



## **WFP Lebanon**

Food Security Outcome Monitoring

Round 2: April 2016



wfp.org

**World Food Programme**

# Highlights

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The second round of food security outcome monitoring (FSOM) concluded after consulting 580 households, including both assisted and non-assisted Syrian refugees as well as conducting 12 focus group discussions (FGDs).

From February to April 2016, WFP assisted 584,073 Syrian refugees through electronic vouchers (e-cards) and 19,748 Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) through cash transfers. In March and April, assisted households received the full monthly entitlement, USD 27 per person, as WFP restored the e-card value following contributions from various donors earlier in the year. The assistance was still capped at five individuals per household.

Results show that the food security status of assisted households improved following the reinstatement of the e-card value. The percentage of households with acceptable food consumption score increased from 59 percent in January to 65 percent in April and the coping strategy index decreased from 18.5 to 18.2. Less beneficiaries spent their savings, sold households assets, borrowed money, and reduced health and education expenditures to buy food after the e-card value was restored. For both assisted and non-assisted groups, food was the main household expenditure.

Assisted households ranked their overall satisfaction with WFP assistance and programming as 7.61/10, an increase from 7.2 in January.

Both assisted and non-assisted households showed similar results in terms of modality preference, with almost half preferring vouchers/e-cards while nearly 40 percent preferring cash.

## Introduction

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. Since the outbreak of violence in Syria in 2011 more than four million individuals have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. WFP's Regional Emergency Operation 200433 was launched in July 2012 to respond to the crisis in those neighbouring countries including Lebanon. Within this framework, WFP provides food assistance to vulnerable UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees through e-cards and Palestinian refugees from Syria through cash transfers in partnership with UNRWA. Additionally, WFP continues supporting the Government of Lebanon to strengthen its social safety net programme - the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) - which provides food assistance to vulnerable Lebanese people affected by the crisis using WFP e-cards.

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) unit at WFP Lebanon has been monitoring outcomes, outputs and implementation processes since the beginning of the operation. In 2016, WFP launched the Food Security Outcome Monitoring (FSOM) to measure food security outcome trends over time among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries on a quarterly basis. The second round was conducted in April 2016.

## Methodology

FSOM allows for comparisons between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries to inform programme adjustments and decision-making. The questionnaire included close-ended questions to evaluate food security, expenditure and processes.

A random sampling approach was used to select a representative sample of assisted and non-assisted households registered with UNHCR. WFP and cooperating partners interviewed a total of 580 refugee households; 324 assisted and 256 non-assisted households. Assisted households are Syrian refugee households registered with UNHCR and assisted by WFP, while the non-assisted households are Syrian refugee households that are registered with UNHCR but not receiving WFP assistance. Beneficiaries were contacted before the visit, and informed of FSOM and its aim. Interviews were only conducted with those interested after having provided their consent.

The FSOM survey was coupled with a qualitative component of focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted in April to triangulate quantitative FSOM findings. Twelve gender sensitive FGDs were conducted to understand the perspectives of beneficiaries by gender. Questionnaires were tailored in order to complement the results of the household survey.

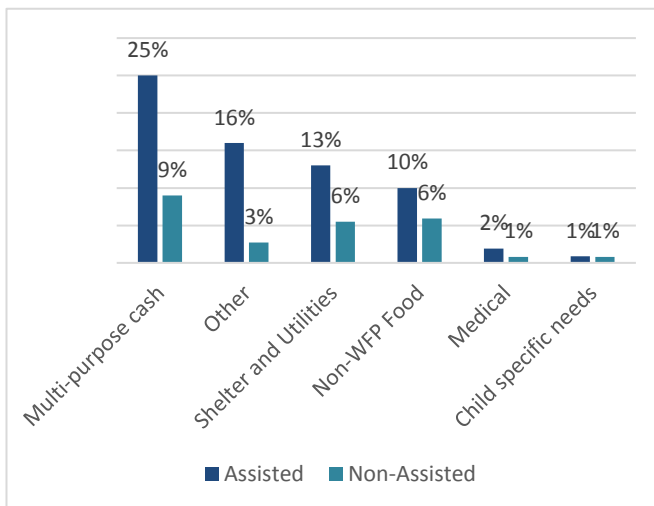
# Beneficiary characteristics

Characteristics of assisted and non-assisted groups were collected and analysed through the FSOM survey. Analysis of **household sizes** shows that the assisted groups have larger household size (6.43) than the non-assisted groups (5). Data by sex of household head shows, more female headed households were found among the assisted group (20%) than the non-assisted group (14.5%)

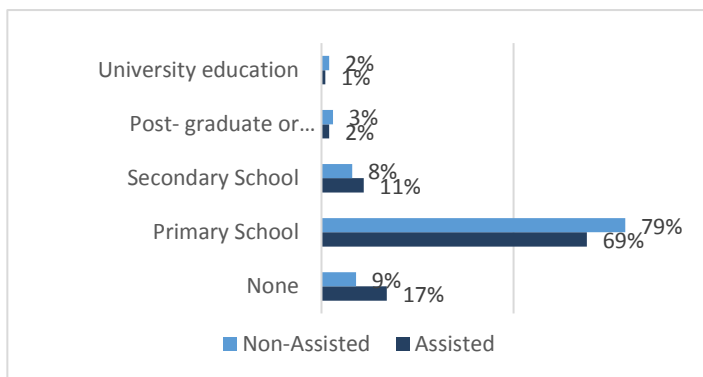
Main **sources of income** for the assisted and the non-assisted groups were reported as follows. Seventy four percent of the assisted beneficiaries relied on WFP's e-card as a main source of income and credit and borrowing (20%) as a second source. On the other hand, for the non-assisted group unskilled labour (60%) was the main income source followed by credit and borrowing as their secondary source of income (56%).

When comparing **education levels of household heads**, the majority of visited households reported only having received primary education. The non-assisted group had higher levels of education than the assisted.

Analyses on **other assistance** received by households show that 67% of WFP assisted households received other forms of assistance, such as shelter, multi-purpose cash and fuel. On the other hand, only one out of four of the households that are not assisted by WFP received other forms of assistance for child-specific and medical needs.



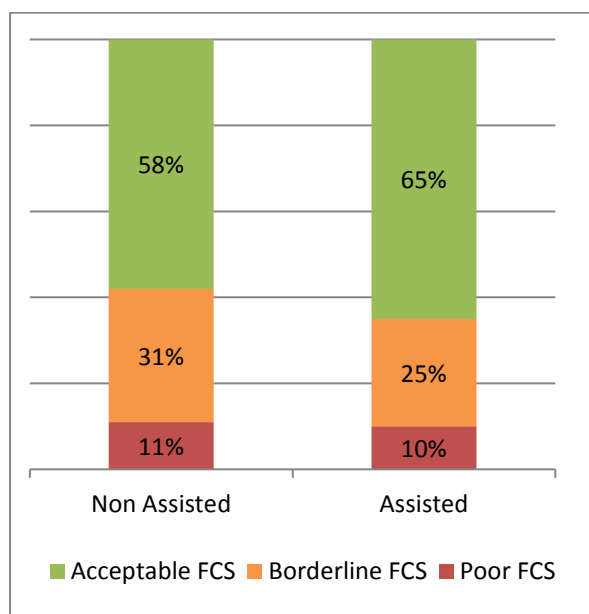
**Figure 2: other assistance provided to refugees. Source: WFP FSOM April 2016**



**Figure 1: education levels of assisted and non-assisted groups. Source: WFP FSOM April 2016**

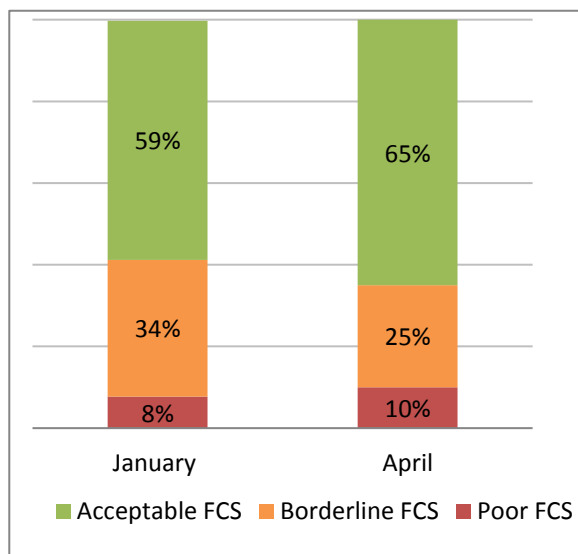
# Main food security outcomes

Main food security outcomes measured by WFP were analysed, including food consumption scores, dietary diversity scores and coping strategy index. The outcome indicators showed that the assisted groups and non-assisted groups had improved food security status as compared to January.



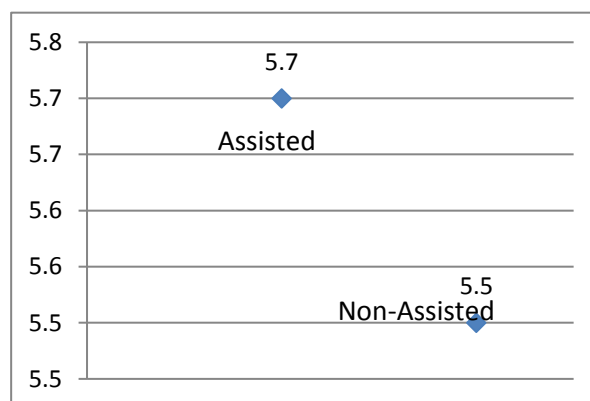
**Figure 3: food consumption levels of assisted and non-assisted groups. Source: WFP FSOM April 2016**

Food consumption over seven days prior to the interview was assessed. The food consumption score of households receiving WFP assistance was higher than that of the non-assisted; 65% of the assisted households recorded having acceptable food consumption score (FCS) while only 58% recorded having acceptable FCS in the non-assisted group. After restoring the e-card value to USD 27, the percentage of households with acceptable FCS increased to 65% in April from 59% in January. Beneficiaries reported during focus group discussions that the restoring of the e-card value had a positive impact on their food consumption as all beneficiaries interviewed reported that they were able to purchase more food.



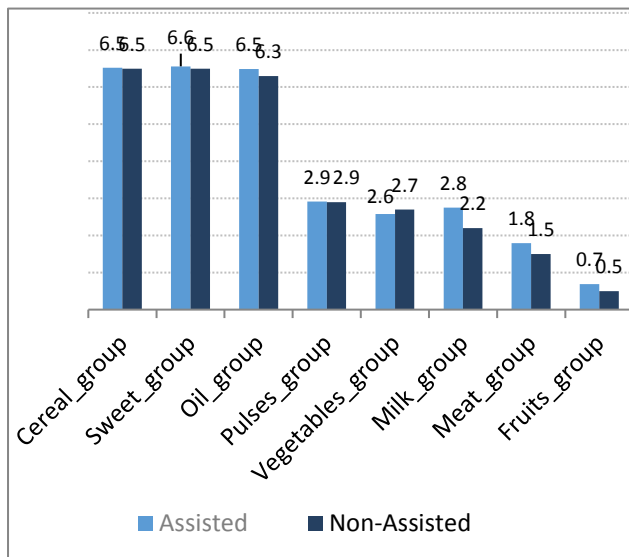
**Figure 4: Food consumption trends among the assisted households in January and April 2016. Source: WFP FSOM January and April 2016**

**Average dietary diversity score (ADDS)** shows that both assisted and non-assisted groups had similar dietary diversity (5.7 and 5.5 food groups per week respectively). Looking at the consumption by food group, both groups consumed a diverse diet. The assisted had slightly higher food consumption level in all food groups except vegetables. This is in line with the assisted group having overall better FCS than the non-assisted.



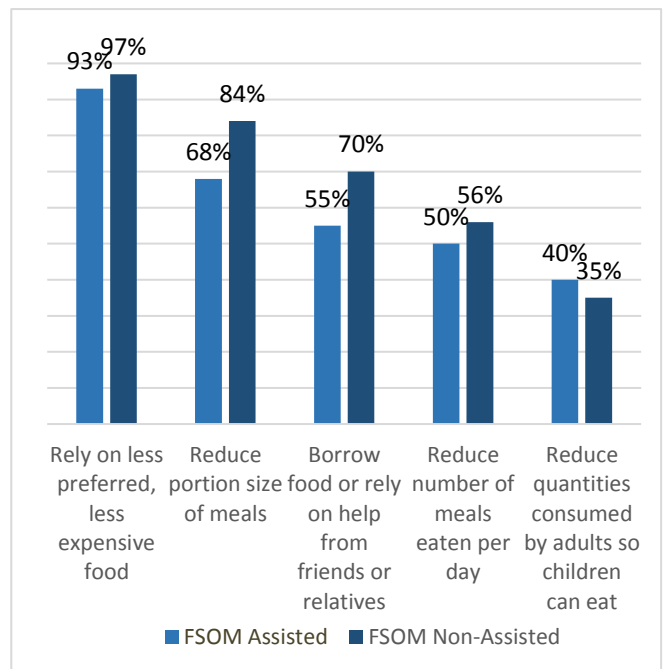
**Figure 5: average dietary diversity score of assisted and non-assisted groups. Source: WFP FSOM April 2016**

Comparing ADDS among the assisted group over time, ADDS increased to 5.7 in April from 5.5 in January following the reinstatement of e-card value as beneficiaries were able to purchase meat, chicken and dairy products that they were not able to buy or bought less when the e-card value was USD 21.6. Results from the FGDs are in line with these findings, with beneficiaries reporting that, in April, they were able to purchase meat, chicken and dairy products.



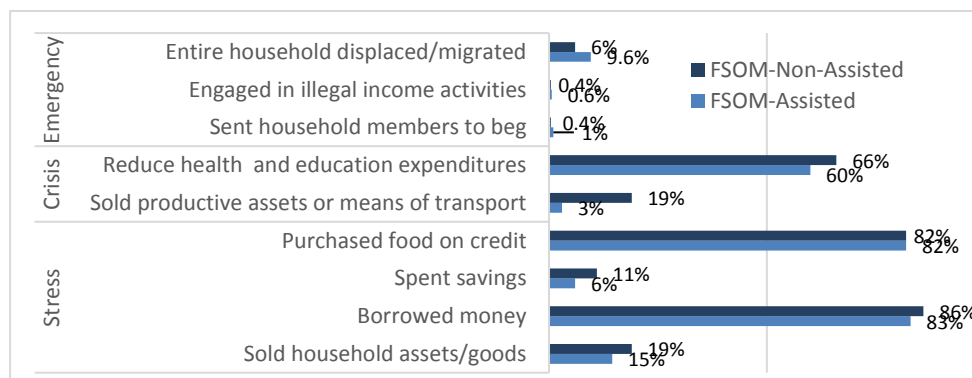
**Figure 6: average number of days per week each food group was consumed (assisted and non-assisted).** Source: WFP FSOM April 2016

**Coping strategy index (CSI)** is an indicator of the coping mechanisms applied to deal with lack of food or money to buy food. Higher CSI means that households have to adapt more coping mechanisms. CSI of the assisted group recorded 18.2 in April, representing a decrease from 18.5 in January. CSI of the non-assisted group was higher than the assisted group and stood at 21.6 meaning that the non-assisted are employing more food based coping strategies than the assisted. Figure 7 shows the proportion of people who adopted each coping strategy.



**Figure 7: proportion of the assisted and non-assisted groups adopting each of the food-based coping strategies in April 2016.** Source: WFP FSOM April 2016

The asset depletion coping mechanism was collected to compare the livelihood coping strategies of the assisted and non-assisted groups. Results show that the assisted households used fewer asset depletion coping strategies than the non-assisted. Reinstatement of the e-card value during this period contributed to fewer beneficiaries spending their savings, selling households assets, borrowing money, and reducing health and education expenditures.

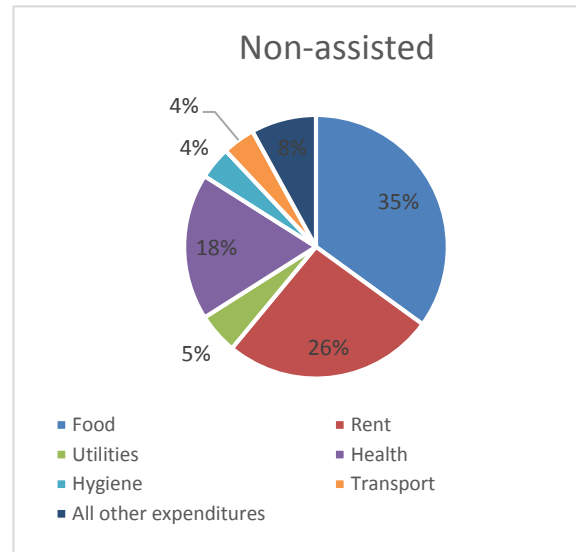


**Figure 8: proportion of the assisted and non-assisted groups adopting each of the livelihoods coping strategies in April 2016.** Source: WFP FSOM April

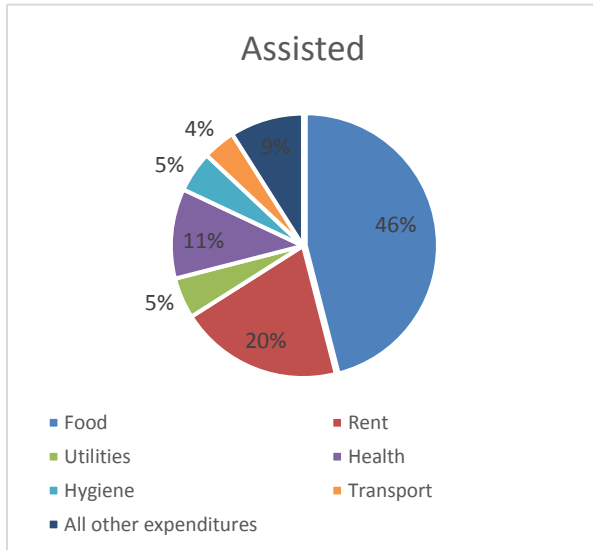
Regarding expenditure, the average amount the assisted household spent during the last 30 days was estimated at USD 510. Food takes the highest percentage of the household's expenditure recording USD 234 (46%), followed by rent recording USD 102 (20%). Among the non-assisted households the estimated monthly expenditure was USD 556 where the households spent on average USD 197 on food (35%) and USD 143 on rent (26%). The April FSOM results continue to show that food represented the biggest expenditure share for both the assisted and non-assisted groups, and that WFP assistance is critical for the vulnerable households to cover their basic food needs

The assisted households spent less on rent (20%) than the non-assisted (26%). Assisted beneficiaries in FGDs were asked to rank their basic needs and the results show that the most important priority is rent followed by food and health.

In terms of **debts**, the majority of the assisted (92%) and non-assisted (94%) households reported having debts. On average, the non-assisted household reported having USD 1,049 worth of debt, on the other hand the assisted had lower amount of debt at USD 725. Results indicate that the amount of debts accumulated by non-assisted is due to their inability to cover for their needs. On the other hand, the assisted group is able to rely less on debts.



**Figure 10: monthly expenditure share for non-assisted group. Source: WFP FSOM April 2016**

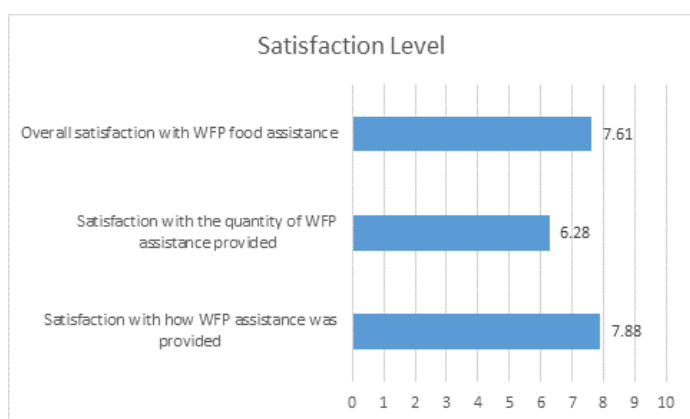


**Figure 9: monthly expenditure share for assisted group. Source: WFP FSOM April 2016**



## Cross-cutting themes and satisfaction

A key objective to all monitoring activities is to also obtain regular and appropriate **beneficiary feedback**. Beneficiaries were asked to rate their satisfaction with WFP assistance on a scale of 1-10 in regard to how the assistance was provided, the quantity and the overall satisfaction. Beneficiaries reported that their overall satisfaction with the programme was rated at 7.61/10. This increased compared to 7.2 in January. However, most beneficiaries stated that due to the capping of the assistance amount they were not able to cover the food needs of the entire family.



**Figure 11: beneficiary satisfaction. Source: WFP FSOM April 2016**

All beneficiaries were asked about their **modality preference** when receiving assistance from WFP. They were asked to choose between in-kind, cash or vouchers or a mix of cash and vouchers. Forty eight

percent of those assisted reported preferring vouchers while 38 percent reported a preference for cash and another 13.6 percent reported preferring a mixture of voucher and cash. Of those who prefer cash and voucher mix in the assisted and non-assisted groups combined, the majority declared that they prefer a 50-50 split between the two modalities.

**Intra-household decision making** within the assisted households was also evaluated through a gender lens. Of the households interviewed, 57 percent reported that women were the primary decision-makers on the use of WFP assistance, whereas 17 percent of households reported that men the primary decision-makers. In half of the male headed households, women were the decision makers over the use of e-cards.

Almost all (99%) of assisted households did not face **safety problems related to WFP assistance** either going to WFP programme sites, at WFP programme sites, or going back from WFP programme sites (e-card distribution and shops). This indicates that the operating environment does not pose safety problems to beneficiaries receiving WFP assistance.

When asked about **other security problems** faced by refugees, 2 percent of the assisted individuals experienced safety incidents within the last three months in Lebanon, mainly verbal harassments from their neighbours or the host community. Another 4.3 percent of the non-assisted also reported facing verbal harassments during their last three months in Lebanon.



# Conclusion

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Following the restoring of the voucher value to USD 27 in March, FSOM results show an overall improvement in the food security situation of the assisted group compared to January. The food consumption and dietary diversity scores improved and less coping strategies were adapted.

Seventy four percent of the assisted beneficiaries relied on WFP's e-card as the main source of income, and food remained the main expenditure component for both assisted and non-assisted households. Food needs represented 46 percent of the monthly households' expenditure (an average of USD 234 per household per month).

Beneficiaries reported an improvement in the overall satisfaction with the programme compared to January. However, limiting the assistance to five individuals per household was still in place in April and beneficiaries reported that they were not able to buy enough food to cover the needs of the entire family.

