

**World Food Programme****Programme Alimentaire Mondial****Programa Mundial de Alimentos****برنامج الأغذية العالمي**

Monitoring and Evaluation Quarterly Report **January to March 2013**

Overview

This consolidated monitoring and evaluation report provides an overview of the World Food Programme (WFP) monitoring activities covering distribution of food assistance in the months of January, February and March 2013.

Since the outbreak of the violence in Syria, the Lebanese government has maintained an open-border policy, welcoming an increasing number of refugees. Upon the invitation of the Government of Lebanon (GoL), WFP has responded to the current influx of Syrian refugees in Lebanon since 2012, targeting all regions: North Lebanon, Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley, and has implemented its operations mainly through four partners: the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Premiere Urgence (PU) and World Vision (WV), which were already present in Lebanon. WFP and partners gradually scaled up their operations, bringing the total planned coverage for March 2013 to 223,772 people. WFP will continue to increase its operations, planning to reach 506,454 people in June 2013. More shops will be contracted to match the increasing caseload of refugees.

This report discusses the needs of the affected population, measures taken by WFP to resolve operational constraints and efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness in achieving its objectives.

Household interviews have shown that beneficiaries are largely satisfied with the food assistance programme despite some access and security concerns. Increasing levels of vulnerability among refugees has emphasized the need for food vouchers for beneficiaries. However, increasingly, people need to satisfy other urgent needs for items such as baby-care products, healthcare products and fuel/gas through the exchange or sale of their food vouchers.



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Highlights



96.5 percent of the targeted population was reached with food vouchers in January, 96.2 percent in February and 96.5 percent in March.



Food voucher assistance distribution challenges included: weather, limited access to sites and site distance from shops, insecurity, and delays in other distributions (NFIs, fuel).



All WFP-contracted shops were monitored. In North Lebanon, 17 shops were terminated and in the Bekaa Valley, 15 new shops were contracted. Reasons for terminating shops included: sale of NFIs, cashing vouchers, imperfect price labeling, registration books badly maintained and non-contracted shops redeeming vouchers.



Activity of all shops, contracted by WFP and its partners, increased through the food assistance programme.



Syrian refugee households interviewed arrived on average between 8 to 9 months ago into Lebanon.



70% of households, receiving WFP food assistance, are living in rented habitations. On average, between 10% and 15% of the respondent households live with host families.



Food vouchers were redeemed within two to three weeks after distribution.



Preferred commodities bought by Syrian refugees were oil, sugar and cereals. 89 percent of beneficiaries reported not being able to buy vegetables or meat.



41% of the Syrian refugee households sold assets and in 32% of the households, children under the age of 18 worked to cover food needs, which may imply a population still fully or moderately food insecure.



31% of Syrian refugees reported skipping meals and 15% reported reducing portions, clearly indicating that needs are still not met for almost half of the refugee population.



The number of households that reported using several sources of incomes increased from 82% in January to 97% in March 2013.



From January to March, the proportion of households reporting having other resources decreased by 18%.



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Recommendations

- Ensure monitoring mechanisms are in place to capture beneficiaries's dietary habits.
- Monitor the frequency of vegetables and fruit consumption by beneficiaries.
- Refer protection cases (harassment, insecurity) to UNICEF and UNHCR

Introduction

WFP food parcel and voucher distributions take place on a monthly basis, usually completed over the course of a month. The dates for each cycle covered in this report are listed below:

	Cycle Dates
January	1 st - 31 st January
February	1 st of February- 2 nd of March
March	1 st of March- 5 th of April

WFP has been distributing food rations to refugees in Lebanon since June 2012 and food vouchers since July 2012. WFP in Lebanon distributes food parcels to new comers and refugees in pending registration for a period of over four weeks, while the voucher programme targets refugees registered with UNHCR.

With a target of 8,000 beneficiaries at the beginning of the operation, WFP progressively scaled up its activities to reach a planned 134,044 refugees in January, 178,213 people in February, and 213,772 people in March. Despite the difficult operating environment, WFP was able to reach 96 percent of its target in January, 99 percent in February and 100 percent in March (graph 1).

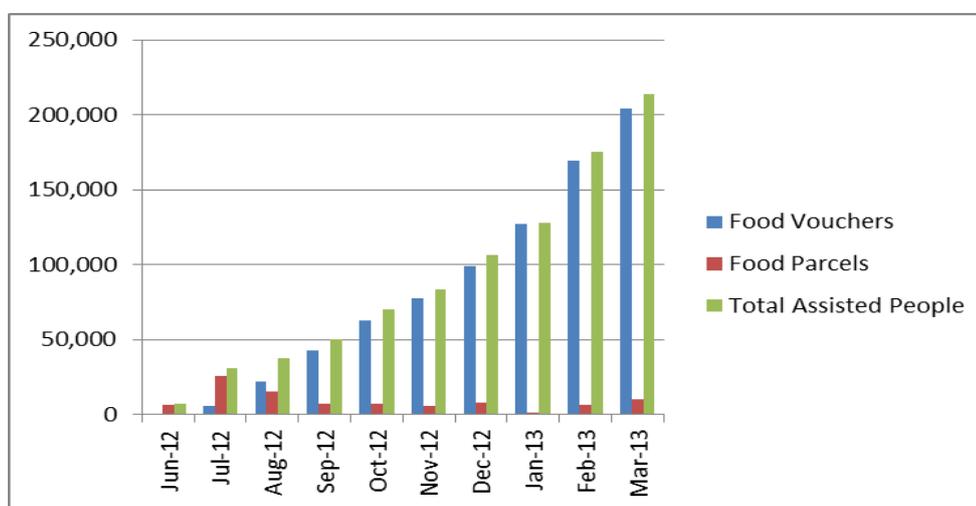


Figure1. Total people assisted by WFP since June 2012

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II. Distribution

- All distributions were monitored every month during the January-March 2013 cycle.
- Overall, the harsh winter during the months of January and February 2013 delayed some distributions and made it more difficult for beneficiaries to access or wait at distribution sites.
- Due to the winter weather conditions during the January and February cycles, WFP faced significant access challenges: the road to Akkar in North Lebanon was particularly affected.
- WFP managed to reach all areas in Lebanon. As the number of beneficiaries grew, new distribution sites were added and new partners were contracted to cope with the increasing caseload.
- Beneficiaries indicated a preference of vouchers over food parcels as it gave them more freedom in the choice (type, brand) and quantity of food items. As most of them do not have refrigerators, it allowed them to buy fresh produce several times during the month.
- Beneficiaries reported being well-treated and were satisfied with the distribution conditions in terms of security, organization, waiting space and time.

Food Vouchers

- WFP provides food vouchers to all Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR. Distribution took place at distribution points agreed upon with the partners.
- In North Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley, voucher distributions were also simultaneously performed with non-food item (NFI) and/or fuel voucher distributions. At times, this caused delays or disturbances within WFP distributions.
- In cases where households did not appear for distributions, WFP agreed with its partners to organize additional "no-show" distributions to try and reach the maximum number of beneficiaries.
- Table 1 below shows the vouchers distribution coverage over the reporting period.

	Planned	Operational	Actual	% Reached
January		131,544	126,913	96.5
February		175,713	169,059	96.2
March		211,272	203854	96.5

Table 1. Food vouchers achievement from January to March 2013

Food Parcels (General Food Distribution)

- WFP provides relief food rations to refugee families arriving from Syria. Distribution took place at distribution points agreed upon with partners.



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- During the March cycle, food parcel distributions took place in 8 locations across Lebanon. WFP distributed more than twice the number of parcels it had originally planned.

-Graph 2 and 3 below shows the parcels distribution coverage over the reporting period.

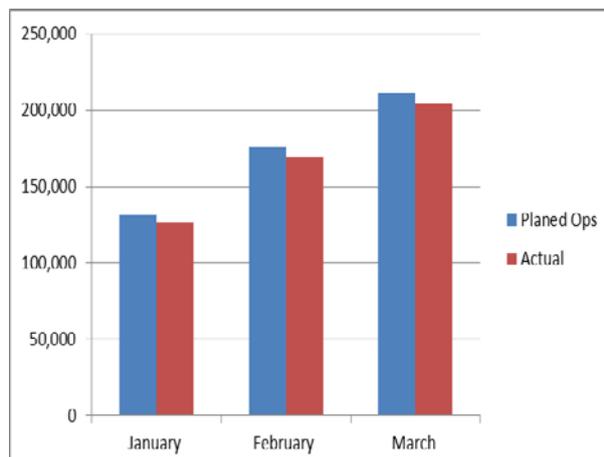


Figure 2. Distribution coverage first quarter (Food Vouchers)

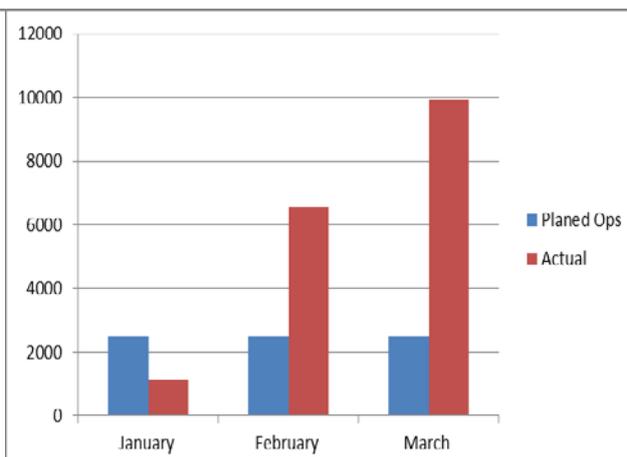


Figure 3. Distribution Coverage first quarter (food parcels)

Positive points

- Distributions sites in all areas were well organized and managed: crowd management, waiting areas, distribution procedures (checking beneficiaries IDs and beneficiaries' signature), time management, and SMS warning were adequately sent.
- Household interviews revealed that beneficiaries were satisfied by the programme and the distributions.
- Preferential distribution systems were organized for the elderly and pregnant women.
- Correctly updated leaflets with new shops names were distributed.
- The distribution sites and contracted shops were easily accessible by all beneficiaries.

Recurring distribution challenges

- People redeeming food vouchers for others (Bekaa Valley, North Lebanon, Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon).
- The cashing of vouchers at distribution sites (Bekaa Valley and North Lebanon).
- The lack of security and information desks at distribution sites (Bekaa Valley).



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- Inadequate waiting conditions: some distribution sites did not have the appropriate structure to protect the refugees waiting for their vouchers in the winter (Bekaa Valley) and the waiting time.
- The delays in or cancellation of NFI distributions often had a negative impact on WFP distributions by creating tensions at distribution sites (Bekaa Valley and North Lebanon).
- Ice and snow prevented access to certain distribution sites (North Lebanon and Bekaa Valley).
- Distribution sites were too far from shop locations (Bekaa Valley).
- Irregularities were found in the identification (ID) control (Bekaa Valley, North Lebanon and South Lebanon).
- Security was still an issue outside some distribution sites as people tried to buy vouchers from beneficiaries.

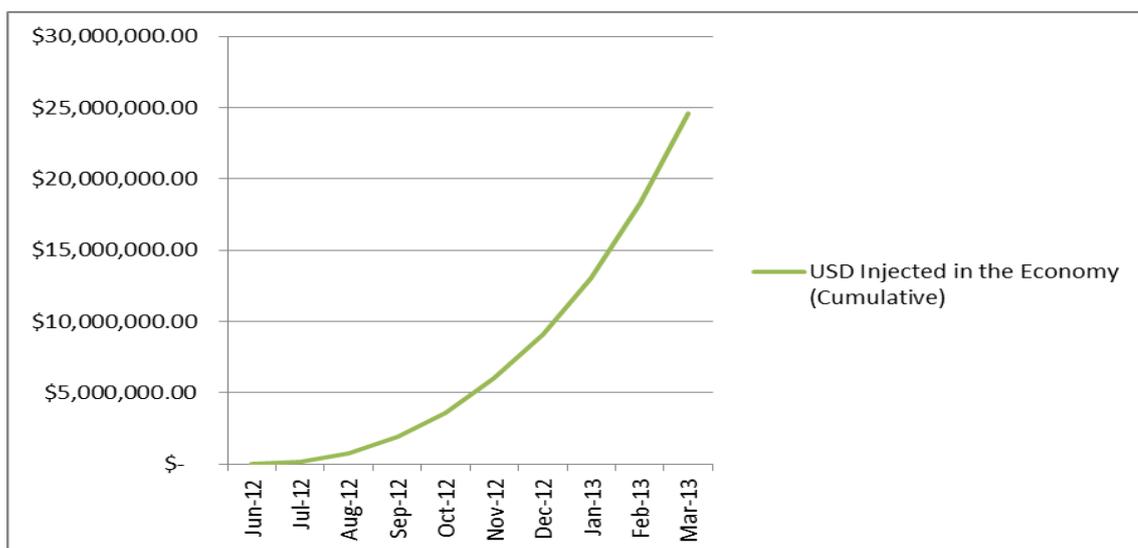
II. Shop Monitoring

- WFP Sub-office teams visited most of the shops every month. Monitoring included: cleanliness of the shops, availability of commodities, difficulties faced by the shopkeepers and compliance with WFP rules and prices. In cases of non-compliance, shops were given a warning and a follow-up visit would take place the following month, which could possibly lead to termination if the shops were still found to be non-compliant.

- In January, WFP teams began a sensitization campaign for the transition to the e-card in August 2013.

- Many shops started opening credit lines for refugees to allow them to divide expenses across the month. This situation will have to be closely monitored to avoid non-payment.

- From June 2012 to March 2013, WFP injected approximately USD 24.6 million directly into the local economy (see Figure 4 below).



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Figure 4. USD injected into the Lebanese economy since June 2012

Positive Points

- Business increased in all partner shops since joining the programme since they had increased demand and regular customers.
- Many shops hired extra workers.
- There was a better relationship for shops with suppliers since WFP served as a guarantor and shops ordered more regular replenishment of stocks from suppliers.
- Shops carried out investments in new/better technology so as to facilitate daily activities. Examples include a barcode system, refrigerators, cleaning, and UV lights to check validity of the vouchers provided by partners.

Recurring issues

- Half of the shops did not offer vegetables forcing families to either not consume vegetables or purchase them by other means in a different shop. Thus, WFP encouraged shops to partner with vegetable and meat providers to ensure dietary diversity of the refugees.
- Prices were inadequately displayed in shops.
- Registries were often badly maintained by the shop-keepers: books were either missing or unsigned, and invoices were often missing.
- The shops workload was unequal during the month, usually higher after distributions (North).
- Delays in payments were recurrent from WFP to partners and partners to the shops.
- Shops were regularly faced with beneficiaries trying to exchange their vouchers against NFIs or cash. Some 80% of households tried at least once to buy NFIs in shops.
- According to beneficiaries, 60% of the shops overpriced the food items yet this could potentially be due to the fact that prices in Lebanon are higher than Syria. Therefore, Syrian refugees switched to lower price brands.
- Shopkeepers were reported selling cooking gas bottles and cigarettes (Bekaa Valley and North Lebanon).
- A large number of non-contracted shops were redeeming vouchers (North Lebanon and Bekaa Valley), reselling them to WFP contracted shops.
- The NFIs most often exchanged for vouchers were diapers, cleaning products, gas and

cigarettes.

Beneficiaries Issues

-Figure 5 shows the main reported issues at the shop levels by respondents.

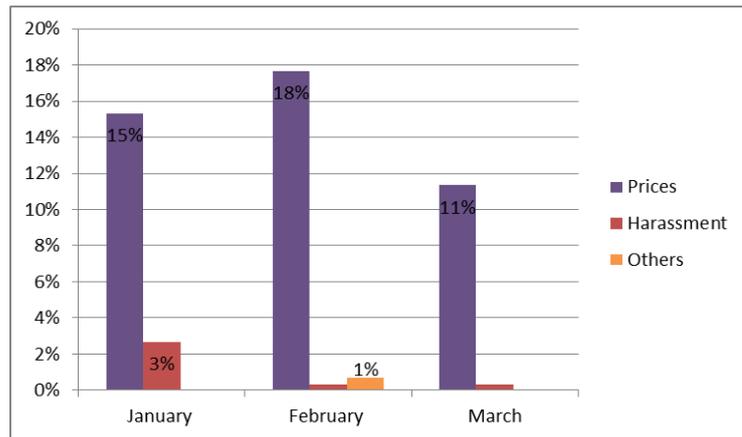


Figure 5. Main reported issues at shop levels by respondents

III. Beneficiary Profile

- WFP field monitors interviewed 203 families during the March cycle, 194 during the February cycle and 179 during the January cycle.

- All interviews took place at the households' living locations. All questionnaires were completed following one-on-one interviews with heads of the households.

Household Composition

- 67% of the respondent households had an adult male as head of household and only 28% of the respondents had children under 5 in their households.

- The households interviewed arrived on average **8 months** before the reporting period (figure 6). Many respondents in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon indicated that they had moved more than once since their arrival. This is consistent with the current migration pattern for refugees who started establishing themselves in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon.

- **38% of households reported having non-registered** members (figure 7) within their households over the reporting period. The most widespread reason was that these members had just arrived (66%). Interestingly, 17% of those non-registered were experiencing delays in registration (figure 8).

- The average household size within the interviewed population was **6.4 members** (figure 9).



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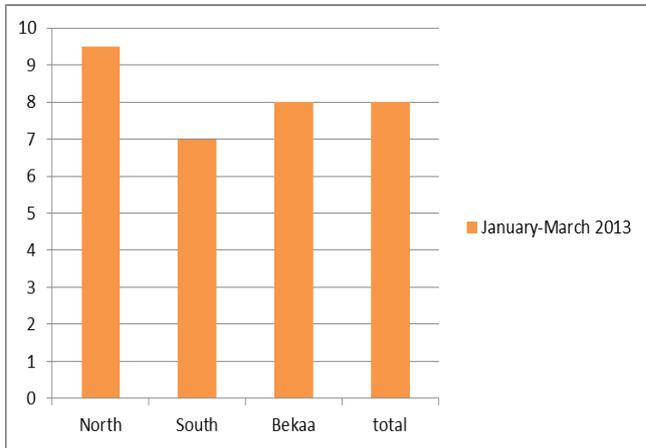


Figure 6. Average Arrival Date in months (January-March 2013)

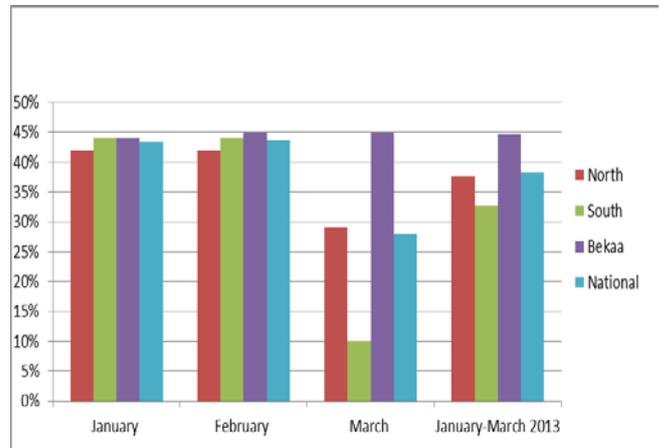


Figure 7. Households with non-registered members (January-March 2013)

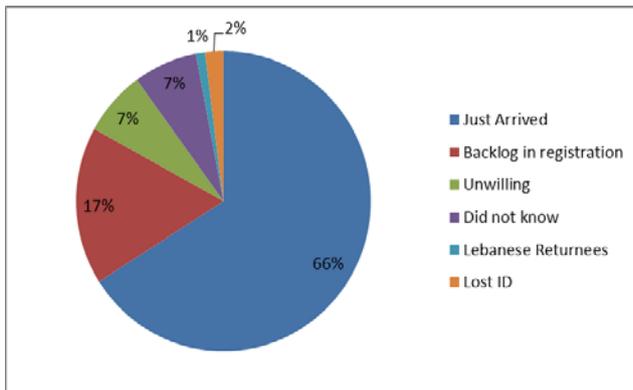


Figure 8. Main reasons for not registering from January to March 2013

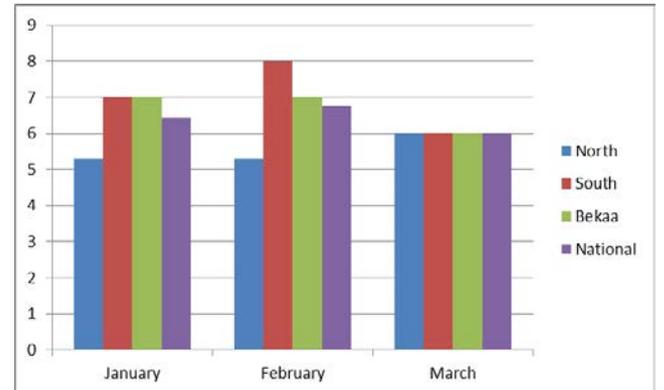


Figure 9. Average Household Size in number of individuals (January-March 2013)

Housing

- Most monitored households were living in **rented accommodations** (figure 10). However, many indicated that they might soon be unable to pay and would switch to tented settlements. The proportion of households living in tents or shelters was significantly higher in the Bekaa Valley and North Lebanon than in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon. Overall, the number of households living in tents or shelter was increasing revealing increasing levels of vulnerability (figure 11). On average, **21% of households reporting living in a tent or shelter**.

- On average, between **10 and 15% of the respondent households lived with host families** (figure 12), indicating the pressure that the increasing numbers of refugees were likely to put on Lebanese populations.



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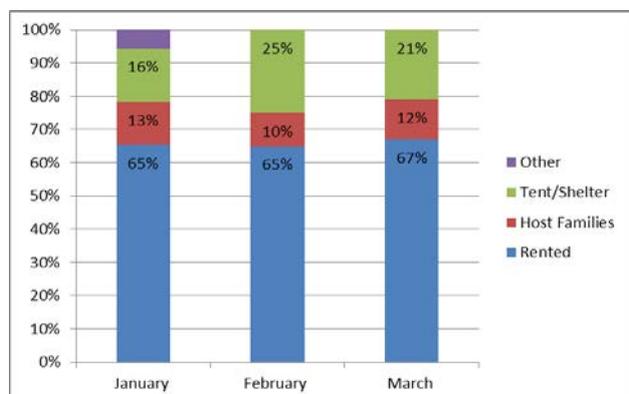


Figure 10. Household housing from January to March 2013

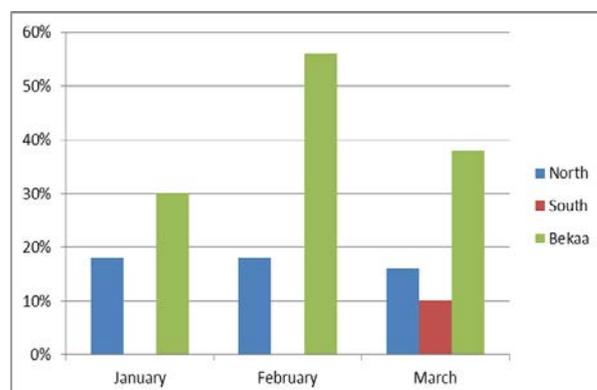


Figure 11. Households living in Tent or Shelter

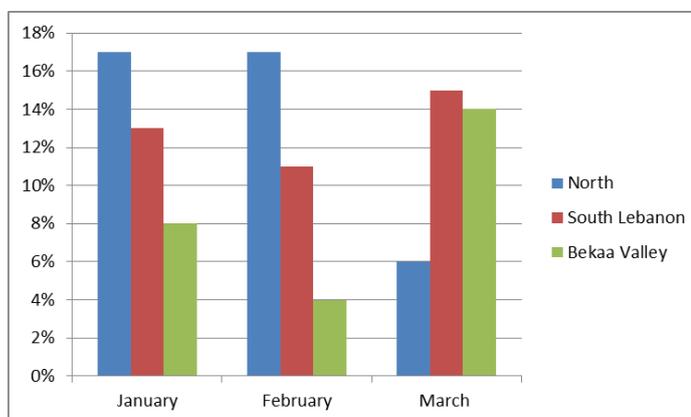


Figure 12. Households living with host families

V. Food Voucher Use

- Overall, vouchers were redeemed within **two to three weeks after distribution**.

- On average, beneficiaries in North Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley reported that the voucher covered food needs for 2 to 3 weeks, while it covered food needs for 3 to 4 weeks in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon.

- The most commonly bought commodities across the country among Syrian refugees were **oil, sugar and cereals** (figure 13). This could be explained by the fact that these commodities were easy to buy in bulk, transport and store; a commodity like oil was essential for cooking; and a smaller quantity of the commodities would provide a high calorie intake. Another reason was that the voucher can only be redeemed once.



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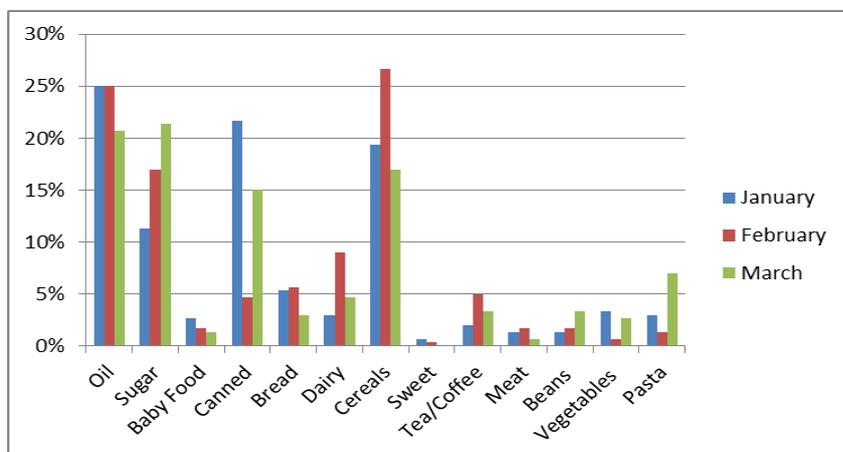


Figure 13. Voucher use across Lebanon from January to March 2013

- In Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon, which is relatively less poor than North Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley, refugees are buying more vegetables and dairy, commodities usually more expensive.

- **89% of beneficiaries reported not being able to buy as much vegetables or fresh meat as they needed** because (1) they were not available in the shops in which vouchers could be redeemed, (2) they do not have the capacity to conserve these or (3) they could not afford them. The first two factors were partly due to the modalities of the paper voucher that cannot be partially redeemed at different times in the month or at different shops. To accommodate for some of these problems, WFP slowly started to encourage partnerships between contracted shops and other specialized shops (for example, butchers or vegetable sellers).

VI. Constraints

- Medicine and housing (rent or shelter) were the main sources of financial constraints for beneficiaries across all regions from January to March 2013 (figure 14 and 15).



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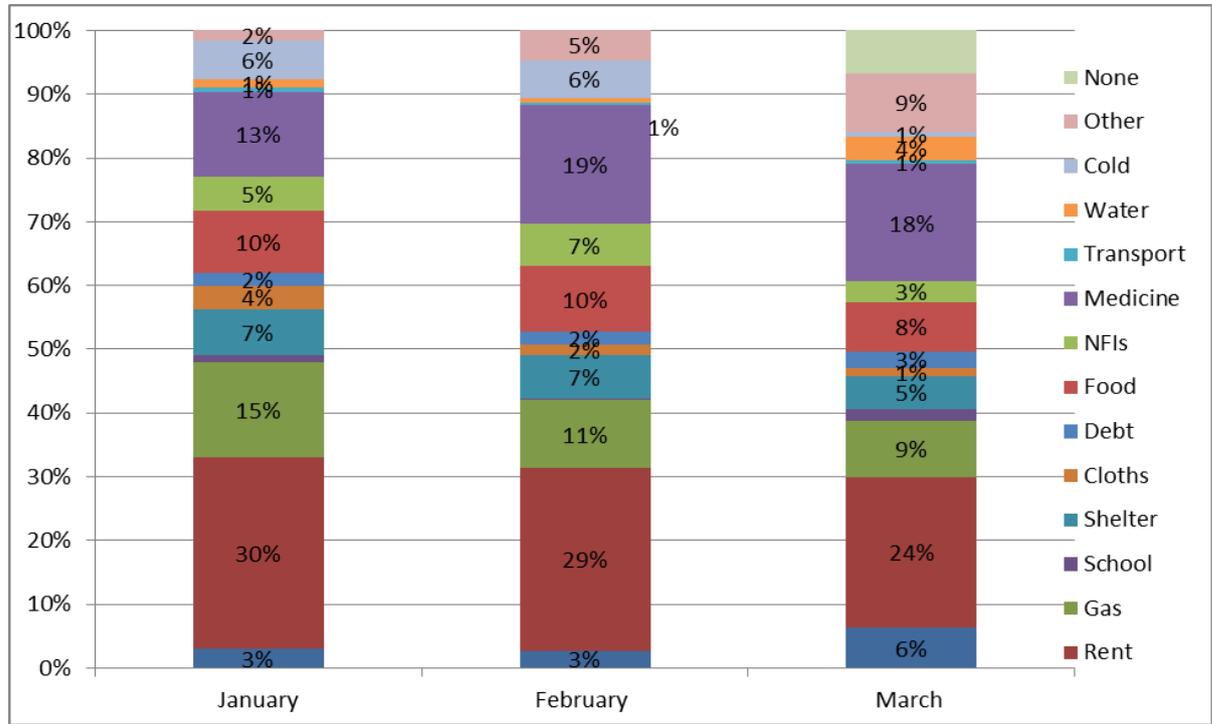


Figure 14. Main households constraints from January to March 2013

- Despite receiving food assistance from WFP, food remained an important source of financial constraint in all regions. Reasons included: a) the number of people benefiting from the voucher was more than one, b) the sale of food vouchers to cover urgent NFI needs (medicine, baby products) c) difficulties in planning for the month as vouchers can only be redeemed once. Although too early to identify trends, the number of households stating food as a main financial constraint decreased by 2% from January to February. This should be monitored closely to assess the impact of WFP assistance.
- Whereas the cold and clothes were among the second most important sources of constraints in North Lebanon, it was only partially mentioned in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, South Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley. In the Bekaa Valley, gas was an important constraint.
- Security was also an important constraint in North Lebanon partly because of the proximity with the Syrian border.



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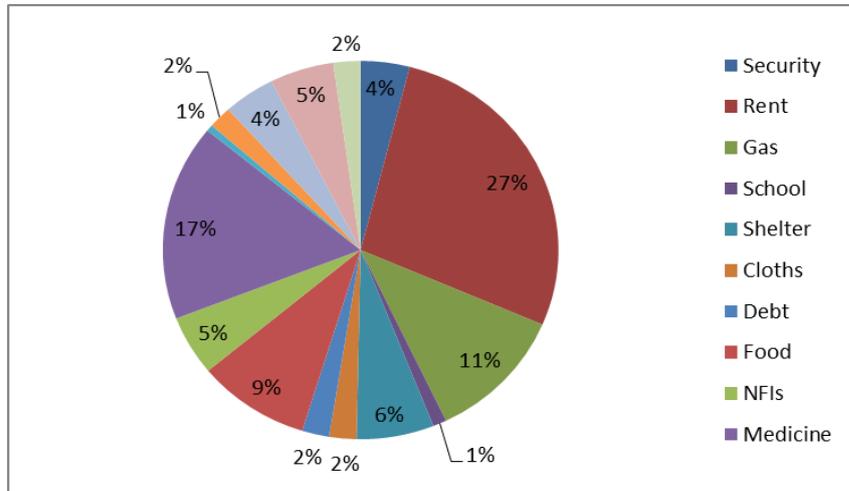


Figure 15. Main households constraints from January to March 2013

VII. Main Resources

- The main resources reported among interviewed households were **labor, charity, NGO assistance and debt** (figure 16 and 17)

- Although it was early to identify trends during the reporting, a few observations could be monitored and should be followed closely in the following months:

- From January to March, the percentage of respondents who reported relying on NGO assistance as a main resource decreased by 9%, while those reporting relying on charity increased.
- From January to March, households which reported having debts increased by 2%.
- From January to March, the proportion of households reporting having other resources decreased by 18%.

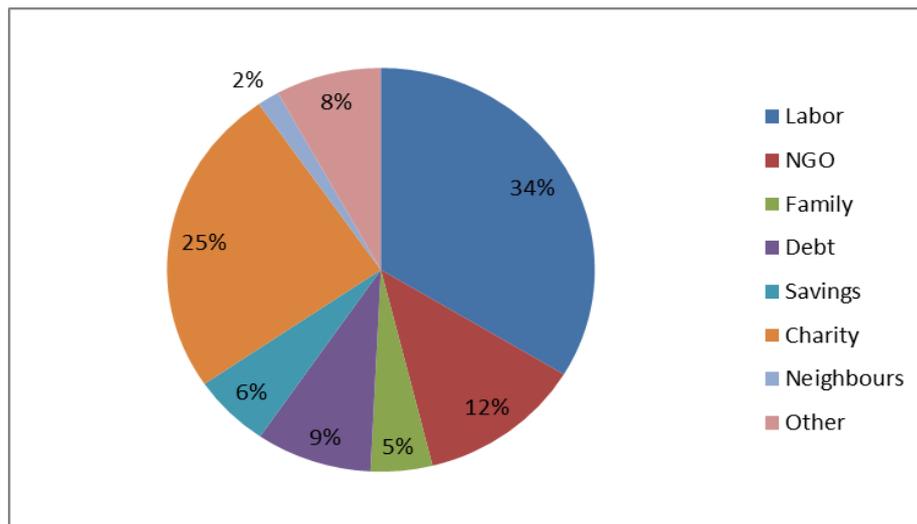


Figure 16. Main households resources from January to March 2013



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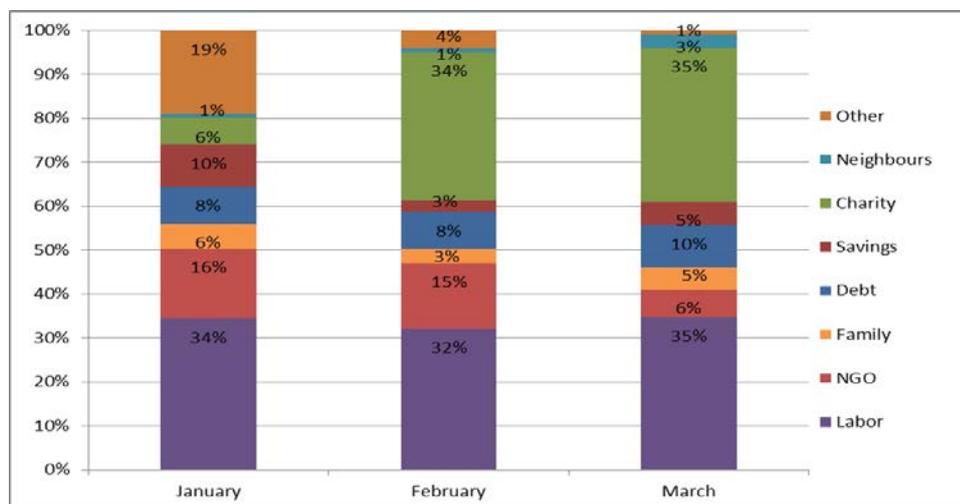


Figure 17. Main households resources from January to March 2013

VIII. Coping Strategies

- 97% of the households reported needing extra sources of income to cover all needs during the January-March 2013 cycle.
- Increasingly, beneficiaries reported having to sell their vouchers against cash to cover all their needs, particularly to buy NFIs such as cleaning products, baby diapers or gas.
- Some “vouchers dealers” were identified in North Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley, and appropriate measures were taken but the situation will have to be monitored closely over the next few months.
- Refugees who have been in Lebanon for more than 6 months reported having exhausted all resources they had when they first arrived, putting them in a state of vulnerability higher than when they first arrived in Lebanon. The number of households that reported using several sources of incomes increased from 82% in January to 97% in March 2013.
- The proportion of interviewed households that sold their assets to cover their needs was on average 41%. The proportion of households in which children under the age of 18 work to cover food needs was 32% (figure 19). This may imply that a large portion of the Syrian refugee population is either **fully or moderately food insecure**.
- 29% of households reported exchanging vouchers for NFIs, 38% share their vouchers with non-registered people and only 4% reported selling their vouchers for cash (figure 18)



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Figure 18. Alternative voucher use from January to March 2013

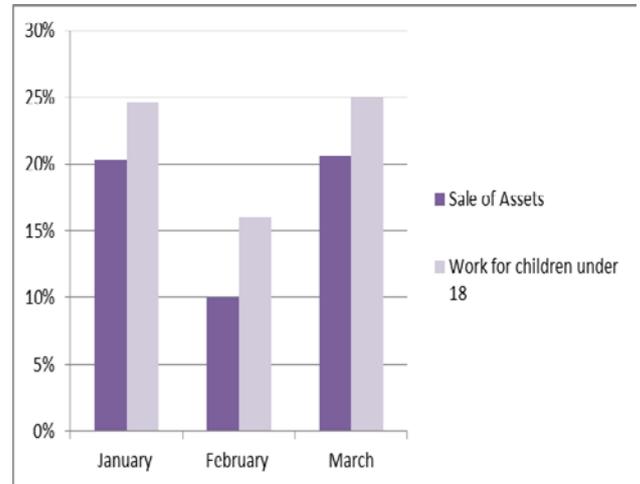


Figure 19. Alternative coping strategies from January to March 2013

- 31% of the interviewed population had to skip meals, 19% had to reduce portions and 8% had to switch to cheaper brands to cover other needs (figure 20 and 21). This is a clear indication that **food needs are still not met** for almost half of the refugee population.

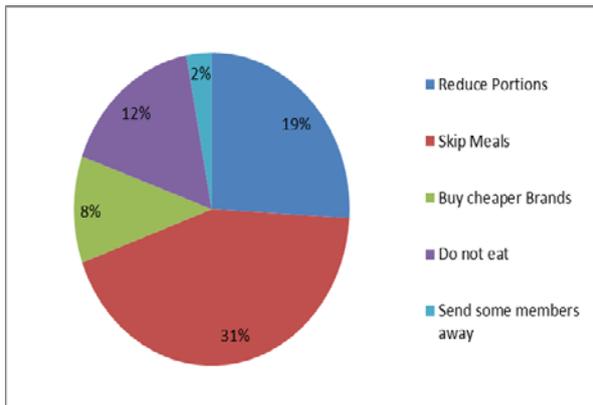


Figure 20. Main Coping Strategies January-March 2013

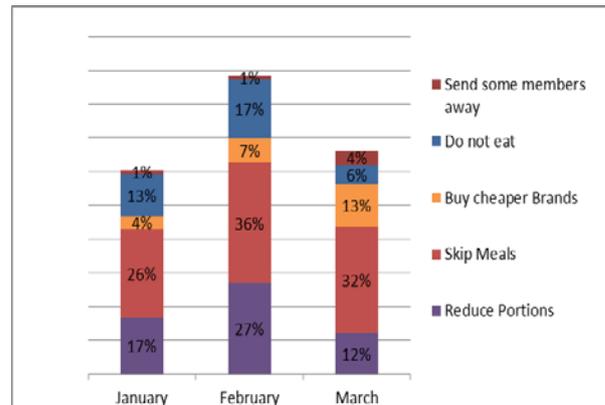


Figure 21. Main coping strategies January to March 2013

VIII. Other issues

Access issues to WFP Shops

-24% of the respondents reported having difficulties accessing WFP shops from their home (figure 22). The main constraint remains distance (15%) and taxi prices (15%) (figure 23)



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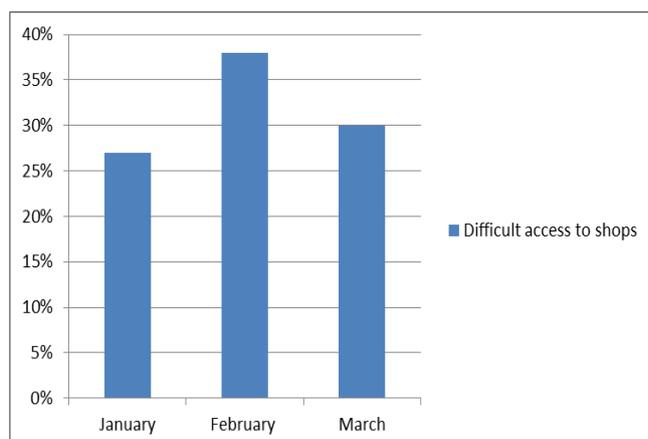


Figure 22. Respondents finding access to WFP Shops difficult

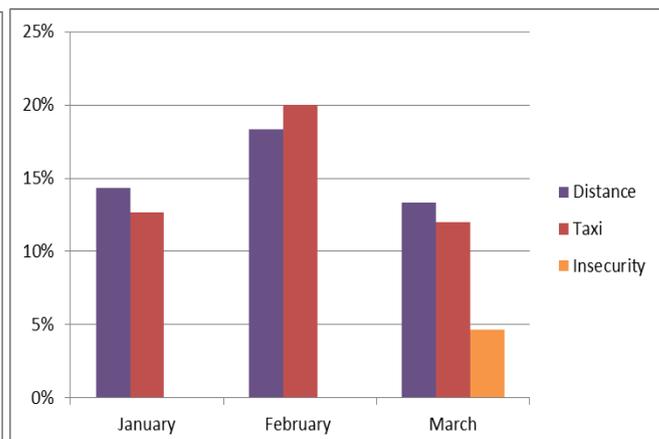


Figure 23. Main Constraints in accessing WFP shops

- For the first time in March 2013, insecurity was reported as being a problem in accessing WFP shops. The situation should be monitored more closely.

Protection

- 67% of respondents over the cycle reported facing security issues. This number reached 76% in North Lebanon.

- Most households reported facing security issues outside the distribution sites with people trying to buy or steal their vouchers. In particular, women reported feeling insecure and reports from North Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley highlighted several incidents of the harassment of beneficiaries. These were reported to the UNHCR Protection unit but will have to be followed closely.

Education

- Although most households indicated that they could send their children to school, many households reported during interviews that school fees and cost of school supplies were an important burden for them. Most of them were not receiving aid from UNHCR or other agencies and were contemplating not sending their children to school for some time.

Health

- Medicine was named as one of the most expensive household expenditures. Some families, with elderly or disable people, reported cutting on food in order to cover medical expenses for chronic diseases.

- The winter, which took place from November to March, intensified health issues with many households suffering severely from the cold and the lack of gas/fuel.