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# Food Security Outcome Monitoring

WFP Lebanon | April 2018

## Highlights

- WFP assisted 640,507 displaced Syrians in April 2018. 21 percent of households were female-headed, 66 percent had children under the age of five, 11 percent had a disabled member and 35 percent of households had a member with a medical condition.

- In April, all WFP assisted households showed improved food security, had higher food consumption scores, better food diversity, and adopted fewer negative coping strategies.

- The main reason for debts among the cash for food households is rent.

- Food is the biggest expenditure for households, followed by rent and medical expenses.

- Food security outcomes for non-assisted households improved in April as compared to previous cycles. Households relied less on negative coping strategies to meet their food needs.

- The overall satisfaction among assisted households remained stable (approximately 8 out of 10).

## Introduction

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. WFP Lebanon is providing life-saving food and basic needs assistance to vulnerable UNHCR-registered displaced Syrians through an electronic card system. In October 2017, two new cash modalities were introduced in addition to the food e-card, the cash for food e-card and the multipurpose cash for essential needs e-card.

WFP continues to incorporate resilience into its interventions to ensure sustainability and strengthen its programme portfolio. As such, WFP shifted from the regional Protracted Relief and Recovery Plan (PRRO) 200987 to the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) in January 2018. This CSP introduces capacity-strengthening support to enhance Lebanon's ability to manage the Syrian crisis and future shocks.

Since 2016, WFP's Food Security Outcome Monitoring (FSOM) measures the outcomes of WFP's food and basic needs programming among beneficiary and non-beneficiary households on a quarterly basis. As of November 2017, monitoring is conducted on four different households groups:

- **Food e-card:** households targeted for this modality receive USD 27 per family member and can redeem the amount to purchase food items at any of the approximately 500 WFP contracted shops located across the country.
- **Cash for food e-card:** households targeted for this modality receive USD 27 per family member and have a choice to redeem at a WFP contracted shop or to withdraw it as cash from any ATM.
- **Multipurpose cash for essential needs e-card (MPC):** households targeted for this modality receive USD 27 per family member (to cover food needs) in addition to USD 175 per household (to cover additional food and other essential needs). The amount can only be withdrawn at any ATM located across the country.
- **Non-Assisted households:** registered Syrian refugees not receiving WFP assistance.

Households receiving MPC are validated and registered with UNHCR. They were selected based on a bottom-up approach of those living below the survival minimum expenditure basket (SMEB<sup>1</sup>). All WFP modalities and programmes are targeted to households living below the SMEB but also take into account factors such as those living in security red zones, receiving cash assistance from other agencies and non-profit organisations, and who do not live in proximity to ATMs.

Table 1: Figures per modality, April 2018

	Food e-card	Cash for food e-card	MPC e-card	Total
	59,166	29,748	22,767	<b>111,681</b>
	342,104	165,377	133,026	<b>640,507</b>
	9,236,808	4,465,179	7,541,777	<b>21,243,764</b>

<sup>1</sup>Detailed explanation of the SMEB in the next section.

## Methodology

After the introduction of the multipurpose cash, a random sampling approach was used to select a representative sample of the four different population groups referred to above. This report covers an analysis of data collected from a sample of 1,000 households in April 2018:

- 250 non-assisted households,
- 250 food e-card households,
- 250 cash for food e-card households, and
- 250 multipurpose cash for essential needs e-card households.

FSOM surveys are coupled with qualitative focus group discussions (FGDs) to triangulate quantitative findings. FGDs conducted after Ramadan will be shared separately.

## Outcome Results for Assisted Displaced Syrians

WFP analyses basic needs and food security outcome indicators to monitor outcome results of WFP assistance. The below sections will detail main findings on the livelihood sources, livelihoods coping strategies, debts, expenditures, the food consumption score (FCS), the reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) and other cross-cutting results. Results are reported per assistance modality and are only comparable over time. Results show that among the assisted households basic needs and food security outcome results improved in April compared to November 2017.

*WFP assisted 640,507 displaced Syrians in April 2018. 21 percent of households were female-headed, 66 percent had children under the age of five, 11 percent had a disabled member and 35 percent of households had a member with a medical condition.*

## Livelihoods



The vast majority of Syrian refugees have to prioritise their limited income across a number of essential needs to survive, often at the expense of their wellbeing. Results show that across all assistance modalities, households continued to rely primarily on the WFP assistance as the main source of income followed by unskilled labour. Alongside the assistance, households also employ a range of coping strategies to address their needs.

The livelihood coping strategy index measures the strategies used by households to access food and cover their basic needs in times of stress. In April, the livelihood coping strategy index decreased for the food e-card and MPC compared to November 2017 (from 5.58 to 4.87 and 5.82 to 4.73). Such findings can be perceived as positive as this helped bridge the gap to

ensure families did not adopt more negative coping strategies to meet basic needs.

Households receiving food e-card assistance reduced the use of crisis and emergency coping strategies such as reducing health and educational expenses, and sending household members to beg. The MPC households reduced the use of stress coping strategies such as purchasing food on credit. The cash for food households reduced the stress coping strategies such as relying less on savings in April, however a higher number of household reported selling productive assets and borrowing money which lead to an increase in the index results between January and April.

Female-headed households relied more on negative coping strategies such as spending savings, borrowing money, and reducing health expenses as compared to male-headed households across all modalities.



## Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI)

	NOV 2017	JAN 2018	APR 2018
Food e-card	5.58	5.01	4.87
Cash for food e-card	6.05	4.87	5.21
MPC e-card	5.82	5.26	4.73

Table 2: LCSI among different modalities.

## Debt

Debt remains a burden for all Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Almost all refugees surveyed have accumulated debts over time (93 percent of the food e-card households, 94 percent of the cash for food households and 91 percent of the MPC households). The average amount of debts accumulated by households have increased for the cash for food and MPC compared to November 2017 with a slight reduction in debts of food e-card households.

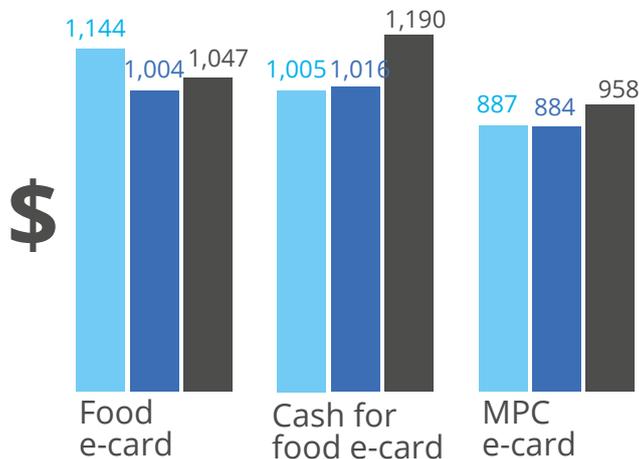
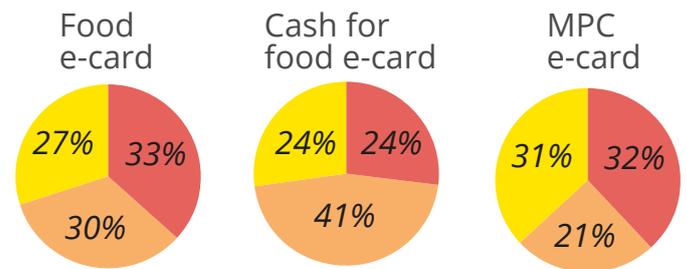


Figure 1: Average household debt in USD among different households.

Nov 2017 Jan 2018 Apr 2018

When households were asked to categorise what they are in debt for, results indicate that the debt categories reported by households are similar to the main expenditures of the households: food, rent and medical needs.

While the debt categories are the same for the three modalities, the ranking in value differs per modality.



Food Debts



Rent Debts



Medical Care Debts

Figure 2: Share of household debt by category among different beneficiaries in April 2018.

The majority of households across all modalities continued to accumulate new debts. Almost half of the households across all modalities are at least two months behind rent. There was no difference between male and female headed households on the debts across all modalities.

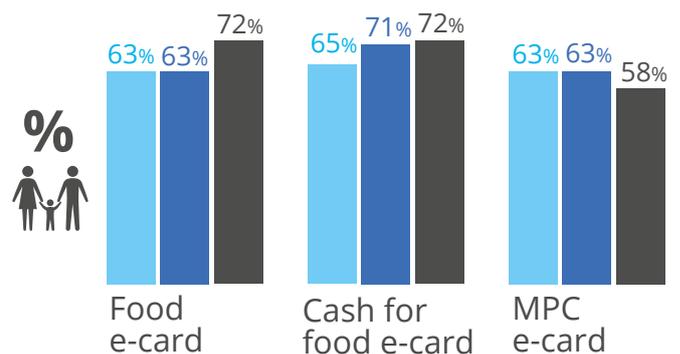


Figure 3: Percentage of households incurring new debts in the last 30 days per modality.

Nov 2017 Jan 2018 Apr 2018

# Expenditure

Food represented the largest expenditure across all modalities followed by rental fees and medical expenses. In April, households spent less of their total expenditures on food compared to January and November 2017. The average total expenditures for the month of April are as follows: food e-card households spent USD 675, cash for food e-card households spent USD 635 and MPC e-card households spent USD 641.

On average, 2 to 3 percent of the expenditures are allocated to pay back accumulated debts. Few households that are repaying their debts were asked to pay more during the past month (14 percent of the food e-card households, 3 percent of the cash for food e-card households and 20 percent of the MPC households).

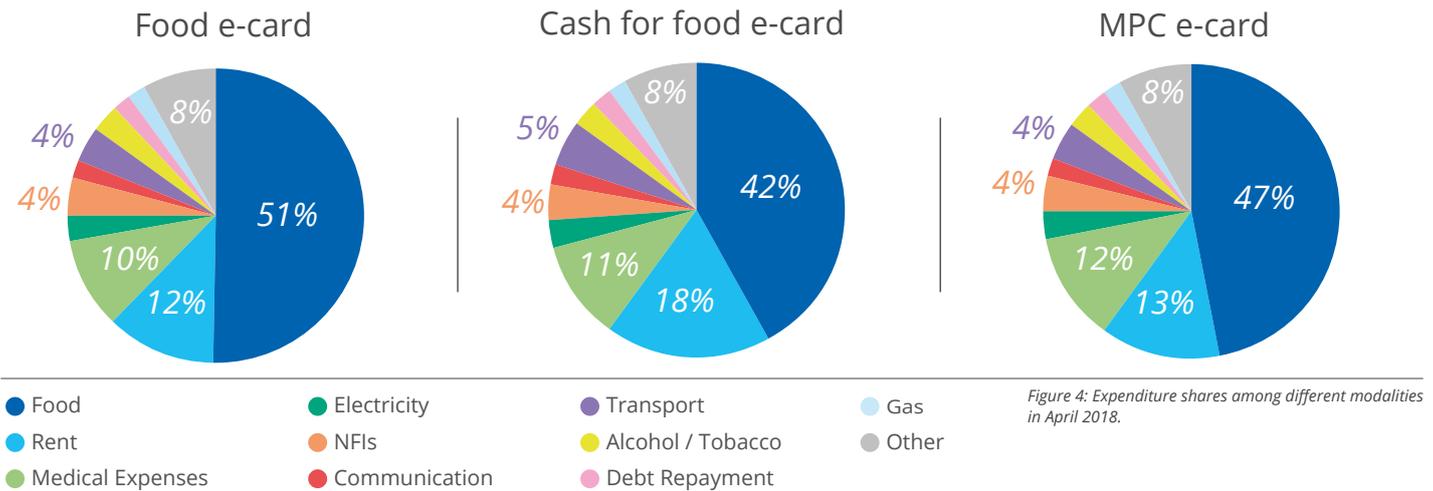


Figure 4: Expenditure shares among different modalities in April 2018.

## Survival minimum expenditures

The SMEB is an indicator on the cost of food and non-food items needed by a refugee household of five members over a period of one month. It assumes a minimum caloric intake of the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) of 2,100 Kcal but with fewer nutrients, the same non-food items, rent expenses for an informal tented settlement, less consumption of water, and an element of debt repayment. The SMEB also does not include the cost of health and education. The value of the SMEB calculated for Syrian refugees in Lebanon is USD 87 per person per month to cover the cost of survival needs.

All households with expenditures below the SMEB are targeted by WFP to receive assistance through the three different modalities. Results in April following provision of six months of assistance show that 66 percent of food e-card households, 71 percent of the cash for food e-card households and 76 percent of the MPC e-card households have expenditures above the SMEB. Moreover, more than half of the assisted beneficiaries through the modalities have per capita expenditure above the SMEB.

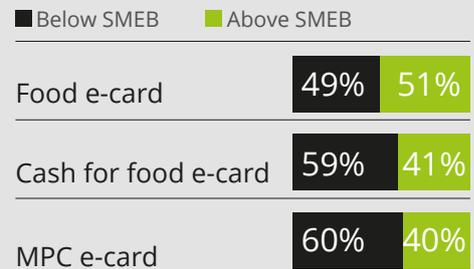


Figure 5: Percentage of households above and below the SMEB in April 2018 (per capita expenditures).

## Food Consumption Score

The percentage of assisted households with acceptable food consumption continues to improve across all the modalities. The prevalence of households with acceptable FCS reached its highest for the food e-card households since the first FSOM (January 2016).

The percentage of households having an acceptable food consumption have increased throughout all the modalities. This increase was also complemented by an increase in household diet diversity, which remained at 6 for cash for food households, but increased from 5.7

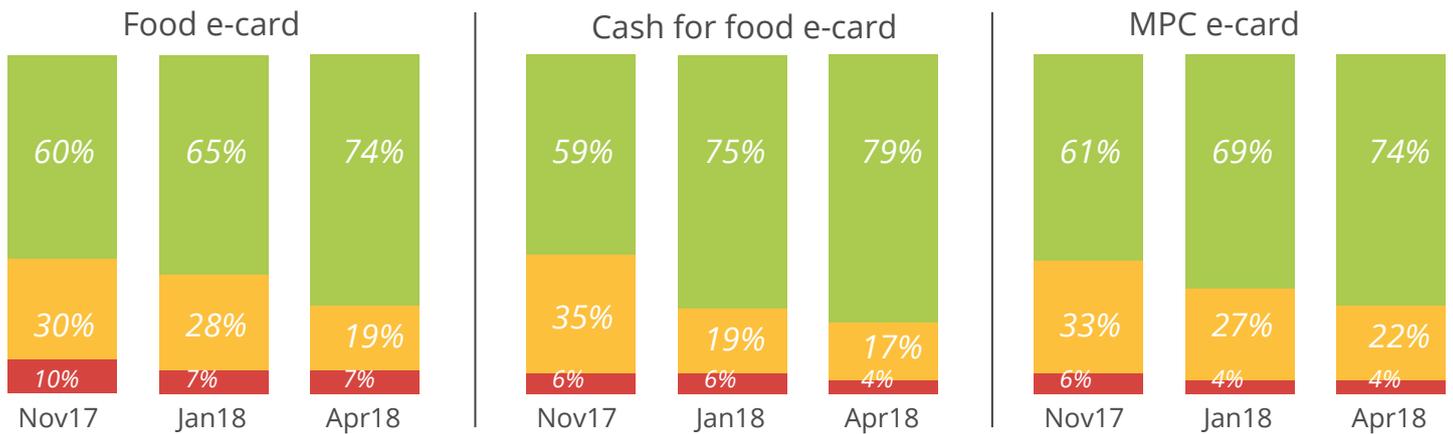
to 5.8 for the food e-card households and from 5.8 to 6 for the MPC households.

As a consequence, the percentage of assisted households with poor food consumption dropped to 4 percent for the cash for food modality and remained stable for both the MPC modality (4 percent) and for the food e-card modality (7 percent). Female-headed households receiving MPC reported a higher prevalence of acceptable FCS (81 percent) compared to male-headed households (72 percent).

## Food Consumption Groups

■ Poor ■ Borderline ■ Acceptable

Figure 6: Food Consumption Groups among different modalities.



## Reduced Coping Strategy Index

The reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) is a relative score that measures the frequency and severity of food-related negative coping mechanisms adopted by households to cover their needs; an increase in score suggests a deterioration. Results indicate a slight decrease on the rCSI of the cash for food e-card, meaning that households adopted less severe coping strategies to cover food and other basic needs.

In April, female-headed households reported a higher rCSI compared to the male-headed households across all modalities, which may reflect the increased challenges that women face to cover their families' needs.

The cash for food households showed a decreased rCSI in April while remaining stable for the MPC needs households. This could be due to the fact that these households are able to prioritize some basic needs with cash to increase their food consumption.

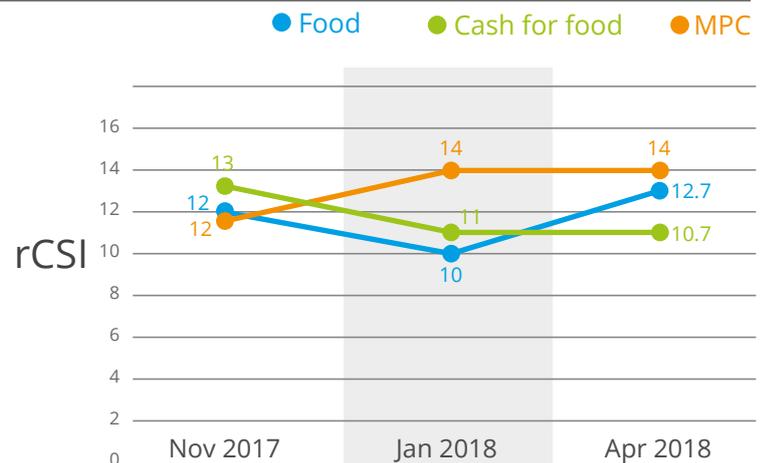


Figure 7: rCSI trends among different modalities.

## Other Assistance Received

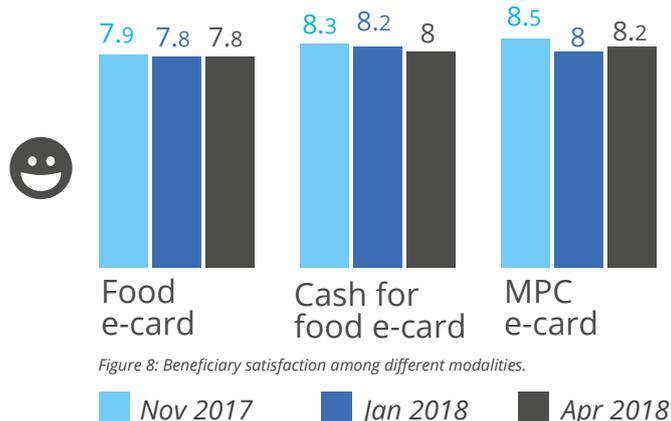
Seasonal education, winterisation and multipurpose cash assistance were distributed by several agencies to 81,718 vulnerable Syrian households between January and April 2018. As such, 21 percent of WFP assisted households received other kind of assistance in April 2018, a decrease of 23 percent compared to January 2018 where the average assistance was 44 percent. This is due to the fact that households receive more assistance during winter.



## Cross-cutting Theme & Satisfaction

Beneficiaries provided feedback rating their satisfaction with WFP assistance on a scale of 1-10. Overall satisfaction stayed almost the same and is stable around 8.0. Satisfaction with the quantity of WFP assistance provided among MPC households slightly increased in April 2018 as compared to January 2018. While the satisfaction with quantity of assistance remains lower for those receiving food e-card and cash for food (6.6 and 6.7 respectively).

**Beneficiaries receiving food assistance did not report any safety issues in April for all modalities.**



## Decision Making

Households were asked about the person in charge of taking decisions regarding the use of cash assistance received; 46 percent of cash for food households reported that men are the decision makers and 52 percent of MPC households reported that the men and women decide together on how multipurpose cash assistance should be spent. On the other hand, food e-card households reported that 45 percent of the decision making is done by women. Generally, men are in charge of collecting cash from the ATMs and in the households receiving food e-card women are the ones deciding on how WFP voucher assistance should be spent.

### Cash for food e-card <sup>3</sup>

	Nov 2017	Jan 2018	Apr 2018
	17%	17%	18%
	32%	31%	32%
	40%	42%	46%
Not member of HH		1%	2%

### MPC e-card <sup>2</sup>

	Nov 2017	Jan 2018	Apr 2018
	14%	19%	24%
	25%	28%	24%
	61%	51%	52%

### Food e-card

	Nov 2017	Jan 2018	Apr 2018
	17%	16%	16%
	44%	42%	45%
	39%	41%	39%

Figure 9: Decision making on use of assistance among different modalities.

<sup>2</sup> Some percentages do not add up to a 100 percent due to some households not responding to the decision making question.

<sup>3</sup> Some percentages do not add up to a 100 percent as the question addressed is regarding cash utilisation and some households redeemed full entitlement from shops.

## Communication

Communication with beneficiaries is conducted on regular basis. WFP explains its food and basic needs programming to beneficiaries at the time of distribution and validation. Monthly text messages are sent to beneficiaries explaining that their e-card has been loaded and with how much money. Despite efforts to share available information, April FSOM results indicates that 36 percent of households in the food e-card modality, 48 percent of households in the cash for food modality and 30 percent in the MPC modality are aware of the type of assistance they are entitled to; a decrease

across all modalities compared to November 2017. Only a very low percentage (2 percent of food e-card modality and 5 percent of cash for food modality and 4 percent of MPC modality) of beneficiaries are aware of how households are being selected to receive WFP assistance. However, around 80 percent of all the households know how to contact WFP through the hotline. WFP programme is actively working on increasing capacity at the hotline to ensure beneficiaries are well informed. However, targeting criteria remains unclear to beneficiaries due to its complexity.

## Outcome Results For Non-Assisted Displaced Syrians

*15 percent of the non-assisted households were female-headed households, 7 percent had a disabled member, 27 percent had a medical condition, and 62 percent had children under five. The majority of non-assisted reported receiving assistance for the last time in 2013 and 2014.*

Non-assisted households have a better diet diversity score compared to November 2017 (an increase from 5.4 to 5.8).

On average 10 percent of the non-assisted Syrians households received assistance from other institutions compared to 13 percent in November 2017.

The main source of income for the non-assisted Syrians is unskilled labour (41 percent) followed by credit and borrowing money (40 percent).

### Food Consumption Groups Non-assisted Syrians

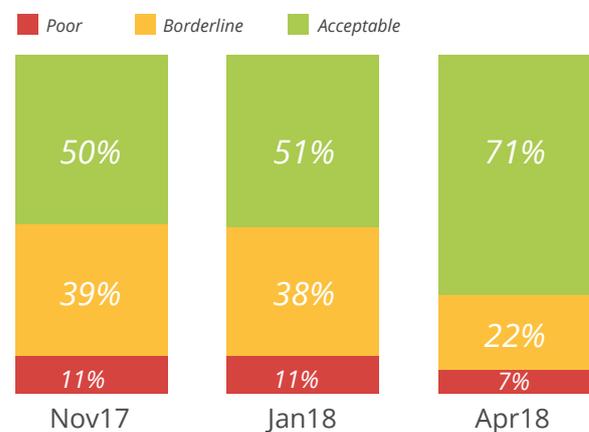


Figure 10: Food consumption groups of non-assisted Syrians.

In April 2018, 94 percent of the non-assisted households reported having accumulated debts. Debts increased from November 2017 to reach USD 1,208 in April 2018. Non-assisted Syrian households have accumulated their debts mainly on food (50 percent) followed by rent (27 percent).

Households are relying on debts to complement their expenditures in order to cover their basic needs on food, rent and medical expenses.

The food security indicators for non-assisted households improved in April 2018 as compared to previous FSOM. The percentage of households with acceptable food consumption increased since November 2017 and reached 71 percent and the percentage of households with poor food consumption decreased to 7 percent.

