Large and increasing needs in refugee makeshift sites

The second FSS round report confirms and quantifies a higher level of vulnerability among unregistered refugees in the makeshift site in Kutupalong, Cox’s Bazar.

The first Food Security Surveillance (FSS) report recommended for the survey of official refugee camps to be expanded to include makeshift sites, where the food security and nutrition status was largely undocumented but believed to be worse. Notably the registered refugees inside the camps receive cash-based transfers in the form of e-vouchers topped-up with approximately USD 7 per household (HH) member each month, to be spent in in-camp food shops offering a selection of 18 WFP approved commodities. The first FSS report showed room for improvements, but an overall stable situation.

At the time of the second round survey the security situation in North Rakhine was deteriorating, and an increasing number of Rohingya had crossed the border from Myanmar and begun to settle in the makeshift sites of Kutupalong (KMS), Leda (close to Nayapara) and later a newly established site in Balukhali. Humanitarian access to the unregistered refugees including the new arrivals remained limited at time of survey, and many new arrivals were still in hiding.

This second FSS round responds to the increasing need for reliable data in these areas by expanding the survey to Kutupalong Makeshift. Leda was not included as a separate WFP-led in depth Food Security and Livelihoods study was being undertaken there. For this round the number of surveyed HHs were not expanded, instead the sample size of 487 HHs was redistributed according to the estimated populations in KMS and the respective camps (246 HHs in camps, 241 in KMS).

Round 2 demographic data shows similar female-to-male ratios in camps and KMS (51:49), HHs are slightly larger in the official camps but HHs in KMS have a higher number of children under 5. Data on income and expenditure show very low income levels among refugees in makeshifts compared to official camps; registered refugees have more income and spend more money on food, linked to the FoodCard ration and reflected in better Food Consumption Scores (FCS) (see section below).
Major food security challenges found in KMS

8.5 percent of HHs in the KMS report alarmingly low levels of food security, and twice as many compared to the official camps are categorised as ‘borderline’

The first FSS round showed that the food security levels in the Kutupalong official camp were much lower than in Nayapara, linked to higher income levels and consumption of fish in the latter, being located closer to the sea. November data showed a decreased gap in FCS between the two, while economic differences remained. Any variation due to the reduced sample size will be followed up, however data indicates that food consumption in Nayapara decreased, particularly of fish and eggs.

Because of its geographic location away from portside economies and with residents in makeshift sites receiving little or no external assistance, food security in Kutupalong makeshift was believed to be worse than in the official camps – which the survey confirms. Findings showed lower intake of all food groups except for vegetables compared to those in the official camps, resulting in a situation where only 6 out of 10 HHs are considered having an acceptable FCS, 3 out 10 are on the edge of food insecurity and 1 out of 10 is seriously food insecure. This compares to 16 percent of HHs in the official camps who do not achieve an acceptable level of food security, despite being eligible for e-voucher food assistance.

Proportion of HHs per FCS category

Vitamin A intake decreases from first FSS round

The major change in Kutupalong official camp is due to a reduction in consumption of the two latter foods.

Almost half of residents in Kutupalong official camp and makeshift, and a third in Nayapara official camp consume too little iron. These findings are consistent from round 1 data and are related to low intake of iron-rich meat and fish products.

Low intake of micronutrients Iron and Vitamin A is a major issue in camps, and even more so in KMS

Vitamin A deficiency, if tackled before the age of five, can significantly reduce mortality and infectious diseases e.g. measles, diarrhoea, and malaria. Iron deficiency contributes to anaemia and affects mainly women and pre-school children. FCS+N derives the consumption of these micronutrients from reported food intake over the last seven days. At round 1, Vitamin A intake in the official camps was already low (15 percent) and has since dropped significantly. 30 percent of HHs in Kutupalong – both in camp and makeshift – responded that they consume Vitamin A rich foods only 1-3 days per week, such as fruit and vegetables, organ meats (liver, kidney etc.), dairy products and eggs.

Because of its geographic location away from portside economies and with residents in makeshift sites receiving little or no external assistance, food security in Kutupalong makeshift was believed to be worse than in the official camps – which the survey confirms. Findings showed lower intake of all food groups except for vegetables compared to those in the official camps, resulting in a situation where only 6 out of 10 HHs are considered having an acceptable FCS, 3 out 10 are on the edge of food insecurity and 1 out of 10 is seriously food insecure. This compares to 16 percent of HHs in the official camps who do not achieve an acceptable level of food security, despite being eligible for e-voucher food assistance.

Proportion of HHs per FCS category

Vitamin A intake decreases from first FSS round

Low intake of micronutrients Iron and Vitamin A is a major issue in camps, and even more so in KMS

Vitamin A deficiency, if tackled before the age of five, can significantly reduce mortality and infectious diseases e.g. measles, diarrhoea, and malaria. Iron deficiency contributes to anaemia and affects mainly women and pre-school children. FCS+N derives the consumption of these micronutrients from reported food intake over the last seven days. At round 1, Vitamin A intake in the official camps was already low (15 percent) and has since dropped significantly. 30 percent of HHs in Kutupalong – both in camp and makeshift – responded that they consume Vitamin A rich foods only 1-3 days per week, such as fruit and vegetables, organ meats (liver, kidney etc.), dairy products and eggs.
HDD for makeshift, and Female-headed HHs overall worse off

In all areas female-headed HHs have lower HDSS than male-headed, and notable differences in HDSS between camps and makeshift – with less than half of KMS residents able to maintain a diversified enough diet

The comparison from the round 2 survey on HDSS (24-hour recall) demonstrates that whether directly consumed or sold to access additional goods, the e-voucher food assistance provided in the official camps contributes to a more diversified diet. In KMS, only 4 out of 10 HHs consumed an ‘acceptable’ six or more food groups the day before the survey. The lowest HDSS are seen in female-headed HHs in official camps and across the makeshift population. Geographic differences are evident in the official camps with lower scores amongst male-headed HHs in Kutupalong versus Nayapara camp. The figures correspond to low income, with HHs with insufficient income adopting negative coping strategies such as reduced meal size and dietary diversity.

The main differences in HDD between HHs in camps and makeshift is the consumption of protein-rich and relatively costly foods such as eggs and pulses.

Share of vouchers spent on rice has risen to 85 percent

The vast majority of voucher value in the official camps is used to buy rice, and the situation on the ground strengthens the argument for redistribution of assistance

It is recommended that HHs spend no more than 58 percent of the food voucher on rice to ensure a diversified diet, yet the first report documented that 79 percent of the voucher value was directed to rice. This increased to 85 percent over Oct-Dec 2016.

HHs may be supporting more non-registered refugees following the influx and to stretch resources are consuming predominantly the most satiating staple food, or alternatively may be purchasing rice in bulk to on-sell and liquidate to meet other needs. Nearly half of HHs in camps report on-selling. Feedback from WFP’s sub-office and partners suggest that the level of on-selling is underreported by HHs in the FSS. Despite efforts for removal, informal systems in the camps enable the redistribution of funds through middle-men. Such groups pose security concerns. Targeted assistance, based on need rather than location or status will aim to mitigate the inefficient redirection of resources.
Gender and protection

Findings call for a balance of assistance to the most vulnerable in official camps and makeshift sites

Increased assistance to makeshift sites the next step for WFP and its partners

The food security, household diversity, and gender concerns in KMS are much worse than in the official camps. Encouragingly, some HHs are able to reach self-sufficiency without assistance, albeit limited. The November 2016 survey was conducted prior to the full-effect of the new arrivals from Myanmar being felt. The third round of surveillance will shed more light on the situation, anticipating a deterioration of the food security situation across the board.

16 percent of refugee HHs in the official camps remain food insecure or are on the verge of being so, despite receiving e-voucher food assistance. These households remain completely dependent on food and non-food assistance, and require augmented support in the form of livelihoods to become more self-reliant. Based on WFP’s experience and the 2016 Joint Assessment Mission these are likely to be the elderly, female headed HHs, or HHs without active earning male members who struggle to supplement assistance with additional income.

At the time of survey, the unregistered refugees received limited access to life-saving services only. Following the influx of Rohingya since October 2016, the humanitarian access to the makeshifts has somewhat improved, with WFP able to provide in-kind food assistance (rice) to all new arrivals since December 2016. Development partners have reached a consensus that assistance in Cox’s Bazar should begin to be targeted to the most vulnerable rather than based on status, for more efficient application of resources. A profiling exercise to identify the most vulnerable in makeshifts is underway, with plans to expand the e-voucher modality. A gradual scale-down of assistance will need to be negotiated in the official camps where families have received blanket assistance for generations.

A third FSS is being undertaken in May 2017. To provide a more comprehensive analysis of the needs and inform appropriate food security response the FSS will be further supplemented by WFP’s Food Security and Livelihoods study in Leda, and Household Economic Analysis in Cox’s Bazar and the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Conclusions and recommendations: November 2016

Women contribute to household decision making

However, access to safe education, especially for girls and new arrivals is a concern

Discussions (FGDs) with adult women and men, as well as adolescent boys and girls.

HH decisions are made jointly by men and women in the majority of HHs in both camps and KMS. More women are in charge of resources in the official camps, with the FoodCard purposively provided in the name of the senior female of the HH to support this. Female e-voucher holders reconfirmed that this has been positive, with increased shared decision-making as a result.

School attendance is very low in the makeshift sites, particularly for adolescent girls, with 1 in 4 going to school. At the time of the FGDs schools were not available in the makeshift sites, with children at best attending religious education in the makeshift sites, or using an acquired Bangladeshi ID to attend schools outside. Barriers to girls’ education include sexual harassment, concern on appropriateness of clothing for teenage girls, and parents not seeing the benefit in a girl’s education. Parents instead focus on arranging marriages for daughters. Sons are more often than not engaged in income-generating activities. Establishment of primary schools in the makeshifts, and provision of school feeding were requested by the HHs to improve access to, and motivation for education.

Gender and protection

- Women contribute to household decision making
- Discussions (FGDs) with adult women and men, as well as adolescent boys and girls.
- HH decisions are made jointly by men and women in the majority of HHs in both camps and KMS. More women are in charge of resources in the official camps, with the FoodCard purposively provided in the name of the senior female of the HH to support this. Female e-voucher holders reconfirmed that this has been positive, with increased shared decision-making as a result.
- School attendance is very low in the makeshift sites, particularly for adolescent girls, with 1 in 4 going to school. At the time of the FGDs schools were not available in the makeshift sites, with children at best attending religious education in the makeshift sites, or using an acquired Bangladeshi ID to attend schools outside. Barriers to girls’ education include sexual harassment, concern on appropriateness of clothing for teenage girls, and parents not seeing the benefit in a girl’s education. Parents instead focus on arranging marriages for daughters. Sons are more often than not engaged in income-generating activities.

Conclusions and recommendations: November 2016

Findings call for a balance of assistance to the most vulnerable in official camps and makeshift sites

Increased assistance to makeshift sites the next step for WFP and its partners

The food security, household diversity, and gender concerns in KMS are much worse than in the official camps. Encouragingly, some HHs are able to reach self-sufficiency without assistance, albeit limited. The November 2016 survey was conducted prior to the full-effect of the new arrivals from Myanmar being felt. The third round of surveillance will shed more light on the situation, anticipating a deterioration of the food security situation across the board.

16 percent of refugee HHs in the official camps remain food insecure or are on the verge of being so, despite receiving e-voucher food assistance. These households remain completely dependent on food and non-food assistance, and require augmented support in the form of livelihoods to become more self-reliant. Based on WFP’s experience and the 2016 Joint Assessment Mission these are likely to be the elderly, female headed HHs, or HHs without active earning male members who struggle to supplement assistance with additional income.

At the time of survey, the unregistered refugees received limited access to life-saving services only. Following the influx of Rohingya since October 2016, the humanitarian access to the makeshifts has somewhat improved, with WFP able to provide in-kind food assistance (rice) to all new arrivals since December 2016. Development partners have reached a consensus that assistance in Cox’s Bazar should begin to be targeted to the most vulnerable rather than based on status, for more efficient application of resources. A profiling exercise to identify the most vulnerable in makeshifts is underway, with plans to expand the e-voucher modality. A gradual scale-down of assistance will need to be negotiated in the official camps where families have received blanket assistance for generations.

A third FSS is being undertaken in May 2017. To provide a more comprehensive analysis of the needs and inform appropriate food security response the FSS will be further supplemented by WFP’s Food Security and Livelihoods study in Leda, and Household Economic Analysis in Cox’s Bazar and the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Gender and protection

- Women contribute to household decision making
- Discussions (FGDs) with adult women and men, as well as adolescent boys and girls.
- HH decisions are made jointly by men and women in the majority of HHs in both camps and KMS. More women are in charge of resources in the official camps, with the FoodCard purposively provided in the name of the senior female of the HH to support this. Female e-voucher holders reconfirmed that this has been positive, with increased shared decision-making as a result.
- School attendance is very low in the makeshift sites, particularly for adolescent girls, with 1 in 4 going to school. At the time of the FGDs schools were not available in the makeshift sites, with children at best attending religious education in the makeshift sites, or using an acquired Bangladeshi ID to attend schools outside. Barriers to girls’ education include sexual harassment, concern on appropriateness of clothing for teenage girls, and parents not seeing the benefit in a girl’s education. Parents instead focus on arranging marriages for daughters. Sons are more often than not engaged in income-generating activities.

Conclusions and recommendations: November 2016

Findings call for a balance of assistance to the most vulnerable in official camps and makeshift sites

Increased assistance to makeshift sites the next step for WFP and its partners

The food security, household diversity, and gender concerns in KMS are much worse than in the official camps. Encouragingly, some HHs are able to reach self-sufficiency without assistance, albeit limited. The November 2016 survey was conducted prior to the full-effect of the new arrivals from Myanmar being felt. The third round of surveillance will shed more light on the situation, anticipating a deterioration of the food security situation across the board.

16 percent of refugee HHs in the official camps remain food insecure or are on the verge of being so, despite receiving e-voucher food assistance. These households remain completely dependent on food and non-food assistance, and require augmented support in the form of livelihoods to become more self-reliant. Based on WFP’s experience and the 2016 Joint Assessment Mission these are likely to be the elderly, female headed HHs, or HHs without active earning male members who struggle to supplement assistance with additional income.

At the time of survey, the unregistered refugees received limited access to life-saving services only. Following the influx of Rohingya since October 2016, the humanitarian access to the makeshifts has somewhat improved, with WFP able to provide in-kind food assistance (rice) to all new arrivals since December 2016. Development partners have reached a consensus that assistance in Cox’s Bazar should begin to be targeted to the most vulnerable rather than based on status, for more efficient application of resources. A profiling exercise to identify the most vulnerable in makeshifts is underway, with plans to expand the e-voucher modality. A gradual scale-down of assistance will need to be negotiated in the official camps where families have received blanket assistance for generations.

A third FSS is being undertaken in May 2017. To provide a more comprehensive analysis of the needs and inform appropriate food security response the FSS will be further supplemented by WFP’s Food Security and Livelihoods study in Leda, and Household Economic Analysis in Cox’s Bazar and the Chittagong Hill Tracts.