption that a HH consists of two adults, one member above five, and two members below five. The current study shows that refugees actually spend much more than the amount suggested. This could be attributed to the fact that HH members between five and 18 are considered by the health sector to spend on health as much as adults. However, in reality children between five and eight might need as much medical care as a child below five. In addition to that, elderly members might need more medical attention than any other adult, and could also increase health expenditure. As such, the expenditure of health needs further revision per capita. The results also showed that hygiene items are quickly removed if resources are limited. Given that poor hygiene may cause significant health problems, beneficiaries may benefit from awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of good hygiene in alleviating health-related costs.

Furthermore, the current study shows some gender differences in terms of expenditure. On one hand, male HoHHs tend to focus more on residency permits, communication, and transportation. On the other hand, female HoHHs focus more on education and children's needs. For this purpose, when developing the new baskets, an ad-hoc gender analysis could help identify more accurate expenditures on the aforementioned items.

Conclusion

Consulting with the affected population constitutes an essential component of setting up humanitarian programs. The current study constitutes a step towards understanding the monthly needs of Syrian refugees and whether the existing MEB and SMEB are a close representation of these needs. This can be used to add upon the input from different stakeholders, and to validate the items along with their expenditures and quantities. After conducting 33 FGDs, the current baskets were found to be insufficient in terms of the items on the list, the prices and the quantities.

The findings suggested that the food items on the list did not reflect what households actually used; bread, tomatoes, and potatoes emerged as main items. Furthermore, the quantities of bread were not found sufficient by participants, and many of them suggested adding tomatoes and potatoes. On the other hand, food items such as lemon and lettuce were eliminated from the list, and items such as spaghetti and beans were deemed unnecessary because should a household suffer from limited resources, they are more likely to spend the money on items that they would find more adequate. The main concern regarding NFIs was the overpricing

of some items and the addition of several unneeded ones. For example, the cost of rent was seen as too low, and hygiene items were not given as much importance as in the baskets.

The study recommended some amendments that could make the baskets more tailored to the expenditures of refugees, and therefore more robust tools for informing humanitarian strategy. It was recommended that the food items in the basket be revised, and that the prices are updated according to more recent data. Moreover, a better understanding of rent costs could be reached by accounting for regional variation, and finally, a gendered analysis could offer a better picture into how male and female headed households organize their expenditures.

Annex I - MEB

	Products	Quantities per capita	Quantities per HH	Amount in LBP	Amount in \$	Comments
Food Basket	Ration per month in G					
	Lemon	900		982,1	0.7	Minimum Food Expenditure Basket per HH with WFP ration to meet nutrient needs + 2100KCAL/month
	Lettuce	1950		4 608,0	3.0	
	egg	600		2 331,4	1.6	
	Bread	2100		3 590,1	2.4	
	Milk powder	600		8 533	5.7	
	Egyptian Rice	3000		5 530,8	3.7	
	Spaghettis	1500		3 664,0	2.4	
	Bulgur Wheat	3900		6 705,3	4.5	
	Canned meat	1140		10 274,8	6.9	
	Vegetable oil	990		2 622,9	1.8	
	Sugar	1500		1 993,4	1.3	
	Lentils	1800		4 208,0	2.8	
	Salt iodized	150		76,0	0.1	
Total Food expenditures/pers				55,119.8	37	
Total Food expenditures/HH				275,599.0	184	
Non Food items (CWG)	Prices collected by CWG actors					
	Toilet Paper		4 rolls/packet	1 233,3	0.8	Quantities harmonized by the NFI WG. Minimum NFI required.
	Toothpaste		2 tubes/75ml	4 132,4	2.8	
	Laundry soap/detergent		Bubbles 900gr	4 073,2	0.3	
	Liquid Dishes detergent		750ml	2 478,8	1.7	
	Sanitary napkins		3 packets of 20 pads per packet	8 051,7	0.6	
	Individual soap		5 pieces of 125g	2 461,8	1.6	
	Hypoallergic Soap		125g per bar	1 298,2	0.9	
	Disinfectant fluid		500ml	3 891,5	2.6	
	Shampoo		500ml	4 022,5	0.3	
	Diapers		90 per packet	14 599,3	9.7	

Fuel	Cooking gas	1kg		2 733,3	1.8	
Total NFI expenditures				48 976,0	33	
Other NFI	Based on HH surveys					
	Clothes		per month	37 050,0	24.7	Based on average expenditures collected through PDM
	Commication cost		per month	34095	22.7	Minimum needed per month to keep the phone active
Shelter						
	Rent		per month	290 075,0	193.4	Average rent regardless the type of shelter. Weighted according to % of population residing in shelter.
Wash						
	Water supply		per month	71250	47.5	Monthly cost of water per HH in normal situation, 35 L/pers/day according to normal standard.
Services	Based on HH surveys					
	Transportation		per month	40 375,00	26.9	Based on average expenditures collected through PDM
	Health		per month	14 250,00	9.5	According to health sector, adults will do 2 medical visits per year+ drugs and diagnostic test which costs 16\$ per year/adult. Children <5 will do 4 medical visits per year which costs 33\$ per year/child. We took the assumption that a HH was composed with 2 adults, 1 child>5 years and 2 children<5 years. Calculation: (16X3+33X2)/12
	Education		per month	45 487,50	30.3	Based on average expenditures collected through PDM
TOTAL MEB				857,157.5	571	

Annex II – SMEB

The Survival Minimum Expenditures Basket includes the minimum food required to meet 2100KCAL/day, the minimum NFI required per month, rent in ITS, minimum water supply required per month. Clothes, communication and transportation are calculated based on average expenditures, the survival minimum for those expenditures will have to define, monitor and add to the SMEB.

	Products	Quantities per capita	Quantities per HH	Amount in LBP	Amount in \$	Comments
Food Basket	Ration per month in g					
	Egyptian Rice	6000		11,061.6	7.4	Based on WFP vouchers. Quantities to cover 2100KCAL/day
	Spaghettis	1500		3,664.0	2.4	
	Bulgur Wheat	3900		6,705.3	4.5	
	Canned meat	1140		10,274.8	6.8	
	Vegetable oil	990		2,622.9	1.7	
	Sugar	1500		1,993.4	1.3	
	White beans	1500		6,945.0	4.6	
	Salt iodized	300		152.0	0.1	
Total Food expenditures/pers				43,419.0	28.9	
Additional 10% for dairy products and vegetables				47,760.9	31.8	
Total Food expenditures/HH				238,804.5	159.2	
Non Food items (CWG)	Prices collected by CWG actors					
	Toilet Paper		4 rolls/packet	1,233.3	0.8	Quantities harmonized by the NFI WG. Minimum NFI required.
	Toothpaste		2 tubes/75ml	4,132.4	2.8	
	Laundry soap/detergent		Bubbles 900gr	4,073.2	2.7	

	Liquid Dishes detergent		750ml	2,478.8	1.7	
	Sanitary napkins		3 packets of 20 pads per packet	8,051.7	5.4	
	Individual soap		5 pieces of 125g	2,461.8	1.6	
	Hypoallergic Soap		125g per bar	1,298.2	0.9	
	Disinfectant fluid		500ml	3,891.5	2.6	
	Shampoo		500ml	4,022.5	2.7	
	Diapers		90 per packet	14,599.3	9.7	
Fuel	Cooking gas	1kg		2,733.3	1.8	
Total NFI expenditures				48,976.0	32.7	
Other NFI	Based on HH surveys					
	Clothes		per month	37,050.0	24.7	Based on average expenditures collected through PDM
	Commication cost		per month	26,488.6	17.7	Based on average expenditures collected through PDM
Shelter	Based on HH surveys					
	Rent		per month	121,800.0	81.2	Average rent in ITS
Wash	Based on HH surveys					
	Water supply		per month	30600	20.4	Monthly cost of water per HH in normal situation, 15 L/pers/day according to sphere standard.
Services	Based on HH surveys					
	Transportation		per month	40,375.00	26.9	Based on average expenditures collected through PDM
Personal expenditures	Based on HH surveys					
	Debt repayment		per month	#####	72.4	Based on average expenditures collected through PDM
TOTAL SMEB				652694.1	435.1	

Legal Expenditures	Based on legislation, registration data and HH surveys					
	Cost of legalizing stay in Lebanon	per year		600,000	400	Starting after one year from entry. Estimated 500,000 persons by mid 2014 may be without residency; average family size in MEB = 5, assumption was made that 2 adults above 15 will require legalization of their stay.

Winterization	Products	Quantities per capita	Quantities per HH	Amount in LBP	Amount in \$	Comments
	Petrol, unleaded	100L		73,950.0	49.3	100L per month during 5 months. One month is 118,3\$ X 5months = 591,5\$. To get a monthly cost 591,5\$/12 = 49,3\$

Annex III – FGD Protocol

(S)MEB AC
 Focus Group Discussion Protocol
 Reviewing the Minimum Expenditure Basket

FGD'S CODE:

Location/District:	Date:
Agency:	Interviewer:
Note Taker:	
Total Number of Participants:	

INTRODUCTION [Read as it is written]
Good [morning/afternoon], How are you all?
My name is [facilitator name] and this is [recorder name], and we are from [NGO name]. As you may know, some assistance are decreasing and needs are increasing. Therefore, this research will help us to get feedback from the refugee community on their monthly basic needs and expenditures, to inform the cash programmes in Lebanon the specific basic needs and essentials of refugees. Your names will NOT be included; everything you say will be stay 100% confidential, secured and only accessed by the principal investigator of the study. Anything you say will not have an impact whatsoever on your inclusion or exclusion to the programme. There is no right or wrong answer; there are only different points of view. Participation is completely voluntarily and you have the freedom to withdraw at any time and the freedom not to answer one or more questions. The interview will be recorded and will take approximately one hour and a half. In case you refuse, it will not involve any loss of benefits or penalty and your participation does not involve giving up any legal rights. Do you have any questions? Are you willing to participate and do you agree on recording the discussion? Thank you, now we are going to start the discussion and if you have any questions, you can contact the agency's hotline (INTERVIEWER: PROVIDE HOTLINE NUMBER).

1. Age:___ -	Gender : M or F	Originally From:_____	Time in Lebanon: _____ Months	Receiving Assistance: o YES o NO	Type of Assistance:
2. Age:___ -	Gender : M or F	Originally From:_____	Time in Lebanon: _____ Months	Receiving Assistance: o YES o NO	Type of Assistance:

3. Age:___ _	Gender : M or F	Originally From: _____ _	Time in Lebanon: _____ Months	Receiving Assistance: o YES o NO	Type of Assistance:
4. Age:___ _	Gender : M or F	Originally From: _____ _	Time in Lebanon: _____ Months	Receiving Assistance: o YES o NO	Type of Assistance:
5. Age:___ _	Gender : M or F	Originally From: _____ _	Time in Lebanon: _____ Months	Receiving Assistance: o YES o NO	Type of Assistance:
6. Age:___ _	Gender : M or F	Originally From: _____ _	Time in Lebanon: _____ Months	Receiving Assistance: o YES o NO	Type of Assistance:
7. Age:___ _	Gender : M or F	Originally From: _____ _	Time in Lebanon: _____ Months	Receiving Assistance: o YES o NO	Type of Assistance:
8. Age:___ _	Gender : M or F	Originally From: _____ _	Time in Lebanon: _____ Months	Receiving Assistance: o YES o NO	Type of Assistance:
9. Age:___ _	Gender : M or F	Originally From: _____ _	Time in Lebanon: _____ Months	Receiving Assistance: o YES o NO	Type of Assistance:
10. Age:___ _	Gender : M or F	Originally From: _____ _	Time in Lebanon: _____ Months	Receiving Assistance: o YES o NO	Type of Assistance:

THEME ONE: DEFINITION OF BASIC NEEDS (15 min)

1. Please share with me what you know about the current situation of refugees in Lebanon. (5 min)
2. In your opinion, what are refugees doing nowadays to meet their basic needs? (5 min)
3. In your opinion, what is the definition of basic needs? (5 min)

THEME TWO: (S)MEB EXERCISES (30 min)

SPLIT GROUPS INTO TWO. EACH GROUP SHOULD DISCUSS AND COME TO A CONSENSUS

4. We are now going to list down the items that you think are a need every month; we will make a basket of needs.

Note: These should be specific items and not general food groups

(Remind the participant that we are asking for his/her personal point of view only and there is not right/wrong answer).

- c. What items would you remove from this category?
13. I am going to share with you the approximate monthly expenditure of some items. (10 min)
[Start with the MEB and go over each item in each category and then ask the following questions for each category, e.g. Food items]
- What do you think of the prices?
 - Which items do you think have high prices and why? [Ask about each item]
 - Which items do you think have low prices and why? [Ask about each item]
 - Which items do you think will differ between urban and rural areas [Ask about the entire list in general]
14. Would you like to add anything that we did not mention? (2 min)

For teams, please rate the degree of accordance between participants.

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Completely Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Completely Agree</i>