# Basic Needs Outcome Monitoring for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

WFP RAM | Monitoring and Evaluation

**World Food Programme**

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

# Lebanon | June 2022

## ECONOMIC CAPACITY

- Since December 2021, there has been a significant increase in the number of assisted households that are unable to cover the costs of items needed to survive.
- If the value of humanitarian cash assistance is excluded from households' aggregate expenditures, 87 percent of assisted households would have had expenditures below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB).
- Debt levels have been increasing while access to food remained the main reason to incur debts.

## FOOD SECURITY

- The incidence of food insecurity among assisted and non-assisted households was similar: 62 percent of all Syrian refugees were food insecure in June 2022.
- Non-assisted households were less prone to adopting coping strategies (livelihood and food) than assisted households.
- Food consumption has evolved in varying directions depending on the assistance modality of households. Nevertheless, the frequency and diversity of diets have deteriorated for both the assisted and the non-assisted.

## HOUSING

- The majority of households lived in rented apartments. Nevertheless, an increasing number of Syrian refugees were either living in concierge rooms – thereby renting their shelter in exchange for work – or being hosted for free. As of June 2022, 25 percent of the assisted and 13 percent of the non-assisted lived in tents, mostly in areas close to the Syrian border.

## INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

- A decreasing number of households relied on humanitarian cash assistance as their main source of income, with more and more members seeking income through either employment in the labour force or gifts and remittances.
- Participation in the labour force was higher for children than women in assisted households, while non-assisted households tended to employ less their children than assisted households.

## ASSISTANCE

- Since October 2019, transfer value adjustments have translated into positive impacts on the ability of households to cover their essential needs. Nevertheless, that effect typically did not last more than a few months, reflecting a need for more regular and systematic adjustments as prices continue to increase and the LBP continues to depreciate.
- Cash-based assistance (Cash for Food, Multipurpose Cash) has attracted more satisfaction than value voucher modalities (Food E-Card).
- Most beneficiaries displayed adequate knowledge of the Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs) and have joint authority between husbands and wives when deciding on the use of humanitarian cash assistance.

# 1. WFP SYRIAN REFUGEE RESPONSE

Since 2012, the World Food Programme has been providing assistance to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, first with food parcels, then paper vouchers, and since 2013 with cash-based assistance through electronic cards.

Today, with almost all Syrian refugees in Lebanon living in extreme poverty, WFP and UNHCR joint programming is more critical than ever to ensure the food and basic needs of the most vulnerable are met.

In addition to supporting Syrian refugees, WFP has also been providing assistance to Palestinian refugees from Syria since 2014 and to refugees of other nationalities since 2019.

E-cards are loaded monthly with LBP 500,000 per person for food needs and for the most vulnerable, LBP 1,000,000 per family for other essential needs such as shelter, health, and education. The amount of cash and degree of flexibility in the use of the e-card varies according to vulnerability, with all extremely vulnerable people receiving food assistance while families with greater needs receive additional support.

As the prices of food and other essential goods keep rising due to the deepening economic crisis, WFP continues to advocate for increased cash transfer values to provide adequate levels of assistance.

**ONE CARD, THREE CASH MODALITIES**

**Food e-cards**: Syrian refugee households receive LBP 500,000 per family member* per month, which can be redeemed on food at more than 430 WFP-contracted shops across Lebanon. Shops are selected based on their ability to provide quality service, diverse and healthy food products, and accessible prices for Syrian and Lebanese customers.

**Cash for food e-cards**: Syrian refugee households receive LBP 500,000 per family member* per month which can be redeemed either at a WFP-contracted shop or withdrawn from ATMs. Throughout 2022, this group is also receiving a top-up of LBP 1,000,000 per household per month through UNHCR's Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance Programme (MCAP).

**Multipurpose cash for essential needs e-cards**: Syrian refugee households receive LBP 500,000 per family member* per month for their food needs and LBP 1,000,000 per household per month for their essential needs, which can be withdrawn from automatic teller machines (ATMs).

*Capped at 6 members*
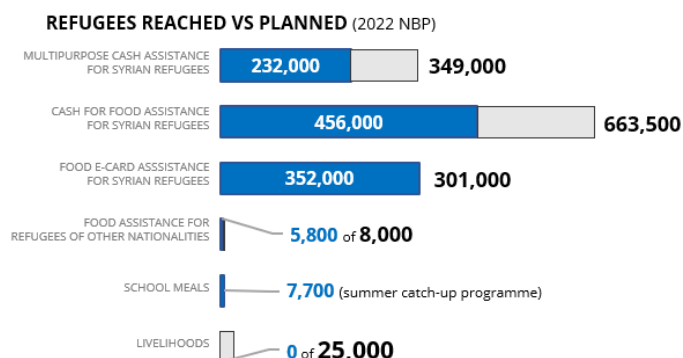
# 2. NEEDS AND ASSISTANCE

In 2022, the situation of Syrian refugees continued to worsen as Lebanon faced a compounded socio-economic and health crisis.

Since 2019, the crises in Lebanon pushed almost the entire Syrian refugee population into extreme poverty. In 2022, despite increasing humanitarian support, 90 percent of Syrian refugee families were not able to afford the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), the absolute minimum amount required to cover lifesaving needs. Thus, the percentage of households below the SMEB level maintained the same high level as in 2021 and 2020, and was significantly higher than in 2019 when it was 55 percent.

Food insecurity, on the other hand, was on the rise due to protracted food inflation, with two-thirds of refugee families reportedly food insecure (60 percent moderately food insecure and 7 percent severely food insecure), compared with half in 2021 and 2020.
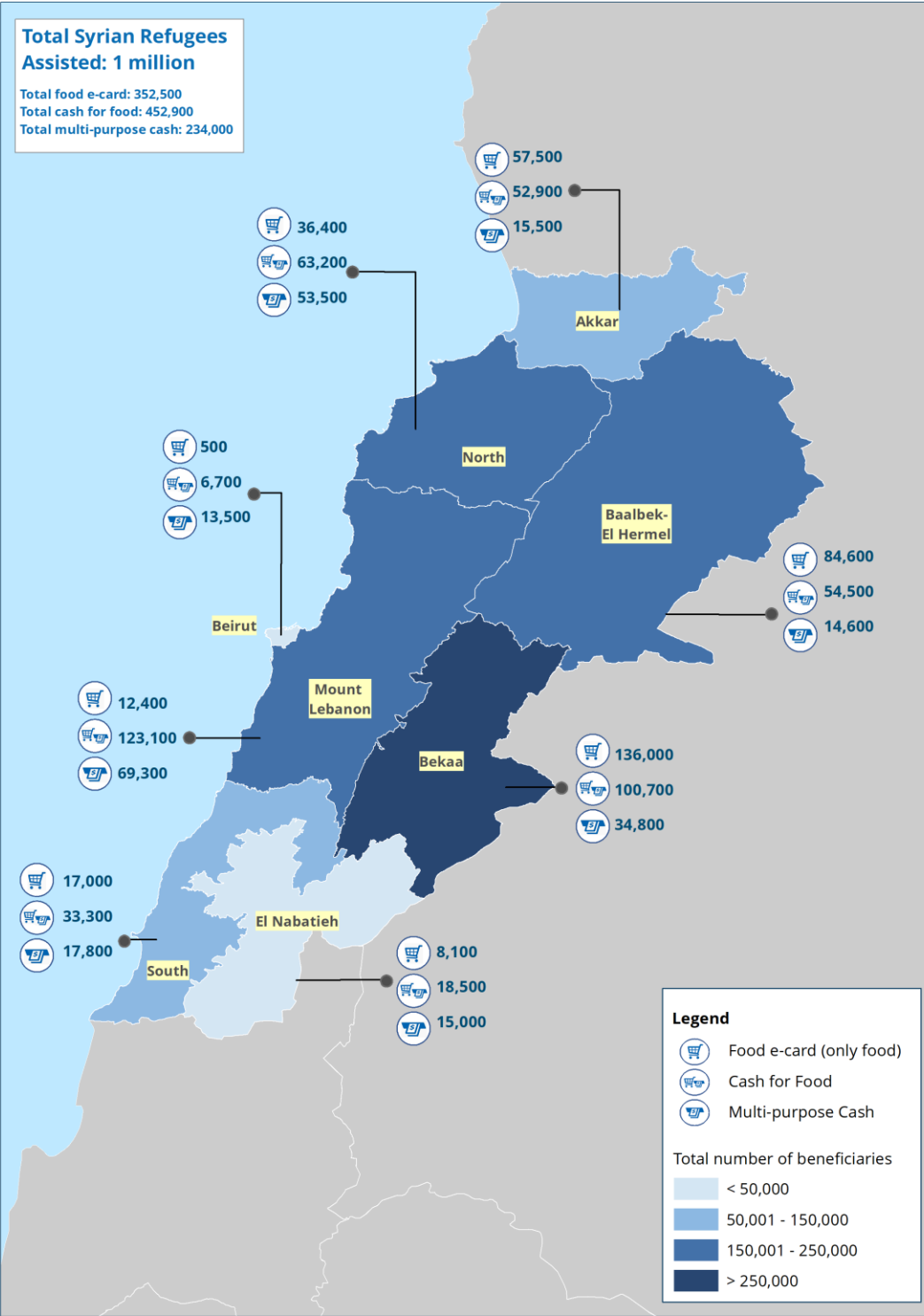
*Source: VASYR 2022*

**Refugee Response Beneficiaries Overview by Activity, as of September 2022**

**REFUGEES REACHED VS PLANNED** (2022 NBP)

| | |
|---|---|
| MULTIPURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES | 232,000 / 349,000 |
| CASH FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES | 456,000 / 663,500 |
| FOOD E-CARD ASSSISTANCE FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES | 352,000 / 301,000 |
| FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES OF OTHER NATIONALITIES | 5,800 of 8,000 |
| SCHOOL MEALS | 7,700 (summer catch-up programme) |
| LIVELIHOODS | 0 of 25,000 |

*NBP: Needs-Based Plan*

**WFP's cash assistance to Refugees as of July 2022**

**Total Syrian Refugees
Assisted: 1 million**

Total food e-card: 352,500
Total cash for food: 452,900
Total multi-purpose cash: 234,000

**Akkar**
57,500
52,900
15,500

36,400
63,200
53,500

**North**

**Baalbek-
El Hermel**
84,600
54,500
14,600

500
6,700
13,500

**Beirut**

**Mount
Lebanon**

**Bekaa**
136,000
100,700
34,800

12,400
123,100
69,300

17,000
33,300
17,800

**El Nabatieh**

**South**

8,100
18,500
15,000

**Legend**

Food e-card (only food)
Cash for Food
Multi-purpose Cash

Total number of beneficiaries

< 50,000
50,001 - 150,000
150,001 - 250,000
> 250,000

*Source: WFP OIM Unit; GIS Portal*

## 3. TRANSFER VALUE ANALYSIS

Since October 2019, WFP has been monitoring closely price evolution and adjusting transfer values to safeguard the purchasing power of its beneficiaries.

Despite continuous adjustments, rampant inflation has regularly offset the coverage of the costs of essential needs (both food and non-food). The latest adjustment was in April 2022, when food assistance was increased from LBP300,000 per capita to LBP500,000 per capita, and the non-food top-up by household increased from LBP800,000 to LBP1,000,000.

The per-capita SMEB in September 2022 was LBP 1.99 million. The per-capita food SMEB reached LBP 988,000 and the non-food SMEB was LBP 5.04 million for a family of five. Coverage of the food SMEB by the transfer value was 51 percent for food and 20 percent for non-food.

**Timeline of transfer value adjustments**

LBP40,000 Food
LBP264,000 Non-Food — **Oct-19**

**Apr-20** — LBP50,000 Food
LBP320,000 Non-Food

LBP60,000 Food
LBP320,000 Non-Food — **Jun-20**

**Jul-20** — LBP70,000 Food
LBP400,000 Non-Food

LBP100,000 Food
LBP400,000 Non-Food — **Nov-20**

**Sep-21** — LBP300,000 Food
LBP800,000 Non-Food

LBP500,000 Food
LBP1,000,000 Non-Food — **Apr-22**
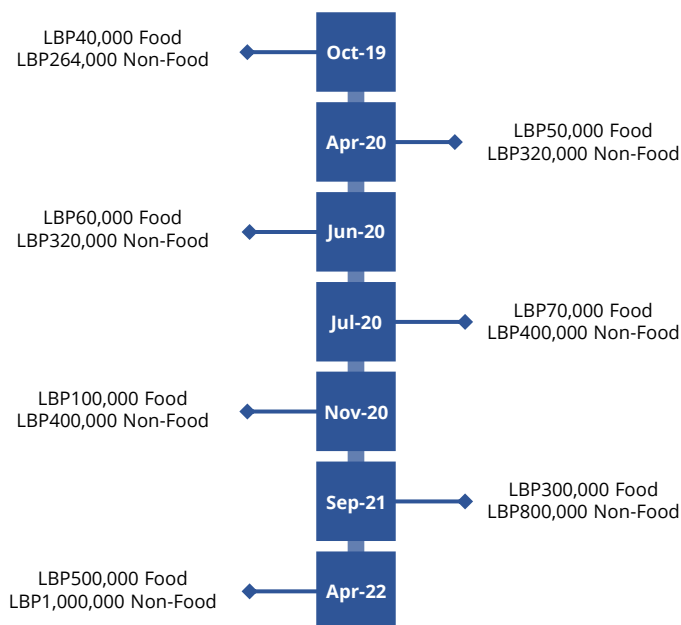
**TV Coverage of Food SMEB - Refugee Response**

Oct-19 77%
Nov-20 79%
Oct-20 56%
Sep-21 72%
Apr-22 72%
Aug-21 26%
Sep-22 51%
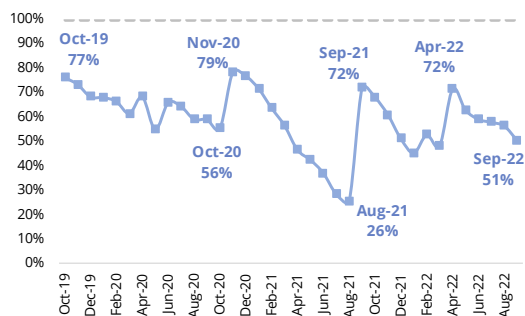
**TV Coverage of Non-Food SMEB - Refugee Response**

Oct-19 35%
Oct-20 46%
Sep-21 48%
Aug-21 25%
Apr-22 39%
Sep-22 20%
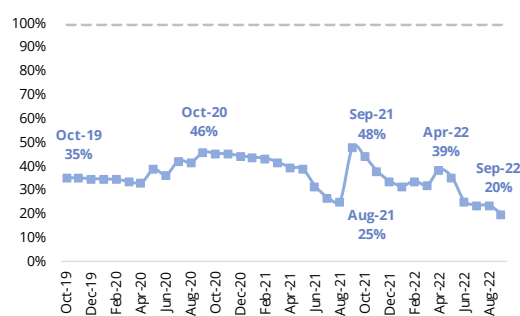
## 4. DEMOGRAPHICS – JUNE 2022 SURVEY

**1,010** beneficiaries surveyed (**79.1 percent** male-headed and **20.9 percent** female-headed)

**255** Food e-card (Food E-Card) assisted Syrians; **253** Cash-for-food (CFF) assisted Syrians
**250** Multipurpose cash (MPC) assisted Syrians; **252** Non-assisted Syrians

**42 percent** of household heads with chronic illnesses
**3 percent** of household heads with a disability

Average household size: **6**

## 5. BNOM METHODOLOGY

WFP's Basic Needs Outcome Monitoring (BNOM) survey has been conducted by WFP and its partners on a quarterly basis since November 2017. Each round of data collection surveyed 750 refugee families receiving assistance and 250 families who are not receiving assistance for a total of 1,000 households. Fifteen rounds of data collection were conducted between January 2018 and June 2022

The June 2022 survey was conducted by WFP's Cooperating Partners (CPs): Lebanese Red Cross, Mercy USA, World Vision International (WVI) and SHEILD. All CPs are trained on the survey tool before each data collection cycle.

Between 2020 and 2021 data collection was conducted remotely, through phone calls, in compliance with the country's measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. Face-to-face data collection resumed in March 2022.

Data collection started 7 days after loading cash assistance and continued up to a few days prior to the next loading. WFP's field offices (FOs) conducted parallel quality spot checks by accompanying the surveyors in the field. In each quarter, the sample was representative of each modality assistance, at a 90 percent confidence interval and a margin of error of 5 percent.

The questionnaire included the following modules: demographics, food consumption, reduced coping strategies (consumption-based), livelihoods coping strategies, expenditures, debts, income, Protection (Safety and Security), and Accountability towards affected population (satisfaction, knowledge of CFM, etc.).

This report monitored the food security status of assisted households against non-assisted households between Q4-2021 and Q2-2022 and across different assistance modalities. The analysis covered the following indicators: Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs (ECMEN), household expenditures, debt, income, housing and Food Security indicators which include Food Consumption Score (FCS), Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI), and Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI). It also covered cross-cutting indicators such as decision-making dynamics within the household and knowledge of Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs).

Link to the Essential Needs Assessment (ENA) guidelines

## 6. ECONOMIC CAPACITY TO MEET ESSENTIAL NEEDS (ECMEN) AND HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURES

Over the past two monitoring cycles, the share of households with the economic capacity to afford survival needs continued to deteriorate throughout assistance modalities. On average, 60 percent of assisted and 49 percent of non-assisted households lived below the SMEB as of June 2022.

If the value of humanitarian cash assistance is excluded from the aggregate expenditure, the share of households without the economic capacity to meet survival needs reached 87 percent among assisted households in June 2022.

There was a higher number of households living below the SMEB threshold among MPC beneficiaries if compared to CFF and Food E-Card beneficiaries. If the value of assistance is excluded, only 5 percent of MPC beneficiaries could have afforded the cost of survival needs.

The share of the top four essential segments in household expenditures has likewise risen over the same period, with an increased share of expenditures on food driving the overall rise.

**WHAT IS THE ECMEN?**

The Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs (ECMEN) indicator presented in this report identifies the **percentage of households whose expenditures exceeded the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB)** that was prevalent at the time of data collection. A SMEB is the absolute minimum amount required to maintain existence and cover lifesaving needs, which could involve the deprivation of certain human rights.

As such, the ECMEN presented here measured households' economic capacity to meet survival needs, including food and non-food. Households with economic capacity below the SMEB were likely unable to access the bare minimum required to survive.

The economic capacity of households was calculated by aggregating expenditures based on the ECMEN methodology. The variables that were aggregated when constructing the ECMEN included cash and credit expenditures, households' own production and labour exchange, gifts and in-kind assistance, humanitarian cash assistance, debt repayments, and finally savings.

The ECMEN was introduced in the BNOM survey in June 2022.

**Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs (June 22)**



Legend: ■ Below SMEB ■ Above SMEB
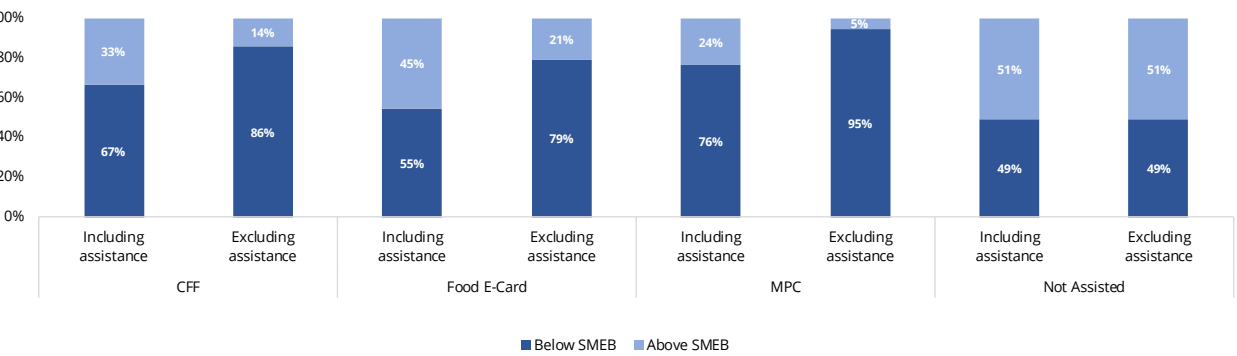
**Household Expenditures (Shares of Top Four Segments)**



Legend: ■ Food ■ Rent ■ Medicine ■ Electricity
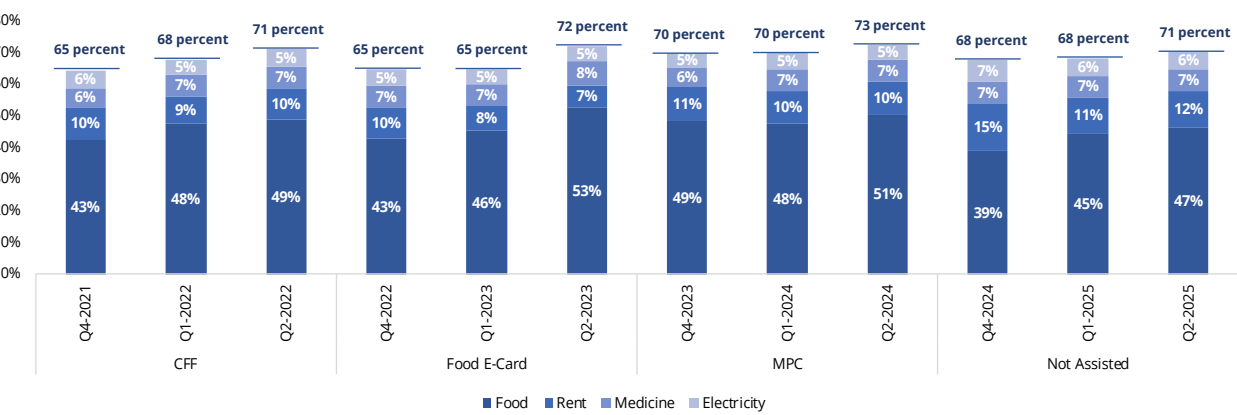
# 7. FOOD SECURITY

Classification of food security using the Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI) has revealed an increasing number of food-insecure households over the past three cycles for both assisted and non-assisted households.

As of June 2022, 65 percent of all respondents were classified as food insecure (of which 61 percent were moderately food insecure and 4 percent severely food insecure), compared with 32 percent of food insecure respondents in December 2021 (31 percent moderately food insecure and 1 percent severely food insecure).

The difference between assisted and non-assisted households decreased significantly, from a 14 percentage point difference in December 2021 (28 percent assisted insecure vs 43 percent non-assisted insecure) to a 2 percentage point difference in June 2022 (64 percent assisted insecure vs 67 percent non-assisted insecure). This narrowing gap was due to a decreasing SMEB coverage of transfer values (most assisted households rely on assistance as their main source of income), as well as a more widespread implementation of reduced coping strategies and livelihood coping strategies among assisted households compared with non-assisted households.

**Food Security Categories (CARI Reporting Console)**



Legend: ■ Food secure ■ Marginally food secure ■ Moderately food insecure ■ Severely food insecure
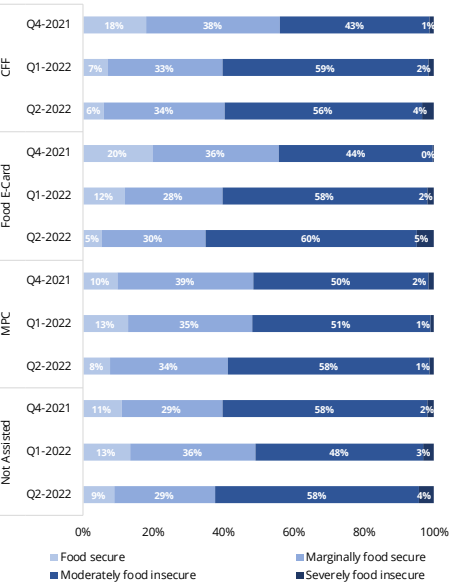
## 7.1 Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI)

Reliance on crisis or emergency type livelihood coping strategies increased significantly since December 2021across all assistance modalities and for non-assisted households as well. The share of assisted households across all modalities that adopted crisis or emergency strategies in June and March 2022 was 5 percentage points higher than non-assisted households (87 percent assisted vs 83 percent non-assisted in June 2022, and 65 percent assisted vs 60 percent non-assisted in March 2022).

Reducing expenditures on health and education to cope with deteriorating financial circumstances was the most common strategy for both assisted and non-assisted households as inflation of health-related items was 31.5 percent between December 2021and June 2022 along with the parallel deterioration of the informal exchange rate between the Lebanese pound and the US dollar.
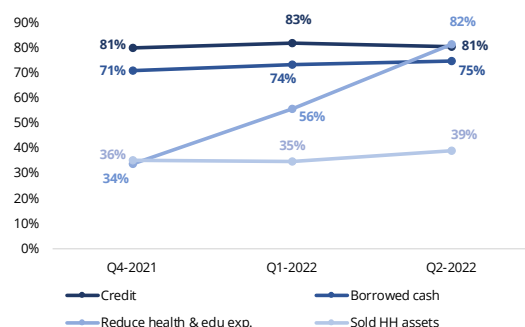
**Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI)**



**Livelihood Coping Strategies - Assisted**
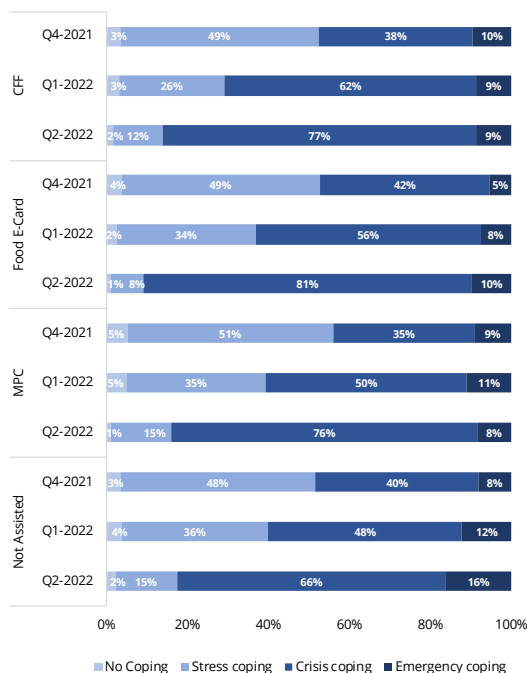


**Livelihood Coping Strategies - Not Assisted**
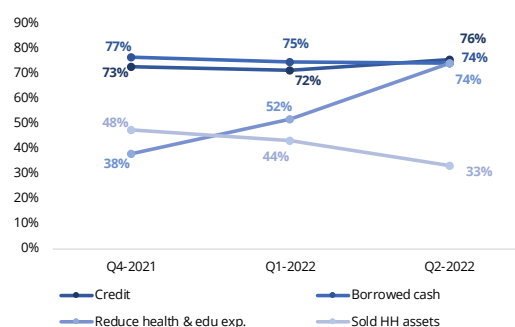


## 7.2 Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)

Both non-assisted and assisted households were prone to adopting food consumption-based coping strategies between December 2021 and June 2022, with an average of 78 percent for assisted households and 72 percent for non-assisted households. Reliance on consumption-based coping strategies, however, increased more significantly among non-assisted households in that timeframe (from 66 percent in December 2021 to 76 percent in June 2022) if compared to assisted households. The use of food-based coping strategies decreased by 13 percentage points among MPC beneficiaries (from 85 percent in December 2021 to 72 percent in June 2022).

The most used strategy was relying on alternative food sources of lesser quality, with an average of 4 days per week among assisted households and 4.3 days per week among non-assisted households. Also widespread was reducing the number of meals (2.9 days/week among assisted, 3.2 days/week among non-assisted) and reducing portion sizes (2.8 days/week among assisted, 3.1 days/week among non-assisted).
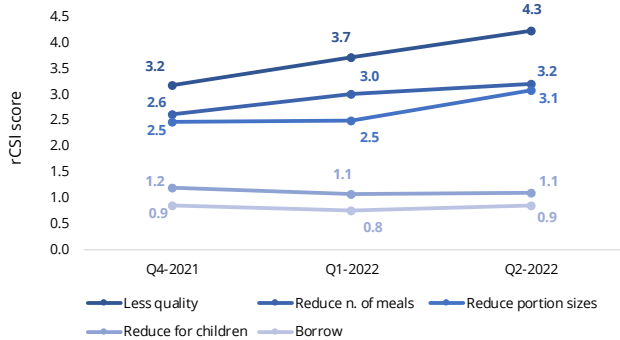
**Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)**
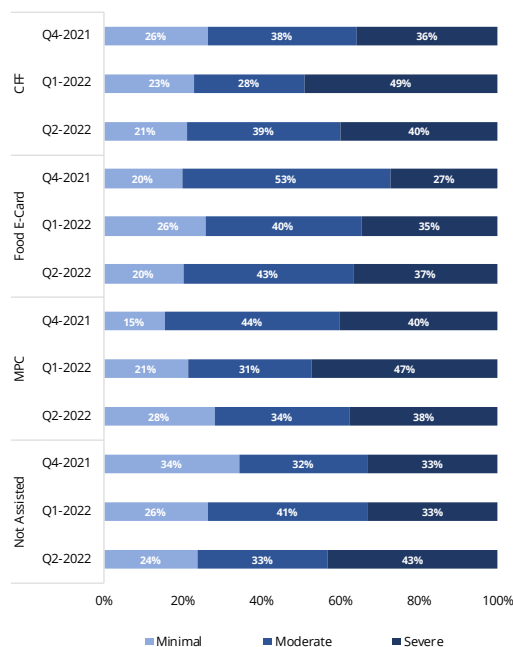
**Reduced Coping Strategies - Assisted**
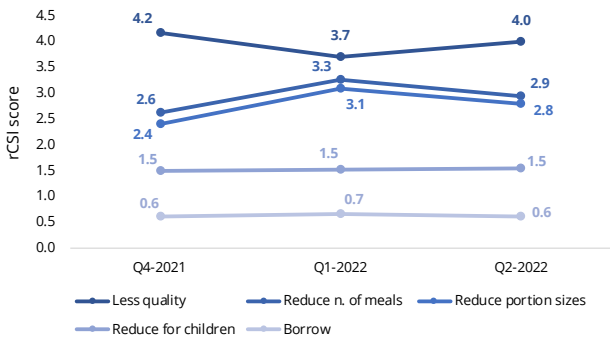


**Reduced Coping Strategies - Not Assisted**



## 7.3 Food Consumption

The frequency and diversity of diets as measured by the Food Consumption Score (FCS) has deteriorated among Cash For Food and Food E-Card beneficiaries by 9 and 11 percentage points respectively between December 2021 and June 2022. It has instead improved among MPC beneficiaries (2 percentage points increase of households with acceptable consumption) and non-assisted (4 percentage points increase) during the same timeframe.

Almost all assisted households have continued to consume staples, sugar, fat, and oils on a daily basis, while the non-assisted have notably increased their consumption of sugar and fat between December 2021 and June 2022. Dairy, proteins, and fruits could be afforded by households for only a day per week or less.

**Food Consumption Groups**
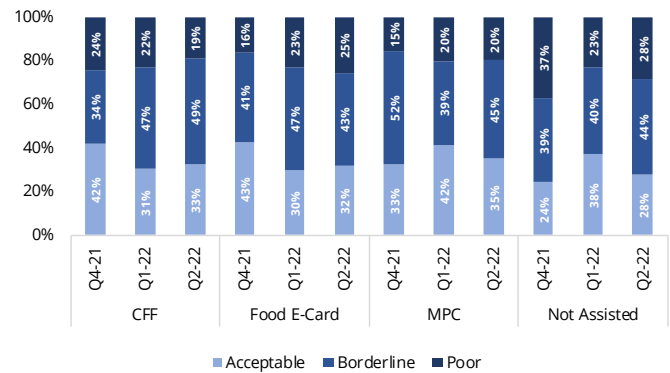


**Consumption per week - Assisted**
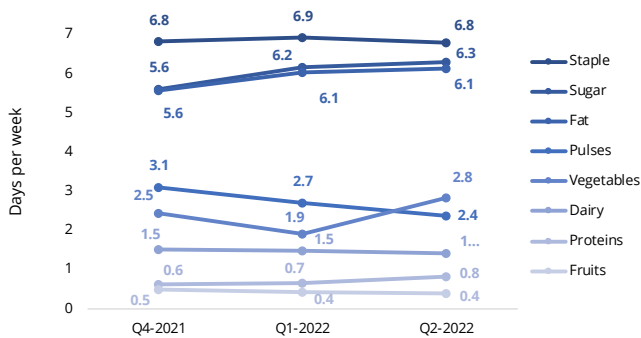


**Consumption per week - Non-Assisted**
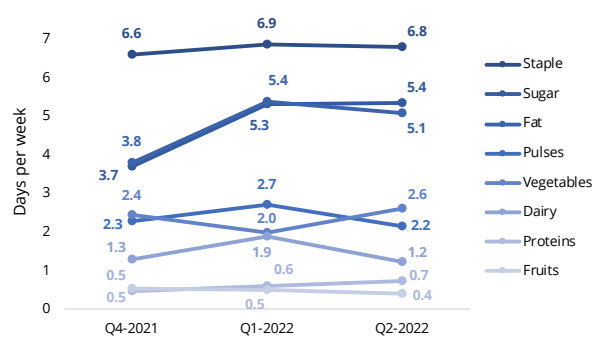
## 8. DEBT

Debt levels were increasing throughout modalities, with assisted households incurring higher levels of debt, both accumulated and new, than non-assisted households.

While most households were still incurring debt to buy food, an increasing number of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries were relying on credit to purchase medical items, a consequence of the above-mentioned inflation of health-related items and deterioration of the informal exchange rate of the Lebanese pound.

WFP did not remove potential outliers in debt figures when collecting data as long as beneficiaries could justify the reason for incurring the stated figure.

**Top reasons for incurring debt by quarter**
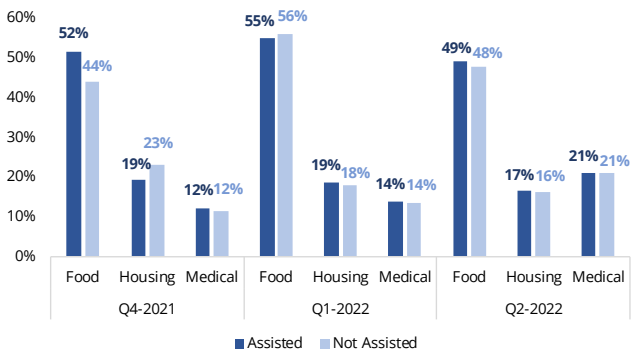


**Average total debt per household (in LBP)**
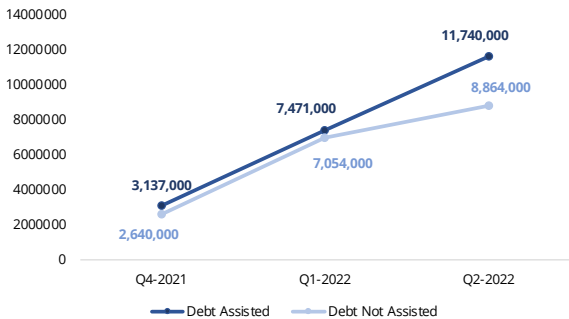


**Average new debt per household (in LBP)**
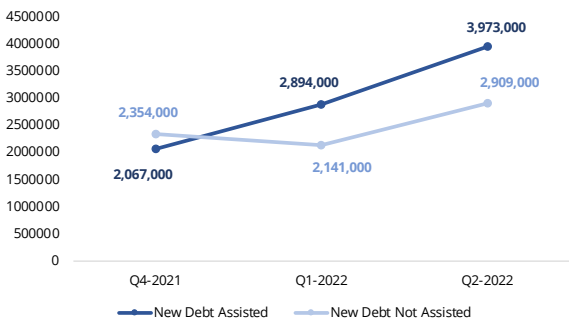


## 9. INCOME & WORK

Despite decreasing transfer value coverage of the costs of essential needs, a majority of assisted households still mentioned assistance as their main source of income.

Women have represented an increasing, albeit still minor, part of the total working population, while the share of working children amongst the working population has also slightly increased. Both may be due to seasonal factors, with the summer season triggering an increased need for labour.

Both male and children work types have showcased a gradual shift from temporal to stable employment, while employment of women has become mostly seasonal.

During data collection, employment was delineated into different work types, which included stable, seasonal, or temporary modalities, in addition to more informal options such as begging and peddling. This looser definition may explain why child labour figures may appear higher than what was portrayed in other reports such as the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASYR-2022).
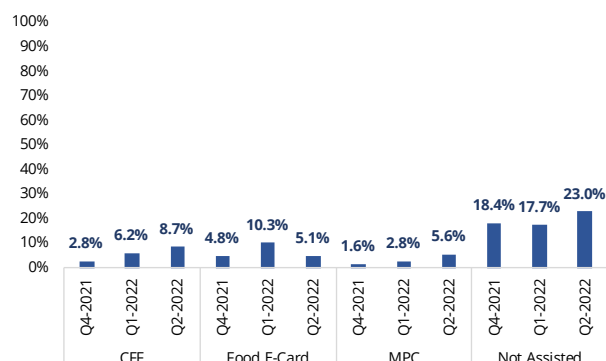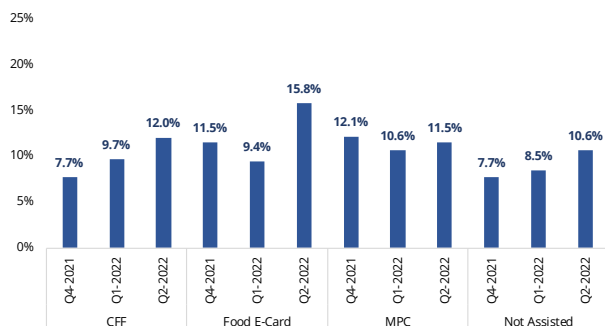
**Main Source of Income - Assistance**
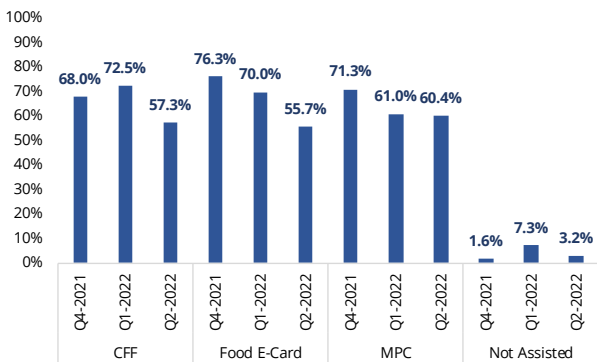
**Main Source of Income - Labor and Commerce**
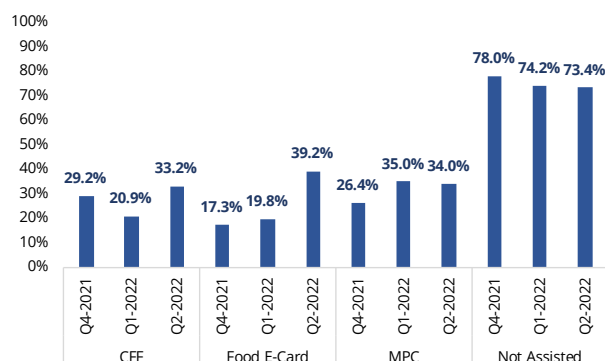


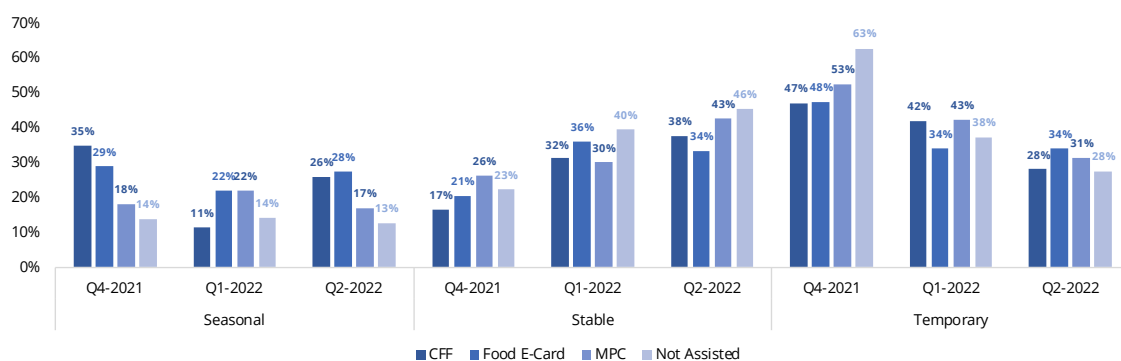**Main Source of Income - Remittances, gifts and credit**



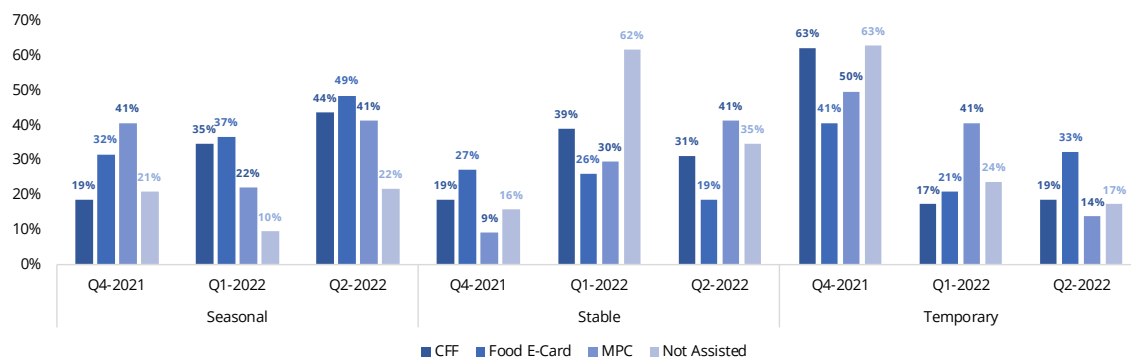**Women Employment (% of all workers per quarter and modality)**



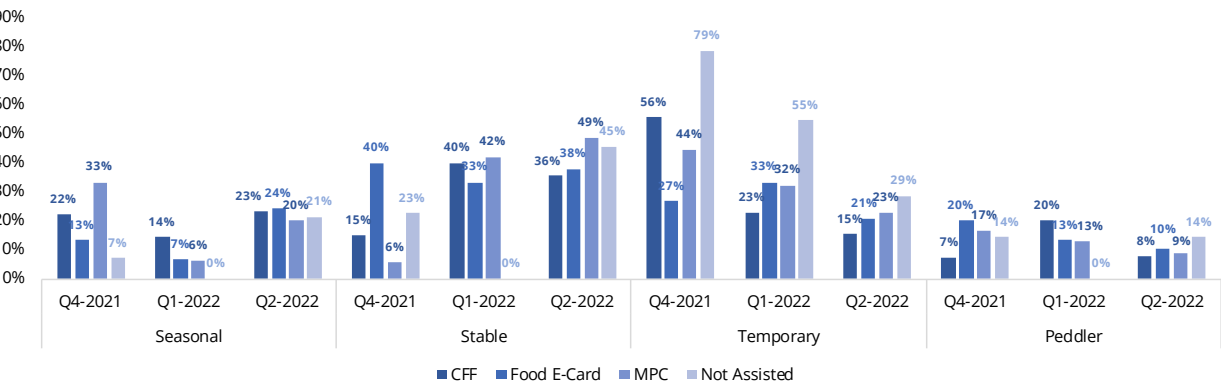**Child Labour (% of all workers per quarter and modality)**



**Work Type - Men (% of working men per quarter and modality)**



**Work Type - Women (% of working women per quarter and modality)**

**Work Type - Children (% of working children per quarter and modality)**



## 10. HOUSING

Data on shelter has showcased differences in housing and occupancy types between governorates.

While a greater concentration of refugees living either in apartments and houses or concierge rooms of residential buildings was to be found in urbanized areas such as Beirut and Mount Lebanon, a greater proportion of those who reside in regions close to the Syrian border (Akkar, Baalbek-El Hermel and the Bekaa) tended to live in tents. Meanwhile, El Nabatieh, the North, the South and Akkar witnessed relatively high levels of other types of housing such as warehouses, active construction sites, farms, engine pump rooms and collective shelters.

The vast majority of households rented their shelter in exchange for financial means, despite particularly high levels of renting in exchange for work in Beirut and Nabatieh, especially amongst MPC beneficiaries and non-assisted households. Moreover, a particularly high number of both assisted and non-assisted households in Akkar, Baalbeck-El Hermel, and the South as well as non-assisted households in Beirut were hosted for free. Other types of occupancy such as assistance by charity organizations or squatting remained scarce, with only El Nabatieh witnessing a substantial number (5%) of Cash for Food beneficiaries assisted by an organization.

**Housing Type per Governorate and Modality**
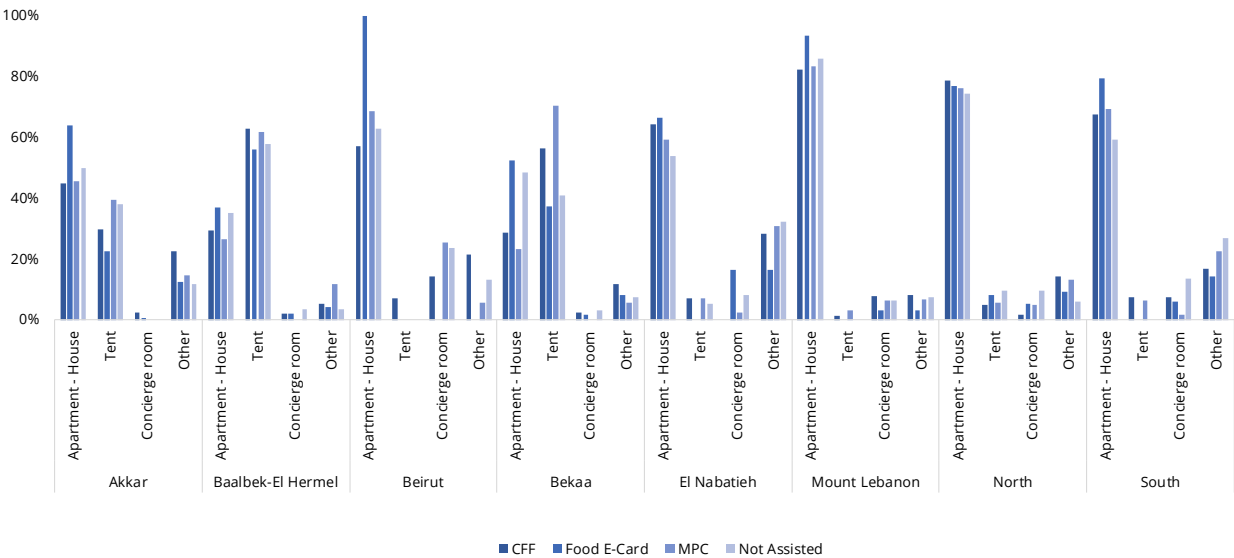
**Occupancy Type per Governorate and Modality**



■ CFF　■ Food E-Card　■ MPC　■ Not Assisted
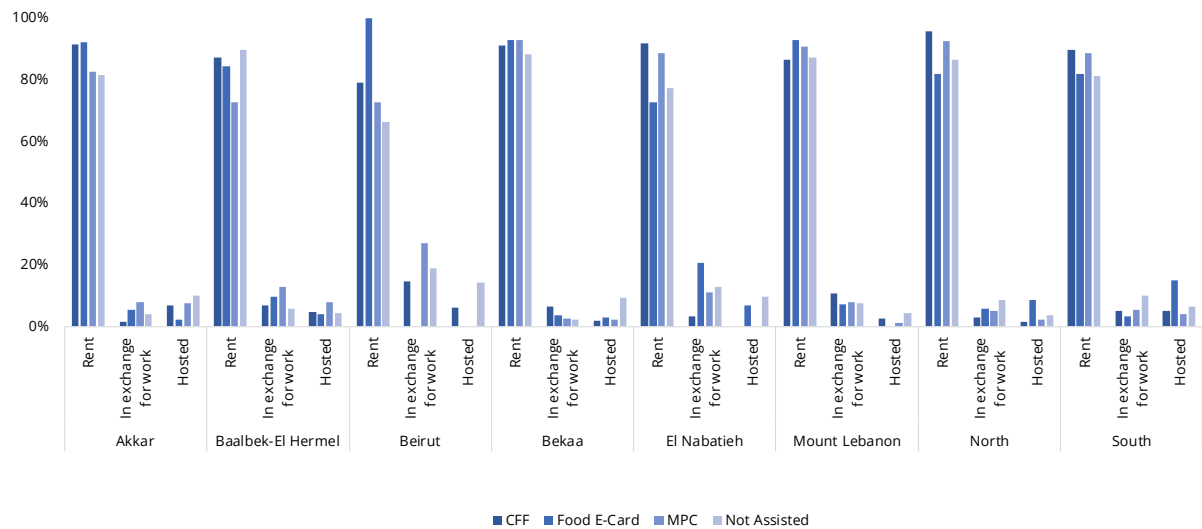
## 11. ACCOUNTABILITY

When it comes to taking decisions on assistance, the majority of households continue to showcase joint decision-making between husbands and wives.

Satisfaction scores by modality revealed that Cash-For-Food and MPC beneficiaries have displayed greater satisfaction than their Food E-Card counterparts. This is likely due to the general phenomenon of beneficiaries preferring to redeem their assistance at ATMs rather than shops, and to regular issues unfolding at the latter.

Knowledge of Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs) remains high throughout all modalities, with a notable decrease in stated knowledge amongst MPC beneficiaries from 93 percent in December 2021 to 80 percent in June 2022.

**Average satisfaction by Modality**



■ CFF　■ MPC　■ Food E-Card

**Decision-Making**



■ Women　■ Men　■ Both Together
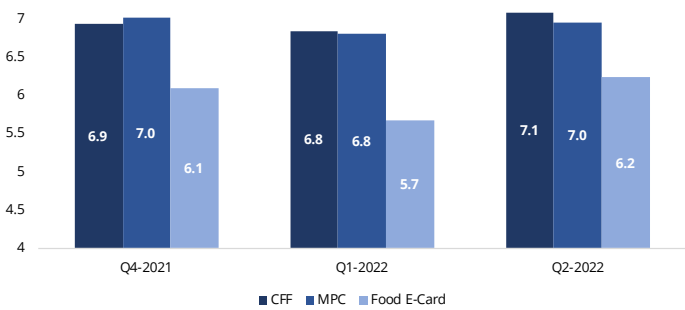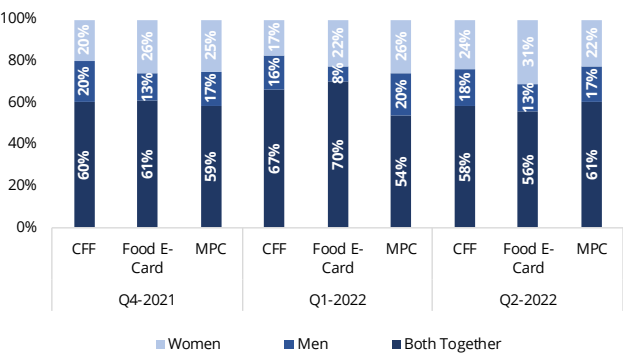
**Knowledge of Feedback Mechanisms**



■ CFF　■ MPC　■ Food E-Card