

# FRAUGHT BUT FRUITFUL

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**RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND SHIFTING  
GENDER ROLES IN SYRIAN REFUGEE  
WOMEN'S PURSUIT OF LIVELIHOODS  
IN LEBANON, WITH ADDITIONAL  
OBSERVATIONS FROM JORDAN AND IRAQ**

The struggle of Syrian refugee women in Lebanon to access decent work, manage households, and avoid protection risks in Lebanon with additional observations from Jordan and Iraq



This report is the product of its authors, and responsibility for the accuracy of data included in this report rests with the authors alone. The findings, interpretations and conclusions presented in this report do not necessarily reflect the views or official positions of the United Nations or its officials, or any of the organisations referred to in the report. Statistics and data provided in the report are provisional and do not necessarily imply official endorsement.





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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AoR	Area of Responsibility
CBI	Cash-Based Intervention
CfW	Cash for Work
DNH	Do No Harm
E-KII	Expert Key Informant Interview
EMAP	Engaging Men through Accountable Practice
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHH	Female-Headed Household
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GBV IMS	Gender-Based Violence Information Management System
I-KII	Individual Key Informant Interview
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITS	Informal Temporary Settlements
MCAP	Multi-purpose Cash
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PCAP	Protection Cash Assistance Programme
PSS	Psychosocial Support Services
SMEB	Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket
SOP	Standard Operational Procedure
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNx3	UN Women, ILO and UNHCR
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VT	Vocational Training

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Given the unique vulnerability of Syrian refugee women to GBV and specific linkages to economic vulnerability, UN Women, UNHCR and the ILO commissioned the current study to explore the (relationships between livelihoods and protection risks for Syrian refugee women, with specific aim to ensure programming is designed to mitigate risks and maximize positive outcomes. The below provides a summary of the study's data, driven by the voices of Syrian refugee women, with a focus on quantitative and qualitative data from Lebanon, supplemented by qualitative data from Jordan and Iraq. Women of all age groups were targeted, while shelter type, head of household classifications and cash assistance statuses were all taken into account during this study.

Gender discrimination and inequality exist across all levels of society in Lebanon with global rankings on gender equality (particularly in economic realms) among the lowest worldwide, ranking 145 out of 153 countries in the 2020 World Economic Forum Gender Gap report.<sup>1</sup> Lebanon additionally has one of the poorest global rates of women's labour market participation, 29% for women<sup>2</sup> compared to 76% for men. This is exacerbated by recent economic crises, spurring countrywide demonstrations and worsened by the global COVID-19<sup>3</sup> pandemic and recent devastating explosions in Beirut. Lebanon continues to host the highest refugee population

per capita, with a Government estimate of 1.5 million Syrian refugees, of whom 879,598 are registered with UNHCR as of end-August 2019.<sup>4</sup>

Although women in the host community are also affected, the reality for Syrian refugee women is even more challenging due to pervading gender inequalities in Lebanon that particularly impact the refugee community. Since the onset of the Syrian war, Syrian refugee women have faced new and compounded challenges that impact their own lives and exacerbate vulnerability, such as family separation (including the loss of male heads of household previously providing main sources of income), loss of documentation, unstable housing, food insecurity, interrupted education and limited freedom of movement. According to 2019 data, Syrian refugee women are roughly six times less likely to be working compared to Syrian refugee men and confront an estimated gender wage gap of 0.44.<sup>5</sup>

This involvement in the economy, paired with discriminatory cultural norms which affect day-to-day dynamics between genders and rising social tensions makes women – both Lebanese and Syrian – more vulnerable to economic shocks and at increased risk of GBV, which remains prevalent across the country. For refugees, issues of domestic violence, child marriage, sale and exchange of sex, and sexual exploitation and abuse, perpetrated by intimate partners and male figures in both households as well as the wider community.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, only 20%

<sup>1</sup>World Economic Forum (2018), "The Global Gender Gap Report", [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2018.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf). Also, According to the Global Gender Gap Index Report—which measures and tracks gaps in gender equality in each country Lebanon ranks 145th in gender equality, World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Report (2020), <https://www.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2020-report-100-years-pay-equality>

<sup>2</sup>ILO and Central Administration of Statistics, Labor Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCs), 2018-2019, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arab-states/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_732567.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arab-states/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_732567.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>UNHCR, "Syrian Regional Refugee Response – 2019," UNHCR Operational Portal for Refugee Situations, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>

<sup>4</sup>UNHCR, Global Focus. Available at: <https://reporting.unhcr.org/lebanon#:~:text=Lebanon%20remains%20the%20country%20hosting,Palestine%20refugees%20under%20UNRWA's%20mandate>

<sup>5</sup>UN Women (September 2019), "Addressing Gender Amongst Syrian Refugees in Lebanon." Available at: <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/10/addressing-gender-amongst-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon>

<sup>6</sup>United Nations University (2018), "Access to SGBV Protection Services for Syrian and Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon."

of registered Syrian refugee women in Lebanon have legal residency, contributing to compounded exploitation and abuse from authorities, employers and local communities.<sup>7</sup> Recent estimates suggest that 73% of Syrian refugee households are living below the poverty line and unable to meet their survival needs for food, health, and shelter – and that this reality is even higher amongst female-headed households, 35% of whom experience food insecurity versus 28% of male headed households.<sup>8</sup> With the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic violence rates increased dramatically.<sup>9</sup>

While the majority of women reported<sup>10</sup> feeling safe leaving the home, 95% of married women noted needing permission from a husband or brother and/or accompaniment of men, and many fear the widespread reports of harassment. Women in informal settlements were more likely to report fears of sexual harassment, and less likely to state a willingness to report harassment and violence compared to their counterparts living in rented residences. The loss (or reduced income-generating capacity) of male breadwinners, coupled with regulatory restrictions for refugees, has forced women to shift from traditional roles and responsibilities to contribute to the survival of their households, yielding both threats and substantive opportunities for women's economic

engagement.<sup>11</sup> Among refugee women who have managed to engage in income-generation, 93% reported this positively changed their position in the household to some degree, and 88% of women involved in the study reported their perceptions of women's participation in the workforce improved.

While women report an increase in their household position and some control over expenses since working, they also note that this is contingent on – and sometimes undermined by – family (namely male) attitudes and acceptance. The majority of married working women believe that their husbands do not approve of them working; additionally, less than half of women (45%) think their broader community is supportive of women's engagement in paid work. Many women reported hiding their work from family members and communities in order not to bring shame on them. This denotes challenges in the shifting gender norms associated with who is responsible for productive and reproductive roles in the household. However, positive changes in attitudes were reported. Some refugee women who were working noted a shift in perception from male relatives and family members, with increasing acceptance of their engagement in work. This was less common among younger women, perhaps suggesting a perception that young women are at greater risk of GBV or more likely to engage in culturally unacceptable behaviour from the family when outside of the home.

Women's burden of continuing household caregiving and other reproductive responsibilities accompanies their new role in providing household income and presents refugee women with a *double work burden*. Within

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<sup>7</sup> UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP (2018), "Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon."

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP (2019), "Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon." Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/73118.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> UN Women (2020), Gender Alert on COVID-19 in Lebanon. Available at: <https://arab-states.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/gender-alert-on-covid-19-lebanon>

<sup>10</sup> Respondents herein referred to within the executive summary are comprised exclusively of Syrian refugee women in Lebanon who responded to a quantitative survey, triangulated by qualitative data. Therefore, demographics should be considered within the summary; the full report is supplemented by qualitative data collected from Syrian refugee men and women in Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan.

<sup>11</sup> Lauren Holtmeier (March, 2019), "Redefining Roles: Refugee Women Take On New Roles in Their Families," Executive Magazine. Available at: <https://www.executive-magazine.com/economics-policy/refugees/redefining-roles>

the study, 71% of working Syrian refugee women reported challenges in availability of childcare (those who report having childcare were married women, and typically it was provided by a family member), and 38% struggled to maintain household needs while working. Only 4% reported that their workplace provided any form of childcare. This burden is a factor in women's decision whether or not to work, and in some cases causes household disruption. In most cases, women's workforce involvement has not correlated to an increase in men's involvement in household caregiving responsibilities, and women reported being unable to leave their children with male family members, at times citing child protection concerns.

The transition in Syrian refugee women's roles and entrance into new, unfamiliar, and typically unprotected informal labour markets has the potential to heighten exposure to GBV risks, including sexual harassment outside the home, and domestic violence in reaction to shifting power dynamics. This risk is heightened by women's lack of access to legal status in the country, which was cited by women to be a significant obstacle to formal work. 7% of women reported increased marital disputes as a result of their engagement in work and some women reported being threatened with physical harm by male family members if they were caught working. Mobility constraints may further inhibit labour force participation; while 83% of women did not report specifically knowing of GBV incidents in transport, rumours remain highly prevalent and influence women's sense of safety and willingness to seek work outside the home. Mixed-sex employment environments are common, and many women reported high rates of workplace exploitation, particularly for single women and in the agricultural sector. Of serious concern, 50% of single women reported withholding of wages, with similarly high rates for women who are either separated or whose husbands have migrated, demonstrating

a unique vulnerability of female-headed households to this type of workplace exploitation.

Due to a combination of lack of gendered market analyses, regulatory restrictions, and sociocultural norms around what work is appropriate for (and therefore preferred by) women, Syrian refugee women's increased role in income-generation has largely been restricted to informal or traditional labour that may not always be sufficiently marketable. The prevalence of women's involvement in informal and unprotected labour has in some cases led to a perception that Syrian refugee women are more vulnerable to harmful coping mechanisms such as the sale and exchange of sex to ensure survival. In fact, 9% of female respondents reported experiencing sexual coercion in their work environment. Women's marital status impacts the types of risks faced; while single women report facing more exploitation in public and face mobility constraints, married women are the least likely to have agency over their involvement in income-generation to begin with, due to the need for male approval, and struggle to be considered substantive economic contributors to the household without facing backlash.

Reporting GBV incidents is generally difficult due to socio-cultural norms, legal frameworks that do not adequately protect women, limited awareness about and ability to access GBV services, and economic dependency on abusers.<sup>12</sup> Mechanisms for reporting workplace-related complaints, even in UN-NGO protected work environments, are either absent or the employees

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<sup>12</sup> Fatima Moussawi and Nasser Yassin (August 2017), "Dissecting Lebanese Law 293 on Domestic Violence: Are Women Protected?" Issam Fares Institute at the American University of Beirut. Available at: [https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/Documents/publications/policy\\_briefs/2016-2017/20170716\\_domestic\\_violence.pdf](https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/Documents/publications/policy_briefs/2016-2017/20170716_domestic_violence.pdf). Also, Elena Ferreras Carreras and Gulnar Wakim (November 2017), "Gender Analysis in Lebanon: Situation Analysis Report", the European Union. Available at: [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/situation\\_analysis\\_report.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/situation_analysis_report.pdf)

lack awareness of such a mechanism. Where they exist, refugee women may be reluctant to use them due to legal status, including a lack of required documentation.

Cash-based interventions (CBIs) can play a critical role in both mitigating risks and responding to GBV, though these are most effective when paired with longer-term vocational training and livelihoods interventions and other activities that are empowering and that enhance well-being, including psychosocial support.<sup>13</sup> This requires strengthening of multi-sectoral referral mechanisms and understanding of the holistic needs of survivors and persons at risk of GBV. Economic independence and sustainable livelihoods play a critical role in women's empowerment and the prevention of GBV,<sup>14</sup> though are often missing from GBV prevention, risk mitigation and multi-sectoral response measures for the well-being of Syrian refugee women and girls.

Despite challenges, commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment provide a strong basis for more strategic advocacy and programming to advance safe, dignified and more sustainable livelihoods opportunities.

## SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

- **Economic necessity has driven many refugee women to engage in livelihoods for the first time, presenting both opportunities that should be optimized, and risks of GBV to mitigate in the home, community, and workplace.** Women's increased

role in income-generation challenges gender norms. It can also increase exposure to risks including as a result of entry into unprotected labour markets. Measures should be taken to reduce risk and optimize safety and empowerment.

- **Rapidly shifting gender norms for Syrian refugee women have in some cases exacerbated women's double work burden.** Many refugee women are entering the labour market for the first time, having to adapt their skills to the marketplace and working in unprotected conditions, while still maintaining household responsibilities. This new reality worsens the double work burden, wherein they navigate new (and sometimes exploitative) work environments, take on financial provision responsibilities, and maintain household and caregiving roles. Labour market support must be paired with work on caretaking responsibilities.
- **Social norm shifts can be gender transformative opportunities** if women can be supported to navigate the increased risk exposure when engaging in the workforce. Refugee women have shared how these new opportunities can contribute to elevating their status in their households due to economic benefits, their personal self-worth and (at times) their position in the community. Mitigation measures should be prioritized to reduce any GBV risks.
- **Socio-cultural norms often determine the type of livelihoods opportunities available to refugee women, worsened by lack of gendered market analysis.** Women's confinement to what is considered acceptable work (i.e. home-based or in sectors such as tailoring or cooking) undermines and can inhibit the success of women's engagement in income-generation. More work is needed not only to ensure viabil-

<sup>13</sup> CARE, Women's Refugee Commission, and CaLP (2019), "Cash & Voucher Assistance and Gender Based Violence Compendium: Practical Guidance for Humanitarian Practitioners".

<sup>14</sup> Women's Refugee Commission (November 2009), "Peril or Protection: The link between livelihoods and gender-based violence in displacement settings." Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/peril-or-protection-link-between-livelihoods-and-gender-based-violence-displacement>

ity of the support offered to women – that opportunities are market based and match demand – but that these are encouraged by women and their families and communities. This is also facilitated by ensuring protected work environments and mitigation of risks in mixed-gender workplaces. As most work available to refugees, particularly to women, is in the informal sector, the lack of formal protections contributes to women’s work being viewed as risky by both men and women.

- **Specialised CBIs and livelihoods referrals are an important GBV case management and mitigation tool – in addition to being a strong intervention to promote equality and women’s economic rights.** This is especially true when CBI’s and economic activities are combined with other services such as psychosocial support and livelihoods/ vocational training referrals. There is a need for enhanced cooperation and coordination between gender equality, livelihoods, and GBV actors for more effective referral pathways and sustainable livelihoods opportunities that can cater to GBV survivors specifically and ensure the meaningful participation of women more generally through gendered market analysis.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations should be used to inform more strategic advocacy and dialogue between UN agencies, host governments and donors on expanding access to safe, dignified and more sustainable livelihoods opportunities for refugee women.

- **Prioritize investment in women’s economic empowerment initiatives,** including not only employment
- and small business opportunities, but also activities that build the agency of women and adolescent girls, such as skill-building related to resource control, access to learning, leadership, entrepreneurship, financial decision-making, business development, etc. Such opportunities should consider both women’s preferences and market-based drivers that optimally enable their success.
- **Ensure refugee women of all abilities and profiles lead in the design of livelihoods activities and associated conditions intended to support their increased economic involvement.** Women should be in leadership roles, and emphasis should be placed on provision of supplemental support, such as childcare, transport, and adaptation of the working environment (i.e. hours, location, and other conditions that facilitate female involvement).
  - **Protection considerations related to women’s ability to work safely should be considered a matter of priority,** including advocacy for regulatory reforms that enable documentation that facilitates engagement in formal labour and access to needed services
  - **CBIs and livelihood interventions are an important tool to strengthen women’s skills, confidence and decision-making.** They should be expanded though paired with support that reduces women’s double burden in the household.
  - **Ensure that market-based analyses include a gender lens to inform options for more gender-transformative programs – and include refugee women and adolescent girls in consultations for such analyses.**

- **Expand and strengthen activities that engage men and boys as agents of change – involve immediate family members and the community to support women's dignified and safe engagement in the labour market.**
- **Expand access to specialised CBIs as part of GBV case management across all contexts and facilitate referral pathways to sustainable livelihoods opportunities to mitigate and respond to intimate partner violence and other forms of GBV.<sup>15</sup>**
- **Interagency and sector actors should collaborate to ensure effective GBV multi-sectorial response and meaningful prevention activities includes access to sustainable livelihoods opportunities.**
- **Disseminate and use the findings of this study for advocacy with key stakeholders on access to safe, dignified and sustainable livelihoods for refugee women.**
- **Continue and strengthen advocacy towards easier access to the labour market for refugees in general as well as for enhanced protection at work places to prevent and respond to physical and sexual harassment, improve poor working conditions, combat child labour, and ensure non-discriminatory pay, particularly for women. Working through national legal framework and labour policies, all partners including national and local authorities, civil society and the private sector should be engaged.**

<sup>15</sup> Melissa Hidrobo and Shalini Roy (November 2016), "Can transfers and training reduce intimate partner violence?" Sexual Violence Research Institute. Available at: <https://svri.org/blog/can-transfers-and-training-reduce-intimate-partner-violence>; And: CARE, GBV Guidelines, IASC GBV Guidelines, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, OXFAM, UNFPA, UNICEF, and Women's Refugee Commission (2019), "Cash & Voucher Assistance and GBV Compendium: Practical Guidance for Humanitarian Practitioners." Available at: <https://gbvguidelines.org/en/documents/cash-voucher-assistance-and-gbv-compendium-practical/>

## COVID-19 JEOPARDIZES WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) has wreaked havoc around the world, including in Lebanon with 18,963 cases and 179 deaths recorded as of 3 September 2020.<sup>16</sup> This has substantial social and economic implications in a country already fractured by political crisis and an economic state of emergency<sup>17</sup> and most recently confronted by a devastating explosion in Beirut in August 2020.

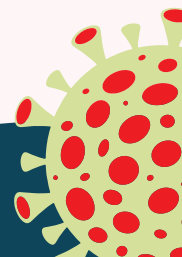
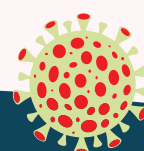
The COVID-19 pandemic has already demonstrated disproportionately detrimental effects for women and girls, with the following of note:<sup>18</sup>

- Women's responsibility for household and caregiving duties has increased, at the expense of participation in the labour market.
- As women engage more in informal and insecure labour, pandemic mitigation measures impact them at a greater rate, with little protection for refugee, migrant and domestic workers.
- Levels of psychosocial distress across all gender and age demographics is increasing, leading to potential safety risks in homes and communities.

<sup>16</sup> John Hopkins University of Medicine (2020), COVID-19 Map. Available at: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

<sup>17</sup> CARE International in Lebanon (May 2020), "Rapid Gender Analysis COVID-19 and Beyond." Available at: [http://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/CIL\\_RapidGenderAnalysis\\_COVID-19\\_FINAL-2007022.pdf](http://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/CIL_RapidGenderAnalysis_COVID-19_FINAL-2007022.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> CARE International (June 2020), "Rapid Gender Analysis – COVID-19: Middle East and North Africa Region." Available at: <http://careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/CARE-MENA-COVID-19-RGA-200720201.pdf>. Also, UN Women, UNFPA, NCLW and WHO (2020), "Gender Alert on COVID-19 in Lebanon." Available at: <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/gender-alert-on-covid-19-lebanon>



- Access to sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls has been reduced with diversion towards pandemic response and mobility constraints.
- GBV rates have increased in homes and communities (including risks of exploitation due to reduced ability to meet basic needs), especially where survivors have been in lockdown with their perpetrators, while the provision of safe, confidential response services is hampered by logistical constraints as well as financial and human resource limitations. Although the continuity of the provision of GBV case management has been ensured remotely to the extent possible, the fact that women and girls often do not own or have easy access to mobile phones is an additional obstacle.

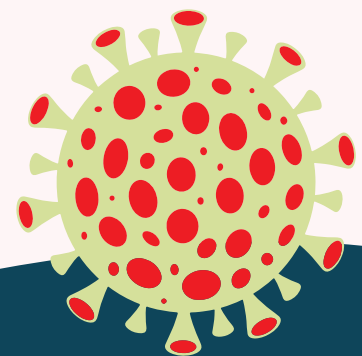
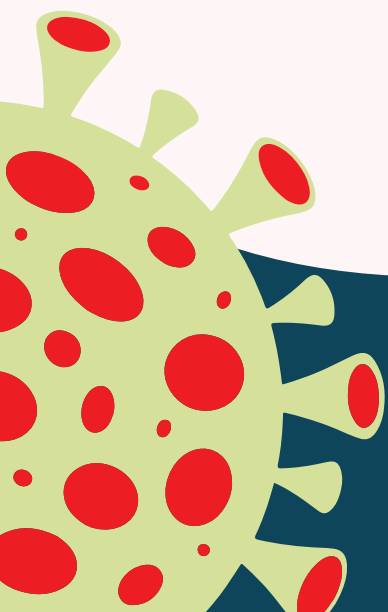
Both operational modalities and strategic approaches to GBV and livelihoods programming should be revisited in light of COVID-19, with emphasis placed on alleviating the burden on women's caregiving responsibilities so that this does not jeopardize any gains on their economic empowerment. Efforts should be made to ensure women have continued access to market-based employment, and where home-based income-generation is necessary for protective purposes these should accommodate for women's increased

burden in the home, with efforts made to balance gendered division of labour.

Given the impact of economic constraints on GBV and the long-term recovery needs, measures should be taken to protect women involved in informal or insecure labour markets, such as increased cash assistance in tandem with programming to ensure skills-building. Paramount to addressing the COVID-19 crisis is the leadership and inclusion of women's and girls' voices to inform response. Women's leadership gaps were widely noted in the region prior to the pandemic, and currently response committees are male-dominated.<sup>19</sup> Women's rights organizations in Lebanon can play a role in changing this trend.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Merissa Khurma (June 2020), "Women Leaders Needed at the High Table During COVID-19 and Beyond," Wilson Centre's Middle East Programme. Available at: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/women-leaders-needed-high-table-during-covid-19-and-beyond>.

<sup>20</sup> Sam Medick (May 2020), "Syrian Refugee Women face New COVID-19 Battleground," The New Humanitarian. Available at: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2020/05/12/Syria-refugee-women-coronavirus-battleground>.





# 1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The relationship between women's economic empowerment and workplace harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse, and domestic violence, including intimate partner violence, has been explored globally.<sup>21</sup> Minimal research is available on this relationship in displacement contexts and for Syrian refugee women specifically. Displacement of millions of Syrians to neighbouring countries has left refugee women and families in dire economic vulnerability, stretching available coping mechanisms, and giving rise to both the necessity and opportunity for Syrian women to seek income-generating activities, often for the first time. While some risks associated with women's economic engagement have been documented in the region, limited empirical investigation hampers understanding of the linkages between livelihoods and protection specific to Syrian refugee women.

To address knowledge gaps and provide an evidence-base for current and future programming, UN Women, UNHCR and ILO commissioned Triangle to conduct an in-depth study to investigate the relationship between women's livelihoods opportunities and the GBV risks and outcomes these may present.

## 1.1. Overview

The aim of the research is to examine different livelihoods opportunities (formal and informal) and financial service provision, and to understand their relationship to GBV risks for women according to the following three research questions:

1. *What are the GBV risks and outcomes associated with displaced women who seek out or engage in livelihoods opportunities?*
2. *How do GBV risks and outcomes experienced by displaced women vary by the type and nature of livelihoods opportunity?*
3. *What is the interaction between livelihoods opportunities and cash-based interventions (CBIs) in relation to GBV-related protection risks and outcomes?*

The following report presents analysis and recommendations that are intended to promote pathways to safe, dignified and sustainable participation of displaced women in the labour force and their wider empowerment.

<sup>21</sup> Oxfam (2015), "Women's Economic Empowerment and Domestic Violence: Links and Lessons for Practitioners Working with Intersectional Approaches." Available at: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/594563/cs-womens-empowerment-domestic-violence-301115-en.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>



## 1.2. Research Matrix

To examine both GBV-related risks and the intersection with livelihoods and CBIs, the following research matrix (See Table 1) was agreed to guide the design, implementation and analysis phases of this research.

**Table 1: Research Matrix**

<b>Main Research Question</b>	<b>What are the experiences of displaced women’s access to livelihoods opportunities in terms of GBV-related protection risks and outcomes in Lebanon, with additional information from Jordan and Iraq?</b>	
<b>Lines of Inquiry</b>	<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Sub-questions</b>
GBV-Related Protection Risks and Outcomes	<b>What are the GBV risks and outcomes associated with displaced women who seek out or engage in livelihoods opportunities?</b>	<p>How does exposure to the public sphere through seeking or engaging in livelihoods opportunities affect GBV risks?</p> <p>How does the broader protective environment and unequal power dynamics affect GBV risks related to seeking or engaging in livelihoods opportunities?</p> <p>Does engagement in livelihoods opportunities increase displaced women’s access to and control over income, resources and assets within the household?</p> <p>How do the national legal and regulatory systems (displacement status and access to work) affect the level of GBV risk exposure for displaced women engaging in or seeking livelihoods opportunities?</p>
Livelihoods and Cash-based Interventions	<p><b>How do GBV risks and outcomes experienced by displaced women vary by the type and nature of livelihoods opportunity?</b></p> <p><b>What is the relationship between livelihoods opportunities and CBIs in relation to GBV-related protection risks and outcomes?</b></p>	<p>Do particular livelihoods opportunities/sectors carry more risk or opportunity in terms of exposure to GBV risks and outcomes than others?</p> <p>Do harmful coping mechanisms change depending on whether someone is employed or not, and depending on what type of employment?</p> <p>What types (formal/informal) and sectors of livelihoods opportunity are most conducive to positive GBV-related protection outcomes and for who (age, gender, status, marital status, livelihoods income level/ contribution to household income, location and diversity factors)?</p> <p>Are displaced women in households receiving multi-purpose cash or other CBIs more/less likely to seek/engage in livelihoods opportunities?</p> <p>How are specialised CBIs and livelihoods referrals used in GBV case management to support displaced women’s economic empowerment?</p>



## 2. RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Approach

This study adopted a phased adaptive approach to refine the research throughout implementation. This was necessary both to examine several variables related to lines of inquiry and to identify research profiles that offer the most valuable and useful information related to GBV-related risks and outcomes. This approach was integrated in the sampling strategy for each research method to gather appropriate information and integrate feedback loop into tool development.

The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative data to provide depth of analysis; qualitative data acquired

through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were analysed using the grounded theory approach, also known as Glaser-Strauss method. Research teams conducting quantitative work were trained by Triangle and UNHCR Lebanon to ensure adherence to do no harm (DNH) and data protection principles, including avoiding the collection of personally identifiable data, research ethics and soft skills, and safe disclosure and referral pathways in case of spontaneous disclosures.

With a focus on consulting refugee women across Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq,<sup>22</sup> a total of 434 Syrian refugee women (the majority in Lebanon) and 18 Syrian refugee men were engaged throughout the data collection process.

<sup>22</sup> Qualitative information was gathered from camp-based settings in Jordan and Iraq, totaling 43 qualitative activities with both male and female Syrian refugees.

## 2.2. Methods

### 2.2.1. Literature Review

Triangle conducted a literature review based on publicly-available documents, those provided by UN Women and other academic and humanitarian sources, and evaluation reports, assessments, and reports relating to the situation of displaced women in the region, trends related to GBV, livelihoods and CBIs programming.

### 2.2.2. Tool Development

The research team developed semi-structured questionnaires for use during the inception interviews. These interviews provided the necessary contextual information for the design of the research. During this consultation phase, the assumption that refugee women want to work and have limited opportunities to do so across the region in the formal and informal sector,<sup>23</sup> and that each of these sectors brings different protection risks and outcomes (positive and negative) was accepted as a starting position for this research, and lines of inquiry and methodology were adapted accordingly. The following tools were developed:

**Focus Group Discussions (FGD).** FGDs are generally inappropriate for investigating more sensitive GBV concerns, as the group setting may inadvertently invoke disclosure which could result in stigma, serious harm or death, and/or post-research community tensions. Accordingly, FGDs were used to investigate attitudes and perceptions of risk (rather than experiences) around each of the lines of inquiry.

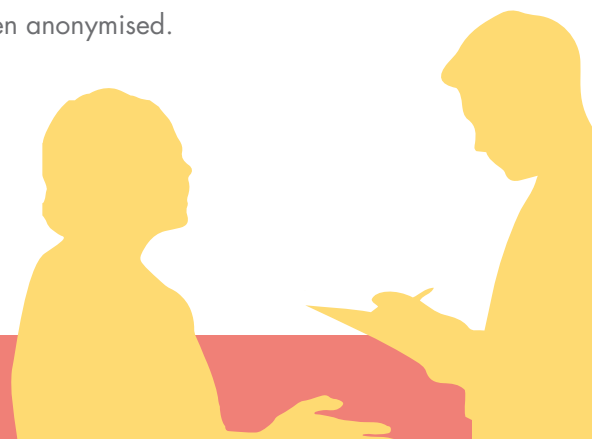
FGDs included five to ten participants and explored:

1. The push/pull factors associated with women's entrance into employment and risk thresholds.
2. Male and female perceptions of work environments, commuting and impact on household dynamics (financial and household decision-making, etc.), as well as female experiences of these environments and their impact.
3. How different livelihoods activities affect GBV-related and broader protection risks and outcomes (wage levels, formal/informal employment, sector-specific employment, seasonality, etc.).
4. The relevant gender, status (refugee), location, employment status and where possible, diversity-differentiated experiences, to inform targeting of survey questions.

Based on the inception phase, the research team adopted a purposive stratified sampling strategy for FGDs, disaggregated on the basis of geography, gender, shelter status (ITS/camp), employment status/type (formal/informal), and CBI recipient status.

**Key Informant Interviews (KII).** KIIs were divided into two main types: Individual KIIs (I-KIIs), which covered particular Syrian refugee profiles and Expert KIIs (E-KIIs) which covered technical specialists and other key stakeholders. Both types of KIIs were semi-structured and guided by the questions in the KII tool relevant to the person(s) being interviewed. E-KIIs adopted a snowball sampling methodology, and both I-KII and E-KII's interviewees have been anonymised.

<sup>23</sup> More nuance is required in the assumption that women want to work and are seeking opportunity to do so. Qualitative findings across all country contexts indicate the assumption is not necessarily correct – that circumstances and dire financial need serve as push factors rather than choice – while many women consulted in FGDs reported positive outcomes, others mentioned they would stop if the male head household could work.



### 2.2.3. Qualitative Activities

Between December 23, 2019 and January 31, 2020, **14** focus group discussions, **34** individual key informant interviews and **13** expert key informant interviews were undertaken across Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq.

**Table 2: Qualitative Activities**

Qualitative	Target	Conducted	Percentage
<b>LEBANON</b>			
Focus Group Discussions	5	4	80%
Individual Key Informant Interviews	15	10	67%
Expert Key Informant Interviews	6	5	83%
<b>JORDAN</b>			
Focus Group Discussions	5	5	100%
Individual Key Informant Interviews	15	12	80%
Expert Key Informant Interviews	6	5	83%
<b>IRAQ</b>			
Focus Group Discussions	5	5	100%
Individual Key Informant Interviews	15	12	80%
Expert Key Informant Interviews	6	4	67%

### 2.2.4. Quantitative Activities

Supplementing the qualitative data for Lebanon, the Women's Well-being and Work Survey ('the survey') was conducted between February 13-15, 2020, through a regularly used UNHCR call centre. Female enumerators led phone surveys and were trained in protection principles (including DNH, data protection and referral protocols). Among Syrian refugee women aged 19-65, the sampling frame targeted female-headed households, employed/unemployed women, and this who did or did not receive various CBLs. The survey adopted stratified random sampling of the target population with a 95% confidence level and 5.64% confidence interval with a sample size of 302 respondents. Statistical significance after disaggregation was set at the levels at or above the confidence interval.

**Table 3: Quantitative Survey Sampling Frame**

Gender	Residence	HH Type	Number of Surveys	CBI Status
Female	Informal Settlement	FHH	34	Recipient
Female	Informal Settlement	FHH	34	Previous recipient/ Not current recipient
Female	Host Community (non-ITS)	FHH	34	Recipient
Female	Host Community (non-ITS)	FHH	34	Previous recipient/ Not current recipient
Female	Informal Settlement	Non-FHH	34	Recipient
Female	Informal Settlement	Non-FHH	34	Previous recipient/ Not current recipient
Female	Host Community (non-ITS)	Non-FHH	34	Recipient
Female	Host Community (non-ITS)	Non-FHH	34	Previous recipient/ Not current recipient
Female	N/A	N/A	15	Previous PCAP recipient
Female	N/A	FHH	15	Current PCAP recipient



### 3. LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Limitations are acknowledged in the process of completing this analysis, with relevant mitigation measures taken as needed.

**Table 4: List of Limitations & Mitigation Measures**

#### LIMITATIONS & EFFECTS

##### Research ethics and sensitive research

Sensitive questioning required indirect queries and complex methodology to ensure compliance with DNH and related protection principles and meet agency expectations with expected research outcomes.

##### Methods

Some methods planned during inception were not carried out, namely the qualitative research conducted with specialised CBI recipients and the quantitative surveys in Jordan and Iraq given time and logistical considerations

##### Sampling

Sampling adherence was not possible due to assumptions around access to research subjects in design, as well as assumptions and lack of access to necessary databases.

Due to the context in Lebanon and lack of available employment data, random sampling was employed to target women engaged in income-generation. As a result, only 12% of the sample comprised of working women, as opposed to the 50% initially planned.

#### MITIGATION MEASURES

- Continuous dialogue with agencies throughout research design and implementation, consulting with GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR), protection and DNH training for staff administering tools, strong oversight of data collection and analysis processes, data protection agreements.
- Specialised cash recipients were added to the sampling frame of the survey in Lebanon.
- In order to compensate for reporting bias towards Lebanon, findings for Jordan and Iraq have been placed in subsequent juxtaposition.
- Triangle and UNx3 developed admissibility criteria for survey data which contained anomalies in order to establish significance, limitations on variation and minimum reporting standards, all of which were applied to the survey.
- In addition, data cleaning was performed alongside further review of qualitative data, including additional E-KIIs and literature review.
- Frequent contact with commissioning agencies and adaptations to the sampling strategy and overarching methodology were agreed and implemented.



## 4. KEY FINDINGS

The following section is organised by the overarching research question, and disaggregated findings are only mentioned when significant to the question asked.

### 4.1. What are the GBV risks and outcomes associated with Syrian refugee women who seek out or engage in livelihoods opportunities?

#### 4.1.1. Public spaces and leaving the home

Due to the regulatory environment, high living costs and informal nature of the labour market, Syrian refugee women dispersed across Lebanon are increasingly seeking out informal work opportunities to meet household needs, which places them in a position of increased exposure in public spaces.

**Few women note work as a reason to leave their home, with most needing permission from male gatekeepers.**

Only 15% of female respondents leave the house for work, indicating a relatively low level of female labour force participation. Beyond work, the most prevalent reasons for women to leave were to seek medical assistance (76%), purchase household goods and services (62%) or to visit family and friends (33%) (See Figure 1). Despite the ritual nature of such activities, women often cannot do so with agency – both FGD participants and survey respondents (including 95% of married women) primarily cited needing permission from their husband (83%) or brother (7%) to leave the home, with implications for service accessibility. The majority of women only leave home when accompanied by others (65%), while only 28% are permitted to leave the home alone, though qualitative data indicated some women devised methods to convince husbands to let them leave unaccompanied.

*“When a woman goes out, she faces a lot of bad men...they may think because of Syrian nationality she is easy to get.”*

*– FGD Males, Lebanon.*

*“We can’t talk about such things [GBV incidents and harassment] in our society. It becomes a scandal. If a woman tells her husband [she has been harassed] he will think she seduced the guy so her husband will tell her to get out of the house.”*

*– FGD Unemployed Women Seeking Work, Lebanon.*





Figure 1:  
What are examples of reasons why you leave your home or residence?

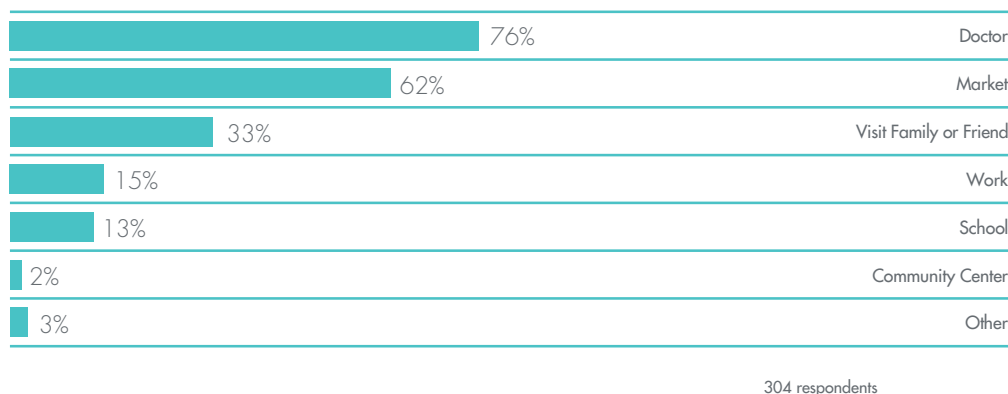
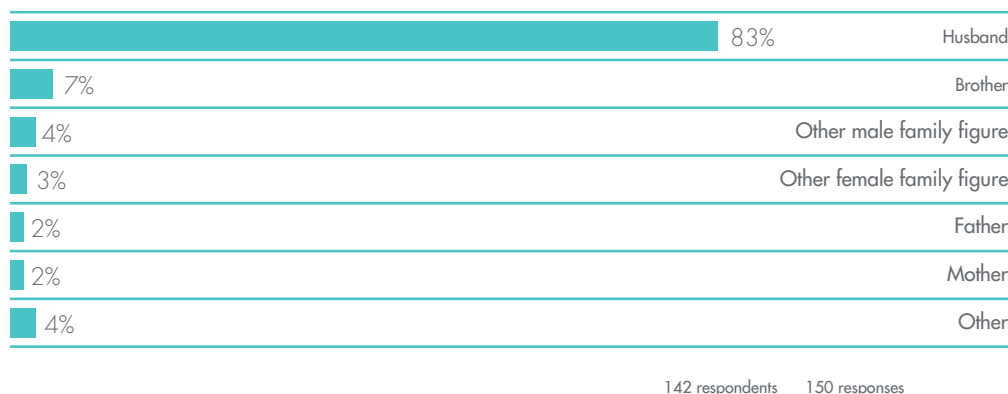


Figure 2:  
Who do you/women in household need permission from to leave the house?



In many cases, Syrian refugee women feel safe leaving their homes, with some geographic variation. Two-thirds (67%) of women felt safe when leaving the home, and just over one-fifth (21%) do not feel safe – of which only 5% feel strongly (See Figure 3). Women in South Lebanon (29%) feel least safe when leaving the home, followed by women in Beirut (21%) whereas women in Beqaa and North Lebanon (72% each) feel safest leaving the house.

Sexual harassment and fear of kidnapping<sup>24</sup> are the most prevalent fears associated with leaving the home. The most cited GBV risks Syrian refugee women feared across Lebanon were sexual harassment (40%), kidnapping (40%), verbal harassment (37%), physical harassment (24%), and street crime (21%). Interestingly,

<sup>24</sup> Little prevalence data is available, but KIIs indicate that rumours and social media perpetuate prominent fears of kidnapping among Syrian refugee women in Lebanon. Kidnapping was differentiated from exposure to human trafficking in the survey.

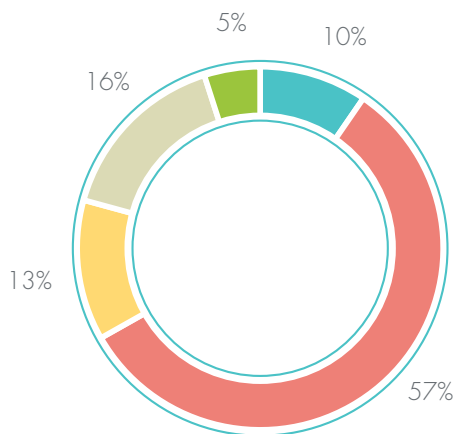
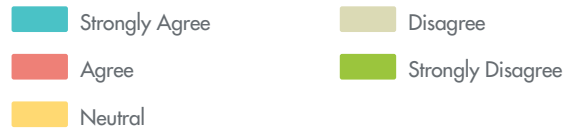


Figure 3:

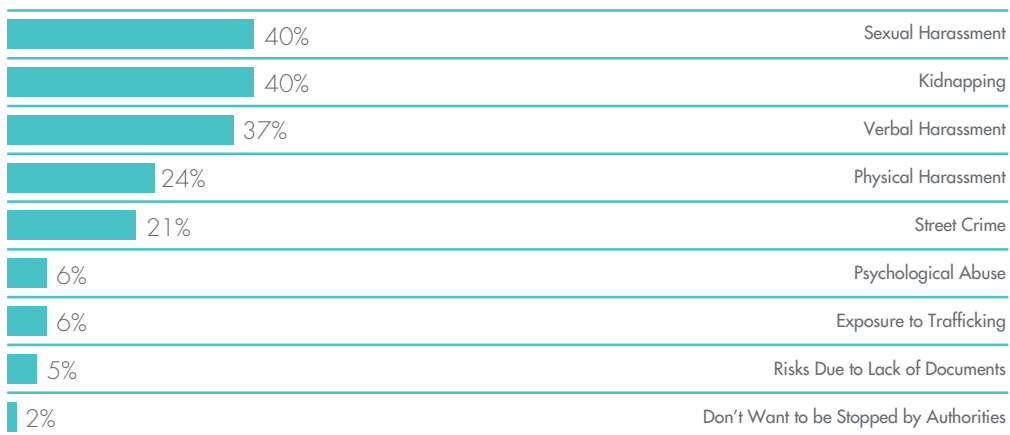
Do you feel safe when you leave the home?



304 respondents

Figure 4:

What are some of the reasons why you would not feel safe?



63 respondents

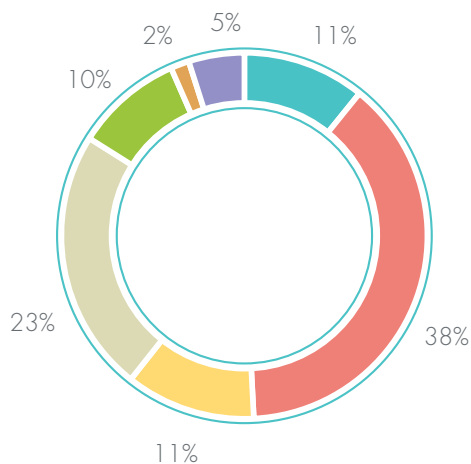
non-GBV related risks were the least reported fears, including being stopped by the authorities (2%) and lack of documentation (5%), (See Figure 4).<sup>25</sup> Qualitative data showed women were often followed or harassed, and male refugee respondents expressed similar concerns regarding harassment and kidnapping of women.

While just under half (49%) of women perceive that incidents of physical harassment, street crime, verbal harassment, psychological abuse, sexual harassment and/or kidnapping and trafficking are prevalent, only 11% felt strongly that way (See Figure 5).

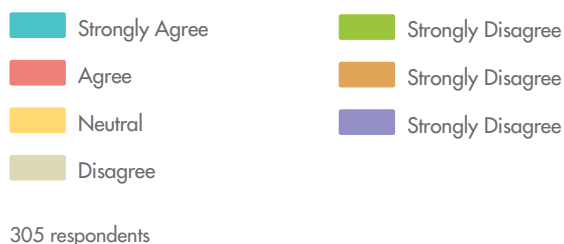
*“We were invited to smoke [by a man in a shared taxi] with a hand gesture of masturbation.”*

– FGD Unemployed Women Seeking Work, Lebanon.

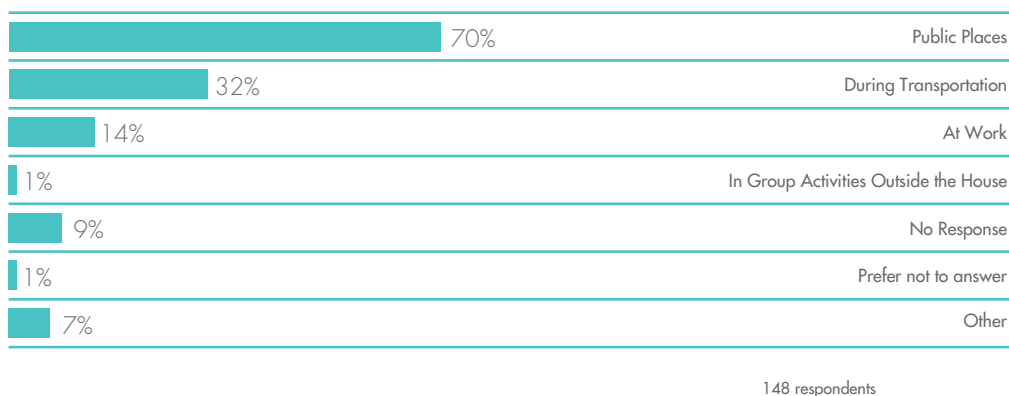
<sup>25</sup> This finding confirms previous findings from protection monitoring missions in Lebanon which identify freedom of movement protection issues to be more relevant to Syrian men relative to women.



**Figure 5:**  
Do you think the following incidents (physical harassment, street crime, verbal harassment, psychological abuse, sexual harassment, kidnapping and trafficking) occur in the community?



**Figure 6:**  
(If GBV related incidents occur) Where do such incidents usually occur in the community?



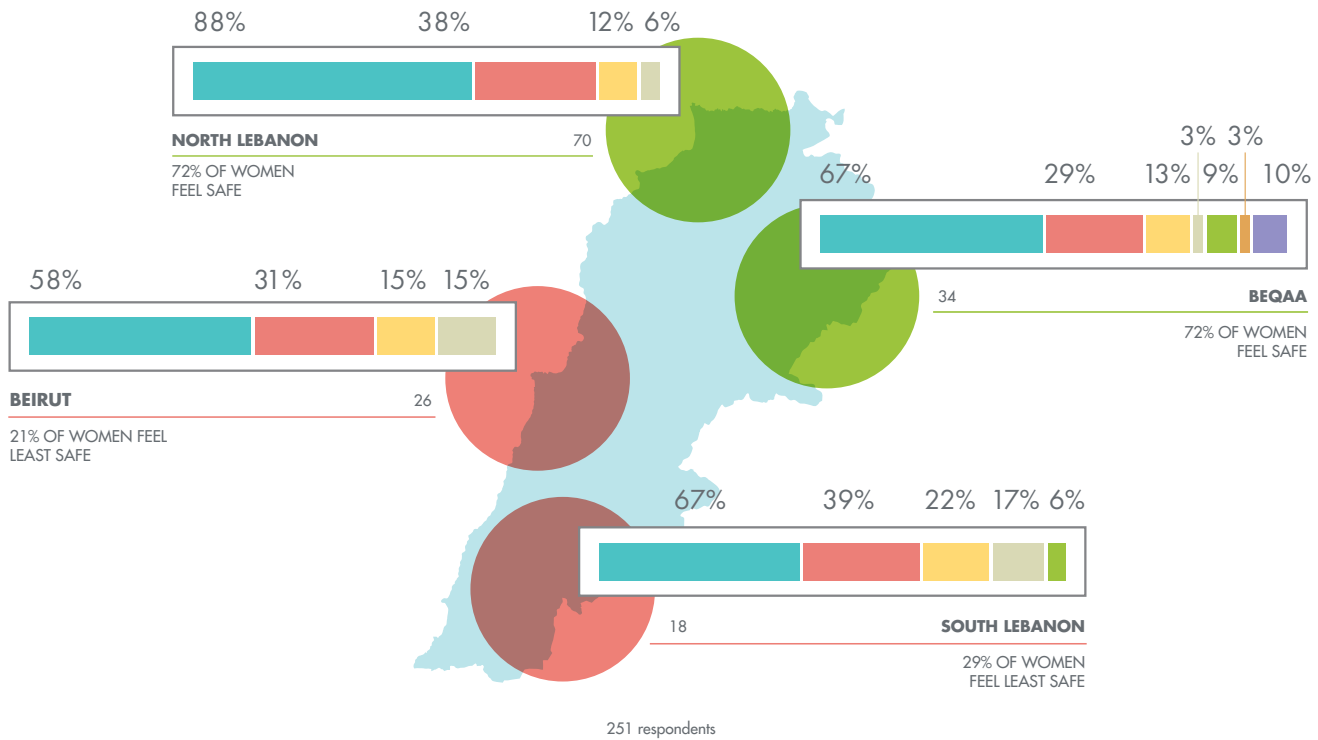
The spaces where women feel they experience the most risk of GBV in their communities are public places, as well as in transport — with workplaces featuring less prevalently.<sup>26</sup> Exactly 70% of female respondents perceived GBV risks were present in public spaces such as streets and markets, followed by transportation (32%) (See Figure 6), which was also reflected in qualitative

data. Women in informal settlements are more likely (74%) to report incidents of harassment occurring in public spaces relative to women renting formally (55%) and informally (69%).

**Just over half of refugee women surveyed believe GBV incidents are reported in their community, with more stating they themselves would report an incident.** Perceptions do vary, and there are significant barriers to reporting. Over half (52%) of refugee women surveyed be-

<sup>26</sup> Due to sampling issues, only 12% of refugee women were working.

Figure 7:  
(If GBV related incidents occur)  
Where do such incidents usually occur in the community (by region)?

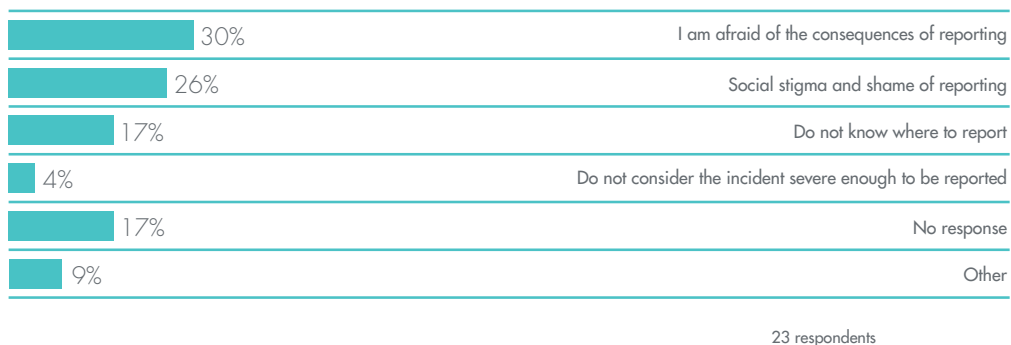


lieve that harassment is reported, while 26% disagreed, and 15% believed reporting occurred sometimes. More than half of respondents noted harassment incidents are reported to police (51%), with others highlighting UN Agencies (38%); these rates are only slightly lower when asked at individual level about reporting tendencies. Male household members and local community leaders were the least likely outlets for women to report GBV (12% and 6% respectively), followed by local community leaders (6%) and female household members (4%).

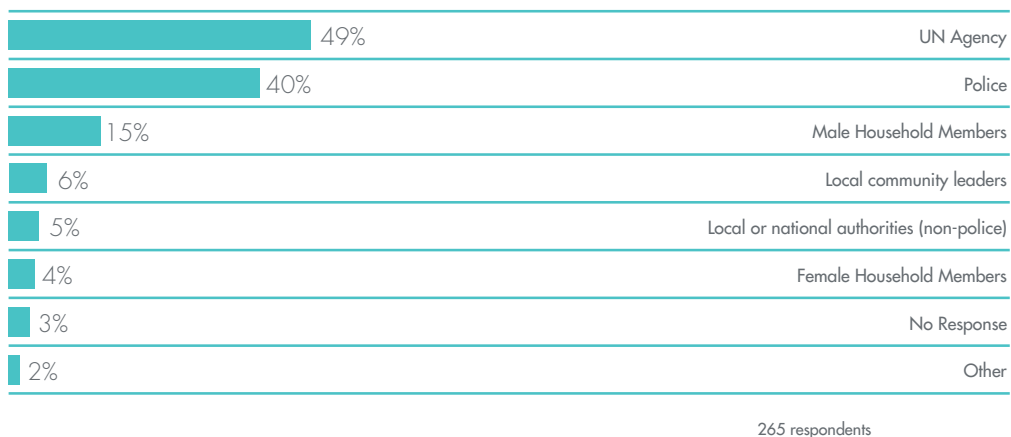
**At the community level, concern for unforeseen consequences and social stigma are the predominant reasons women do not report incidents of GBV.** More than half (57%) of respondents cited fear of future consequences, including street crime (related to community awareness of the incident), psychological abuse, kid-

napping/trafficking, physical, verbal, or sexual harassment, as reasons not to report. Almost a third (32%) cited social stigma and shame, such as familial or community retaliation, as a reason for not reporting (See Figure 8). At the individual level, women report having more agency to report incidents. Most refugee women (88%) surveyed stated that they would report a GBV incident if they experienced it, with higher rates among young women (97% of women aged 19-25). Most women in Beirut (96%) stated that they would report an incident of harassment, while 84% of women in Beqaa stated the same. Women residing in a formally rented residence (93%) are most likely to report, with much lower rates among those living in informal settlements. Around 26% of women who don't report cited social stigma as their main reason, followed by not knowing where to report (17%), (See Figure 8).

**Figure 8:**  
(If respondent would not report incident) The main reasons why you would not report are:



**Figure 9:**  
(If respondent would not report incident) To whom do you report?





## FINDINGS FROM CAMP SETTINGS: JORDAN & IRAQ

Although there are no formal camp settings for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, there are significant numbers of Syrian refugees in the region who live in formal camp settings in Jordan and Iraq, which has an impact on livelihoods opportunities and exposure to GBV. While there is relatively free mobility within camps (with most movement by foot in the absence of taxi and bus services), there is not a lot of travel outside camps, particularly in Jordan, which reduces access to wider markets and correlated livelihoods opportunities. Traditional socio-cultural attitudes can limit Syrian refugee women's ability to move freely, with men often accompanying and/or checking in on women's movement. Women's work within the camp, although still not widely accepted, is considered more suitable for women due to the close proximity to the home. Other constraints exist; one Jordanian male reported that his wife, who holds a physics degree, is unable to give private lessons because she would not be able to get a work permit in this sector which is not open to Syrian refugees. In some cases, security restrictions on movement more often affect men.

*“At first, my husband did not agree that I work. He asked ‘how can you go out of the house?’ I told him that I would work inside the camp and convinced him, then he agreed.”*

*– FGD Employed and Income-Generating Women, Iraq.*

In Jordan and Iraq, some refugee women engaging in home-based work reported that they face particular difficulty selling their products given high competition and few clients in camp settings. E-KIs with GBV specialists confirmed the lack of market-based livelihoods opportunities for women, which diminishes effectiveness of vocational trainings in regards to achieving that goal.

*“What we do as work is not being sold. It's not just us. All women have difficulty selling. The camp is small and there is a high competition.”*

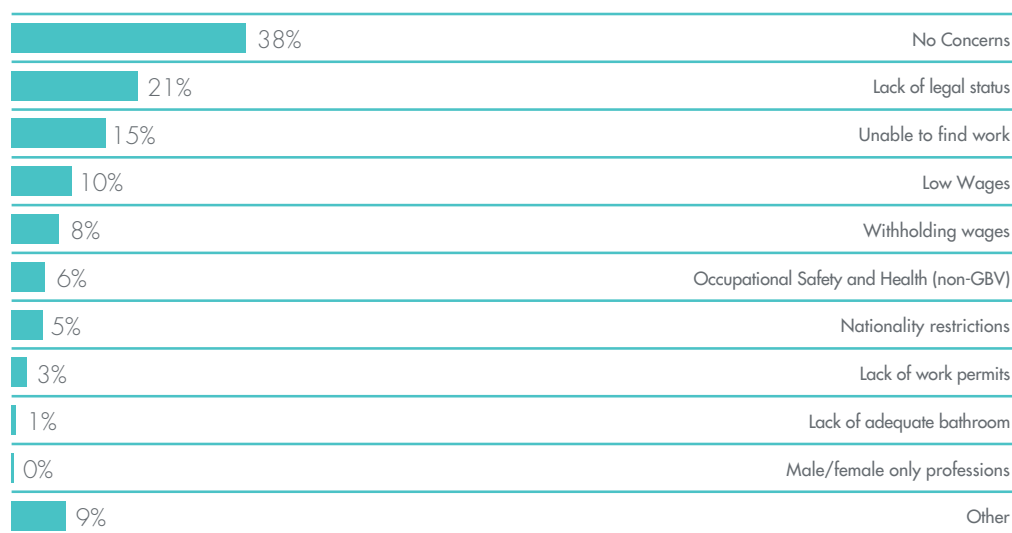
*– FGD Employed and Income-Generating Women, Iraq.*

Some respondents noted that child marriage was the main harmful coping mechanism identified in Jordan and Iraq, though a number of additional and equally worrisome coping mechanisms exist. A possible camp-specific incentive for child marriage according to an E-KI in Jordan is that new couples may be able to buy shelters on the black market, enabling them to establish a separate household – then accessing services and assistance through their new household. Child labour was also cited as a coping mechanism.



Figure 10:

What concerns do you face in relation to the work requirements in your host country?



272 respondents 313 responses

#### 4.1.2. Impact of national legal and regulatory systems on GBV risk exposure – formal and informal work

**Legal and regulatory restrictions on residency and access to work for refugees in Lebanon mean that very few refugee women seek work permits.** The three sectors in which work permits are usually easier to obtain (environment [including sanitation], construction, and agriculture) are not undertaken traditionally by women which acts as an additional barrier to their formal labour market participation. Several female respondents reported working informally, and others reported having recently lost jobs after clampdowns and labour inspections.

**Bureaucratic obstacles can be a disincentive to access formal work.** Even in the agricultural sector where work permits for refugees are legally feasible, a number of obstacles mean that women continue to work informally. Procedures for obtaining a work permit are too time-consuming and often expensive. Additionally, farmers and land-owners often consider the number of days for which work is required too few to formalise work arrangements. Overall, 21% of refugee women cited the lack of legal status in the country as their greatest concern related to work requirements (See Figure 10), more so in Beirut (30%) compared to the South (25%), North (19%) and Beqaa (15%).

*“As the work permit regulations are being enforced, we are seeing increased inspections being carried out by all security forces, not just Ministry of Labour officials. This is both deterring employers from hiring and refugees from working.”*

*– Expert Interview, Lebanon.*

**INFO BOX:****LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES TO WORK IN LEBANON**

There is no specific legal framework regulating the work of refugees in Lebanon and refugees have to comply with the legal framework regulating the work of foreigners. In Lebanon, all foreigners (including Syrians) have to obtain a work permit from the Ministry of Labour (MoL) before being able to work legally. In application of the Bilateral Labour Agreement signed between Lebanon and Syria in 1994, Syrian nationals do however benefit from some advantages when requesting a work permit. These include the exemption from pre-approval by the MoL prior to arrival into the country, a reduction of the work permit fee by 75%, and the exemption from the bank deposit of LBP 1,500,000.

The required documents and fees to obtain a work permit remain nevertheless extensive, including the need to have valid residency and the support from the employer throughout the process to obtain the work permit. These requirements are challenging to meet, especially due to the difficulty in obtaining legal residency for foreigners, including Syrian refugees. Specific difficulties are also faced by those working in the informal sector or for daily workers, as they do not have a regular employer able to provide such support.

In addition to the requirement of having a work permit, there are certain sectors and professions in Lebanon that are restricted to Lebanese. Based on Decisions from the MoL, Syrian nationals are nevertheless allowed to work in the areas of agriculture, construction, and environment/cleaning, as well as in any other sectors not restricted to Lebanese.

Finally, once a person obtains a work permit, his/her residency will be based on this work. This provision - applicable to all foreigners - has specific consequences for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. In 2015, the GSO decision issued on 31 December 2014 stipulating that refugees who were in Lebanon before 2015, and who sought to remain in the country, had to renew their residency permits either on the basis of registration with UNHCR or through a pledge of responsibility by a local sponsor, either an individual or business entity. In a follow up decision in 2017, it added that a person who had obtained a legal residency based on UNHCR registration but later on, obtained a residency on another basis (including based on work) may not revert back and renew his/her residency based on UNHCR registration. As a result, refugees who lose their work and therefore their residency based on this work, will most likely also lose their residency if they cannot secure another work.

**SOURCE: UNHCR**





Figure 11:  
What concerns do you face in relation to legal stay in your host country?



27 respondents 401 responses

*“I worked for a doctor as an assistant, but I was stopped from working as they found a Lebanese woman to work and Lebanese have priority. Now it is so hard to find a job without having legal documents Lebanon.”*

*– Individual Interview, Unemployed Woman Seeking Work, Lebanon.*

Nearly half of refugee women (47%) felt that their legal status does not permit them to move freely. However, more women in Beqaa (55%) felt they had freedom of movement compared to Beirut (41%), the South (41%) and the North (40%). The most cited concern for women associated with

their legal stay in Lebanon was a general fear of arrest for myriad reasons (36%). Meanwhile, forced return to Syria (27%) and lack of a valid residency permit (22%) were the next most cited concerns. While 37% cited no concerns, others noted evening curfew concerns (5%) (See Figure 11).



## LEGAL AND REGULATORY INFLUENCE IN THE REGION

Jordan's regulatory environment for Syrians provides opportunities and a number of constraints. Foreigner classifications do not have distinction for refugees, and the government limits the areas that are open for foreign workers – of which Syrians (including refugees) are a category, so their possible occupations are curtailed which has led to numerous harmful coping mechanisms and a substantial economic deficit for urban-based Syrian refugees without access to camp-based aid.<sup>27</sup> As a result, urban refugees predominantly work in the informal sector, which is the predominant labour market for all low-skilled workers in the country and traditionally considered suitable only for men. In addition, formal labour requires a government-issued work permit and, in FGDs, women reported that the sectors that are open for work permits – mainly agriculture, construction and manufacturing – are not very appealing for women – and there are also significant societal obstacles that women face, both in and outside of the camp, so men are considerably freer to take these jobs. So even if women did not report facing issues in obtaining exit permits to leave camp-based settings, they do not necessarily seek and benefit from work permits.

27 Sarah Bidinger, Aaron Lang, Danielle Hites, Yoana Kuzmova, Elena Noureddine, and Susan Akram (2019), "Protecting Syrian Refugees: Laws, Policies, and Global Responsibility Sharing," Boston University School of Law. Available at: <https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/Syrian%20Refugees%20Full%20Report.pdf>

*"We don't face issues with permits.<sup>28</sup> The police are good, there are no concerns with checkpoints. The only issue is when people try to leave the camp illegally, but this is more of a threat to men than women."*

*– FGD Employed and Income-Generating Women, Jordan.*

In Kurdish areas of Iraq, legal and regulatory systems do not explicitly impede camp-based refugee women's ability to work. Overall, the freedom of movement within the camps provides women with greater security. The Kurdish Region of Iraq additionally granted Syrian refugees the right to work in the region.<sup>29</sup> However, additional legal challenges still exist for refugee women, due to difficulties obtaining civil documentation, including marriage certificates (for those seeking divorce) and birth certificates (for children to attend school).

28 Although permits are required for movement in and out of camps, camp-based refugees can now use their work permits to leave the camp for employment purposes, without the need of an additional exit permit. See in UNHCR (May 2020) Zaatari refugee Camp – Factsheet. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/zaatari-refugee-camp-factsheet-may-2020>; See also Allegra Lab (2015), "When Camps Become Home: Legal Implications of the Long-Term Encampment in Zaatari #Refugees". Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20150504123228/http://allegralaboratory.net:80/when-camps-become-home-legal-implications-of-the-long-term-encampment-in-zaatari/>

29 George Sadek (December 2013), "Legal Status of Refugees: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq;" The Law Library of Congress. Available at: <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/refugees/2014-010156%20RPT.pdf>



### 4.1.3. Socio-cultural influences and refugee women's engagement with work

**Pressure from family members, particularly males, plays a key role in limiting refugee women's choice to work in Lebanon.** Female FGD and I-KII participants reported that women engaged in income-generation were verbally prohibited by male members such as husbands and brothers from working and in some cases threatened with physical harm if caught working or seeking work. FGD respondents noted that male unemployment limits women's labour force participation, causing some working women to hide their work from parents, male family members and their community, as it is considered shameful for a man to stay at home while a woman works.

*“Even though he is not working, my husband refuses to let me work outside the house because he doesn't want people to think he is not fulfilling his responsibilities towards his family.”*

– FGD Unemployed Women Seeking Work Receiving Cash, Lebanon.

**Although some refugee women perceive their community to be supportive of women's work – negative perceptions continue.** Less than half of women (45%)<sup>30</sup> think their community is supportive of women being part of the labour force, and only 6% of women felt strongly that their community supported women's work.<sup>31</sup> The majority (54%)<sup>32</sup> felt their community was unsupportive of women's participation in the labour market, even if only 2%<sup>33</sup> said the community held this opinion strongly.

<sup>30</sup> Corresponding to 45% of responses

<sup>31</sup> Corresponding to 6% of responses

<sup>32</sup> Corresponding to 54% of responses

<sup>33</sup> Corresponding to 2% of responses

**Refugee women who have been able to work in Lebanon reported a change in family attitudes once they began to contribute to household income.** Around (47%) of respondents perceive their families to be relatively supportive when women started employment, though this was less so for young women aged 19-25 (at a rate of 18% support).<sup>34</sup> This finding could reflect socio-cultural perceptions that young women are more at risk of harassment, more likely to conform to 'acceptable' behaviour as opposed to challenging norms, or deemed more suited to marriage and home life rather than working. Despite improvements in family perceptions, refugee male partners are reported to be primary inhibitors for women's employment. Qualitative data from female refugees cited examples where husbands controlled women's labour market engagement. Survey data similarly reflected that two-thirds of women felt their husbands disagreed with women's employment (32% and 29%, respectively), though 35% felt their male partners approved of them working (See Figure 12).

*“The attitude towards work has changed. It's driven by the necessity for women to work.”*

– Individual Interview, Unemployed Woman Seeking Work, Lebanon.

*“My husband in Syria would have refused that I work, but here he has to accept as my children are young and have many needs”*

– FGD Employed and Income-Generating Women, Lebanon.

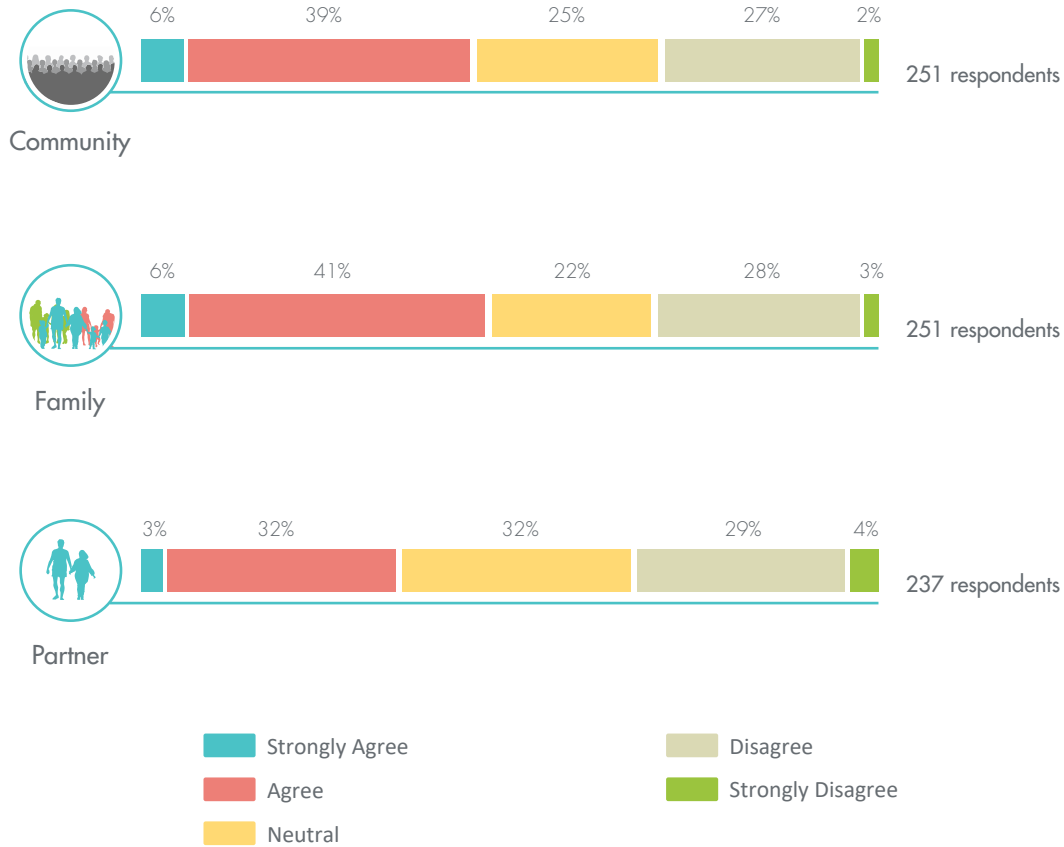
*“Even if we don't have enough money to buy food, my brother won't allow me to work. He told me he would break my legs if I went out to work. My husband refuses the idea as well, but I feel I might be able to convince him, given the situation we are facing.”*

– FGD Unemployed Women Seeking Work, Lebanon.

<sup>34</sup> Corresponding to 20% of responses

251 respondents

Figure 12:  
Does your community, family, and partner agree with you working?



Many refugee women who work felt their employment had a positive effect on their household and allowed them to have greater control over household expenses. Exactly 70% of women working or engaged in income-generation felt this affected their households positively, among which 76% attributed this to higher household income, while others noted greater control over expenditures and household awareness of income opportunities (See Figure 13).

Despite positive gains, some working refugee women experience negative effects in the household, namely the inability to manage childcare (71%) and household

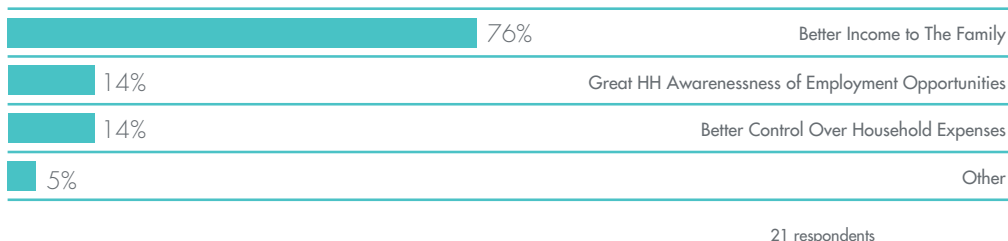
needs (36%) when working.<sup>35</sup> A lower number of women reported marital disputes (7%) and issues with the community (7%) caused by their employment.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Corresponding to 53% and 26% of respondents, respectively.

<sup>36</sup> Corresponding to 5% for responses for both.



**Figure 13:**  
How has being employed affected your household in a positive way?

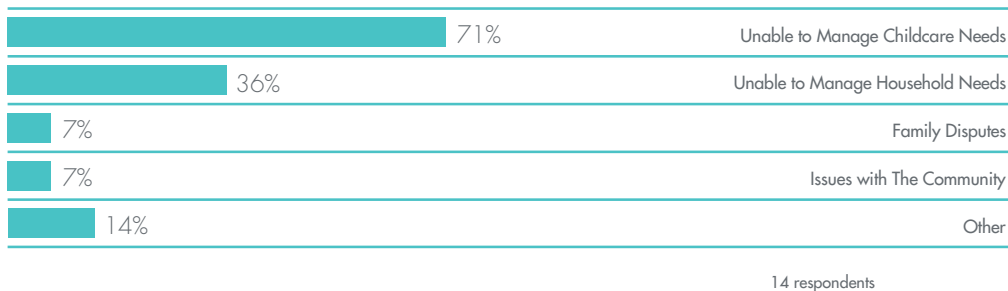


**Figure 14:**  
Has being employed affected your household in any negative way?

Strongly Agree  
Agree

28 respondents

**Figure 15:**  
In what ways has being employed affected your household in a negative way?



## MEN AND BOYS CAN SUPPORT GENDER TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Gender equality work with refugee men and boys has yielded positive results in shifting entrenched gender norms around women's work.<sup>37</sup> GBV specialists in Iraq noted a number of initiatives and subsequent behavioural change observed in the Kurdish region related to the acceptability of women engaging in livelihoods, despite needing time to see more transformative changes. For example, see the project "Engaging Men through Accountable Practice (EMAP) in Qushtapa Refugee camp in Erbil-Iraq".<sup>38</sup>

*"We have several initiatives to engage the male partners of women engaged in cash for work projects, these include topics related to men taking the money of their wives or the support men should provide women because they are working. The support should come from all aspects: the liberty to go out, decision making etc."*

*– Expert Interview, Iraq.*

Some women residing in camps in Jordan and Iraq have seen a change in household roles as a result of working, with some in Jordan noting increased household support from husbands, such as willingness to assist with cleaning or cooking or encouraging personal-rewards for working; While notably this is not the case in the majority of households, it presents a promising opportunity. Other women reported their position in the community being elevated because of their work experience.

*"I come home more often with him preparing lunch."*

*– FGD Employed and Income-Generating Women, Jordan.*

*"I remember when I once got my first salary, my husband insisted that I go buy something new for myself."*

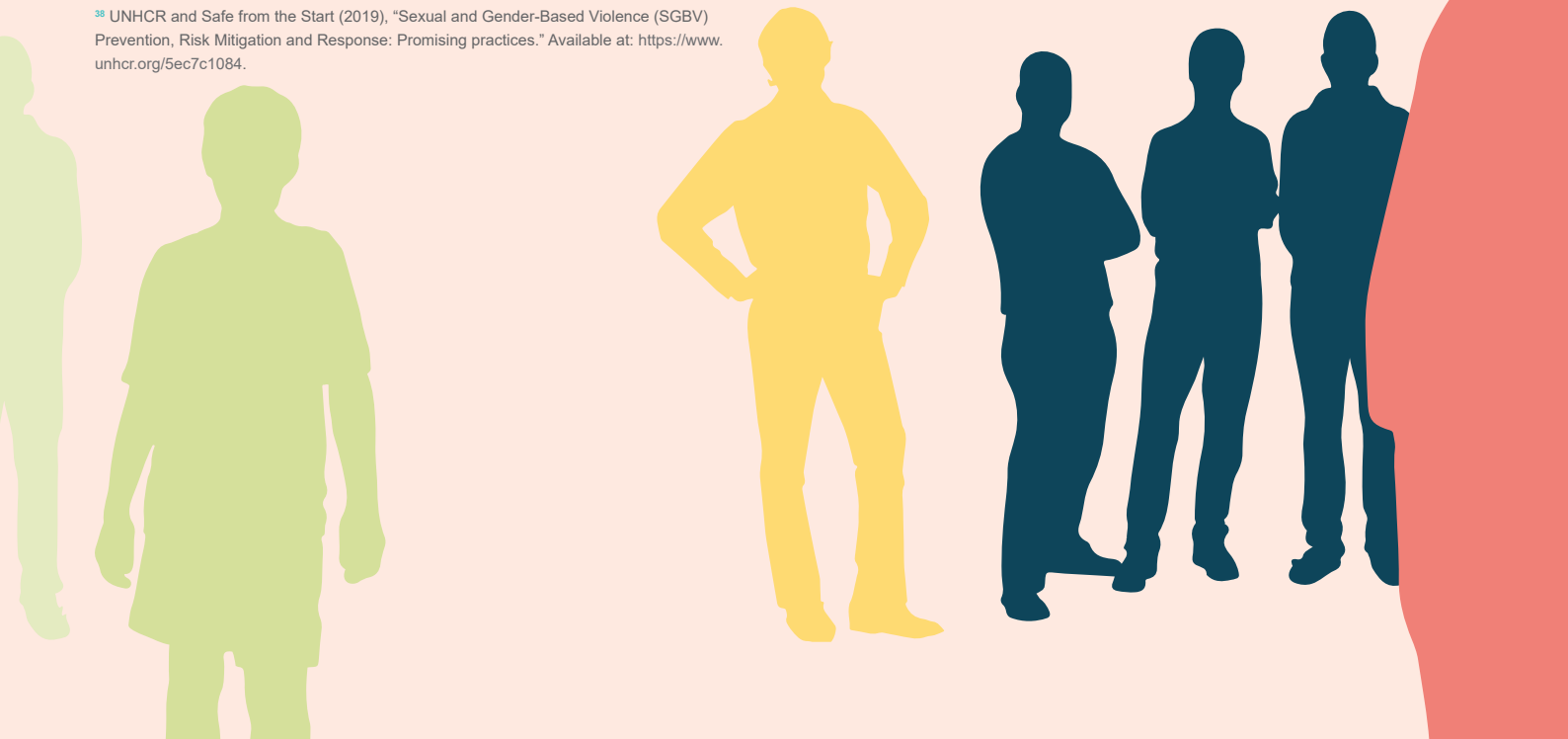
*– FGD Employed and Income-Generating Women, Jordan.*

*"People nowadays come and ask us for information about work and how to apply. Some also ask for help to read them things or teach their kids. It is more like we have become a reference."*

*– FGD Employed and Income-Generating Women, Jordan.*

<sup>37</sup> Preventing Intimate Partner Violence: Impact evaluation of engaging men in accountable practices in eastern DRC; International Rescue Committee; 2020

<sup>38</sup> UNHCR and Safe from the Start (2019), "Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Prevention, Risk Mitigation and Response: Promising practices." Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5ec7c1084>.



## DISABILITY, HEALTH AND LIVELIHOODS

To begin to understand the impact of disability and/or serious medical conditions on refugee women's access to livelihoods, the survey looked into the situation of refugee women, their households and related care-giving responsibilities.

**Disability affects a significant number of women, particularly among widowed and divorced women.** Almost a fifth (22%) of women surveyed reported health problems preventing them from undertaking certain activities. General issues identified by women were related to physical health and mobility requiring daily medication, mental health, needing financial support from the family to pay for treatment and requiring a caregiver. Divorced and widowed women are more likely to have health problems, with 56% of divorced women and 31% of widowed women reporting health issues.

**Women carry a disproportionate burden of caregiving for those with special needs in the home.** Exactly 20% of female respondents (61 of 304) reported having a household member with a special need, predominantly related to physical health, with 77% of women reported being the primary caregiver of those with disabilities or serious illness. More women residing in informal rent residence (81%) and informal

settlements (75%) reported being the primary caretakers for the household member with special needs than women whom are renting formally (33%).

### *Implications for programming*

Households where the female has a disability, serious medical condition, and/or caregiving responsibility for one or more household members face additional financial responsibilities, elevated barriers to engagement in the formal and informal labour market, stigma and discrimination— including higher exposure to GBV and exploitation risks.<sup>39</sup>

While the survey identified home-based livelihoods recipients with caregiving duties, there was limited evidence of deliberate attention to inclusion and options for individuals with a disability and/or caregiving responsibilities. Though possibly related to targeting measures, the report's findings should inform more inclusive programming measures to reduce additional financial hardship and risk exposure, including quotas for income-generating opportunities and adapted assistance for specific needs while pairing with home-based options and psychosocial support.

<sup>39</sup> Women's Refugee Commission (2020), Disability & GBV. Available at: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/disabilities/disability-gbv>



#### 4.1.4. Transportation and location of work

**While incidents are not prevalent, there is some perception of danger while using public transportation – which presents an obstacle to freedom of movement and access to work.** The majority of women’s main mode of transportation (per the table below) is walking, followed by buses or vans, taxis and by car-pool or motorcycle (See Figure 16). Only one woman reported using a bicycle (See Figure 16). Around a third (36%) of women perceive risks to women and girls’ safety when commuting, namely verbal harassment (55%), kidnapping (41%), physical harassment (39%), and sexual harassment (34%) (See Figure 18),

while 47% of women do not perceive risks. More women living in informal settlements (40%) cite sexual harassment to be a risk when commuting than women renting informally (34%) and formally (14%); similarly, only 7% of women renting formally report knowing someone that experiences harassment and safety risks while using transportation.

*“I am afraid to take the taxi, nothing happened with me but I heard many things.”*

– FGD Unemployed Women Seeking Work, Lebanon.

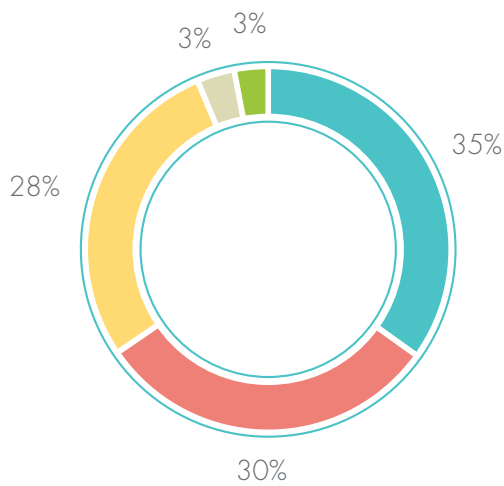
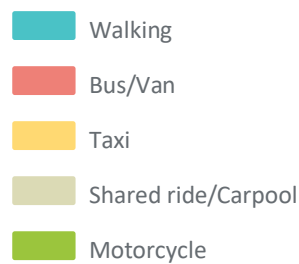


Figure 16:  
What is your main mode of transportation?



302 respondents

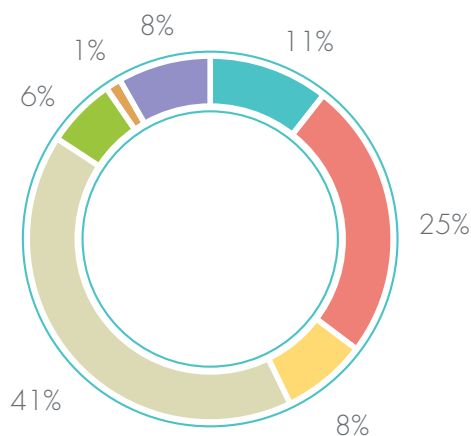


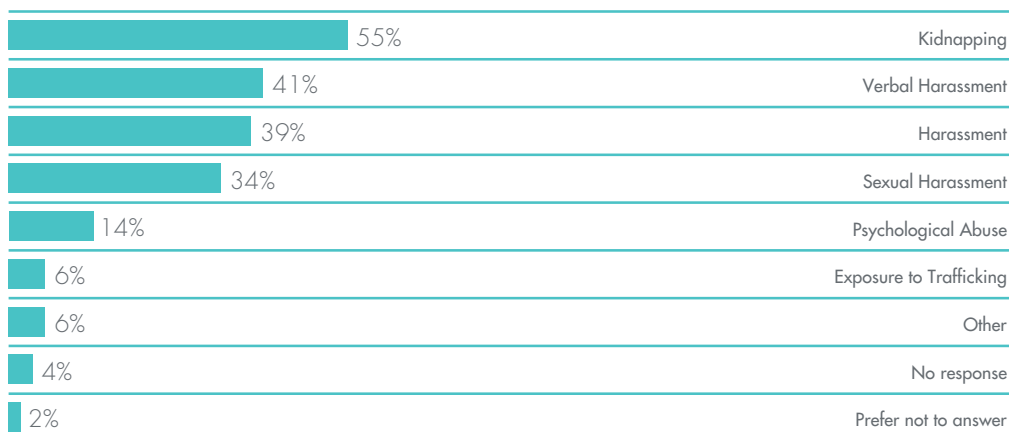
Figure 17:  
When commuting, do you perceive any risks to women or adolescent girl's personal safety?



292 respondents



Figure 18:  
What are the risks to women or adolescent girls' personal safety?



102 respondents

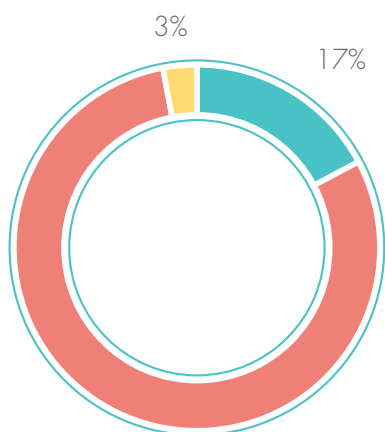


Figure 19:  
Did you hear of others in your community experiencing harassment or any safety risks while using transportation?



302 respondents

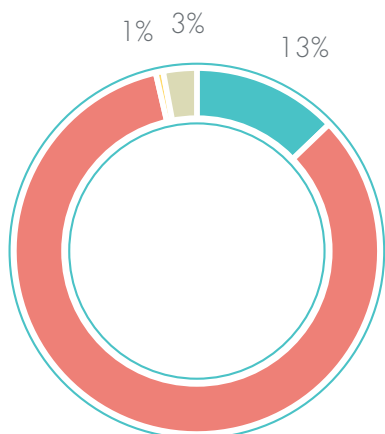
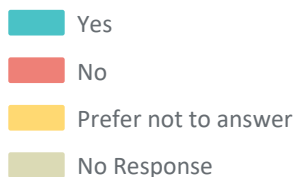


Figure 20:  
Without mentioning names or indicating anyone specific, have you or are you aware of anyone experiencing any safety risks while using transportation?



304 respondents

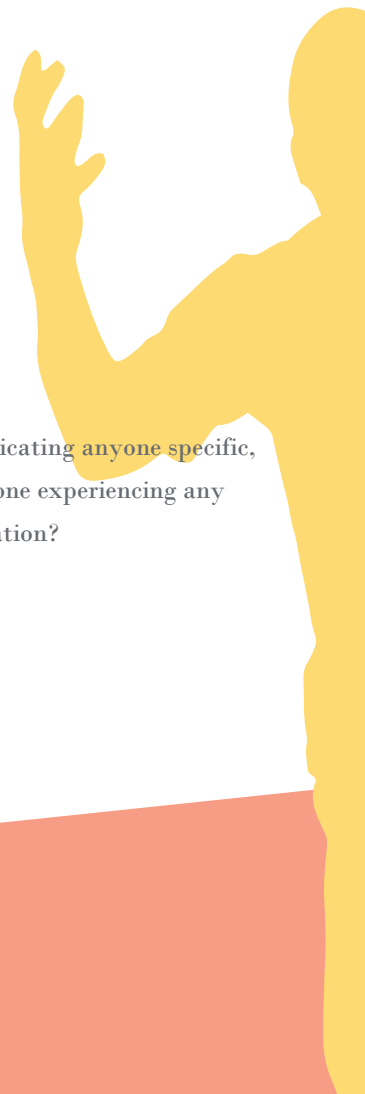
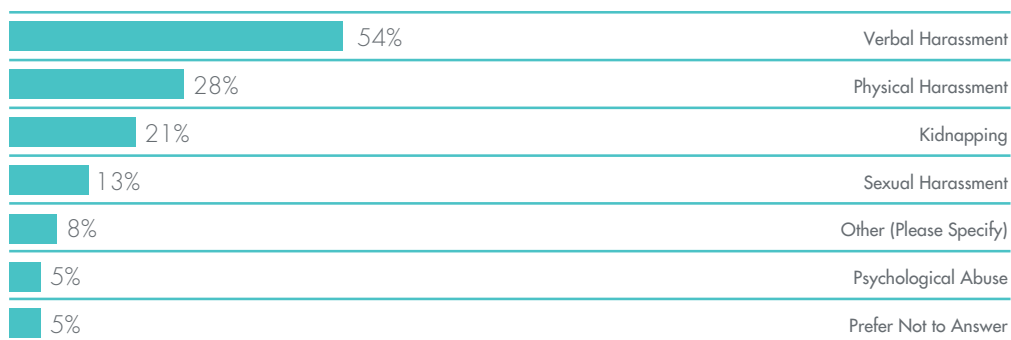


Figure 21:

What kind of safety issues or incidents have you or someone you know experienced?



39 respondents

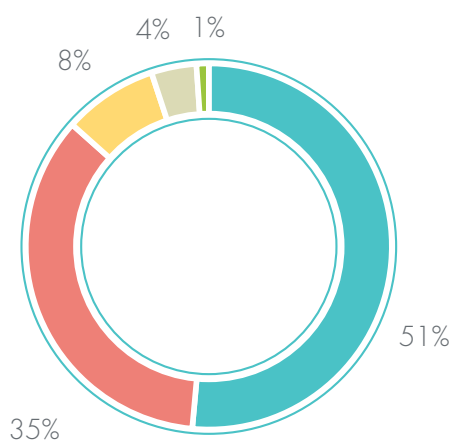
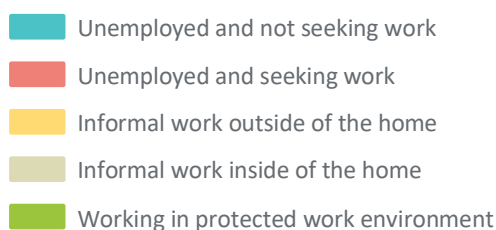


Figure 22:

What is your current employment status?



276 respondents

While it is perceived that there exists some risks for women while commuting, when asked about knowledge of specific GBV incidents, the vast majority (84%) stated that they were not aware of anyone experiencing safety risks while using transportation, compared to the 13% who knew of such risks (See Figure 20). The type of GBV incidents mentioned most frequently were verbal harassment (40%) and physical harassment (21%), followed by attempted kidnapping (15%) and sexual harassment (10%) (See Figure 21). FGDs and I-Kills also noted transport-specific incidents, including stories of taxi/bus drivers diverting routes in perceived attempts to kidnap, rob, and/or sexually assault Syrian refugee women, while others described instances of sexual harassment through verbal and physical conduct.

#### 4.1.5. Limited opportunities for women seeking work

**Occupation in unpaid (primarily domestic) work and unemployment are rife among female refugee populations.** Over half of refugee women respondents weren't involved in the labour market (51%), while 35% of women were unemployed but seeking work (See Figure 22).<sup>40</sup> Around 8% were actively engaged in income-generation outside of the home, 4% were engaged in home-based work and 1% of women were

<sup>40</sup> Corresponding to 142 out of 276 respondents and 97 out of 276 respondents respectively.

working in a protective environment (See Figure 22).<sup>41</sup> Since 2015, the Lebanese government has made it difficult for Syrian refugees to obtain both residency and work permits, such as introducing restrictive entry criteria that made it more difficult for Syrians in Lebanon to renew their residency for free by means of exiting and re-entering the countries and thus leaving refugees with little choice but to pay the \$200 annual residency fee and sign a mandatory pledge to refrain from working, later replaced by a pledge to abide by Lebanese law. As a result, most refugees are forced to work in the informal sector.

**Limited employment opportunities contribute to the perception that refugee women seeking work are seen as vulnerable to the sale and exchange of sex as a coping mechanism and willing to accept any job offer.** FGDs with Lebanese males said women would only need to work if desperate economic necessity compelled them to do so — and felt women were then highly susceptible to GBV. One Syrian refugee woman described being offered a job in exchange for sex. Such vulnerability to GBV is exacerbated by the restrictive regulatory environment. Even when women are able to attend a vocational training (6% of respondents),<sup>42</sup> they are often unable to find employment in the same field.

*“The mentality is: ‘This is a woman and whatever she is offered she will accept.’ Because they know a woman is working to survive because her father or her brother isn’t able to earn money.”*

— FGD Male, Lebanon.

<sup>41</sup> Corresponding to 23 out of 276 respondents, 11 out of 276 respondents, and 3 out of 276 respondents respectively.

<sup>42</sup> Corresponding to 17 of 306 respondents.

*“I tried to find a job at [name of sweets shop] or as a hairdresser, I tried many times to find a job but it was hard because I don’t have any certificate. I took lessons on hairdressing for four months with [name of association].”*

— FGD Unemployed Women Seeking Work, Lebanon.

**Relatively low female literacy rates, educational attainment and skill levels also contribute to the types of work opportunities available or sought.** At least 44% of Syrian female refugee respondents reported being illiterate prior to arriving in Lebanon, while 19% were able to read and write. While in Syria, 19% had received primary education, 14% had received intermediate education, 2% received secondary education, 1% received university education and 1% received vocational education. This contrasts with the much higher literacy rates among Syrian men.<sup>43</sup>

**Refugee women’s marital status is a key factor in their involvement in income-generation.** While at least 30% of female respondents are the main contributor to their household’s income,<sup>44</sup> married refugee women were least likely to be the main contributor (21%) while women whose spouse was not in the country were most likely to be the main contributor (50%) (See Figure 23). Women participating in the protection cash assistance program (PCAP) (47%) were more likely than those not receiving assistance to engage in livelihoods.<sup>45</sup> Most women, especially

<sup>43</sup> World Bank (2020), Literacy rate for adult males in the Syrian Arab Republic. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.MA.ZS?locations=SY>

<sup>44</sup> Corresponding to 89 out 292 respondents. The 203 out of 292 women (70%) were not the main contributor to household income.

<sup>45</sup> Corresponding to 34 out of 163 respondents and corresponding to 7 out of 14 respondents.

Figure 23:  
Are you the main contributor in the household?



married women<sup>46</sup>, who stopped income-generation activities implicated pressure from male family members rather than authorities.<sup>47</sup>



<sup>46</sup> Corresponding to 15 out of 148 respondents.

<sup>47</sup> Corresponding to 19 out of 271 respondents.

### 4.1.6. Experiences while working

#### INCIDENTS RECORDED IN GBVIMS THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE WORKPLACE – JORDAN, IRAQ AND LEBANON

The GBVIMS captures data from survivors who disclose an incident of GBV to GBVIMS member organisations or survivors who provided informed consent to be referred to assistance/service. However, due to fear of stigma and retaliation by perpetrators and limited access to justice it is assumed that GBV is widely under-reported, so recorded incident numbers do not indicate prevalence and should not be used in isolation. Instead, this data can be used effectively for trends analysis and to improve coordination of GBV prevention, risk mitigation, and response.

Expert KIs with GBV specialists reinforced concerns over GBV risks in the workplace, and in the informal and agriculture sectors in particular. Such concerns arise based on disclosures around risks and incidences made during case management and in consultations with refugee women.

Figure 24:

Without mentioning names or indicating anyone specific, in your community what safety risks do you think women might face in the work place?

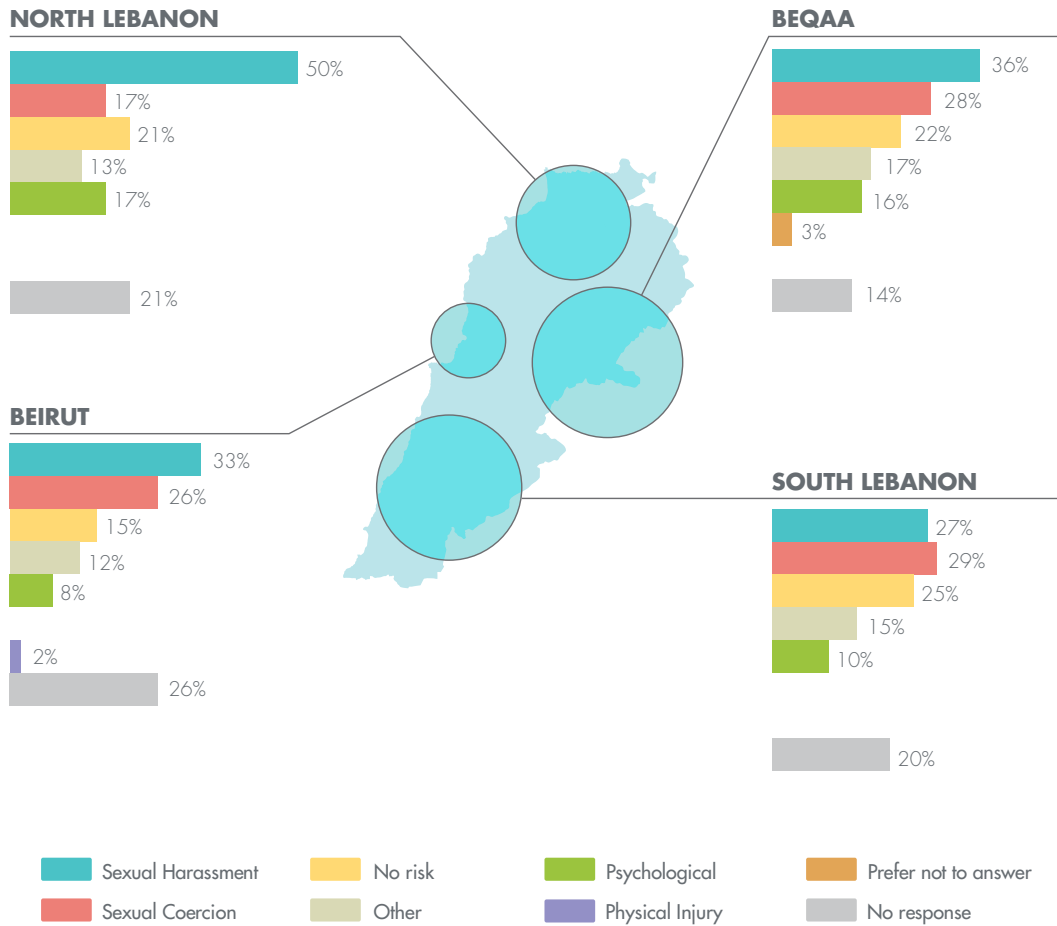


**Refugee women working in the informal sector reported GBV risks and incidents related to discriminatory work practices, sexual harassment, psychological bullying, physical injury, and sexual coercion.** Women in FGDs and I-KIs – particularly who are divorced or widowed –reported receiving unsolicited marriage offers when

seeking work. 29%<sup>48</sup> perceive GBV risks, namely sexual harassment (26%), psychological bullying (17%), physical injury (11%), and sexual coercion (9%) in the work-

<sup>48</sup> Percentage out of 264 respondents. Exactly 29% of women do perceive risks at the workplace with 6% of them feeling strongly so. Almost half of women surveyed (48%) do not perceive risks at the workplace with 4% feeling strongly so.

Figure 25:  
Without mentioning names or indicating anyone specific, in your community what safety risks do you think women might face in the workplace? (by region)



place (See Figure 24), while 21% of responses noted no workplace risks for women. Perception of GBV risks was concentrated among women in the South (40%) and North (39%) compared to only 25% of women in Beirut and 24% of women in Beqaa. Nearly 38% of PCAP recipients perceived risks to be present in the workplace compared to 28% who didn't receive this. More women in South Lebanon (50%) cited sexual harassment as a workplace risk than women in North Lebanon (36%), Beirut (33%), and Beqaa (27%), (See Figure 25).

**Workplace conditions and relationships with management and co-workers for refugee women were largely seen as satisfactory, despite often being poor conditions.** Exactly 50% of the women surveyed felt their current work conditions were satisfactory (4% very much so). Yet 27% reported their current work conditions as poor and 8% as very poor. Of employed women surveyed, 65% reported a good relationship with management at their place of work while 35% were neutral. The majority (63%) state they enjoy a good relationship with co-workers, while

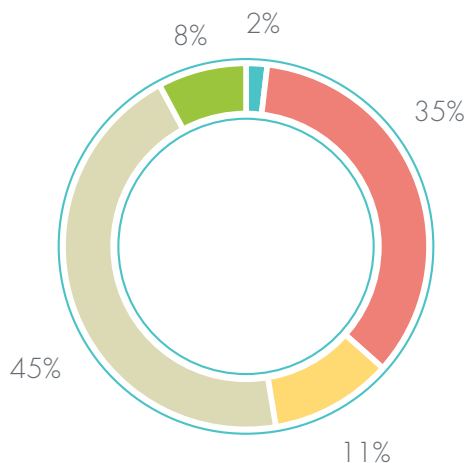


Figure 26:  
Do you feel comfortable working alongside men?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

268 respondents

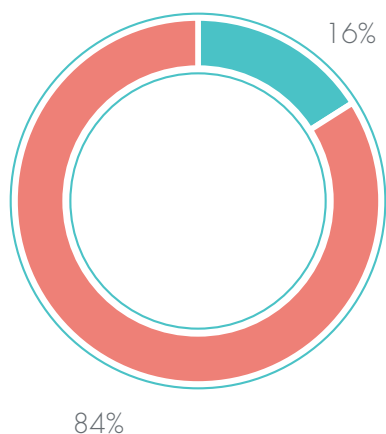


Figure 27:  
Do you think any challenge or safety risk exist in your workplace?

- Yes
- No

25 respondents

only 12% stated otherwise. Most women surveyed, however, had female co-working environments.

**Mixed-gender workplaces are perceived to pose certain risks according to refugee women.** Over half of women surveyed stated they do not feel comfortable working alongside men (either themselves or other women in the household), with 7-8% feeling strongly so (See Figure 26). On the other hand, more than one third of women felt comfortable (themselves or other women) working alongside men, with only

1-2% of those feeling strongly so. Responses indicate this is likely attributed to lack of accommodation of women's specific needs within work spaces.

**Several risks and incidents while working were reported by refugee women – most of which were sexually motivated.** During interviews, several participants brought up specific cases of GBV in the workplace, while 16% of employed women surveyed noted sexual harassment risks at their place of work, particularly in the agriculture sector (See Figure 27).

**Working refugee women were most likely to be paid a daily wage, at very minimal rates.**<sup>49</sup> Of women engaged in income-generation, half were paid daily as casual labour (50%) while 2% were paid weekly, 14% monthly, and 11% seasonally. 64% of women paid daily receive less than \$5 a day, followed by 29% paid \$5-10 a day, and only 7% paid \$11- 20 a day. Women reported deciding to stay in employment out of economic survival despite poor conditions.

*“I worked in a supermarket and the experience was bad. I was exploited, verbally harassed, and had delays in payment. I earned LL 400.000 (around \$260) a month working shifts from 5 am to 9pm and worked for 1 and a half years. I would have stayed if they had let me.”*

– FGD Unemployed Women Seeking Work, Lebanon.

**Withholding of wages and insufficient wages were the most reported risks by refugee women.** In line with qualitative data, the most prevalent forms of workplace exploitation were: withholding of wages (24%) and insufficient wages (24%), followed by delayed wages (12%), unpaid overtime (12%), cutting of wages (6%), and risk of coercion by employer (3%), while 21% of women reported not having any concerns with wages. Around 30% of refugee women whose wages were withheld never got paid, mostly in North Lebanon, while others’ wages were retained between one week and 12 months. More single (50%), separated women (33%), and women with their spouses not in the country (33%) experienced or knew of someone experiencing withholding of wages than those with partners (22%), showing that female-headed households are more susceptible to this form of workplace exploitation.

#### 4.1.7. Gender norms, workplace risks and opportunities

**Engaging in livelihoods results in a double work burden for refugee women, particularly among female-headed households.** Women are often compelled to engage in livelihoods opportunities to survive economically, which can expose them to new and/or increased GBV risks, namely in the public sphere, workplaces, and the household. Both married and unmarried women are at risk in the household sphere due to shifting gender norms. Work available to women is predominantly found in the informal sector with low pay and lack of protection mechanisms. All this coupled with the necessity to retain childcare and household responsibilities produces a double work burden for women.

*“I want to find work. I can go out from 7 am till 2 pm, children come back home at 1pm – I can stay an hour after they come back not more.”*

– Individual Interview, Unemployed Woman Seeking Work, Lebanon.

*“No one objects to me working, but my problem is time, because most of the jobs are until 5-6 pm, and I want to teach my children.”*

– FGD Unemployed Women Seeking Work, Lebanon.

**Despite many refugee women wanting to work, balancing time between work, household and childcare responsibilities was reported as difficult, and as a deciding factor for women when choosing whether and how long to work.** Over half (57%) of employed women lack access to childcare. When present it is provided by family members (57%), which is more common for married women (50%) and those aged 26-35 (54%), while widowed women and those aged 36-64 less so (33% and 36% respectively). 22% receive childcare from a friend or a community member,

<sup>49</sup> Calculated at 1507.5 Lebanese Lira to the USD (hereinafter \$).



## CHILD PROTECTION RISKS LINKED TO THE 'DOUBLE WORK BURDEN'

Participants across all contexts shared safety concerns with leaving children at home unattended. Refugee women reported several cases of child injuries and deaths, as well as the inability to leave children with their husbands.

*“Once I had a training session here, but when I went back home, I found the lock to the electricity cabinet broken. The youngest one is so active; they are not to be left alone. Otherwise I would have loved to work outside.”*

*– Individual Interview, Unemployed Woman Seeking Work, Lebanon.*

GBV risks in the workplace affect adolescent boys as well:

*“My 17-year old son is obliged to work during the night, because he has no legal documents, so during the day there is the possibility of him getting caught. He works at a construction site where work men bully him and call him gay. It started as a joke, then they began harassing him verbally and offering him money to have sex with them. When he refused, they threatened to fire him from work. A month ago, they followed him at night, and got him in a side street. Thank God it was during the beginning of ‘thawra’/ ‘revolution’ and some people were on the street. They heard something wrong was going on, so they saved my son.”*

*– Individual Interview, Unemployed Woman Seeking Work, Lebanon.*

These findings are supported by GBVIMS data wherein 10% of reported incidents of sexual violence in 2019 were male survivors, and in UNHCR's *We Keep it in Our Heart* (2017) study which showed that power imbalances and legal vulnerability in the informal sector increase sexual exploitation risks for men and boys in the workplace.

22% stated that childcare is not required, and only 4% stated that the workplace provides a day-care.

**Nearly all refugee women reported a positive change in their household position as a result of paid work, namely in relation to increased involvement in decision-making around income.** As previously stated, around 30% of women are a main contributor to their household income, most of whom are women without partners. Yet across all categories of women respondents, a substantial 93% stated that their contribution to household income positively changed their position in their households—though this varies in degree. The majority of

these women (61%) felt that their position only changed somewhat, while 18% said their position changed very little (See Figure 28). **Women's perceptions of work positively change after they've worked.** 58% agree that their perceptions have changed as a result of working – 88% of whom believe this was a positive change (See Figure 28 and Figure 29 respectively).

**While refugee women's position in their households may have changed for the better, for the majority interviewed, this does not translate into greater control over household assets and resources.** The majority of women (63%) felt that working did not have an effect on their control

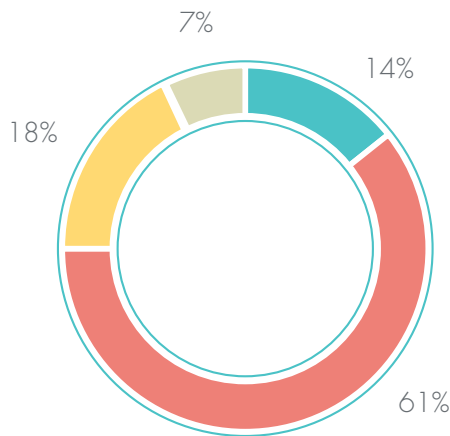


Figure 28:  
Has your contribution to household income (positively) changed your position in the household?

- To a large extent
- Somewhat
- Very little
- Not at all
- Strongly Disagree

28 respondents

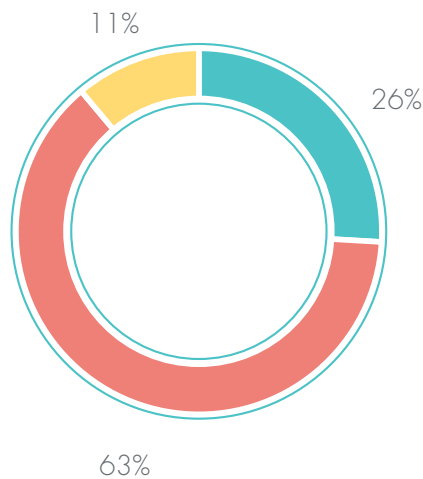


Figure 29:  
Has working increased or decreased your control over your household's resources or assets?

- Yes
- No
- Neutral

27 respondents

over household resources (non-income material goods), while for some, control actually decreased (11%), and only 26% noted increased control (See Figure 29). Married women were least likely to control assets on their own (46%)<sup>50</sup> (See Figure 30).

**Despite limited increases in family asset and resource control, refugee women enjoy some control over the actual income they bring in, yet most is used to cover house-**

**hold expenses and may be handed over to the husband.**

The majority of women surveyed control the income that comes into their household (67%)<sup>51</sup> – only 11%<sup>52</sup> of women said their partner controls their income while 16%<sup>53</sup> noted shared control. However, 91% of the employed respondents said they use the money they receive for the

<sup>50</sup> Corresponding to 46% of responses.

<sup>51</sup> Concurrent to 65% of responses.

<sup>52</sup> Corresponding to 10% of responses.

<sup>53</sup> Corresponding to 16% of responses.

Figure 30:  
Who controls the income that comes into the household?

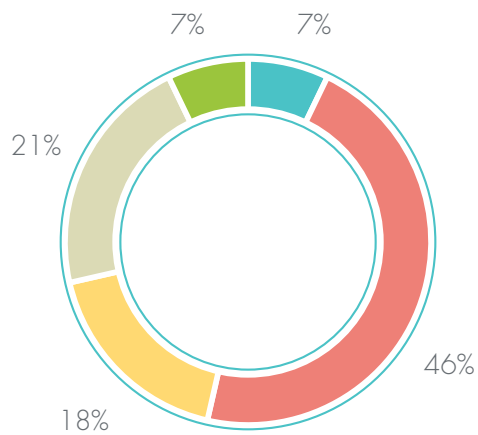
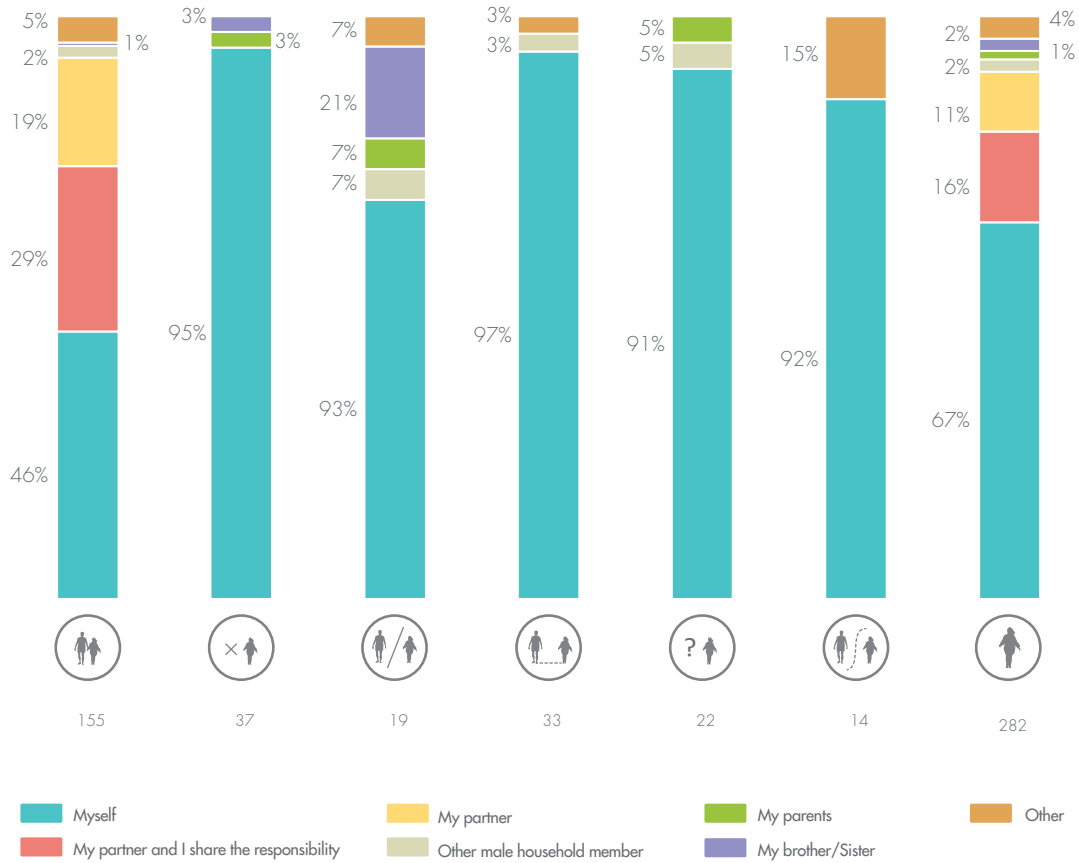
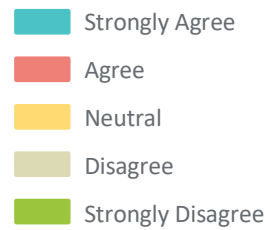


Figure 31:  
Overall, do you feel like the job that you are working in has had a positive impact on your wellbeing and safety?



28 respondents

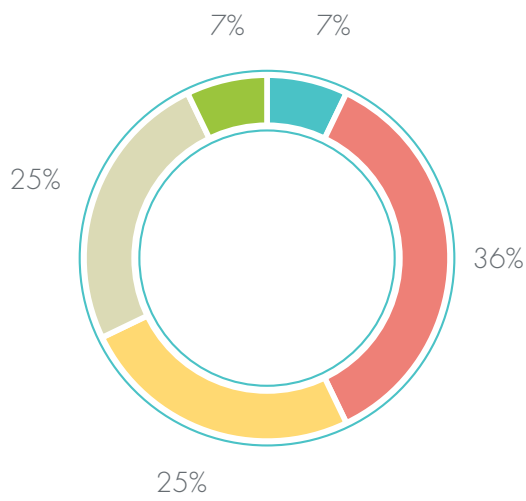
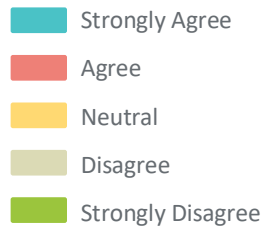


Figure 32:

Do you feel like the job that you are working in has had a negative impact on your wellbeing and safety?



28 respondents

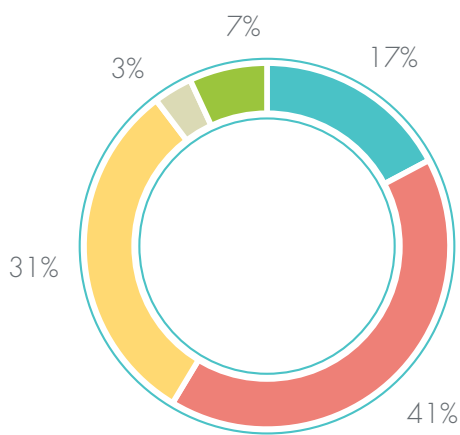
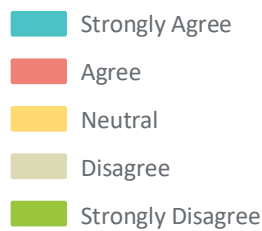


Figure 33:

Have your perceptions on women's work changed in any way as a result of working?



29 respondents

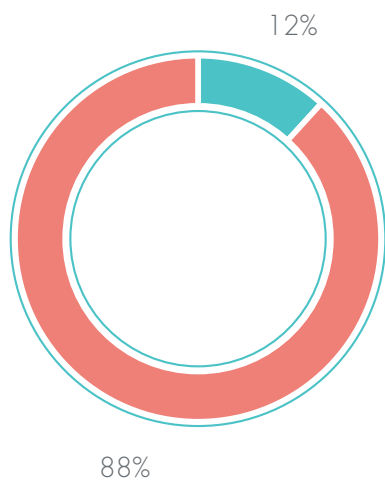
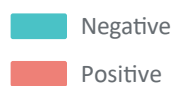


Figure 34:

What is your perception on women's work now?



17 respondents

family and only 9% keep it to themselves. Earnings are paid directly to 96% of women, with the remainder paid in-kind with shelter. Both unemployed and employed refugee women were responsible for rent, electricity, groceries, water and medication expenses.

*“I gave the money I earned to my husband. He didn’t save it or spend it responsibly. Now I try to spend the money on what we urgently need. But this made him lazy. He doesn’t know how much I earn...he’s given up on his responsibilities.”*

– FGD Unemployed Women Seeking Work, Lebanon.

While over half of working respondents agreed (46%) or strongly agreed (7%) that their job positively contributed to their wellbeing and safety (See Figure 31), others (mainly married women) noted negative impact (See Figure 32). This could be associated with dissonance in household decision-making based on traditional gender roles and have implications of increased tension leading to intimate partner violence, as well as strain associated with work burdens on top of continuing caregiving roles. Of the 69% that feel employment has affected their physical health, 94% (or 16 out of 17 respondents) have stated that working has negatively affected their physical health.

## 4.2. How do GBV risks and outcomes experienced by displaced women vary by the type and nature of livelihoods opportunity?

### 4.2.1. High and low risk sectors

**Work that involves approaching or entering other people’s homes is perceived as high risk by refugee men and women.** Men and women noted jobs, such as cleaning, were higher risk. One female FGD participant shared an incident where she narrowly escaped attempted sexual

assault by a man who claimed to be her employer’s husband. She later heard that other women had the same experience. Male FGD participants added that door-to-door sales can also carry high risk.

*“When selling things, a woman has to knock on doors and enter, and this will often be taken as her having bad intentions.”*

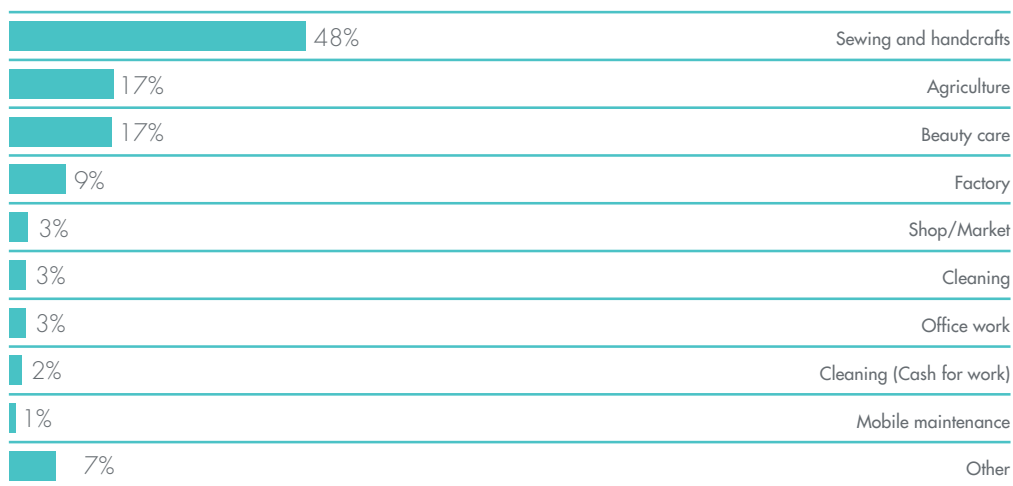
– FGD Male, Lebanon.

**Gender segregation influences the perception of workplace safety, while agriculture presents specific GBV risks.** When asked to choose between jobs on the basis of safety in terms of exposure to sexual harassment, almost half of women (48%) opted for sewing and handcrafts (most common with married women), followed by beauty care (17%), agriculture (17%) and factory work (17%) (See Figure 35). Less traditionally-gendered jobs have been successful, with one expert highlighting a carpentry course for women as a positive example of women engaging in the non-gender traditional market, though are not cited by refugee women as work they would choose to engage in. Agricultural work is perceived by women as high risk, particularly as free or subsidized accommodation is sometimes taken in place of wage payment. This type of in-kind compensation increases the imbalance of power, making reporting and responding to GBV incidents more difficult for survivors.

### 4.2.2. Protection mechanisms at work reflective of broader GBV reporting challenges

**Refugee women are not always fully aware of reporting mechanisms in protected workplace environments, even where they do exist.** Many women who were previously employed in a UN cash for work project said they had not been given contact numbers to report incidents. However, no knowledge of the occurrence of GBV incidents was reported during discussions. FGDs with refu-

Figure 35:  
If you were to choose between jobs on the basis of safety in terms of exposure to sexual harassment or coercion risks, which job would you choose?



295 respondents

gee men and women identified lack of legal residency documentation as a specific barrier to women’s reporting. For women who do report incidents, they lacked clarity regarding procedures and expected issues to be resolved immediately. In turn, frustration over inaction and ability to effectively handle cases constitutes a disincentive for survivors. Mechanisms in the workplace are limited by the broader socio-cultural and legal barriers to GBV incident reporting.

*“In case you want to report at the police station, the first thing they ask for is documents, and most of us have no legal documents. So, there is the fear of reporting. If the boss is Lebanese, he has the power. If he is a good person, he may be able to help her.”*

– FGD Males, Lebanon.

*“In Lebanon, one woman who had experienced sexual harassment and attempted sexual assault*

*at a cleaning job said she had reported the incident to a local NGO: ‘I reported what happened to the local NGO, but they did nothing about it. I was asked again to report and I refused to talk.’”*

– FGD Unemployed Women Seeking Work, Lebanon.

*“The imbalance of power is so great, and there are so many hindering factors – a conservative context, cultural sensitivity, that it’s extremely difficult for women to report. In the rare instances that cases are disclosed, the case management organisations admit to feeling powerless in seeking accountability.”*

– Expert Interview, Lebanon.

**Reporting GBV incidents does not always result in receiving a prompt, appropriate and comprehensive response.** E-Kills noted power imbalance makes it very difficult for women to report and agencies to follow up, complicated by weak workplace regulations and lack

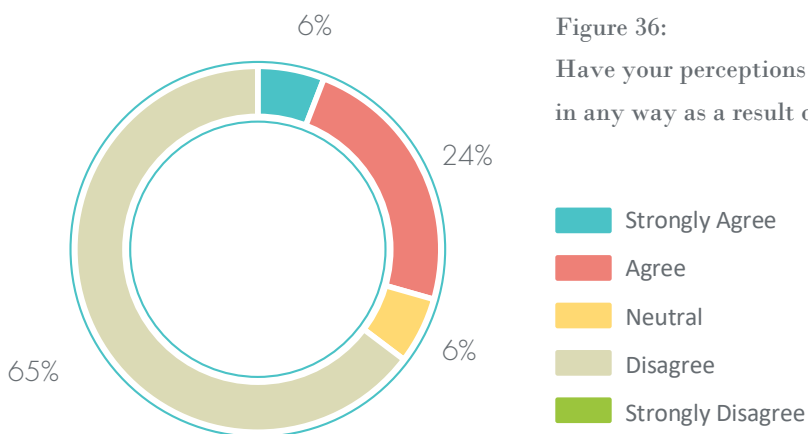


Figure 36:  
Have your perceptions on women's work changed in any way as a result of working?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

17 respondents

of consistent reporting mechanisms in the workplace. Survivors can seek legal redress but are faced by different challenges such as lack of legal residency. There is already limited government capacity to address Lebanese cases, thus even less so for Syrian refugees. While a refugee’s case would not be dismissed, it could lead to slower procedures.

*“Law enforcement is not robust and carries risks for refugees; therefore, legal pathways for reporting/ addressing GBV [are] very weak.”*

– Expert Interview, Lebanon.

#### 4.2.3. Sustainability of income

**While refugee women who received vocational training stated that they hadn’t found a job in that field, many were still satisfied with the training itself.** Despite not finding jobs, all women stated that they were “interested” in the training they received, with 53% reporting being “strongly interested.” Vocational training was most effective when combined with PCAP, wherein 67% found paid employment compared to women who only received vocational training (21%). Additionally, combining with PSS and life skills sessions maximized the

benefit of participants, with women noting more active roles in the household and better relations with children. **Vocational training (often based on women’s traditionally preferred income opportunities) fail to match market demands.** Many women feel safer working in vocations that are deemed more acceptable in their communities. As a result, in some regions, too many women have been trained in the same home-based business skills, meaning supply far outstrips demand and lacks sustainability. Several women who received home-based business training complained of high costs and few clients. This is mirrored in survey data: sewing/handcrafts was the most common type of vocational training alongside hairdressing (also 35%). Other types of trainings included cooking/catering (12%), computer/mobile phone maintenance (6%), and house maintenance (6%) (See Figure 37).

**Female caregivers of special needs individuals prefer home-based work.** Around 12% of respondents who care for special needs individuals are either currently or have previously engaged in home-based work (compared to 3% of women overall, and 91% not having participated in home-based work). While accommodating for those pro-

Figure 37:  
What kind of vocational training did you receive?



viding special needs caregiving in addition to considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mobility are important, prioritizing women’s work from home should be viewed with caution, according to one GBV specialist. Rather than simply avoiding household tensions when women leave the house, home-based work can counteract gender transformation and reinforce existing gender norms.

**Refugee women viewed cash for work schemes positively, even though they would not necessarily choose to work in the given roles.** Some types of work including street cleaning were reported as a source of shame by FGD participants. Women also added that street cleaning attracted negative attention including verbal sexual harassment.

#### 4.2.4. Harmful coping mechanisms to address household economic challenges

**Refugee child labour was one of the most commonly reported harmful coping mechanisms in response to economic challenges.** E-Kills in Lebanon ranked it alongside child marriage as the most common harmful coping mechanism. Overall, 24% of refugee women respondents reported that one or more of their children were working in some capacity. This was more common

in female-headed households; while 82% of married women said no one under 16 years old was working, 62% of widowed women, 67% of separated women, 75% of divorced women, and 60% of women whose spouse was missing reported having a working child in the household. Child labour was more common in the north of Lebanon, where 38% of women reported having one or more working child in the household, compared to 23% in Beirut, 22% in the Beqaa and none in the south. In Beqaa, it was more common for children to work in agriculture, while in the north street begging and small business work were more common (See Figure 38).

**Survey findings suggest that refugee children under 16 are more likely to be out of school in Beirut than in other regions.** Less than half of refugee women in Beirut (48%) reported that each household member under 16 was attending school, while 64% reported this in the

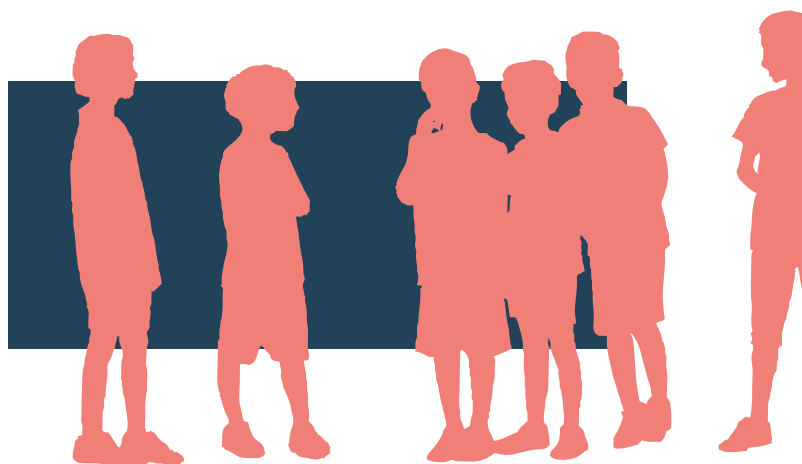




Figure 38:  
What is the type of work of the household members who are under 16?



south, compared to a rate of 55% across the country. A significant proportion of respondents noted that girls were less likely than boys to attend school of those who do not receive education.

### 4.3. What is the linkage between livelihoods opportunities and cash-based interventions (CBIs) with respect to GBV-related protection risks and outcomes?

#### 4.3.1. Impact of CBIs on refugee women's livelihoods seeking behaviour

**Women reported that economic deterioration coupled with generally insufficient levels of cash assistance negatively impacts their purchasing power.** Qualitative data from the study notes that levels of cash assistance that were previously sufficient to make a real positive difference are now found to be insufficient. This is due to the increase in the cost of living caused by the loss of value of the currency, including for those participating in multi-purpose cash assistance programs (MCAP) who are now facing reduced purchasing power. Some female respondents no longer receiving assistance not-

ed they would want to work even if they began receiving cash assistance again, with one reporting using cash assistance to pay for childcare so she could work. The increase in the cost of living in Lebanon continues to drive the need for income-generating opportunities.

*“We are taking food cash from the UN, but now everything is so expensive we can barely afford things.”*

– FGD, Unemployed Women Seeking Work, Lebanon.

**Cash assistance was found to help refugee women seek employment, though not always.** Of the 79% of respondents receiving cash, 40% felt that cash has helped them seek or access employment, with conversely 26% disagreeing and 3% strongly disagreeing. Regardless, 99% agreed that the cash had a positive effect on themselves and their family.

*“Previously partners were seeking cash-recipients (CBIs being seen as a marker of vulnerability) for cash for work projects. Now they focus on those NOT receiving CBIs on the basis that the economic situation is fuelling vulnerability, and those not receiving cash could be even more vulnerable.”*

– Expert Interview, Lebanon.



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#### 4.3.2. Specialised CBIs and livelihoods referrals in GBV case management <sup>54</sup>

**The combination of specialised CBI and vocational training has led to better results in terms of women subsequently finding paid employment.** Exactly 67% of PCAP recipients who received a training opportunity compared to 21% who did not receive PCAP reported trainings led to paid employment. No PCAP recipients reported hearing of harassment during vocational training, in contrast to 8% of non-PCAP recipients, indicating a potential benefit specific to pairing PCAP and livelihoods interventions for refugee women.

**While PCAP is an important programming tool that combines financial assistance with case management over several months, the lack of a sustainable exit strategy and feasible livelihoods opportunities in Lebanon limits its effectiveness.** Temporary interventions such as cash assistance provided

in parallel with case management can assist an individual or family facing an imminent risk (with GBV among women reportedly the most prevalent risk), though E-Kills note this is most beneficial when coupled with longer-term psychosocial support, as provided through PCAP. Research demonstrates that CBIs alone do not have a dramatic impact on gender relations and women’s economic empowerment.<sup>55</sup>

*“PCAP which combines cash assistance with case management has some effects on mitigating risks and harm in extreme cases. But it is not the cash component alone.”*

– Expert Interview, Lebanon.

*“The UN is struggling to support exit strategies for women receiving PCAP. They face enormous difficulties to be independent and self-sustaining. Long-term*

<sup>54</sup> Out of protection concerns, FGD’s and KII’s were not undertaken with PCAP recipients. Instead, UNHCR Lebanon handpicked a selection that were integrated into the overall survey sample frame, and their responses disaggregated for analysis. Of that selection 19 were included in the total number of survey participants. Limitations with the overall survey administration affected PCAP data.

<sup>55</sup> Francesca Bastagli, Jessica Hagen-Zanker, Luke Harman, Georgina Sturge, Valentina Barca, Tanja Schmidt and Luca Pellerano (July 2016), “Cash Transfers: What Does Evidence Say? A Rigorous Review of Impacts and the Role of Design and Implementation Features.” Available at: <https://www.odi.org/publications/10505-cash-transfers-what-does-evidence-say-rigorous-review-impacts-and-role-design-and-implementation>. See also, UNHCR (October 2020), “UNHCR MENA Research Project: Protection Impacts of Cash-Based Interventions with a Focus on Child Protection.” Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/79523>

*livelihoods opportunities are very limited and most women have skills that are not marketable, and there are no opportunities. Once the PCAP ends, women [who had received the assistance in response to domestic GBV protection concerns] often end up with limited choices and return to abusive situations due to lack of opportunities for independence and self-resilience.”*

– Expert Interview, Lebanon.

### 4.3.3. Livelihoods referrals

**Legal and regulatory restrictions on livelihoods activities result in low levels of cash for work programming.** Increased enforcement of restrictions and a deteriorating economy present significant barriers to livelihoods opportunities, including cash for work initiatives, despite some services for survivors and persons at risk of GBV provided by NGOs.

*“Given the legal situation, the livelihoods options are almost non-existent. This is compounded by the overall economic situation in Lebanon.”*

– Expert Interview, Lebanon.

Despite challenges due to the very different nature of the livelihood and GBV programmes, continued strengthening of referrals of GBV survivors to livelihood opportuni-

ties is needed. According to E-KIs, the programme cycle for current livelihoods activities is difficult to harmonise with GBV referral requirements (which don't inherently align with a particular timeframe), which poses challenges for coordination between protection and livelihoods actors. While GBV referral pathways have been established for a range of response services (mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), health, legal, etc.), livelihoods referrals are considered insufficient, occurring largely bilaterally and without systematic protocols. This requires closer collaboration and agreement for protection and livelihoods joint programming to give protection case managers and livelihoods better understanding of the suitability of livelihoods activities for survivors and persons at risk of GBV. E-KIs noted some relevant gaps:





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- In a typical livelihoods cycle, participants are selected prior to placement – so opportunities are not always available in the same geographic location as a survivor and per their timely needs. Specific skills are also required; there are still misconceptions around the preference to target refugees perceived to be more self-sufficient, which in some cases inherently discriminates against GBV survivors and can limit their integration.
- There is a broader capacity gap among livelihoods actors regarding safe disclosures, in case they occur, and safe referrals of GBV survivors, posing challenges in terms of their understanding of the

specific programming needs and vulnerabilities of GBV survivors, including the fact that it is not the role of livelihoods actors to identify GBV survivors or persons at risk, but rather to receive referrals and include individuals in programmes as appropriate.

*“When UNHCR is approached by implementing partners for cash for work referrals, the partners have effectively already selected [the beneficiaries], they are looking for confirmation from UNHCR that selected beneficiaries would be eligible for cash assistance based on UNHCR’s vulnerability criteria”*

*– Expert Interview, Lebanon.*



## INCREASED NEED FOR CASH PAIRED WITH SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS AND PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS

Qualitative data from refugee women in Iraq and Jordan noted that the length of their displacement necessitated longer or more frequent cash for work opportunities – adding that one short term job lasting three to six months was not sufficient. By their nature, cash for work programmes are not meant to build sustainable resilience, thus strengthening the argument for longer-term livelihoods interventions bundled with other forms of agency-building and supplemented by immediate cash assistance to provide consumption support.

*“The issue with [cash for work] opportunities with the UN and other organisations is most of the women will only get one work opportunity for 3 months every 18 months. To those who are single mothers getting such a chance is not enough, as cash assistance is not enough.”*

– FGD Unemployed Women Seeking Work, Jordan.

According to E-KIs in Jordan, general cash assistance is scarcely enough to cover basic needs, which is even more challenging for urban refugees who also need to cover rent. UNHCR Jordan’s cash assistance is based on the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) which represents the minimum monthly cost per capita needed for physical survival. UNHCR’s cash assistance programme supports the most vulnerable refugees in the urban community. Camp-based

refugee women use any income and/or other forms of cash assistance they receive for educational materials and other children’s needs, menstrual hygiene management, and medical costs. In addition, no specialised cash assistance linked to GBV case management was identified in Iraq at the time of data collection, though a programme integrating cash assistance to GBV survivors available in Zaatari in Jordan was reported, and a second one has been added in 2020 since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Iraq, there is merely a referral pathway by GBV service providers to the cash working group for ‘immediate life-saving needs’ (noting that some but not all survivors and persons at risk of GBV would be eligible).

*“We recognise there is a need for cash to assist addressing the increased vulnerability. This is a big gap and we are advocating for more resources for this. Until now there have only been small interventions here and there.”*

– Expert Interview, Jordan.

In camp-based settings in Iraq and Jordan, women may work in UN-NGO facilitated programmes. However, in order to access other jobs and potential sustainable income, women must be in a position to leave the camps. As such, most women continue to rely on camp-based programmes which are not market-based in a way that can contribute to women’s economic empowerment.





without marketable skills. Each of these factors produces GBV risks. Yet mitigation of such risks and capitalizing on gains women have made with new opportunities can elevate women's status, their sense of self-worth, and community perception.

**The potential for women's economic empowerment and positive gender-transformative impacts** are challenged by the limited scale and impact of interventions, the regulatory environment regarding legal status, insufficiently gendered labour market analysis, socio-cultural norms influencing types of work considered "acceptable" for women (and concurrent family pressures), and the double burden that includes continued household responsibilities.

**More nuance is required in assessing women's preferences and drivers for economic engagement.** While dire financial need can be an impetus for women's economic empowerment, with opportunities therein, meeting such need cannot ignore social norms that require long-term interventions and an attention to listening to women's voices. Rather than categorising, there is a need to better account for the diversity of refugee women's experiences – those who are married, widowed, single and/or female-headed household, and those that have a disability or serious medical condition or caregiving responsibility. This requires women-centred approaches that involve males acting as gatekeepers and other household members to ensure their voices are heard.

**Women's economic empowerment outcomes and positive impact for survivors and persons at risk of GBV are strengthened when programme interventions consider holistic approaches.** Areas of improvement in referral modalities to link protection programming with livelihoods activities are well noted, strengthening of which may support a struggling legal, political, and economic environment. These comprehensive approaches should consider the attitudes, behaviours, and practices that perpetuate gender inequality and therefore include as an essential component working with men and boys to leverage them as allies, while ensuring access to vocational training opportunities as well as individualised provision of activities such as PSS that help alleviate distress associated with social norm change and economic deprivation.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following set of recommendations aim to inform current and future livelihoods programming and promote pathways to increase the safe, dignified and sustainable participation of displaced refugee women in the labour force and their empowerment. At the time of writing, the COVID-19 crisis has already introduced disproportionately detrimental effects for refugee women due to their role as caregivers, higher rates of participation in the informal labour market, and limited assets/resources to withstand further economic and health shocks. Pre-existing gendered barriers to women's engagement in the public sphere will continue to be compounded by the pandemic and should be factored into the recommendations below.

**Prioritize investment in women's economic empowerment initiatives**, including not only employment and small business opportunities, but also activities that build women's agency, such as learning, skill-building related to resource control, leadership, entrepreneurship, financial decision-making, business development, etc. Such opportunities should consider both women's preferences and market-based drivers that optimally enable their success.

**Ensure refugee women of all abilities and profiles lead in the design of livelihoods activities and associated conditions intended to support their increased economic involvement.** The range of GBV risks women are exposed to in all aspects of income-generation and labour market engagement mean programming should prioritize refugee women's voices, including minority groups and those with a disability and/or serious medical condition, older women, and other marginalized groups. This also requires relevant accommodations for their engagement.

- Women in the affected population should be proportionately included in decision-making roles for programme design and throughout the programme cycle for both livelihoods and protection interventions.
- Budgets should be analysed to ensure adequate investment in adaptation measures needed for women's economic engagement, including support for caregiving responsibilities – such as provision of childcare –, safe transportation provision, and facilities that consider women's needs.
- Emphasis should be placed on activities that build women's agency, including skill-building related to resource control, leadership, financial decision-making, business development, etc.
- Particular attention should be paid to women with disabilities, accounting for workplace adaptations and other accommodations to enable them to actively participate.

**Ensure that market-based analyses include a gender lens to inform options for more gender-transformative programs – and engage with refugee women in consultations for such analyses.** Gender roles often confine women to traditional 'women's work' sectors which have become saturated by labour supply, and are all too often the focus of UN/NGO livelihoods programming. Improved labour market analysis in non-traditional sectors can produce smart and workable alternatives for women in protected environments where the opportunities outweigh the risks of women's involvement.

**Expand and strengthen activities that engage men and boys as agents of change – involve immediate family members and the community to support women's digni-**

**fied and safe engagement in the labour market.** Scale up and expand longer-term behaviour change programming, prioritising women and girls' voices to support women's agency and reduce the risks women and girls face in the community, home and entering the labour market.

**Expand access to specialised CBIs for GBV case management across all county contexts and referral pathways to sustainable livelihoods opportunities.** Increase access to specialised CBIs for survivors or in situations where women may not be in a position to work in the short term due to their circumstances such as mobility constraints and lack of childcare, recognising that such mechanisms are most effective when combined with other case management services.

- Where not already in place, protocols should be put in place to ensure prioritisation of women and GBV survivors in CBI activities, with standards for collaboration to ensure effective referrals and program design is inclusive and understood by all actors.
- CBI programming should be paired with socio-economic empowerment initiatives, such as psychosocial support, life skills, and agency-building to develop sustainable skills for women, while accommodating for participation barriers such as childcare provision and safe transport.

**Interagency and sector actors should collaborate to ensure effective GBV multi-sectorial response and meaningful prevention activities that include access to sustainable livelihoods opportunities.** Strategic coordination between actors including the GBV AoR, livelihoods sector, host government and national civil society must be prioritised to increase access to market-based opportunities and meet the specific needs of women refugees, including GBV survivors.

- SOPs or other protocols should be developed to facilitate coordination of referrals and more strategic planning between protection and livelihoods actors such that survivors and persons at risk of GBV may access life-saving economic support with flexibility to the livelihoods intervention project cycle. Such support should not be limited to those with more easily facilitated access to such interventions, but to also ensure activities are provided to more marginalized survivors and persons at risk.

**Disseminate and use the findings of this study for advocacy with key stakeholders on access to safe, dignified, and sustainable livelihoods for refugee women** including host governments, donors, GBV AoRs and Livelihoods AoRs, supporting agencies at the global and national levels. **Reinforce through dialogue** with host governments and donors commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment, and the women, peace and security agenda including commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Goal 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth and UN Security Council Resolution 1325, to:

- Lobby member states to ratify and implement ILO Convention No 190 (2019) and Recommendation 206 on violence and harassment in the workplace<sup>56</sup> for all women in their territory and enact Domestic Legislation that protects all, with specific measures for refugee women.
- Support expanded funding targeting livelihoods opportunities for women focused on their economic empowerment.

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56 International Labour Organization (January 2020), "Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work," ILO Global. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/violence-harassment/lang-en/index.htm>.

- Operationally strengthen legal, policy and regulatory provisions related to GBV reporting (including workplace setting reporting mechanisms) and awareness campaigns, and specific measures to protect refugee women.
- Expand and scale up behaviour change campaigns for men and boys more broadly, as well as particular roles (husbands, fathers, brothers etc.) to deconstruct harmful gender norms and strengthen the protective environment at home and in broader society.
- Influence localised Global Refugee Forum commitments and highlight the need for more attention to gendered experiences– even in restrictive contexts within a framework of preparation for return and/ or labour mobility.











