Food Security Outcome Monitoring
WFP Lebanon | Nov 2017 - Jan 2018

Highlights

• This report covers the outcome results for the months of November 2017 to January 2018.

• WFP assisted 634,878 displaced Syrians in November 2017 and 636,134 in January 2018, of which 23 percent are female-headed households, 75 percent are children under the age of five, and 13 percent are households with members with disability.

• WFP is implementing three modalities of food and basic needs assistance through the e-card: 1) food ecard redeemable at any WFP-contracted shop; 2) cash for food ecard, that a portion of targeted Syrian refugees can redeem either at WFP-contracted shops or withdraw the amount at ATMs throughout the country (since September 2017) 3) multipurpose cash for essential needs e-card covering essential needs, including food, that the most vulnerable Syrian refugees can withdraw from ATMs (since October 2017).

• The percentage of households with acceptable food consumption reached its highest in January since 2016 across all modalities. The cash for food families scored the highest with 75 percent of households having an acceptable food consumption score.

• By January, all WFP assisted households, across all modalities, have shown consistently improving food security, and have ranked higher in food consumption, food diversity and used fewer negative coping strategies than at any point in 2017.

• Food security outcome trends among the non-assisted households remained stable in November 2017 and January 2018. Food consumption remained stable and households relied less on negative coping strategies to meet their basic needs.

• The overall satisfaction among the food e-card households continued to increase till January 2018. Satisfaction with the quantity of WFP assistance provided among cash for food households slightly increased in January 2018 as compared to November 2017.
**Introduction**

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 September the cash for food modality was introduced and in October 2017 the multipurpose cash for essential needs modality was introduced.

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 receive USD 27 per family member and can only redeem the amount to purchase food items at WFP-contracted shops;

- **Cash for food** households 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 (MPC)** households receive USD 27 per family member in addition to USD 175 per household to cover food and essential needs. The amount can be withdrawn at any ATM.

- **Non-assisted households** registered Syrian refugees not receiving WFP assistance.

Households integrated into the multipurpose cash for essential needs modality are all validated and UNHCR registered refugees, they are selected from a ranking of all households living below the SMEB\(^1\), using a bottom up approach starting with the most vulnerable. Households living in security red zones, receiving MPC from other agencies and non-profit organisations, and who do not have access to ATMs were provided assistance through other WFP programmes.

### Timeline and programmatic changes from August until January

**Sept 2017**
- The cash for food modality started targeting 32,000 households. These beneficiaries were informed about the change in modality and had the choice to redeem their assistance either at any WFP-contracted shop or to withdraw the money from any ATM.
- A follow-up SMS was sent to 44,922 households who were informed that October will be their last month of assistance.

**Oct 2017**
- A follow-up SMS was sent as a reminder to the excluded beneficiaries, informing them that the current month (October) will be the last month where they will receive WFP assistance.
- The multipurpose cash for essential needs modality was introduced during this month. 11,837 household shifted modalities from food e-card to multipurpose cash, others were included to this modality. These beneficiaries were entitled to received USD 27 per family member in addition to USD 175. The whole amount could only be withdrawn from any ATM.

**Nov 2017**
- 30,275 households were informed by SMS that they have been included to multipurpose cash and that they are now entitled to receive USD 27 per family member in addition to USD 175. The whole amount could only be withdrawn from any ATM.
- An SMS was sent to 44,922 households who were informed that October will be their last month of assistance.
- A follow-up SMS was sent as a reminder to the excluded beneficiaries, informing them that the current month (October) will be the last month where they will receive WFP assistance.
- The multipurpose cash for essential needs modality was introduced during this month. 11,837 households shifted modalities from food e-card to multipurpose cash, others were included to this modality. These beneficiaries were entitled to received USD 27 per family member in addition to USD 175. The whole amount could only be withdrawn from any ATM.

**Dec 2017**
- 7,806 households were informed by SMS that their modality of assistance has changed to multipurpose cash.

**Jan 2018**
- The 9th FSOM data collection took place during January 2018.
Methodology
After the introduction of the multipurpose cash, a random sampling approach was used to select a representative sample of the four different modalities referenced above. This report covers an analysis of data collected from a sample of 1000 households in November 2017 and again in January 2018: 250 non-beneficiaries, 250 beneficiaries assisted with food e-cards, 250 beneficiaries assisted with cash for food and 250 beneficiaries assisted with multipurpose cash. The FSOM survey was coupled with a qualitative focus group discussions (FGDs) to triangulate the quantitative FSOM findings (42 FGDs were conducted covering the three modalities and with each gender so as to understand the perspectives of each).

OUTCOME RESULTS for assisted displaced Syrians
WFP analyses the core food security and basic needs outcome indicators to monitor outcome results of WFP assistance: the food consumption score (FCS), the reduced coping strategy index (rCSI), the livelihoods coping strategies; and food expenditure share and debts. Results are reported per assistance modality and are only comparable over time. Results show that among the assisted households food security outcome results improved in January 2018 compared to November 2017.

Food consumption score
The percentage of assisted households with acceptable food consumption significantly improved throughout the quarter in all the modalities. On average 75 percent of households receiving cash for food reported an acceptable food consumption and compared with November 2017 they have increased their diet diversity from 5.8 in November 2017 to 6 in January 2018. This means that they have a better quality diet.

As a consequence, the percentage of assisted households with poor food consumption dropped in January 2018 among all three modalities. The households receiving multipurpose cash reported the lowest percentage of families with poor food consumption (4 percent).

Reduced coping strategy index
The reduced coping strategy Index (rCSI) is a relative score to measure the frequency and severity that households have to resort to a set of food-related negative coping mechanisms to cover their needs; an increase in score means that these coping strategies were resorted to more frequently. Results indicate a notable decrease on the rCSI meaning that households less often adopted coping strategies to cover food and other basic needs. 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 multipurpose cash households showed an increased rCSI in January, due to increased reliance on “less preferred food or expensive food” (58 percent in November 2017 compared to 83% in January 2018). This might be due to the fact that they prioritised other basic needs with the cash but, as indicated above, were able to do so without compromising and even increasing their food consumption score.
Livelihood coping strategies
Livelihood coping strategies are the strategies used by households to access food and cover their basic needs in times of stress. They are classified into three categories according to their severity: stress, crisis and emergency. In November 2017, none of the assisted households surveyed adopted emergency coping strategies. In January 2018, all assisted households adopted less crisis coping strategies such as reducing non-food expenses and selling productive assets. However, female-headed households in the cash for food group relied on less stress coping strategies in comparison to male-headed households.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Stress</th>
<th>Food e-card</th>
<th>Cash for food e-card</th>
<th>Multipurpose cash e-card</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nov 2017</td>
<td>Jan 2018</td>
<td>Nov 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
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Food expenditure share and debts (FES)
The FES is a proxy indicator for the economic vulnerability of a household. In general, the higher the expenses are on food in relation to other consumed items/services, the more economically vulnerable the household. Households spending more than 65 percent of their monthly budget on food are considered vulnerable. In general in January 2018 the food expenditure share decreased among all assisted modalities. The FES of the cash for food households decreased from 60 percent in November to reach 53 percent in January. The food e-card and multipurpose cash households recorded 56 percent.

Debt remains a burden for all Syrian refugees in Lebanon. A slight decrease in debt was noticed in January 2018 for beneficiaries receiving food e-cards (USD 1144 in November 2017 to USD 1004 in January 2018) and multipurpose cash (USD 887 in November 2017 to USD 884 in January 2018).

Other Assistance Received
Seasonal winterisation assistance was distributed by several agencies in country between November 2017 to January 2018 to 171,000 vulnerable syrian households. Therefore 44 percent of WFP assisted households received other kind of assistance in January 2018, an increase of 13 percent compared with November 2017.

*Stress coping strategies include: borrowed money, purchased food on credit, spent savings, sold household assets. Crisis coping strategies include: reduced health expenses, withdrew children from school, sold productive assets. Emergency coping strategies include: entire household displaced, engaged in illegal income activities, sent household members to beg.*
CROSS-CUTTING THEMES AND SATISFACTION

Beneficiaries provided feedback rating their satisfaction with WFP assistance on a scale of 1-10. Satisfaction with the quantity of WFP assistance provided slightly increased in January 2018 for beneficiaries receiving cash for food. The overall satisfaction increased in January 2018 for the assisted households receiving food e-cards while decreased for the multipurpose cash households.

The WFP operating environment remains safe for those receiving food assistance. Two safety incidents were reported in January 2018, one related to beneficiaries holding illegal identity papers and other was related to verbal harassment from excluded beneficiaries.

Households were asked about the person in charge of taking decisions in the household; 43 percent of households reported that they decide together on how multipurpose cash assistance should be spent. Usually men are in charge of collecting cash from the ATMs and women decide on how WFP e-card assistance should be spent.

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 card has been loaded and with how much money. Despite efforts to share available information, FSOM results indicate that on average 55 percent of households in the food e-card modality and 50 percent of households in the cash modalities are aware of the type of assistance they are entitled to. Only around 10 percent of food e-card and 4 percent of multipurpose cash beneficiaries are aware of how households are being selected to receive WFP assistance. However, 80 percent of all the households know how to contact WFP through the hotline. WFP 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.

Decision making on food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nov 2017</th>
<th>Jan 2018</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food e-card</td>
<td>44% Women</td>
<td>42% Women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Decision making on cash

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nov 2017</th>
<th>Jan 2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash for food</td>
<td>40% Both together</td>
<td>42% Both together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multipurpose cash</td>
<td>61% Both together</td>
<td>51% Both together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Outcome results for non-assisted displayed Syrians:

The non-assisted beneficiaries’ food security was stable over November 2017 and January 2018. The percentage of households with acceptable food consumption remained stable at 51 percent and the percentage of households with poor food consumption remained stable at 11 percent.

Non-assisted households decreased the use of food related coping strategies from November 2017. However, they relied more on emergency and stress livelihood coping strategies.

In January 2018, non-assisted households reported having fewer debts compared to November 2017. A total of 24 percent of the non-WFP assisted group received other non-WFP assistance compared to 13 percent in November 2017.

Non assisted FCS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Borderline</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2017</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2017</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2018</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>51%</td>
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