



FOOD SECURITY OUTCOME MONITORING (FSOM)

Quarter two (Q2)

September 2017



World Food Programme

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Food consumption amongst Syrian refugees declined in comparison to the previous quarter.
- Syrian refugees not receiving WFP assistance (non-beneficiaries) continued to fare worse in terms of food consumption, compared to Syrian refugees receiving WFP assistance.
- The usage of consumption-based coping strategies increased amongst refugees living in communities.
- Livelihood coping strategies remain a critical factor to allow refugee households to meet their food needs.
- The primary source of income amongst WFP beneficiaries remains WFP food assistance. While for non-beneficiaries' informal work is their main source of earnings.

CONTEXT:

In Q2 over 1200 household level interviews were conducted with Syrian refugees throughout the twelve governorates in the Kingdom of Jordan. The majority of interviews took place in the governorates with the highest concentration of refugees: Amman, Irbid, Mafrq and Zarqa.

For the purposes of FSOM four strata are monitored every quarter to inform WFP programming. These four groups include: 1) camp refugees, 2) vulnerable refugees in communities, 3) extremely vulnerable refugees in communities and 4) non-beneficiary refugees in communities. The camp and extremely vulnerable refugees receive full assistance (20 JD per person per month), while the vulnerable receive partial assistance (10 JOD per person per month). Non-beneficiaries were excluded from WFP assistance during the targeting exercise rolled out in April 2015. In addition, the targeting exercise established the tiered approach in communities, which created two groups of beneficiaries the extremely vulnerable and the vulnerable.

LIMITATIONS:

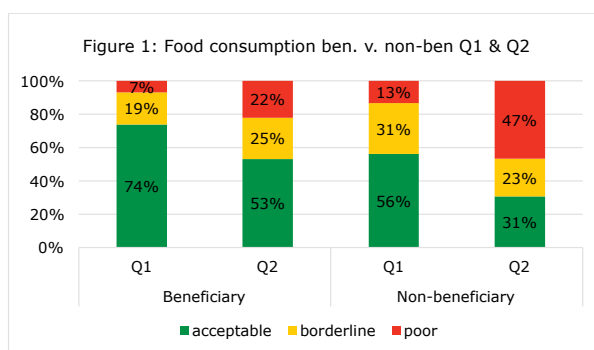
It is important to note that in Q2 WFP conducted its first comprehensive validation exercise for all Syrian refugees receiving general food assistance. The validation exercise was conducted to ensure that refugees cases targeted for general food assistance are those refugee cases that redeem their monthly assistance in WFP contracted shops. Perceptions around the validation exercise by the

refugee community might have left beneficiaries to believe their assistance was in jeopardy. This factor could have potentially impacted the information provided by refugees during the FSOM interviews.

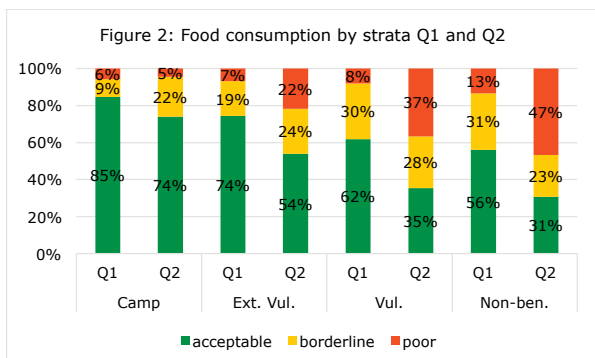
ACCESS TO FOOD:

WFP uses food consumption as a proxy indicator to measure household food security. Food consumption is measured at the household level and is calculated based on the number of times eight food groups are consumed inside the home in a seven-day recall period. Each food group has a corresponding weight based on nutritional value. Based on the calculation households are categorised as having either acceptable, borderline or poor food consumption.

In Q2 acceptable food consumption for Syrian refugees, WFP beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, decreased by over 20 percent (see figure 1). The majority of non-beneficiaries reported to have poor or borderline food consumption (60 percent). These findings indicate that this group does not consume an adequate amount of nutrient-rich foods, for example protein, dairy and pulses. When findings were disaggregated by the sex of the head of the household, no variations were observed.



However, when data was disaggregated amongst the four strata, the two groups which receive a lower level of food assistance or no food assistance at all reported the greatest decrease between Q1 and Q2 in acceptable food consumption: the vulnerable (27 percent) and non-beneficiaries (25 percent) (see figure 2). As a result, these two groups now have a majority of households reported to have either poor or borderline food consumption.



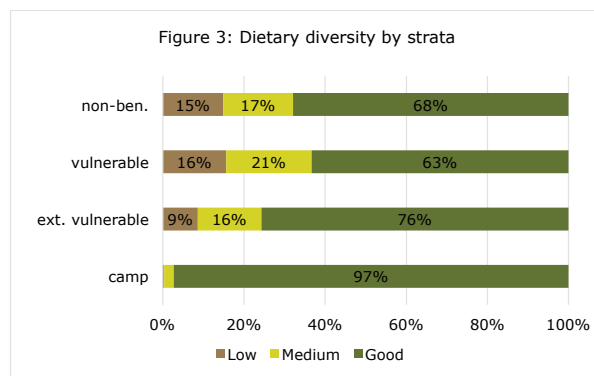
The primary explanation for the change in refugees' food consumption is due to a reduced intake of food groups with higher weighting (protein, dairy and pulses) used to calculate the food consumption score. Amongst the vulnerable and non-beneficiaries, one in five refugee households did not consume any protein (red meat, chicken, eggs, etc.) or pulses (lentils, chickpeas, beans) within the seven days prior to data collection. In addition, these two groups had the highest proportion of refugee households that did not consume any dairy, at 16 and 20 percent respectively.

Over half of refugees living in communities reported they did not consume fruit within the past seven days. These results suggest that the diet of refugees in communities is largely comprised of cereals, fats, sugar and vegetables. Commodities in these food groups (vegetable oil, bulger, rice, lentils, sugar, cucumbers, tomatoes) are often cheaper which allow families to stretch their money farther and to satisfy their hunger. Focus group discussions conducted during the reporting period emphasise that often refugee families are only purchasing basic, essential foods, such as pasta and lentils to meet their needs.

DIETARY DIVERSITY:

In addition to food consumption, dietary diversity is calculated based on the food consumption table and reveals the variety of food groups a household consumed within a seven-day time period. Based on corresponding thresholds households are categorised as either having low, medium or good dietary diversity.

In Q2 non-beneficiaries reported lower dietary diversity compared to WFP beneficiaries, at 15 percent and 9 percent respectively. The vulnerable group represented the highest proportion of refugee households with low and medium diversity followed by non-beneficiaries at 32 and 23 percent correspondingly (see figure 3).

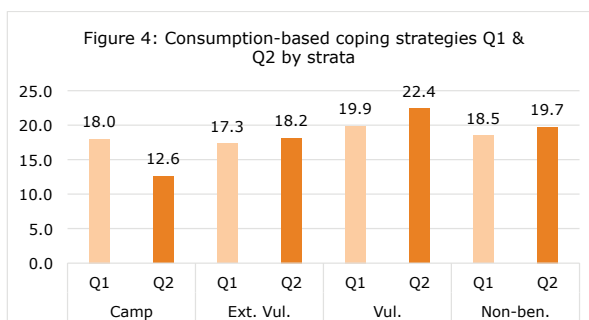


CONSUMPTION-BASED COPING:

Consumption-based coping strategies measure the short-term mechanisms households utilise in order to meet their food needs. Each strategy has a severity weighting which is multiplied by the frequency of usage. The higher the total coping strategy index (CSI) score signifies that households are more reliant on short-term strategies to meet their immediate food needs.

During the reporting period, the usage of consumption-based coping strategies increased amongst refugees living in communities while the CSI reduced for the camp population. There was no variation amongst the total CSI score when findings were disaggregated by sex of the head of the household.

Vulnerable refugees in communities reported the highest CSI at 22.4 (see figure 4). Within a seven-day time period this group reduced the number of meals consumed four times, while they reduced portion size at meals times and reduced the consumption by adults to provide for the food needs of their children three times. The vulnerable and non-beneficiaries were more inclined to borrow food from family or friends to meet their food needs compared to the other groups.

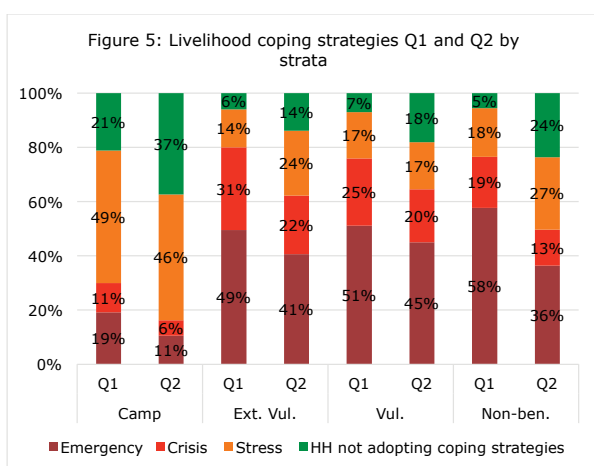


These findings reveal that consumption-based coping mechanisms remain a vital part of refugee families' daily routine as they enable households to meet their bare minimum food needs.

LIVELIHOOD COPING:

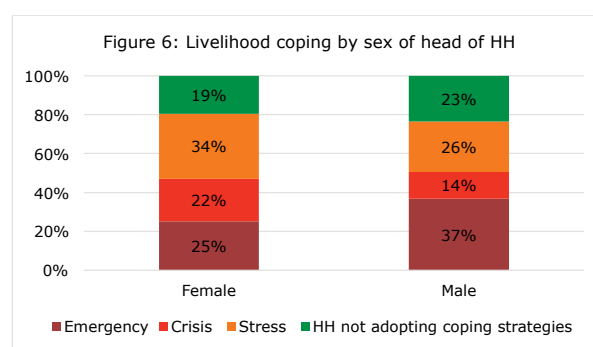
To measure longer-term coping capacity, households are asked if any member adopted a livelihood coping strategy within the 30 days prior to the survey or if they have exhausted the use of the strategy. Each strategy is categorised as either stress, crisis or emergency based on its irreversible nature.

Overall, the usage of livelihood-based coping strategies reduced during the reporting period. Less refugee families employed emergency or crisis coping strategies such as reducing essential non-food expenditures (for example health and education expenses) (see figure 5). While there was a decrease in the usage of the most severe coping strategies, a significant proportion of refugee households continued to rely on multiple livelihood strategies to meet their basic food needs. For example, over half of Syrian refugee families (camps and communities) purchased food items on credit or borrowed money to better meet their food needs. Over one-third of refugees in communities changed accommodation to reduce rental expenditures for the same intended objective. These two strategies remain fundamental for refugee families particularly amongst refugees in communities. The mobile nature of this population further highlights their vulnerability.



Nearly 30 percent of refugees in communities reported a male household member worked in a socially degrading, high-risk, illegal or temporary job to meet food needs. Vulnerable refugee households represented the highest percentage (38 percent) that adopted this strategy. While informal work is quite common place in Jordan amongst Syrian refugees, the nature of the work is a concern as often these types of jobs place families in high-risk situations.

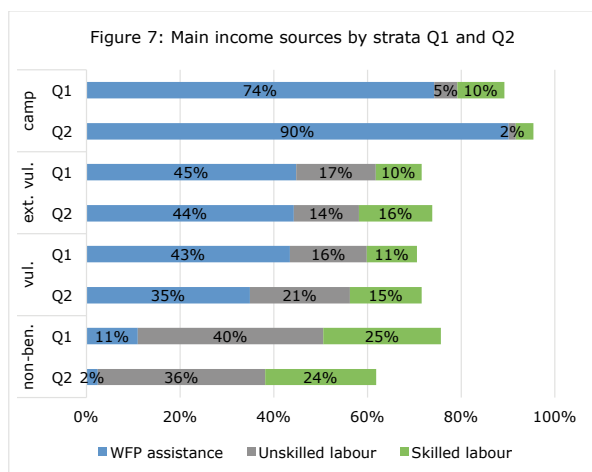
A slightly higher proportion of male headed households are engaging in emergency coping strategies as opposed to female headed households, 37 percent compared to 25 percent (see figure 6). This could be due to the fact that male headed households are more likely to have men present in the home and able to engage in high-risk, illegal, temporary jobs.



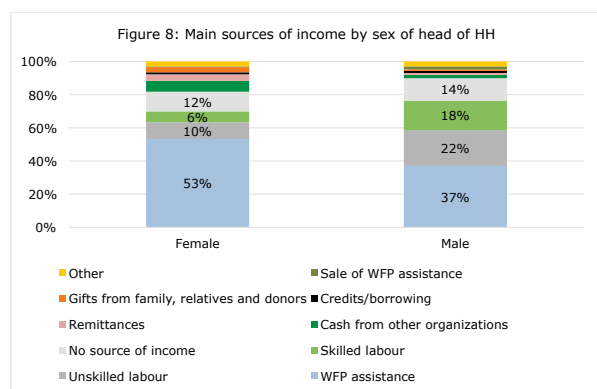
Over one in five extremely vulnerable refugee households withdrew their children from school to better meet their food needs (21 percent). This statistic has remained consistent over the past year, as refugee families are forced to secure their income streams their family members are often exposed to dangerous activities, such as child labour.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME, EXPENDITURES AND DEBT:

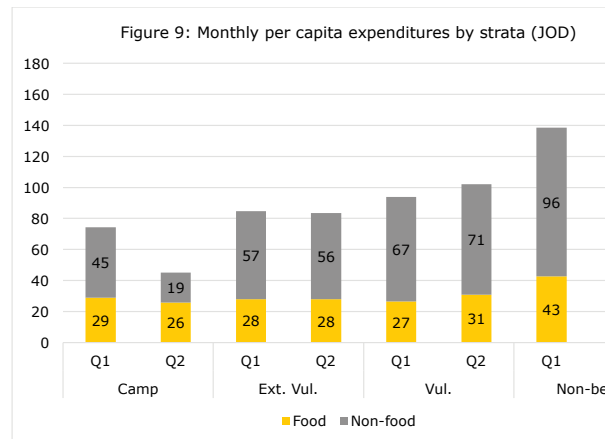
To further understand the household dynamics amongst the four strata, questions regarding their income, expenditure and debt are asked. The primary source of income amongst WFP beneficiaries remained WFP food assistance (see figure 7). In Q2 there was an increase in the proportion of camp refugees that cited WFP as their main source of income, from 74 percent to 90 percent. While the vulnerable strata reported a slight rise in the proportion of refugees which indicated unskilled and skill labour as their primary income sources.



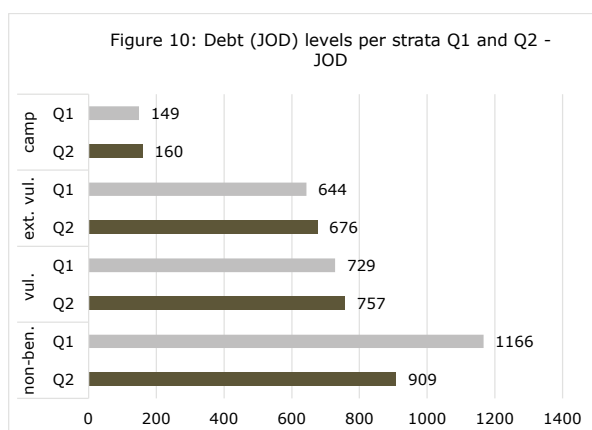
When disaggregated by the sex of head of household, a higher proportion of females depend on WFP food assistance as their main source of income compared to their male counterparts. Whereas, a greater percentage of male headed households are more reliant on informal and formal labour. However, WFP assistance remained the primary source of income for both sexes.



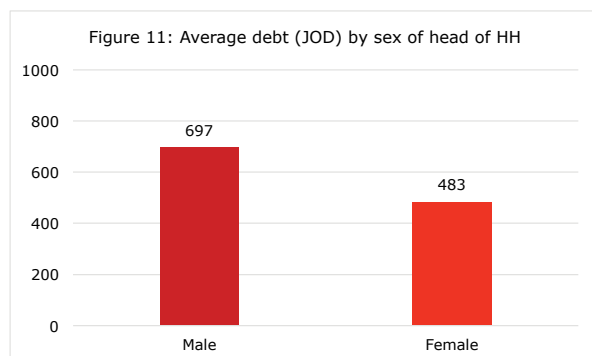
Food expenditures across all four strata remained steady to previous quarters (see figure 9). Non-beneficiaries continued to report higher food expenses per person compared to WFP beneficiaries. Non-food expenditures increased for non-beneficiaries in Q2 from 96 to 120 JOD while they decreased amongst camp refugees by over half (from 45 JOD to 19 JOD). Non-beneficiaries on average have higher expenditures for health, education, debt repayment and rent.



The refugee strata that receive the lowest levels of WFP assistance or no assistance at all have the highest levels of household debt (see figure 10). While non-beneficiaries still represent the strata with the largest amount of household debt they reported a decrease between Q1 and Q2 of approximately 250 JOD. Otherwise debts levels remained consistent amongst the other three groups when compared to the previous quarter.



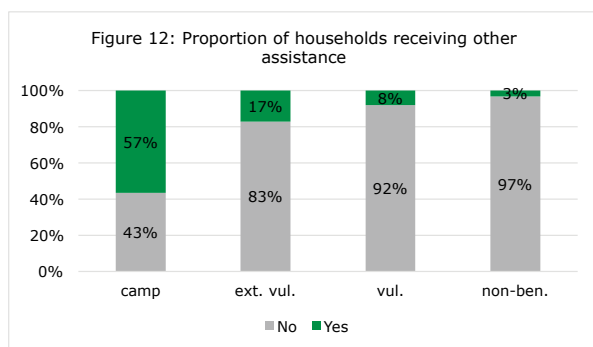
Male headed households on average have higher household debt, (by over 200 JOD) in comparison to female headed households (see figure 11). This can be due to their ability to access informal and formal creditors more readily than females.



High debt levels amongst refugees in communities is often linked to rent. A majority of these households are behind in their rental payments by at least one month, some are behind by upwards of four months.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE AND ACCESS TO SERVICES:

To better understand the external impact on food assistance, refugees are asked if they have received assistance from other aid organisations in the last 30 days. In Q2 only 20 percent of refugees received assistance from other aid organisations. Camp refugees were more likely to receive assistance from other aid organisations than refugees in communities (see figure 12).

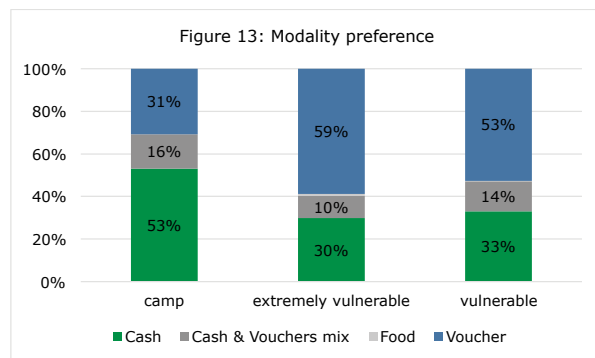


Less than one in five extremely vulnerable families received assistance from another aid actor in the previous month, these figures were much lower for the vulnerable and non-beneficiaries.

Over one-third of refugee in communities reported that they were unable to access a public medical centre in the past six months if there was a medical need in the household and that they were unable to access required medicine in the corresponding time frame. These findings have been consistent over the past year, and continue to highlight the challenge refugees have in accessing medical support.

MODALITY PREFERENCE:

To ensure beneficiary preference is taken into consideration when reviewing the modality of assistance, the FSOM inquires about refugees' feedback. In Q2 the greatest proportion of beneficiaries preferred the e-voucher followed by cash (see figure 13). When disaggregated by strata, camp beneficiaries are more likely to prefer cash than refugees in communities.



PROTECTION/APP:

To inform programming and ensure that WFP is accountable to affected populations, a series of questions are asked to beneficiaries with regards to their awareness about the programme, complaints feedback mechanisms and selection criteria. A majority of beneficiaries reported they have been told what they are entitled to with their food assistance and who to contact if in need of assistance. A minority of beneficiaries were aware of how they were selected to receive assistance.

To understand the gender roles within the household, beneficiaries are asked about who redeems their food assistance, men, women or both together. Camp beneficiaries reported the highest levels of both men and women who redeem their food assistance together. The vulnerable reported an even split amongst men, women and both men and women who redeem assistance together. While the extremely vulnerable had the highest proportion of females that chose how the assistance was utilised.

FOLLOW-UP FROM PREVIOUS FSOM REPORT (Q1):

- Continue to review exclusion error, non-beneficiaries continue to fare worse in regards to overall food security outcomes.
- A review of WFP's current targeting was conducted and it revealed that the exclusion error for the general food assistance is within the reasonable range when utilising proxy-means testing for targeting. However, the existing WFP complaints and feedback mechanisms will continue to be utilised to serve as an additional source to review exclusion error.
- Further review the transfer value for the vulnerable, this group is unable to achieve the same level of acceptable consumption observed by other beneficiary groups (extremely vulnerable and camps) which could be due to the low transfer value.

- While it is recommended to increase the transfer value for the vulnerable caseload to a slightly higher amount, for example 15 JOD, due to current funding this is not feasible at this time.
- Observe whether non-beneficiary debt continues to raise in Q2.
- In Q2 non-beneficiary debt levels did not increase rather a decrease was observed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Conduct targeted focus group discussions to better understand the following:
 - the sharp decrease in refugees' food consumption;
 - the increase in consumption-based coping strategies in communities;
 - the reliance on key livelihood coping strategies and whether there are other livelihood strategies being used;
 - awareness and levels of interest for Syrians in cash-based resilience programming;
 - modality preference.
- Share inter-sectoral FSOM findings with key working groups nutrition, health, education, and shelter.
- Share findings with key stakeholders with the government and amongst the donor community.

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