



Funded by the
European Union

inmaa
إنماء

Self-Reliance Composite Index Monitoring Round Report

Sustainable Social Protection and Livelihood
Solutions for Severely Vulnerable
Households in Lebanon

October 2022

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Disclaimer:

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its content is the sole responsibility of INMAA and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

INMAA is an European Union funded project implemented by four partners (LOST, Akkarouna, Plan International and Save the Children) and aims at ensuring severely vulnerable households in Lebanon are more self-reliant and less dependent on social assistance. This is achieved through social protection, livelihoods promotion, financial inclusion and social empowerment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

Save the Children is leading a consortium, INMAA, for the delivery of an EU funded project under the title of “Sustainable Social Protection and Livelihood Solutions for Severely Vulnerable Households in Lebanon” implemented in Akkar and Baalbek. The project targets vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugee households allowing them to become less reliant on social protection schemes, paving their way to sustainable pathways out of extreme poverty through focusing on productive inclusion (graduation) by bridging social assistance and livelihoods/resilience pathways and promoting self-reliance.

The program targets both Lebanese and Syrian refugee households from Baalbek and Akkar to achieve the overall self-reliance objectives of the intervention. For this, the program has four primary results for participants, linked to outcomes in social protection, livelihoods promotion, financial inclusion, and social empowerment.

These outcomes are achieved through the implementation of:

Social Protection Activities	Livelihoods Promotion Activities	Financial Inclusion	Social Empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Supporting Social Development Centres- Awareness on social protection facilities- Case management- Cash for prevention of child labor- Emergency cash for protection- Cash for health- Cash for school attendance- Cash for minor repairs- Cash for food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vocational pathway- Entrepreneurship pathway- Childcare spaces for young children while caregivers are engaged in training activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Asset transfer- Financial literacy- Capacity building on debt management, and savings- Linkages to different financial services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Gender-transformative and transferrable life skills training- Social behavioural change training- Parenting for protection- Foundational literacy and numeracy skills- Community and peer support groups.

The Self-Reliance Composite Index (SRCI) is a household level assessment that targets all the selected households. It was developed and contextualized for Lebanon to measure the ability of households to achieve their self-reliance, and their readiness to graduate from poverty. The index covers the most used indicators for tracking graduation progress and success. The baseline was conducted in November 2021 and a monitoring round took place in May 2022. The monitoring round helped determine the change in HHs ability to meet their basic needs, their current engagement in livelihood activities, their actual practices in financial management and the actual ability of women and youth to protect themselves and engage in decision making. This executive summary shares the key findings and recommendations from the monitoring round assessment of the SRCI, completed in May 2022.

Up until May 2022, households had participated in awareness on social protection facilities and had started benefiting from cash assistance programming, including cash for food, cash for health, cash for protection, emergency cash assistance and cash for education. The life skills were ongoing, as well as the livelihood counselling, the case management activities along with the foundational literacy and numeracy trainings. The financial literacy and the minor repair interventions had just begun in both fields and a screening was ongoing to decide on the relevant livelihood sector that the programme participants are interested to enrol in, based on the results of the in depth-market assessment conducted by INMAA.

METHODOLOGY



Sample size

309

Households

calculated based on a stratified randomized sampling. This is a representative sample with 95% confidence and 5% margin of error



Data Collection

completed on survey
123 with both
Lebanese and Syrian in
Akkar and Baalbek
during May and June
2022



Data Analysis

relied mainly on
descriptive analysis
using excel and on
inferential analysis
using STATA

KEY FINDINGS

Pillar 1: Households' ability to meet their basic needs

Findings from the monitoring round show that 58% of households with children report improved ability to meet 3 minimum basic material needs (including food, clothing, housing, health, education), more predominantly within male-headed households. While those needs were met, Lebanese and Syrian refugee households continue prioritizing expenses related to food, with 89% of respondents citing being able to cover their food needs, 76% reporting being able to meet their housing needs, 70% reporting being able to meet their health needs, 68% reporting being able to meet their education needs, and lastly 33% reported being able to meet their clothing needs.



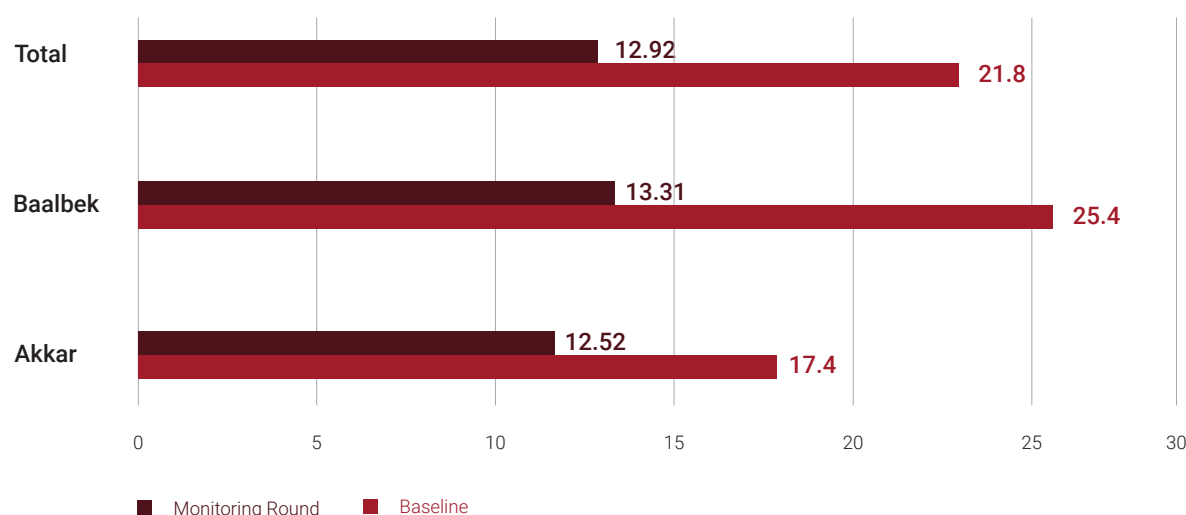
Within the current context in Lebanon, this indicates that households are prioritizing expenses related to food, followed by housing and health respectively to maintain their survival, over expenses related to education and clothing. To further understand this indicator, the following sub-themes were assessed: Food Security, Education, Child Protection, and Shelter.

FOOD SECURITY

In comparison to the baseline, findings from the monitoring round indicate a deterioration in the overall food security of households, primarily attributed to high inflation rates, insufficient assistance values covering around 63% of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), and unemployment.

Despite this deterioration, households are relying less on negative coping strategies related to food with a significantly higher improvement in Akkar compared to Baalbek, with the latter recording a decrease of 48% between baseline and monitoring rounds compared to a decrease of only 28% in Akkar. This could be primarily attributed to the elevated levels of vulnerability in Akkar compared to Baalbek, corroborated in the IPC, indicating higher levels of food insecurity in Akkar.

Average HH coping at Baseline level and monitoring round for food coping



Lebanon launched its first Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) in September 2022. The IPC classifies Akkar and Baalbek in Phase 3 in the current period with approximately 53% of Lebanese population and 58% of Syrian refugee population falling under phase 3. The projected period however signifies potential increase in the percentages of Lebanese and Syrian refugee households moving to Phase 3, with an increase by 10% and 7% respectively leading to Akkar potentially being classified in Phase 4.

Additionally, The Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) and World Bank, March 2022 report; "Lebanon Multidimensional Poverty Index 2019" describes Akkar and Baalbek as the governorates with highest multidimensional poverty prior to the current economic crisis.

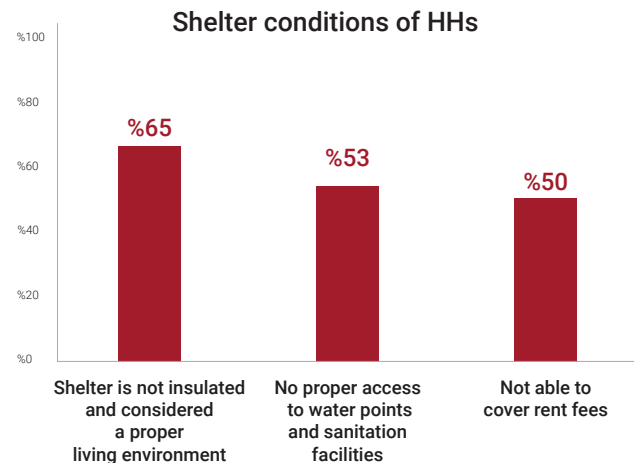
EDUCATION AND CHILD PROTECTION

Comparing the results of the monitoring round to the baseline, the overall score attributed to this sub-theme at monitoring round and baseline found a significant change.

The results of the education sub-theme in the SRCI showed that around 17% of school-aged children are not enrolled in school. Of the entire sample, 11% of school-aged children are not admitted in school yet or dropped out from the school in the last 3 months. Almost half of surveyed households still find indirect costs (such as books and stationery) a barrier to their children going to school, with 4% of respondents citing children under 18 involved in economic or domestic work. A further economic deterioration will likely result in increased reliance on worst forms of coping strategies including child labour, child marriage, accepting higher risk jobs and begging.

SHELTER CONDITIONS

Comparing the results of the monitoring round to the results obtained at baseline, it shows that the average score of the shelter sub-theme remained the same. The insignificant change in the shelter section is attributed to the fact that the minor repair activities were not yet initiated in many areas. Effectively, around 65% of respondents did not agree that their shelter conditions are insulated and considered as a proper living environment for the households, 53% reported not having proper access to a water points and sanitation facilities, and 50% reported not being able to cover their rent fees.

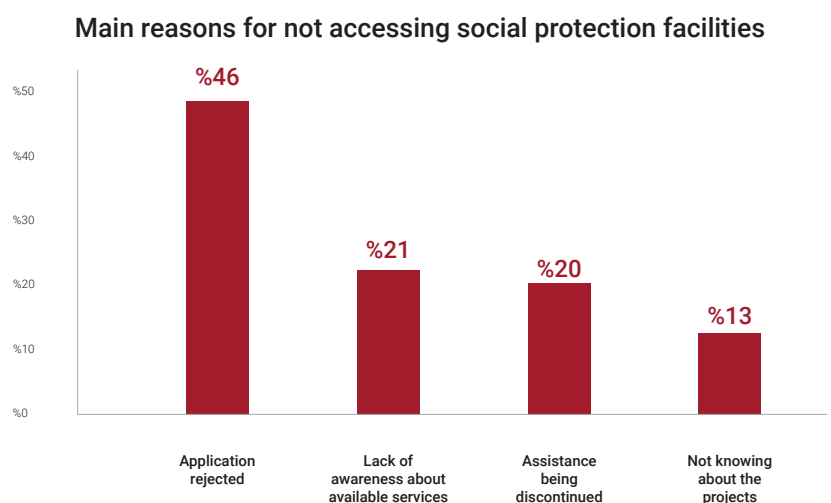


INCREASED ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION FACILITIES

Comparing how awareness on social protection facilities changed between baseline and the monitoring round, it seems that significant change has been observed.

87% of the households reported that they are aware of at least one type of cash and/or voucher assistance available in their area, and 70% reported that they are currently receiving a type of cash/voucher assistance. In addition, 60% of respondents marginally improved their access to social protection facilities.

The main reason for not accessing these social protection facilities is that the application of the household was rejected (46%), there is a lack of awareness about the available services (21%), assistance being discontinued (20%) or not knowing how to apply to such projects (13%).



¹The current period within the IPC Lebanon framework is from September 2022 to December 2022

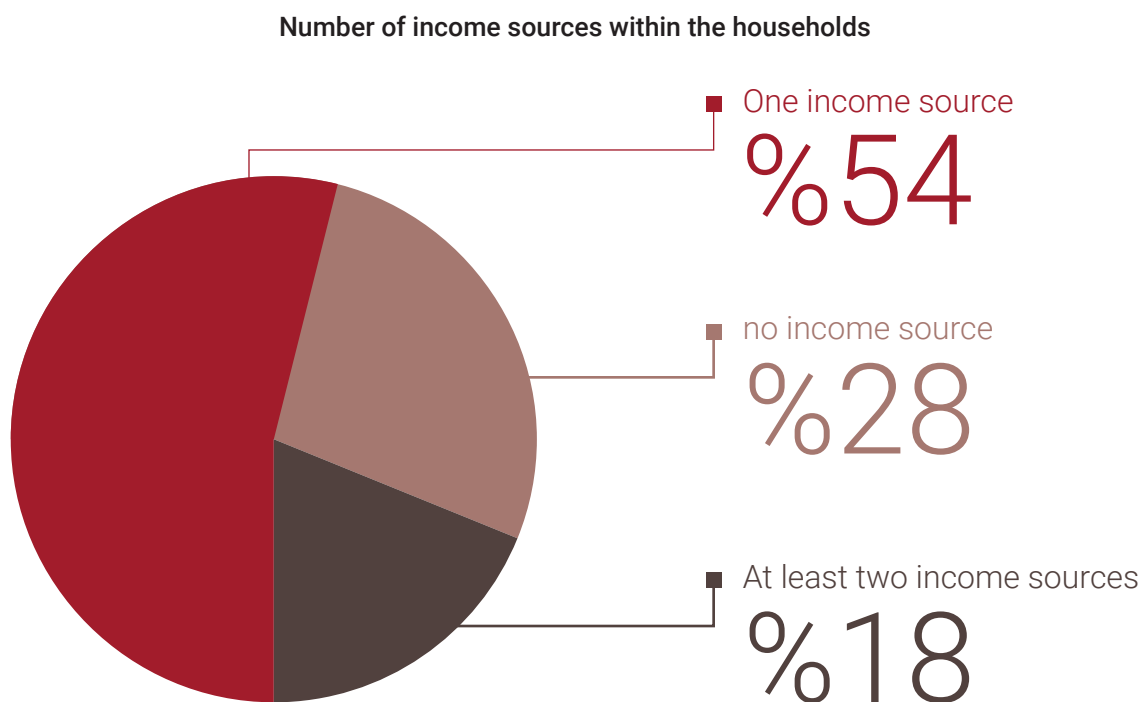
²The projected period within the IPC Lebanon framework is from January 2023 to April 2023

Pillar 2: Improved access to livelihood options

Results from this monitoring round demonstrated that only 9% of respondents had their income higher than the SMEB threshold for May 2022 and 91% had their income lower than the SMEB.

Slightly over half of the surveyed households reported reliance on savings, remittances, humanitarian assistance, and gifts as the primary source of income while 44% reported generating income from labour. The average monthly income was LBP 3,500,786, in line with findings from UNDP's wage monitoring, which indicates an average total income of LBP 3,459,060, whereas the average monthly expenditure was LBP 3,510,000, mostly spent on food.

72% of the households reported being engaged in at least one livelihood option. This can be linked to the livelihood counselling and life skills sessions taking place. Livelihood counselling is an approach that includes career guidance services and activities intended to assist individuals, male and female, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make tailored and appropriate educational, training, and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Like a case management approach, opening a livelihood counselling file means that participants develop a Personal Development Plan with their counsellor to explore and clarify their options and to build their self-reliance. The file is closed when this action plan is achieved, and consistent support and coaching is offered to support participant to achieve their ambitions.



Moving forward, programme participants included under INMAA's employability track may face the risk of not being able to secure a job due to the deterioration of the economic situation and closure of businesses. Only 3% of respondents stated engagement in some sort of home-based income generating opportunities.

Pillar 3: Households' ability to manage financial resources, accrue savings, and increase productive assets

60% of the programme participants have decreased their debt-to-income ratio between the baseline and the monitoring round.

This can be linked to the financial literacy trainings that were launched during this data collection period whereby households are counselled on expenditures, incomes, debt repayments and more. It is worth mentioning that the debt-to-income ratio has decreased mainly due to the increase in HHs' income and not necessarily due to less reliance on debt.

The average debt amount of the household from either borrowing money and/or receiving credit was LBP 8,732,254, an increase from LBP 5,265,785.32 at baseline level. The average for Syrian refugees is 8,328,380 LBP and the average for Lebanese is 9,142,915 LBP. 92% of the respondents said that they are not making regular payments to their debts, primarily due to the inability to afford to make any debt repayments.



93.8% of the respondents have highlighted some sort of increase in their confidence in their ability to manage their financial resources, which shows the impact of the financial literacy sessions that were launched during this data collection period.

Pillar 4: Women's empowerment to protect themselves, and participate in decision making at household and community level

The results showed that 82% of the women reported participating in 7-8 of these topics.

Women appear to have high levels of decision-making power within the household on topics related to minor daily purchases, healthcare, mobility, and children's education. Women can decide on making small purchases for the household as well as children's upbringing as they are confined to the roles of caretakers within their households; however, the husband ultimately makes big decisions that affect all family members even if family members are consulted.

Pillar 5: Field staff observation

Counsellors were asked to rate the conditions of the households based on the livelihood coaching they have been employing. At this stage, the only observable significant change is related to the household's perception of their own preparedness, their motivation, and faith in a brighter future. It is understandable that at this stage of the project, the scoring of the livelihood counselors has not increased significantly. This is because at the early at the early stages, the counselors were starting to get to know those enrolled in the project, focusing on the needs to address them rather than on action plans and achievements. Moving forward, as the livelihood counseling would proceed and the other project activities are implemented, more change is expected to be seen in this area.

Severely vulnerable households in Akkar and Baalbek-Hermel are more financially self-reliant

This monitoring round showed an increase in the overall scoring on the self-reliance composite index. The total score on the scorecard have significantly improved from an average of 21.73 at baseline to 27.47 at the monitoring round, bringing the project beneficiaries one step closer to their self-reliance.

Pillar	Baseline	Monitoring	P-value
Pillar 1: Households' ability to meet their basic needs	0.86	0.98	<0.05**
Pillar 2: Improved access to livelihood options	0.52	0.89	<0.01***
Pillar 3: Households Ability to manage financial resources, accrue savings, and increase productive assets	0.89	1.15	<0.01***
Pillar 4: Women empowerment to protect themselves, and participate in decision making at household and community level	0.84	0.92	<0.01***
Pillar 5: Field staff observation	1.5	1.58	0.059
Total score	21.73	24.47	<0.01***

Conclusion & Recommendations

According to this midline assessment, the interventions under the INMAA consortium's project, "Sustainable Social Protection and Livelihood Solutions for Severely Vulnerable Households in Lebanon", have started to show success in supporting households to meet their basic needs, with 58% of households with children reporting being able to meet at least three basic needs. Survival related expenses remain the priority for vulnerable families with 89% of respondents citing being able to cover food needs and reducing expenses on other basic needs such as housing, health, education, and clothing. Food security for vulnerable households indicate an overall deterioration mainly driven by inflation rates, lifting of subsidies, and the value of assistance not being enough to cover the needs of households.

Those households are more reliant on savings, gifts, remittances, and humanitarian assistance to meet food needs as this remains the primary source of income for families. Despite food insecurity, households are relying less on negative coping strategies related to food, primarily because those households are barely able to meet their food needs and cannot afford any additional reduction in their food intake.

Despite 60% of programme participants citing a decrease in their debt-to-income ratio, the debt amounts have increased by 60% compared to baseline findings with 92% of respondents citing not being able to make regular debt payments. To tackle this issue, the INMAA consortium has been providing financial literacy sessions, which have proved to be very beneficial; which is demonstrated by the fact that 93.8% of respondents cited an increase in their ability to manage their financial resources. Given the volatility of the economic situation and its effects on vulnerable families, the consortium does not anticipate a huge reduction in debt-to-income ratio as a result of the financial counselling sessions, as debt remains one of the main coping strategies that households are adopting to make ends meet. However, the consortium anticipates that through the financial counselling sessions, households will be empowered to make more informed decisions related to household budget management, spending, and savings. In return, this will lead to an overall enhancement of debt-to-income ratio in the mid-term.

INMAA consortium foresees an increase in the employment of programme participants after the vocational and entrepreneurship trainings are delivered. This would contribute to an overall increase in the household's ability to meet basic needs, and potentially lead to even more reduction in reliance on negative coping strategies especially those employed in times of crisis and emergency especially with 52% of respondents reporting high coping in this monitoring round.

Findings from this monitoring round also indicate an increase in the overall scoring of the self-reliance composite index translating into an overall increased ability of households to meet basic needs despite the effects of the economic crisis on vulnerable households. However, given that the data is still premature at this stage, further data collection and analysis will be required in the next monitoring round (Q1 2023) to indicate the extent to which households are self-reliant.

In order to tackle the challenges outlined in this report, the consortium recommends:

The Government of Lebanon and International Partners to:

- Ensure broad rollout of the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) project, making sure that the most vulnerable governorates are targeted for outreach to vulnerable households that may not have access to, knowledge of, or trust in the Impact platform. Delays in rolling out the ESSN limits the scale compared with need, and in the event of a more extreme economic hazard, Baalbak governorate in particular may face severe need.

- Increase the transfer value for Cash for Food and Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MCPA) to align with the market-based Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) values, and in line with guidance by the national Basic Assistance Sector. This may also require a change in the ESSN transfer value, ensuring that cash transfers to all populations are regularly updated at appropriate intervals in line with any changes in market monitoring.
- Support the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and Social Development Centres' (SDC) role in local level programming, particularly in social protection projects

Donors to:

- Increase investment in Social Protection Programming in Lebanon that look into the coverage, adequacy, comprehensiveness and effectiveness, timeliness, accountability, predictability, and ownership and sustainability

Humanitarian community to:

- Increase support to existing businesses in sustaining their activities, and/or expanding their product-base and creating new employment
- Advocate for and factor for increased operational and structural budgets for SDCs to sustain their businesses and expand their interventions
- Continue building the capacities of SDC staff on various topics including but not limited to vulnerability assessment, food security, income generation, child protection and gender-based violence and safe identification referrals
- Increase linkages of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) to existing Social Protection Programming

INMAA Consortium to:

- Strengthen counselling approach to monitor on ongoing basis family's status and support households in making decisions
- Continue linking households to existing social protection systems to ensure sustainability and ability of families to cope with shocks
- Increase awareness of counsellors on new and available initiatives to support in referrals. This includes back to school initiatives, new health and nutrition services and others.
- Plan a relevant duration for coaching after livelihoods pathways to avoid relapse of households to initial conditions
- Financial counselling sessions to remain a priority for counsellors throughout the project duration, even during periods of employment