

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a result of the unrest in Syria, the Akkar Region in northern Lebanon has hosted several thousand displaced Syrians since May 2011. While the numbers have fluctuated per month, UNHCR reports that in February 2012 there were 6,916 registered displaced Syrians in northern Lebanon.¹ They entered the Akkar area both legally and illegally, giving some the right to move freely and restricting others to the area of Wadi Khaled. Displaced families often live with host communities, but others rent accommodation, occupy abandoned spaces, or are housed in collective shelters (rehabilitated by DRC/UNHCR).

DRC Lebanon conducted a livelihood assessment 6-10 February 2012 as follow-up to an initial livelihood assessment (November 2011) and to offer preliminary analysis of the livelihood survey administered to all 1,192 households registered during its January 2012 distribution. The 5 geographic areas surveyed were Tripoli, Halba, Birreh, Akroum, and Wadi Khaled. Due to time constraints, this report contains qualitative analysis of general livelihood trends per area of displacement from 42% of the findings. DRC plans to enter and analyse the full dataset quantitatively in March 2012.

Main Findings

- **Assistance (through monthly distributions) is the main livelihood strategy for most displaced families.** Because it fulfils most food, NFI, and fuel needs and many displaced households live with families (i.e. do not pay rent), there is little incentive to search for other sources of income. Because people were surveyed through the distribution, there was also greater incentive not to report other sources of income during the livelihood assessment.
 - However, many displaced Syrians are able to find temporary work and use this to supplement the assistance they receive.
- Findings from the livelihood survey indicate a **largely unskilled male working population** in both the displaced and host communities.² Very few of the households surveyed reported women working, either in their place of origin in Syria or in their current displacement location in Lebanon.
- Displaced **Syrians' ability to find work in Lebanon is generally related to the area in which they are displaced;** displaced Syrians could find work in Tripoli, Halba, Birreh and Akroum, while those in Wadi Khaled could not (with some notable exceptions).
 - Figures from Birreh, Tripoli, and Wadi Khaled in February 2012 indicate that approximately 52.5% of displaced Syrians entered Lebanon through official crossings, while 47.5% entered unofficially.
 - The legal framework surrounding Syrians' right to work in Lebanon and the reality on the ground remain unclear and require further inquiry.
- Quantitative and qualitative data indicate that **both the refugee and host communities are extremely gender-segregated;** as such, livelihood activities in the region are generally divided by gender.
- There is a **general lack of in-depth market analysis for the Akkar region**, and there is no market analysis related to the sudden influx of displaced Syrians and the newfound difficulty to cross the Lebanese-Syrian border.
- The newfound difficulty to cross the Lebanese-Syrian border presents an opportunity for humanitarian and development actors to collaborate on diversifying sources of income for both the displaced and host community households.
 - Short term: Vulnerable displaced households may require more than direct assistance to survive
 - Medium term: Skills of both displaced and host communities could be strengthened / expanded

¹ Source: UNHCR Lebanon Update, "Support to displaced Syrians," 18-24 February 2012.

² Unskilled labour is generally defined as work people can learn to do in 30 days or less. Semi-skilled labour consists of professions that take at least 30 days to learn, but the scope and variety of semi-skilled professions can vary from low to high skill levels. *Source: U.S. Department of Labour.*

- Long term: Development plans for the region have been underway for nearly a decade without much concrete infrastructure to show for it.

Recommendations

- **Determine the sustainability of continuing distributions for all displaced** and consider tailoring assistance to households' livelihood vulnerabilities
 - Develop an assessment tool to determine livelihood security in order to better respond to needs
 - Consider a voucher system or cash transfers for food – reduce the logistical burden and increase impact of assistance on local market economies, which are suffering from the restricted border movement
- **Focus immediate livelihood support (March 2012 onward) on vulnerable single-headed households**, male or female – they emerged as some of the most vulnerable livelihood cases
 - Establish inter-agency livelihood assessment and assistance standards, including vulnerability criteria
 - Promote a phased approach to livelihood assistance in order for vulnerable households to “progress” out of vulnerability³
- **Humanitarian organisations should work with development actors** to integrate livelihood programming to fit within existing, longer-term community development plans
 - Any vocational training (VT) programme should aim to improve skill levels from unskilled to semi-skilled or skilled work
- DRC should **advocate for gender-specific vocational training**
 - A market study can look at traditionally female and male-oriented VT sectors to understand what the market can support
 - Organisations should endeavour to support “female friendly spaces” for women to socialise and eventually engage in income generation, either in groups or individually
- The humanitarian community should **advocate for circulation permits for displaced Syrians** to find work. If this is not feasible politically, organisations need to examine specific skills training and/or income-generating activities that are marketable in the areas of confinement.
 - This requires a market study tailored to displaced Syrian (and vulnerable host community) needs, as well as a better understanding of employment policy – the legal framework versus the reality on the ground.

2. BACKGROUND

The border between Syria and the Akkar region has always been porous; even when it existed, it was rarely enforced. A 2009 study noted that “families had members of both sides of this line, daily or weekly trade routes crossed it, schools served populations in both Syria and Lebanon, and... the administrative centres of both Lebanon and Syria did little to incorporate the periphery into the day-to-day functioning of government.”⁴ Wadi Khaled was particularly neglected; its residents, for example, only became Lebanese citizens beginning in 1993-4. As a result, many livelihood opportunities came through cross-border trade, in many cases smuggling but also through work opportunities in Syria (and in Lebanon for Syrians). In 2009, the British Embassy in Beirut commissioned a socio-economic survey on smuggling practices, which indicated that on average the households surveyed in Wadi Khaled were poorer than other areas of Akkar, and that many households travelled frequently to Syria to buy goods (for consumption or smuggling) because necessities were much cheaper in Syria.⁵ This is confirmed by discussions with officials in Wadi Khaled, who noted that prior to the unrest in Syria many host community families made a living from consuming or smuggling legal goods (fuel, cigarettes, clothes, bread, etc.) from across the border into Lebanon.

The Akkar region has also been the focus of development projects due to its history as a marginalised yet uniquely located area. The UN Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the European Union⁶ currently support development projects in the region ranging from youth empowerment, poverty assessment, agricultural development and community

³ This report will not cover this topic in-depth, but a phased approach will be articulated in DRC’s livelihood strategy (March 2012).

⁴ Source: Hutson, Royce A. “Wadi Khaled in Perspective: A Report to the British Embassy, Beirut, Lebanon.” 31 October 2009, p. 9.

⁵ Source: Hutson, Royce A, p. 2.

⁶ The EU is supporting a project translated as “Project to Support Local Development in the North of Lebanon” (ADELNORD), implemented in collaboration with local actors (GFA Consulting Group) and the Lebanese government for roughly €14 million over 3 years. (http://www.cdr-adelnord.org/div_class_standard/Objectifs_et_Mission_br_div_3565109.html)

development planning. Despite these investments, the Akkar region has little to show in the way of vocational training programmes or larger-scale development initiatives on the ground. There are few local organisations active in the area, and those who are depend heavily on short-term funding from various international donors.

Since the unrest in Syria, the flow of goods has been severely limited and residents are forced to buy the same goods within Lebanon, but in much smaller quantities due to the higher prices. Lebanese have also stopped crossing into Syria for seasonal work; the lack of “unofficial” border access, coupled with continued violence in Syria, have also affected habitual Bedouin cross-border movements. Even local organisations have had to scale back livelihood activities, such as women’s sewing groups, because they cannot buy material in bulk from Syria anymore.⁷ Despite the current hardship faced by restrictive border movements, humanitarian and development actors have emphasised the opportunity to engage the Wadi Khaled host community in “legal” livelihood activities, particularly the youth; they used to engage in smuggling (referred to as “cross-border commerce”) and are now looking to acquire other skills.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT

The livelihood assessment took place from 6 to 10 February 2012 with the following objectives:

- Follow-up on the initial livelihood assessment conducted in November 2011;
- Offer preliminary analysis of the livelihood survey data collected in January 2012;
- Meet with displaced and host community members to collect qualitative data to supplement the survey (Wadi Khaled);
- Assess qualitatively livelihood and skills development options available in the Akkar region, and the Wadi Khaled area in particular (through secondary information and key informant interviews).

The figures used in this report are based on DRC’s January 2012 distribution figures, since they correspond directly to the livelihood survey data.

Sources of information for this assessment include:

- Livelihood survey (please see Section 5 – Assessment)
- Key informant interviews with DRC staff, UNHCR and partners, and village officials
- Focus group discussions with host community members in Wadi Khaled (female) – in person
- Focus group discussions with displaced community members in Wadi Khaled (male and female) – reports
- Document review

4. GENERAL LIVELIHOOD NEEDS

Displaced Households

Across the 5 geographic areas surveyed, **displaced families depend primarily on assistance**; even those who answered honestly about finding temporary employment in Lebanon still rely heavily on assistance to meet their basic needs. This is likely due to the comparatively high cost of living in Lebanon for Syrian families, which cannot be met through casual labour wages. At the same time, households were asked this question by staff they know through distributions, so they were more likely to emphasise the importance of assistance for fear of losing it.

The majority of the 502 household surveys analysed said **their primary livelihood need is a circulation permit**. The predominantly male respondents said that a circulation permit would allow them to move freely in the region to find any available work. The households surveyed did not mention concrete skills training they wanted or needed, but rather emphasised that they were interested in “any work” that would provide an income. The majority of respondents felt the only way to find this work was to receive a circulation permit.

UNHCR is advocating for circulation permits for displaced Syrians confined to Wadi Khaled, in addition to another issue. DRC staff note that even those who entered Lebanon legally and are able to circulate need to renew their permits every 6

⁷ Discussion with the Organisation for Women’s Empowerment (OWE), Wadi Khaled, 26 October 2011.

months, which must be done in person within Syria.⁸ Most **displaced Syrians cannot return to Syria to renew permits** for safety or protection reasons, and now their permits are expiring, which renders their status “illegal.”

Host Community Households

Host community members interviewed in November 2011 and February 2012 mentioned the difficulty in crossing the border between Lebanon and Syria as having significant impact on their household incomes. This is due partly to smuggling-based incomes, but also to the fact that Syria is extremely unsafe even when entered legally. **Host community families that depended on cheaper goods or employment in Syria are cut off from their income sources, often with no financial alternatives.** Although many families have savings to keep them afloat, humanitarian organisations are noticing an increasing number of households who say their savings are depleted.⁹

Female host community members in Wadi Khaled gave very gender-segregated responses to their main livelihood needs. They repeatedly cited the **lack of employment opportunities as the major livelihood need for men**, because there are too few vacancies in the area. The women said **the primary livelihood need for women is to gain more skills through home-based projects** that could hopefully become home-based businesses. They felt this would not create problems with men, who traditionally generate income and control household finances, because they had lost their sources of income due to the Syrian conflict and would welcome any extra cash. Also, the young women felt that their parents would be happy to see them economically active because many have too much “boring free time.” One woman in her forties added that “working women will help to change the mentality of the region to be more open-minded.”¹⁰ They mentioned a few women who already had home-based businesses, mainly for beauty products and clothing. However, the majority of the women felt that employment outside of the home remained more appropriate for men.

5. ASSESSMENT: LIVELIHOOD SURVEY MAIN FINDINGS PER AREA

DRC collected data from 1,192 households in January 2012 during the monthly distribution. Beneficiaries were asked the following questions with regards to livelihoods:¹¹

- 1) What kind of work were you doing before you were displaced?
- 2) What strategies are you using now to cope with food and income insecurity?
- 3) Do you have any particular skills or resources that you think you could use to get an income? What are they? (Not necessarily related to previous employment/livelihood strategy)
 - a. Do you have these skills already? If you do not, what would you need to improve your skills?



Source: Google Maps

⁸ Syrians who enter Lebanon legally receive a permit that allows them to work for 6 months in Lebanon; this permit, however, does not allow them to be registered in the social security system (this requires an official work permit).

⁹ This information was corroborated by DRC and UNHCR field staff in February 2012.

¹⁰ Focus group discussion with adult women in Amayer Village, Wadi Khaled, 8 February 2012.

¹¹ The wording of the questions in Arabic provides more straight-forward language.

The following is a summary of the information obtained on general livelihood trends per area of displacement. The areas represented here are:

Area	Total Registered Displaced Population ¹²	Total Number of Locations per Area ¹³	Locations Sampled for Analysis	Registered Displaced Population Sampled for Analysis
Tripoli	264 households 1,384 individuals	25	1) Al Mankoubin 2) Al Bedawi 3) Qoubbe 4) Al Tebbane	1) 10 households (55 individuals) 2) 18 households (85 individuals) 3) 18 households (82 individuals) 4) 72 households (385 individuals) <i>118 households (45% of Tripoli)</i>
Halba	96 households 471 individuals	15	1) Halba	1) 29 households (128 individuals) <i>(30% of Halba)</i>
Birreh	158 households 540 individuals	16	1) Al Birreh	1) 61 households (159 individuals) <i>(39% of Birreh)</i>
Akrum	19 households 106 individuals	4	1) Akrum 2) Al Sahle	1) 8 households (39 individuals) 2) 6 households (34 individuals) <i>14 households (74% of Akrum)</i>
Wadi Khaled (& surroundings)	655 households 3,381 individuals	35	1) Al Ibra – Collective Shelter 2) Mashta Hammoud 3) Al Amayer 4) Rama 5) Kneisseh 6) Al Bqaiia	1) 15 households (72 individuals) 2) 43 households (163 individuals) 3) 67 households (349 individuals) 4) 75 households (424 individuals) 5) 41 households (235 individuals) 6) 39 households (220 individuals) <i>280 households (43% of Wadi Khaled)</i>
Total	1,192 households 5,882 individuals	95	14 locations (15% of total)	502 households (42% of total) 2,430 individuals (42% of total)

The sample analysed represents approximately 42% of the total number of registered households. Locations were selected per area because they contained a high concentration of displaced families or livelihood profile characteristics representative of the area.

General Survey Findings

- ❖ Displaced Syrians' livelihood strategies in Syria were quite varied, but the majority of men were employed in unskilled or semi-skilled work.
- ❖ Very few of the households surveyed reported women working, either in their place of origin in Syria or in their current displacement location in Lebanon.
 - No women reported working in Syria; only 1 household in the sample said women were doing casual work (Halba area – in a female-headed household).
- ❖ The data were collected during the monthly food kit distribution; answering questions while receiving assistance can influence responses related to livelihoods and particularly income.
 - In some areas, notably Halba, Birreh, and Wadi Khaled, DRC field staff noted that the presence of “key officials,” such as mayors and municipality officials, appear to have influenced beneficiaries not to report any income or employment history. For example, it appears implausible that a large number of households “did not work” in Syria prior to displacement. DRC infers that they either decided not to declare their former livelihood strategies or were engaged in smuggling and chose not to report it.
- ❖ Very few households acknowledged income from smuggling activities; smuggling is either under-reported or under-represented in the sampled population.
- ❖ In response to Question 3, the majority of male beneficiaries said they would do any type of casual work, related or unrelated to their previous jobs, without specifying types of skills.

¹² This table reflects data collected during the January 2012 food kit distribution and may have been updated since then.

¹³ “Locations per area” indicates the number of sites per area where there are displaced Syrians registered with DRC/UNHCR.

The following tables provide general livelihood profiles of the sample locations per area of displacement, with the **most common responses highlighted in bold**.

Tripoli Area

Registered Households: 264 (1,384 individuals) – 22% of registered households

The Syrian displaced currently residing in the Tripoli area entered Lebanon both legally and illegally. Those who entered legally have the right to work without a work permit. Some came due to the unrest in Syria, and others were already working in Tripoli before 2011. Some Syrians working in Tripoli before 2011 brought their families to Lebanon because of the violence in Syria.

Tripoli – Al Mankoubin		
Registered households in Al Mankoubin: 10 households (55 individuals)		
Places of Origin in Syria	Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homs (Al Khaldeeye, Al Bayada) Hama Tal Khalakh Idlib Lattakia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casual labour Fruit vendor Cement worker Butcher Painter (construction-related) Driver Baker Carpenter Tiling (construction-related) 	<p>Most respondents said they live off the combination of work-related income and humanitarian assistance.</p> <p>Many were able to find at least part-time work related to their livelihood strategies prior to displacement. Other strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harvest work – olive or fruit picking Casual work unrelated to previous job

Tripoli – Al Bedawi Village		
Registered households in Al Bedawi: 18 households (85 individuals)		
Places of Origin in Syria	Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homs (Kamar Zeintoun, Bayada) Aleppo Tal Khalakh Idlib Hama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casual worker Painter Mechanic Merchant Butcher Waiter (in restaurant) Welder Factory worker (glass) Carpenter Blacksmith Cement worker 	<p>Most respondents said they live off the combination of work-related income and humanitarian assistance.</p> <p>Most were able to find at least part-time work related to their livelihood strategies prior to displacement, although many men said they were only able to work on and off.</p>

Tripoli – Qoubbe		
Registered households in Qoubbe: 18 households (82 individuals)		
Places of Origin in Syria	Sample of Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homs (Karam al-Zeitoun, Al-Ijbari, Taldou, Nazha) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concierge Delivery man Construction (contractor) 	<p>Most respondents said they live off the combination of work-related income and humanitarian assistance.</p> <p>Many were able to find at least part-time work related to their livelihood strategies prior to displacement.</p> <p>Others are unemployed but searching, usually in sectors related to their previous job.</p>

Tripoli – Al Tebbane		
Registered households in Al Tebbane: 72 households (385 individuals)		
Places of Origin in Syria	Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tal Khalakh • Homs (Midan and others) • Aleppo • Idlib • Tartuz • Hassakeh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetable vendor • Carpenter • Cement worker • Concierge • Mechanic • Free trader / businessman • Tailor • Fishmonger • Restaurant worker • Grocery employee • Shop employee (plastics, sportswear, kitchen utensils) • Plumber • Painter (construction-related) • Tiling (construction-related) 	<p>Most respondents said they live off the combination of work-related income and humanitarian assistance.</p> <p>Many were able to find at least part-time work related to their livelihood strategies prior to displacement.</p> <p>Others are unemployed but searching, usually in sectors related to their previous job.</p>

Halba Area

Registered Families – 96 (471 individuals) – 8% of registered households

Most of the displaced Syrians currently residing in Halba entered Lebanon illegally from Debebieh area or recently moved from the Birreh region to Halba. Syrians living in Halba have more access to services than those living in Wadi Khaled because they are allowed to move freely with Halba and Abdeh.

Halba Village

Number of registered households in Halba: 29 households (128 individuals)

Places of Origin in Syria	Sample of Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homs • Lattakia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual worker • Cement worker • Brick layer • Nut roaster • Driver • Baker • Car washer • Minibus driver • Student • Truck driver • Electrician • IT programmer 	<p>The majority of beneficiaries have found work related to their livelihood strategies in Syria, but still rely on assistance as well.</p> <p>In particular, the following professions found work: IT programmer, nut roaster, baker, car washer, minibus driver, mechanic, casual worker.</p> <p><i>Examples of adapted livelihood strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Receiving remittances from father working in Saudi Arabia ○ A driver now works in a supermarket ○ A driver now washes cars ○ 2 students, ages 12 and 17, dropped out of school to work in an auto repair shop ○ An electrician is engaged in casual work <p>Several female headed-households without family support were reported in the Halba area. They are largely dependent on assistance and any income generated in Lebanon; for example, one household relies on 2 daughters who work during harvest periods picking olives/fruit.</p>

Birreh Area

Registered Households: 158 households (540 individuals) – 13% of registered households

Most of the Syrian displaced currently residing in the Birreh region entered Lebanon illegally from Debebieh area since May 2011; despite entering illegally, the displaced Syrians in Birreh area have more access to services than those living in Wadi Khaled, since they access the Halba and Abdeh areas.

Al Birreh		
<i>Registered households in Al Birreh: 61 households (159 individuals)</i>		
Places of Origin in Syria	Sample of Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homs • Tal Khalakh • Hama • Idlib • Lattakia • Damascus (Midan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastry maker / baker • Supermarket employee • Small business owner (supermarket) • Imam • Cement worker • Teacher (University of Damascus) – now with a heart condition • Factory worker (sugar factory) 	<p>Most beneficiaries have either found work related to their livelihood strategies in Syria or casual work, but still rely on assistance as well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imam working as private teacher in a school • Construction work

Akrum Area

Registered Households: 19 (106 individuals) – 2% of registered households

Akrum is a cluster of 7 villages located near the Lebanese-Syrian border, of which 4 have registered displaced Syrians. The displaced entered Lebanon both legally and illegally, and live in a variety of situations – some rent accommodation, others live in abandoned places, some stay with family and there is 1 collective shelter that houses 8 families.

Akrum Village		
<i>Registered households in Akrum Village: 8 households (39 individuals)</i>		
Places of Origin in Syria	Sample of Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homs (Heet) • Homs (Bab Amr, Bab Itrib) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmer • Construction (plaster moulding) • Baker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual work – related to harvesting (olive/fruit picking) • Assistance • Credit • 2 brothers who worked as bakers in Syria are currently employed in a bakery in Lebanon (in Kuny)

Al Sahle

Registered households in Akrum Village: 6 households (34 individuals)

Places of Origin in Syria	Sample of Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homs (Aser) • Tal Khalakh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual worker • Tiling • Driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual work – unrelated to prior work, willing to take any job • Assistance

Wadi Khaled Area

Registered Households: 655 (3,381 individuals) – 56% of registered households

The area of Wadi Khaled has the highest concentration of displaced Syrians who entered Lebanon illegally as a result of the unrest.¹⁴ Most of the households displaced in Wadi Khaled stay with family in the area. Because the region was considered stateless until 1993, many families found themselves on both sides of the border.¹⁵ As a result, many households have Syrian and Lebanese members, and still others have high rates of marriage between the two nationalities. For example, one Lebanese woman surveyed is married with a Syrian and her children are Syrian; she is displaced from Syria in Wadi Khaled with her children, staying in her parents' home, while her husband remains in Syria.

Al Ibra Collective Shelter

Registered households in Al Ibra: 15 households (72 individuals)

Places of Origin in Syria	Sample of Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tal Khalakh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual worker • Plumber • Electrician (fridge & washing machine repair) • Blacksmith • Taxi driver • Mechanic • Painter • Lawyer 	<p>13 families depend completely on assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A family of 8 reported that they are selling the food kit to buy diapers and milk, as they have 3 children in diapers and they consider it a primary need. <p>2 families reported that in addition to assistance, they are working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Electrician now working on satellite cabling ○ Mechanic working as a mechanic <p>Everyone is ready to work if they receive permits to leave Wadi Khaled, since they report job vacancies are scarce or inexistent.</p>

Mashta Hammoud

Registered households in Mashta Hammoud: 43 households (163 individuals)

Places of Origin in Syria	Sample of Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homs • Tal Khalakh • Hama (1 family) • Damascus (1 family) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual worker • Farmer • Blacksmith • Construction (drywall installation) • Tiling • Mechanic • Mattress stuffing 	<p>The majority of families depend on assistance because they could not find vacancies in Mashta Hammoud. They depend on the hosting family as well (to whom they are related).</p> <p>However, the following beneficiaries found temporary employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A blacksmith has found work in his trade • Construction worker installs drywall and work stops in wintertime due to bad weather • Tiling worker did a few jobs in the fall but now cannot find work in winter • One man found work stuffing mattresses

¹⁴ Although the delineation of the Wadi Khaled "area" and its surroundings is not precise, DRC has registered 32 locations and 3 collective shelters within Wadi Khaled where displaced families reside (35 sites total).

¹⁵ Wadi Khaled residents received Lebanese nationality starting in 1993-4.

Al Amayer		
<i>Registered households in Al Amayer: 67 households (349 individuals)</i>		
Places of Origin in Syria	Sample of Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tal Khalakh • Homs (Al Bayada, Assayer, Bab Amr, Drib) • Idlib 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual worker • Did not work in Syria • Cement worker • Baker • Driver • Tiling (construction-related) • Electrician • Glass cutter (windows) • Painter (construction-related) • Mechanic • Farmer • Factory worker (food processing) 	<p>The majority of beneficiaries surveyed said they currently only rely on assistance.</p> <p>The following reasons were given as to why displaced Syrian men in Amayer do not work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They entered illegally and lack the official papers to work • They have medical conditions that prevent them from working (back pains, chronic ailments, etc.) <p><i>Examples of adapted livelihood strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One man, who was a factory worker in Syria, has found casual employment doing tiling work. ○ One woman's husband works in Beirut and she relies on his salary.

Rama		
Rama is a village in Wadi Khaled that hosts the largest numbers of displaced Syrians in the region. The majority of the households live with host community families, while 13 families are staying in a collective shelter renovated by the DRC/UNHCR 2011 project.		
<i>Registered households in Rama: 75 households (424 individuals)</i>		
Places of Origin in Syria	Sample of Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tal Khalakh • Homs (Bab Amr, Taldou, Al Khaldeeye) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual worker • Did not work in Syria • Cement worker • Driver • Electrician • Plumber (contractor) • Painter (construction-related) • Auto mechanic • Farmer • Architect • Teacher • Blacksmith • Taxi driver • Real estate agent • Small business owner – supermarket 	<p>The majority of beneficiaries surveyed said they currently only rely on assistance.</p> <p>The following reasons were given as to why displaced Syrian men in Rama do not work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They entered illegally and lack the official papers to work • They have medical conditions that prevent them from working (back pains, chronic ailments, etc.) <p><i>Examples of adapted livelihood strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some casual workers have found casual work in Lebanon, mainly harvest-related (olive/fruit picking) ○ A taxi driver has found working driving in Lebanon ○ A former real estate agent is now a bread distributor

Kneisseh		
<i>Registered households in Kneisseh: 41 households (235 individuals)</i>		
Places of Origin in Syria	Sample of Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homs (Heet, Qusur) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual worker • Blacksmith 	<p>The majority of beneficiaries surveyed said they currently only rely on assistance.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver • Smuggling • Mechanic • Farmer • Factory worker (pharmaceuticals) • Construction (drywall installation) • Minibus driver • Shepherd 	<p>The following reason was given as to why displaced Syrian men in Kneisseh do not work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They entered illegally and lack the official papers to work <p><i>Examples of adapted livelihood strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A shepherd sold his flock and is using the savings to supplement the assistance he receives. ○ One woman has a son in Beirut working as a carpenter and her husband in Syria who provide some remittances.
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Al Bqaiia		
<i>Registered households in Al Bqaiia: 39 households (220 individuals)</i>		
Places of Origin in Syria	Sample of Livelihood Strategies Prior to Displacement	Sample of Current Livelihood Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homs (Jubar, Bab Amr) • Tal Khalakh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction worker • Driver 	<p>The majority of beneficiaries surveyed said they currently only rely on assistance or personal savings.</p> <p>The following reason was given as to why displaced Syrian men in Al Baqayya do not work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They entered illegally and lack the official papers to work <p><i>Examples of adapted livelihood strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adult children work in Syria and Beirut to provide for their families. ○ Men engaged in seasonal work during the olive harvest, but have not found work past the olive season.

6. SUGGESTED ACTION PLAN

General Recommendations for Livelihood Support in the Akkar Region

- **Determine the sustainability of continuing distributions for all displaced and consider tailoring assistance to households' livelihood vulnerabilities.** The assessment revealed an increasing dependence on assistance that could be detrimental if displacement becomes more protracted. Agencies should reflect on ways to “phase out” distributions in favour of more sustainable livelihood support.
 - Phasing – Would it be possible to move to more targeted distributions while planning livelihood support?
 - Should this wait until the weather is warmer, when household costs will decrease because fuel needs decrease?
 - Funding – How long can full distributions (food/non-food) continue? What other options exist?
 - **Develop an assessment tool to determine livelihood security** in order to better respond to needs
 - A profiling methodology can provide indicators of displaced households' vulnerability
 - **Vouchers or cash transfers for food** – reduce the logistical burden and increase impact of assistance on local market economies, which are suffering from the restricted border movement
 - WFP conducted an assessment and recommended starting a voucher programme for at least the bread distribution (which constitutes approximately 5% of the total food kit)
 - DRC can investigate the possibility of converting the hygiene kits into a voucher system as a first step
 - **Note:** SDC (Swiss Development Cooperation) is an expert agency on cash transfer programming and may be able to provide expertise on the issue

- **Focus immediate livelihood support (March 2012 onward) on vulnerable single-headed households, male or female – they emerged as some of the most vulnerable livelihood cases**
 - Direct livelihood support to the most vulnerable – cash transfers, income generating activities, etc. – to reduce livelihood insecurity
 - Establish inter-agency livelihood assessment and assistance standards, including vulnerability criteria
 - Promote a phased approach to livelihood assistance in order for vulnerable households to “progress” out of vulnerability
 - Example: Cash for work + savings → vocational guidance → vocational training (VT) → income-generation grant/cash transfer
- **Humanitarian organisations should work with development actors to integrate any livelihood programming to fit within existing, longer-term community development plans**
 - It will be important to obtain development plans from the major actors in the region – UNDP & ADELNORD
 - **Note:** UNHCR in Beirut is coordinating this.
 - Any vocational training programme should aim to improve skill levels from unskilled to semi-skilled or skilled work
 - Link with development actors to achieve this
 - Attempt to understand market dynamics within Syria (i.e. what kinds of work were in demand before the conflict?) and link the information with VT programming for displaced people in Lebanon
 - Prioritise a “dual approach” between traditional VT and hands-on training (apprenticeships) – this can compensate for beneficiaries’ overall low level of education and Syrians’ inability to circulate within Lebanon by providing on-site training
- **DRC should advocate for gender-specific vocational training**
 - A market study can look at traditionally female and male-oriented VT sectors to understand what the market can support
- The humanitarian community should **advocate for circulation permits for displaced Syrians** to find work. If this is not feasible politically, organisations need to examine specific skills training and/or income-generating activities that are marketable in the areas of confinement.
 - This requires a market study tailored to displaced Syrian (and vulnerable host community) needs, as well as a better understanding of employment policy – the legal framework versus the reality on the ground.

Specific Programme Recommendations for DRC-Lebanon

The overall livelihood goal should be for displaced households and vulnerable host community members to diversify their sources of income and build skillsets that are useful in Syrian and Lebanese markets. Programming should also explore specific opportunities for women to enter the market.

- To **diversify sources of income** means to reduce dependence on humanitarian assistance and/or illicit activities during displacement.
- To **build useful skillsets** means to move unskilled workers to semi-skilled labour that reflect market realities in Syria and/or Lebanon, given the baseline assessment of unskilled work.

DRC can work towards this goal through a two-fold approach:

1) Skills-building through a community-based approach (via the DRC/UNHCR Community Centre)

- DRC should be clear about the objectives of Community Centre skills courses
 - “Skills courses” should either be designed as social courses or oriented towards a specific vocational goal, e.g. “childcare for home-based babysitting.” This will help DRC be clear with beneficiaries about what the courses can provide and to separate social activities from courses with objectives related to income generation.¹⁶
 - Offer financial or vocational planning “workshops” – savings techniques, financial literacy, job search skills – to build non-technical livelihood skills

¹⁶ An evaluation of DRC-Syria’s Community Centre skills courses for refugees in Damascus (December 2011) revealed that mixing social and economic course objectives contributed to the courses’ overall lack of economic impact.

- These can be linked with life skills if appropriate
 - Support women through “female-friendly spaces” and home-based income generation
 - Comprehensive livelihoods support: life skills, vocational training, financial literacy, and (if possible) income-generation grants
 - Local and displaced women seem motivated to create “female-friendly” spaces and even perhaps to engage in income generating activities together.
 - Suggestion – Provide a “start-up kit” for women’s clubs:
 - Training – Life skills, team-building, savings group techniques
 - Basic equipment
 - Planning tools
- 2) Providing direct livelihood support to the most vulnerable families
 - Identify and conduct an in-depth assessment
 - If there is a relatively small caseload of vulnerable single-headed households, DRC can conduct individual interviews using a tailored livelihood vulnerability tool (livelihood “case management”)
 - If DRC finds a large number of vulnerable households, DRC will need to develop a more rapid assessment tool and livelihood support “options” in response to particular vulnerabilities
 - Vulnerability criteria should be set with UNHCR and other protection actors
 - Follow a phased approach: Cash for work + savings → vocational guidance → vocational training (VT) → income-generation grant/cash transfer

In March 2012, DRC-Lebanon developed a livelihood strategy for the Akkar Region that reflects these recommendations and outlines DRC’s livelihood programming priorities through a phased approach.