

Rapid Assessment – March 2020

SITUATION OF WORLD VISION LEBANON'S REGISTERED CHILDREN IN LIGHT OF THE CURRENT LIVING CONDITIONS IN LEBANON

Introduction

The situation in Lebanon has been unstable for the past five months. Lebanese people revolted against the former government to protest against the poor economic and living conditions. The latter triggered roadblocks in several areas in Lebanon along with closure of banks, schools, universities, and most workplaces between the period of October and November 2019. The economic situation further deteriorated during December 2019 when the US Dollar (USD) to Lebanese Pound (LBP) exchange rate started to increase, causing the “Lebanese Lira” to lose its value in the market. This has greatly affected the Lebanese population at all levels.

World Vision Lebanon (WVL) has previously assessed the impact of the situation that occurred in October 2019 on a small sample of registered children (RC) and their families. Given the persistent economic deterioration, WVL conducted a similar assessment aiming to evaluate the current living conditions of RCs and their families, and consider their needs for the coming phase in view of the ongoing poor political, economic, and social conditions in Lebanon. This report presents the findings of the survey filled with RC's parents/caregivers about the impact of the situation on their living conditions.

Methodology

World Vision Lebanon (WVL) has access to nearly 20,000 households through children registered in its child sponsorship program. A cross sectional survey of closed and open-ended questions was administered to a total representative random sample of 377 RC households randomly selected from 19037 RCs all over Lebanon, over a period of 10 days from January 13 until January 27, 2020. Accordingly, a proportionate sample was selected among all area programs (AP) to participate in the survey depending on the number of RCs per area.

49 households from
Beirut and Mount
Lebanon

102 households
from Akkar

102 households
from South
Lebanon

124 households
from Bekaa

Findings

Demographic Information of Respondents

Age distribution

- The age of the respondents varied between 18 and 80 years old, with 39% between 40 and 49 years old, and 37.1% between 30 and 39 years old

Sex

- 61.3% of the participants were females while the remaining 38.7% were males.

Primary Breadwinner

- father is the breadwinner for 90.2% of the households. 7.4% of households were headed by the mother, whereas in 1.6% of the households, the breadwinner was the brother or the mother's family.

Work Status

- 75.3% of the households have only one working member in the family, while 17.8% have 2 working members in the house, 5% have 0 working members

Occupation

- farmers, police or military men, teachers, drivers, barbers, shop owners and others who work in construction, carpentry, mechanics, etc.

Family size

- The total number of members living in the same household ranged from 2 to 21 members. The number of children ranged from 1 to 11 children per family

30% of households members were searching for a job, however only 3 out of 115 family members were able to find a job in the last month (0.8%).

Impact of the situation

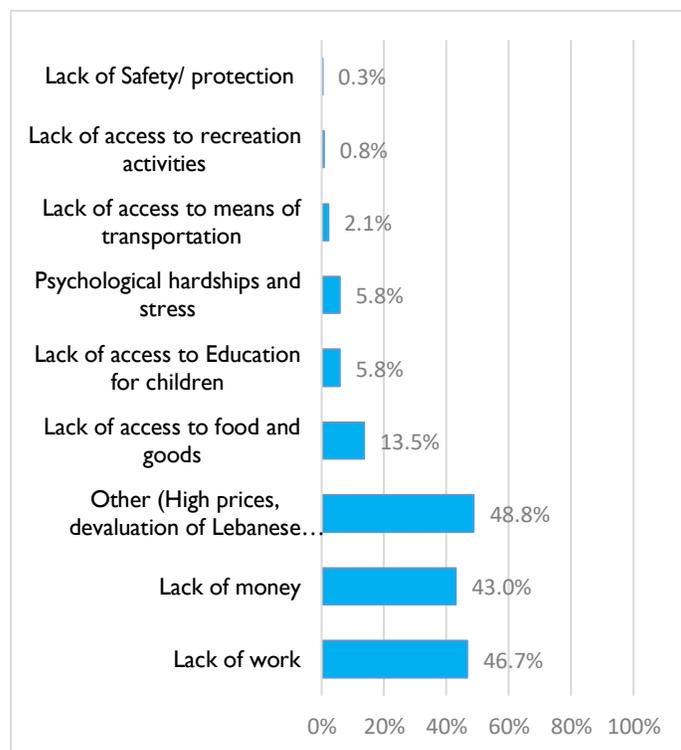
Participants believe that the current situation in Lebanon has taken its toll on the whole population residing in the country. **The majority stated that they were affected at various levels.** Some also described their living conditions to be **disastrous and devastating (8.2%).**

Major repercussions of the situation mentioned by respondents:

- lack of work (46.7%)
- lack of money (43%).
- 13.5% suffered from lack of accessibility to food and goods.

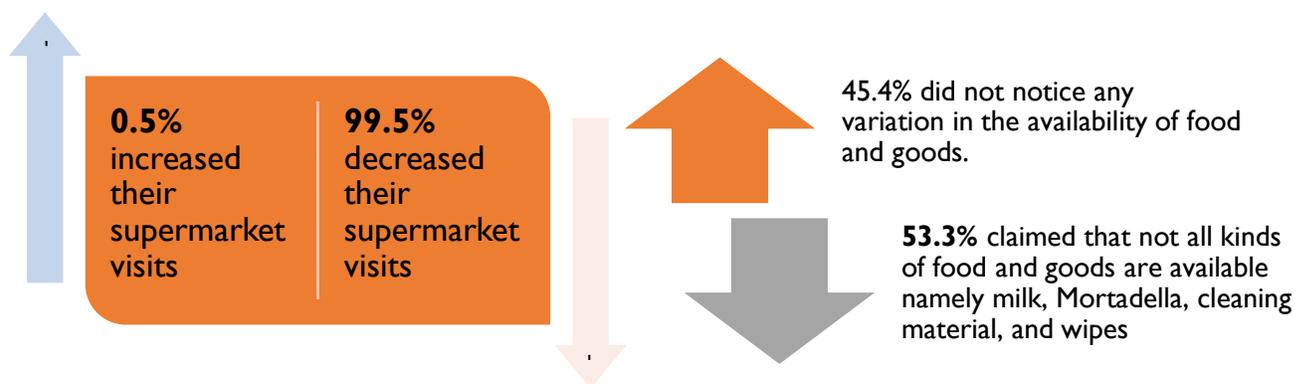
48.8% of participants mentioned other effects of the situation including generally high prices with 56.5% linking it to the drop in the value of the Lebanese pound with 5.4%, and lack of healthcare with 4.9%

In another question exploring if people are affected by psychological hardships and stress, **46%** are affected due to the current economic condition and other problems at home, **23%** are trying to cope as they believe that they eventually have to adapt to the new conditions, while **22.8%** said that this has restricted them to buy only basic needs.



However, there were no statistical significance between work status and Psychological hardship and stress

Accessibility, Availability, and Pricing of Basic Needs



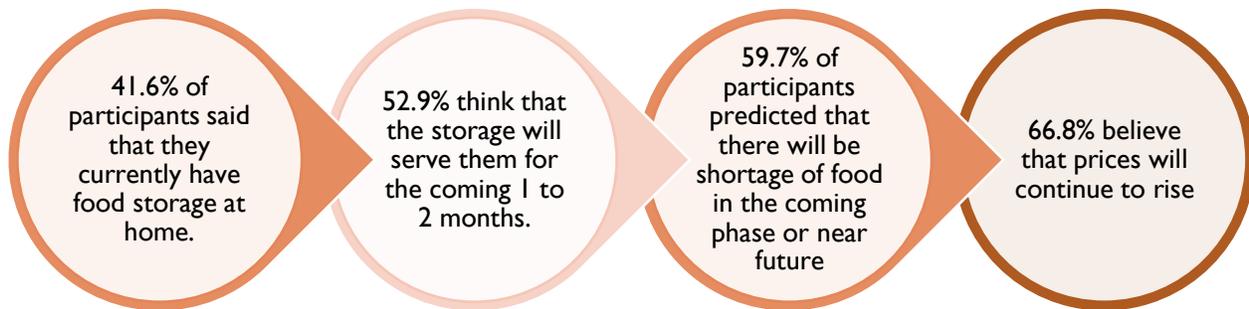
99.5% agreed that prices have drastically increased. Around half of them shared their own estimation of price increase. Of those, **55.4%** believe that food and goods prices have doubled during the past period or even more than doubled. Another **27.7%** mentioned a wide range of augmented prices that may vary from a 10% increase to reach at times 100% increase.

82.2% of participants reported decreasing their spending pattern by:

1. Buying only their basic needs
2. Buying less clothes
3. Changing quality of purchases (cheaper quality)
4. Buying less quantities including less quantities of meat and chicken.

13% of respondents said that they are currently spending more due to the existing expensive prices and only 2.9% still have the same spending pattern as before the crisis

Storing food: Furthermore, 41.6% of participants said that they currently have food storage at home. Of those who store food at home, 52.9% think that the storage will serve them for the coming 1 to 2 months. 59.7% of participants predicted that there will be shortage of food in the coming phase or near future and 66.8% believe that prices will continue to rise (Please refer to figure 5 below).



Financial Services Expenses and Financial Situation

Financial services refers to the use of checks, relying on credit or loan to buy goods and the use of instalment payments amongst other services that facilitate for people the ability to pay expenses.

40.1% of participants confirmed having had financial services for any kind of payment prior to the situation.

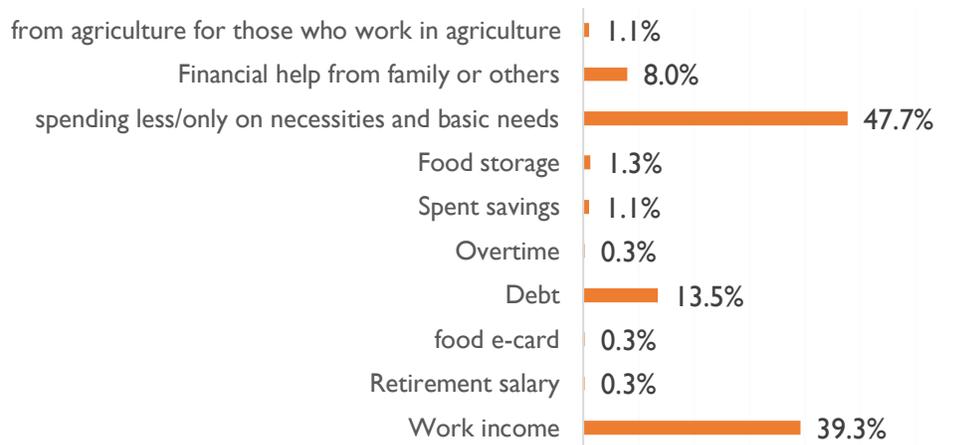
77% claimed that financial services deteriorated

23% said that services are still the same

Some mentioned that the minimarket next to their house used to give them food which they could pay for later on and now they are not accepting before having the full payment.

Others owned a business which necessitated for them to buy goods and they used to get them by paying divided payments. Now the sellers want to get the full cash and in dollar so the business owners are not able to buy goods anymore...

Means of Covering Daily Expenses



Accumulated debt and its types

83.9% of participants have accumulated debt.

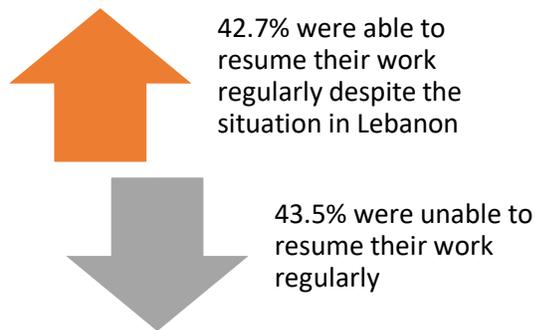


25% Spend on other things including bank loan, house payments, own business supplies, car loan/maintenance, clothing, heating system at home, and other goods like gas and diesel payments.

The following table reveals the results of expenses and financial situation after segregation of data by area program.

Variables		Akkar	Beirut and Mount Lebanon	South	Bekaa
Having financial facilities before the situation	Yes	85.3%	38.8%	8.8%	29%
	No	14.7%	61.2%	91.2%	71%
Changes in Financial Facilities	Improved	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Deteriorated	81.6%	68.4%	33.3%	80.5%
	Same Facilities	18.4%	31.6%	55.5%	19.4%
Changes in Usual Expenses	Yes	98%	97.9%	90.2%	97.6%
	No	2%	2%	9.8%	2.4%
Having Accumulated Debt	Yes	92.2%	89.8%	77.5%	79%
	NO	7.8%	10.2%	22.5%	21%

Work Condition



The current economic situation has affected the monthly income of **46.2% breadwinners** regardless of whether they were able to resume their daily work or not. The vast majority reported having lower monthly incomes due to lack of work, inability to buy supplies for their own business, other people not paying their bills, and also due to reduction in salaries mainly deduction of transportation allowance.

81% of participants had changes in their work or source of income during this period

34% reported a reduction in salary due to deduction of transportation allowance, or due to lack of work for those who run their own businesses

28% are not working anymore due to the situation

20% reported reduction in number of working hours, which in turn led to salary/income reduction

2% of people are not working anymore due to non-crisis related reasons. The reasons they mentioned are the Syrian crisis and their influx to Lebanon, or due to the winter season which usually holds less work for farmers.

13% had other changes in their work and income conditions. These include:

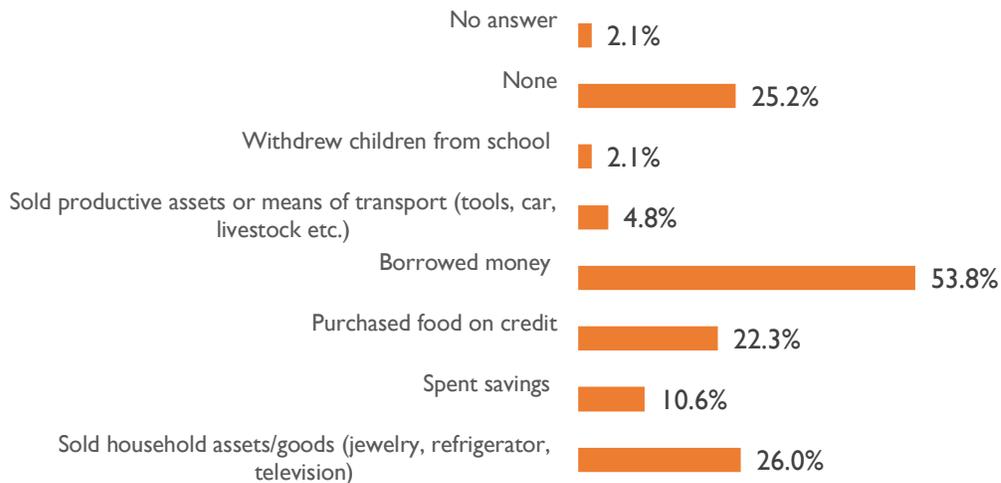
- Military or police men who were forced to work extra hours
- Employees who had their salaries changed from USD to LBP
- Employees who are getting paid late or in divided payments
- Business owners who are unable to buy supplies to be able to work

The following table reveals the results of work condition after segregation of data by area program.

Variables		Akkar	Beirut and Mount Lebanon	South	Bekaa
Ability to resume work	Yes	51.9%	65.3%	32.3%	34.6%
	No	41.1%	26.5%	52.9%	44.3%
	On/Off	0.9%	4.1%	2.9%	1.6%
Effect on monthly income	Yes	51.9%	40.8%	32.9%	49.2%
	No	0.9%	6.1%	3.9%	2.4%
Changes in work or source of income recently	Yes	88.2%	83.7%	72.5%	81.4%
	No	6.8%	14.3%	26.5%	12.1%

Coping Strategies

Financial coping strategies:



Reduction in Social events:

57.6% of interviewees did not have a special event with the family during the past holidays. Of those only 2 families did not celebrate because they were mourning the loss of a family member, while the others did not celebrate because of the poor economic conditions.

41.6% held a special event with the family this year. Of those, 81.5% had to cut down on budget, whereas 17.2% were able to keep same standard celebrations. The remaining percent of participants did not answer this question.

Impact on Children

Effect of schools' closure on children:

- 25% of children are currently overloaded with school material
- 25% are going to school on holidays to compensate for missed days/sessions
- 22% were not affected as their schools did not close much or because children are not school age yet.
- 18 of children are not focused on studying anymore as reported by the parents.
- 15% of parents said that their children are late with their class curriculum due to missing school.
- 7% of caregivers believe that their children are also psychologically affected
- 5.3% of families reported that their children have showed poor performance at school during this period

In the previously conducted (by WVU) situation analysis in November, 2019, caregivers have predicted the abovementioned issues to result from frequent closing of schools.

School Enrollment and Attendance

98.9% of households confirmed that their children currently attend school, the remaining Children of 4 household's do not attend school. Of those 4 families, only one family does not have school age children.



Parents of children who go to private schools clarified that they either get financial help to send their children to private schools, pay half the fees, get scholarships, or their children are in the cheapest private schools.

Transferring children to other schools

1 in 4 parents/caregivers had to transfer their children from one school to another. Those that transferred their children to another school (25%) provided the below answers when asked on the reasons.



Availability of Food for school children

- 87.7% of parents send food with their children to schools.
- 57.1% of caregivers send money with their children to school to buy food, while 42.9% do not send any money with their children (among those, 4 families do not send money because the school forbids it).
- 3.4% (13 families) do not send food nor money with their children to schools.**

The following table reveals the results education and schooling after segregation of data by area program.

Variables		Akkar	BML	South	Bekaa
Children attending school	Yes	98%	100%	98%	100%
	No	2%	0%	2%	0%
Transferred children from one school to another	Yes	19%	12.2%	26%	34.6%
	No	81%	87.7%	74%	65.3%
Send food with children to school	Yes	76%	87.7%	95%	91.1%
	No	24%	12.2%	5%	8.8%
Send money with children to school to buy food	Yes	65%	49%	61%	50.8%
	No	35%	51%	39%	49.2%

Child Protection

Parents resorting to violence

25.5% of respondents indicated that they know that some parents are resorting to violence for disciplining their children both verbally and physically. Participants explained that the possible reasons behind this could be:

- Parents' stress from the current situation in Lebanon
- Children's nagging
- Children not studying
- Children sometimes ask for things that parents cannot afford to buy for them

Involving children in income generation

60% of participants denied that children are involved in income generation, while 40% think that children are working due to the current poor economic conditions.

The following table reveals the results regarding child protection matters after segregation of data by area program.

Variables		Akkar	BML	South	Bekaa
Violent child discipline	Yes	24.5%	22.4%	13.7%	36.3%
	No	73.5%	73.5%	85.3%	63.7%
	I do not know	1%	4.1%	1%	0%
Children engaging in income generation	Yes	37.2%	32.6%	35.3%	49.2%
	No	62.7%	67.3%	64.7%	50.8%

Health

80% of families required healthcare services during the past month. Out of those, 78% were able to access the services they needed. **22% were unable to access health related services** due to:



The following table reveals the results about healthcare services after segregation of data by area program.

Variables		Akkar	BML	South	Bekaa
Require Healthcare services	Yes	71.6%	73.5%	86.3%	83.1%
	No	28.4%	26.5%	13.7%	16.9%
Ability to access required healthcare services	Yes	65.7%	69.4%	85.2%	83.5%
	No	34.2%	30.5%	14.8%	16.5%

Perceived Level of Safety

Participants were asked if they feel safe to go out of their home to purchase home necessities or withdraw money.

60% of respondents feel very safe to go out in their respective areas.

16% feel it is somewhat safe

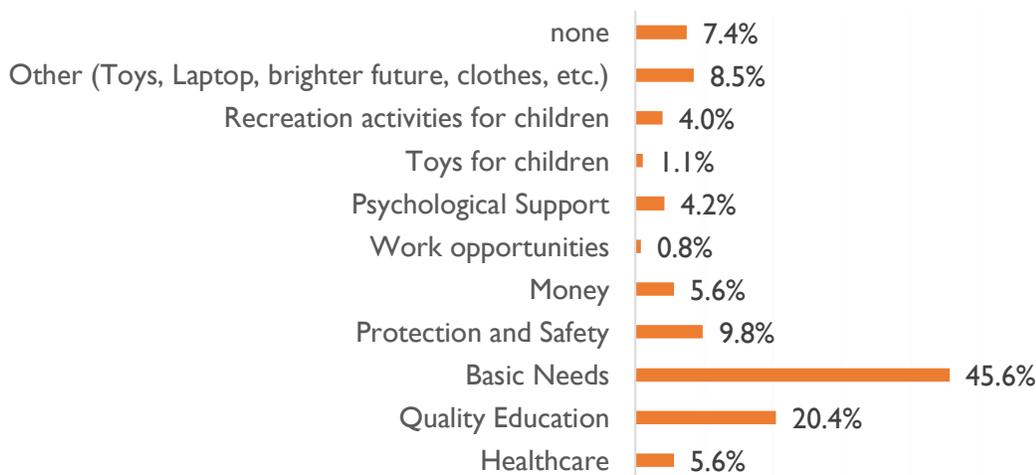
15% do not feel safe at all

10% feel safe on and off depending on day to day road blocks conflicts.

Out of those who do not feel safe at all, 46.4% reside in Akkar area, 30.4% reside in the Bekaa, 19.6% live in South Lebanon, and 3.6% live in the capital Beirut.

Current Pressing Needs for Children and their Families

Children's pressing needs



When parents mentioned other things, these included bright future, laptop, eye glasses, improve the current situation, enhance public schools, peace of mind, people's love, transportation to school, clothes, heating system at home and at schools, immigration/travel, live with dignity, school supplies, and to stay in good health.

Caregivers' pressing needs



When caregivers mentioned other needs, it included living with dignity, better future in Lebanon, improve the current situation, immigration/travel, diesel, God's mercy, changing the government, holding accountable politicians who stole from the country, food storage, peace of mind, pay debt, stay in good health, stay at work, and finally for their kids to be healthy, safe, satisfied and happy.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, January 2020's survey results revealed the adverse impact of the ongoing unfortunate situation in Lebanon on people's lives causing poor economic and living conditions. The majority of participants agreed that the situation in Lebanon reduced their patterns of accessing supermarkets due to lack of money and expensive market prices. The latter obliged them to stick to purchasing only basic needs or to decrease the quantity of their purchases. As well, the vast majority decreased their spending pattern during this period due to high prices of goods and the issue of USD to LBP exchange rate increase. A considerable number of people have accumulated debt, have lost their jobs or had reduction in their monthly salary/income, thus leading to cutting down on their budget to decrease monthly expenses. A large percentage have also reported a decrease in their ability to access financial services thus limiting their ability to provide the basic needs for their families.

Almost all children attend school, however a lot of parents had to transfer their children from private to public schools as a result of the poor economic situation. A considerable percentage of parents mentioned resorting to violent child discipline and almost half of the participants mentioned that they believe that children were engaged in income generating opportunities. In addition, one fifth of the participants believe that there is lack of safety. The main highlighted needs of children during this phase are basic needs and quality education, whereas caregivers' wishes were mostly basic needs, money and better work opportunities.

In response to the current economic situation, WVWL will be reprogramming a percentage of our Sponsorship funding towards a few key foundational Livelihood's activities: Savings Groups and Producer Groups. WVWL will facilitate the formation of producers' groups (when they don't already exist) in each of our project areas. Participants of each group will ideally work in the same production/profession and facing the same challenges. These groups will meet on a regular basis to discuss challenges and potential common work such as buying or selling goods collectively, collective negotiation on prices and procedures with buyers and traders. Through these meetings, WVWL will also promote embedded financial education and savings group formation.

WVWL will generate evidence and reliable data through the producers led assessment that each producer group will be conducting with support of facilitator and consultant. Producers' groups initiatives built on findings and evidence generated will be supported to improve the production environment and increase income opportunities in the targeted community. The savings groups will also help the members be more resilient to shocks and allow them access to loans at lower interest rates. Through these entry level initiatives we hope to better understand how we can engage in building secure livelihood's in the communities and to lay a foundation for growth in key sectors.