



Lebanon

Monitoring and Evaluation report, April-June 2015

Monitoring brief

WFP conducts a range of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities to receive feedbacks from beneficiaries on the effectiveness of the programme and to assess the impact of the assistance. WFP also conducts shop monitoring to ensure that the contracted shops maintain specified standard. WFP and partners visit all WFP- contracted per quarter to check the quality and price of food and its storage facility.

During the reporting period, 741 households were visited for post-distribution monitoring (PDM) and a total of 482 households were interviewed for pre-assistance baseline (PAB) at card distribution sites. The PAB data collection stopped as of June 2015 due to the sharp decrease in the number of newly registered refugees eligible to receive assistance. PAB data for June 2015 was estimated and extrapolated based on previous results and patterns. All 423 WFP-contracted shops were visited for shop monitoring.

Highlights

- From April to June 2015, WFP assisted 819,433 Syrian refugees and 21,798 Palestine refugees from Syria. Some 27,021 Lebanese were assisted in May 2015. Due to limited resources, since January 2015 WFP's monthly voucher value has been reduced by 30 percent, from USD27 to USD19 per person.
- Despite the reduction in food assistance, WFP assistance ensured improved food consumption levels of recipients compared to non-recipients. During the second quarter of 2015, 78 percent of households had an acceptable consumption score compared to 57 percent who were interviewed before receiving food assistance.
- Coping Strategy Index (CSI) remained stable throughout 2014 and recorded a sharp increase by 16 percent in the first quarter of 2015 following the decrease in voucher value. CSI then recorded a decrease in the second quarter indicating that beneficiaries were better off during quarter two compared to quarter one.
- Due to the reduction in the voucher value, the percentage of household buying food on credit increased compared to the previous quarter with households still reducing expenditure on education or health and spending their savings to buy food. Comparison between the last quarter of 2014 and the second quarter of 2015 shows an increase in the consumption of cereals/rice/pasta and oils and fats following the decrease in voucher value.
- As observed in the previous quarters, households in the Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon region had higher levels of food consumption than households in North Lebanon and the Bekaa.

Overview of activities

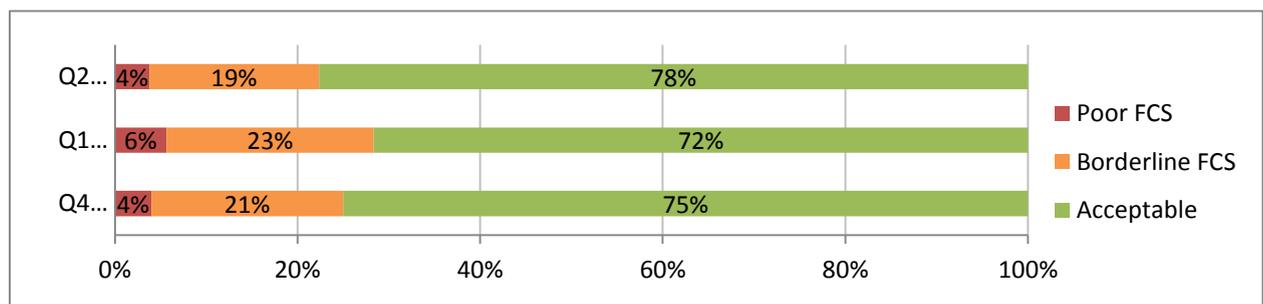
During the second quarter of 2015 WFP reached **819,433 UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees** through electronic vouchers (e-cards). Food parcel distribution to newly arrived Syrians awaiting registration discontinued as of April 2015 due to the sharp decrease in the number of new arrivals. Some 21,798 Palestine Refugees from Syria were assisted with cash transfer through UNRWA's ATM card. During the month of May, WFP was able to provide food assistance to 27,021 Lebanese under the emergency National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) of the Government of Lebanon.

As of June 2015, there are 423 shops contracted by WFP across the country where e-card beneficiaries can redeem their e-card value for food of their choice. Whilst WFP has been striving to determine vulnerability levels of refugees in Lebanon in order to reach the neediest, limited resources since the beginning of 2015 resulted in continued reduction of assistance by 30 percent of regular monthly voucher value, **from USD27 to USD19 per person**.

Main Food Security Outcomes

In the second quarter of 2015, food consumption levels amongst refugees receiving WFP assistance remained relatively stable showing a slight improvement compared to the previous quarter. Food consumption levels for the second quarter are similar to the results witnessed during the fourth quarter of 2014. Further comparison within the quarter provides evidence that acceptable food consumption score (FSC) increased by 4 percent from May to June 2015. Similar results were recorded in the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) which was conducted in June 2015 using a representative sample. According to the VASyR, households with acceptable FSC stood at 84 percent, similar to that of June 2015 which stood at 80 percent. During the reporting period, refugees received other forms of food assistance from various donors prior to the holy month of Ramadan, which might have compensated for the impact of reduced assistance from WFP. The lower prices of fuel and the overall decrease in food prices in Lebanon also contributed to the increase in the purchasing power of beneficiaries during the period, helping them meet their food needs.

Figure 1 – Food Consumption trends between Q4 2014, Q1 and Q2 2015

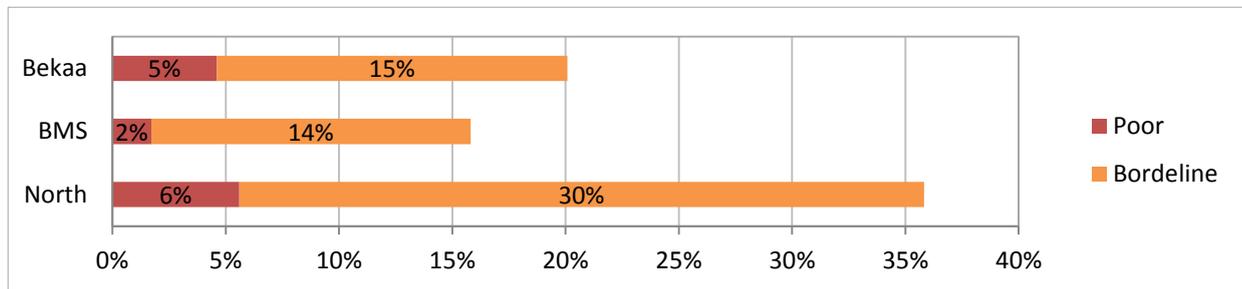


Source: WFP PDM: Q4 2014, Q1 2015 and Q2 2015

For geographical comparison North showed the lowest food consumptions levels in Lebanon. Food consumption analysis by food group shows that main food groups consumed by refugees are cereal, followed by oils and fats, and sugars. Relatively lower food consumption levels were observed among the animal protein-rich food, pulses, fruits and vegetables groups. Comparison between the fourth quarter of 2014 and the first and second quarter of 2015 shows that with the reduction of the voucher value, beneficiaries increased their consumption of cereals, milk and oils. An increase in the consumption of vegetables was noted during the second quarter as the cheaper vegetables were available during the summer season. Nevertheless, the level of vegetable consumption during

the second quarter of 2015 was still lower than it was during the same time of last year which is linked to the decrease of the voucher value.

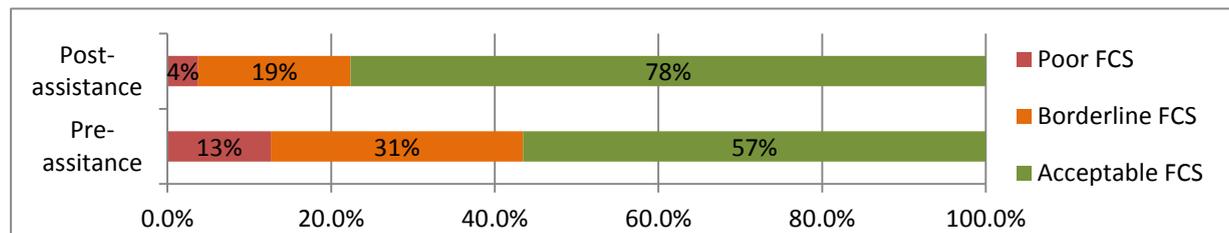
Figure 2 – Food Consumption levels, by region (Q2 2015)



Source: WFP PDM, Q2 2015
 *BMS: Beirut, Mount Lebanon, and South

PDM findings also reveal that **refugees receiving WFP assistance have higher levels of food consumption** compared to those households who have not yet received WFP assistance, monitored through the **pre-assistance baseline**¹. In line with the analysis from previous quarters, these results show that WFP assistance contributes to improved and stabilized food consumption status of refugees. Poor and borderline FCS decreased by 21 percents when compared to baseline group, showing a significant improvement in the food consumption of targeted beneficiaries.

Figure 3 – Pre-and Post-assistance level of food consumption (second quarter 2015)

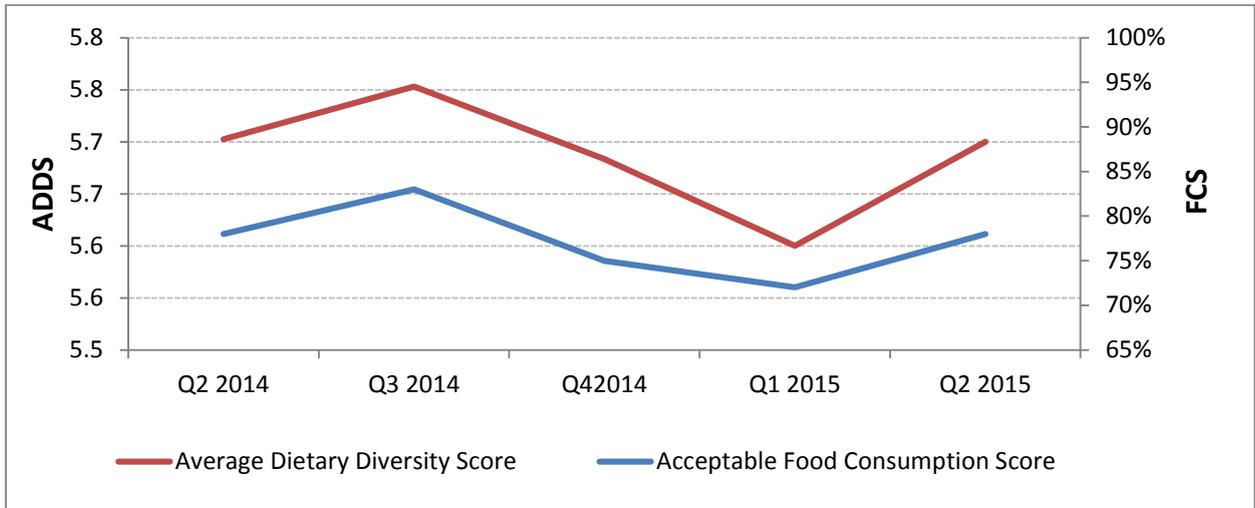


Source: WFP PDM, Q2 2015; WFP PAB Q2 2015

Analysis of **Average Dietary Diversity score (ADDS)** below shows an improvement from the first quarter to the second quarter of 2015 following a sharp decrease in the first quarter linked to reduction of assistance. While the voucher value decreased by 30 percent, beneficiaries dietary diversity stood at the same level as it did during the same period in 2014. This is due to beneficiaries using cash and in-kind assistance received from other donors to help them cover their food needs. Comparison between ADDS and acceptable FCS shows similar trends, further proving the impact of the reduced assistance on beneficiaries.

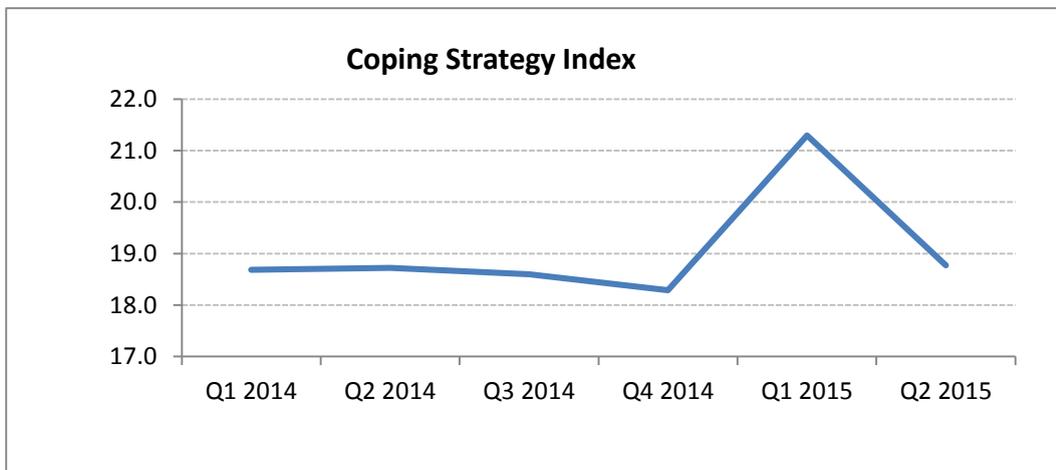
¹ The Pre-assistance baseline data collection was discontinued as of June due to the unavailability of newly registered refugees eligible to receive assistance and the discontinuation of issuing new e-cards. Baseline values for June were extrapolated and estimated using historical data.

Figure 4- Average Dietary Diversity Score (ADDs) and Acceptable Food Consumption Score (FCS) by quarter



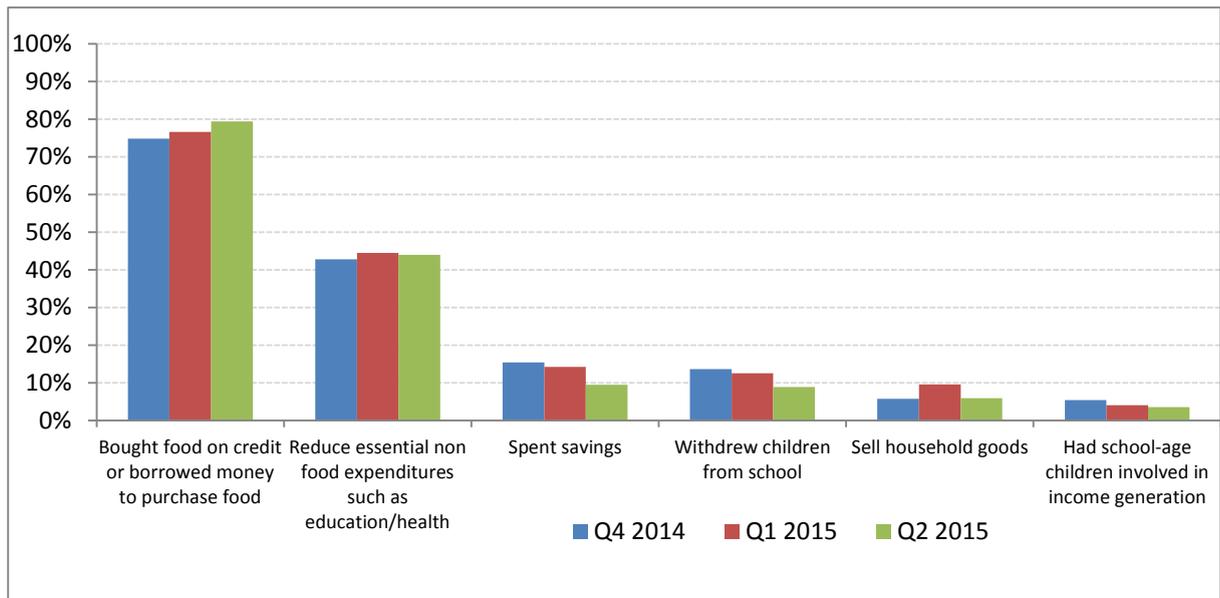
Coping Strategy Index (CSI) further supports the above observed trend. CSI is an indicator of the coping mechanisms applied by beneficiaries to cope with lack of food or money to buy food. CSI remained stable throughout 2014 and recorded a sharp increase by 16 percent in the first quarter of 2015 following the decrease in voucher value. Nevertheless CSI remained higher in the second quarter of 2015 compared to that of during the same period in 2014.

Figure 5- Coping Strategy Index



The frequency of **asset-depletion coping mechanisms** adopted by beneficiaries to cope with food shortages remained relatively high during the reporting period. Comparative analysis of the coping mechanism during the first two quarters of 2015 shows that WFP's assistance prevents refugee households from adopting asset-depletion coping mechanisms.

Figure 6 – Trends in frequency of asset-depletion coping strategies (Q4, 2014, Q1 and Q2 2015)

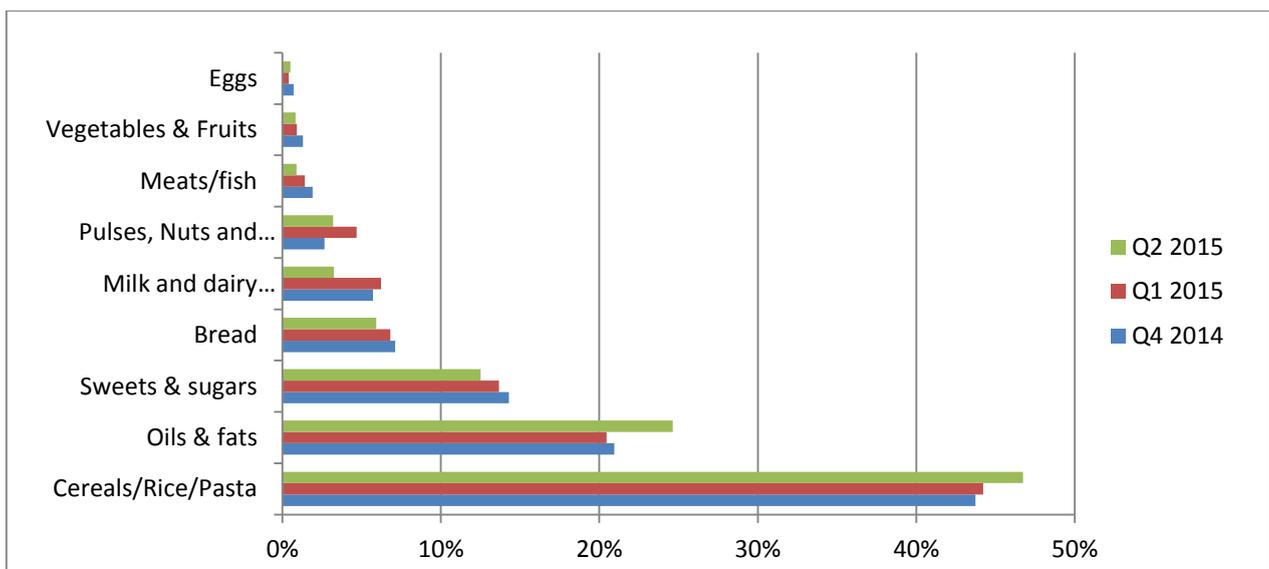


Source: WFP PDM, Q1 2015 and Q2 2015

Beneficiaries’ usage of WFP assistance and decision making

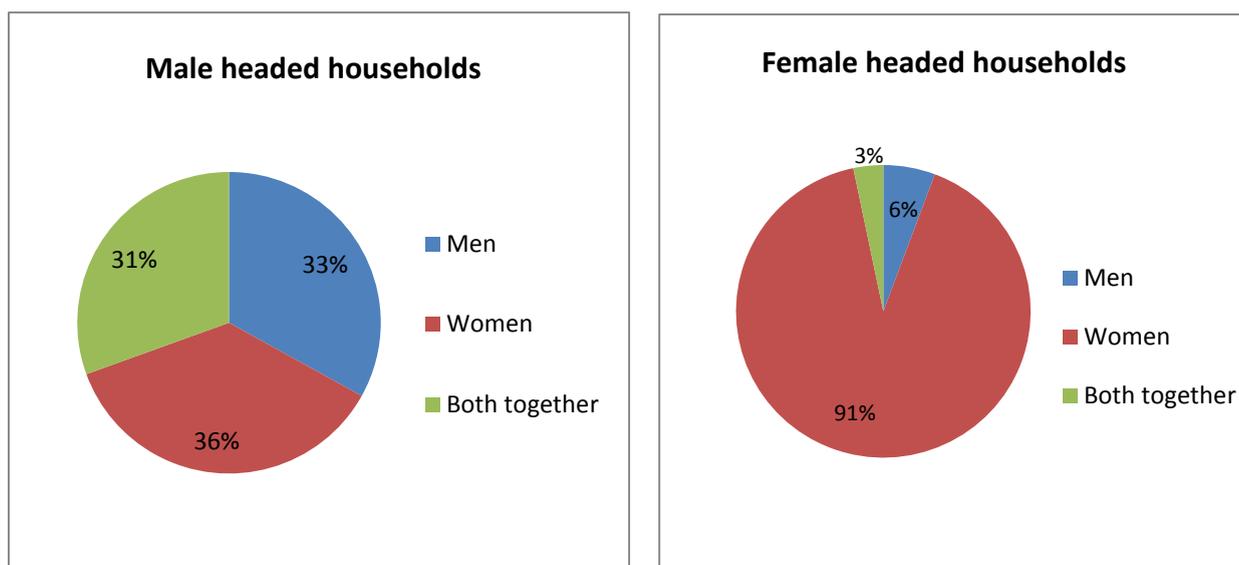
Food purchase: According to the PDM findings, and in line with results from the previous quarter, half of WFP beneficiary households reported cereals/rice/pasta and bread to be the main food group purchased with their e-cards. One out of four households reported to buy mainly oils and fats, whereas 12 percent reported to buy sugar and sweets. Comparison between quarter four 2014 and quarter two 2015 shows an increase in the consumption of cereals/rice/pasta and oils and fats following the reduction in voucher value. A decreased proportion of households reported purchasing animal protein-rich food with their e-cards. Should further reduction in voucher values occur, it is likely that the proportion of households reporting staple foods as their main purchase with e-card would rise, with potential negative impacts on households’ diet diversity.

Figure 7– Distribution of households by main reported food group purchased with e-card



Gender and decision-making: Amongst the households receiving WFP assistance, 47 percent reported that women are the primary decision-makers on the use of WFP assistance, such as what, where and when to buy, whereas 28 percent of households reported that men alone made a decision on the use of WFP assistance. In more than one third of the male headed households, women were the decision-makers over the use of e-cards.

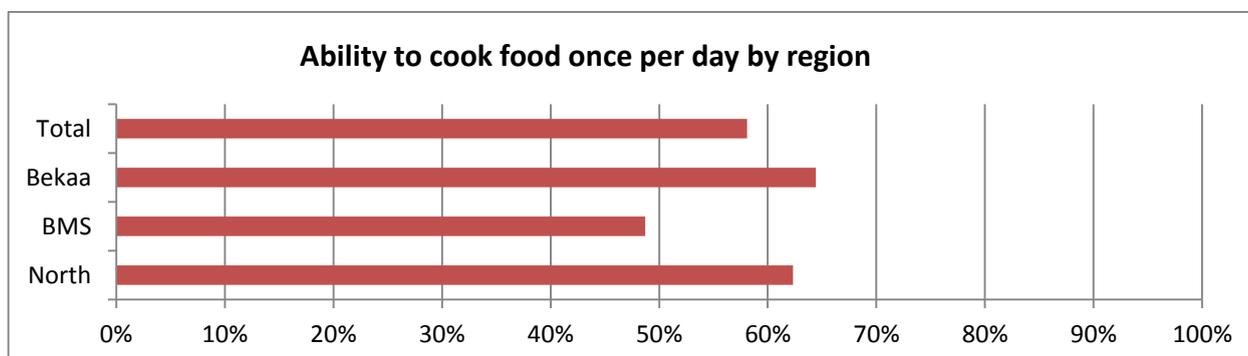
Figure 8 – Decision-maker on voucher use, by sex of head of household



Source: WFP PDM, Q2 2015

Cooking ability and food shortages: When asked about the ability to cook on a regular basis, 58 percent of interviewed households reported to be able to cook food every day. However, some differences were observed when comparing results by region, with some 49 percent of beneficiaries in the Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South reported to have such ability. Out of the beneficiaries interviewed, 28 percent reported that the main reason for not being able to cook on a daily basis was the lack of enough food to cook.

Figure 9 – Percentage of households reporting ability to cook food every day



Main findings from activity implementation monitoring

- Access to Asral, Hermel, Al Qaa and the northeastern border towns in the Bekaa continued to be restricted due to volatile security situation. However, WFP conducted shop monitoring and PDM activities via phone, using the questionnaire tailored for remote monitoring. Some of the PDMs in areas with restricted access to WFP were conducted face-to-face when households came to the nearest e-card distribution site to participate in the PDM survey. Since the Government of Lebanon started implementing the security plan in February, restriction in movement affected some of the monitoring activities causing delay and cancellation of several missions in the Bekaa.
- Refugees interviewed for the PDM expressed their satisfaction with the WFP e-card programme, 41 percent declared that they are satisfied but the programme needs improvement due to the sharp decrease the voucher value to USD 19. Out of the beneficiaries interviewed, 99 percent declared that they did not face any safety issue commuting from and to the shops to use their e-cards with no difference was noted between men and women.
- Irregularities at contracted shops, such as skipping UNHCR registration certificate check, displaying food items without price tag and keeping shop premises untidy, were reported more often during

the peak period (few days after loading of e-cards) as the shops were overcrowded with customers. WFP continues to monitor all the contracted shops on a regular basis to ensure that the shops are following the programme's regulations and policies. WFP's cooperating partners (CPs) deployed volunteers to assist shop monitoring during the peak period to check price tags and expiry dates of food items and to collect beneficiaries' feedbacks.

Recommendations and action points

- As fluid security situation has been a challenge to conduct monitoring activities in several areas of the country with limited access and potential security risks to WFP and CP staff, it is necessary to maintain and strengthen relationship with local governments and to continue strong coordination with UN security. WFP should continue conducting monitoring using telephone calls and face-to-face interviews outside restricted access zones.
- The ongoing targeting household survey affected PDM exercise as beneficiaries were reluctant or refused the PDM household survey, misunderstanding the PDM team as the targeting survey team. WFP should strengthen communication with beneficiaries during monitoring to assure them that PDM process does not affect their eligibility status.
- Refresher training to monitoring teams and regular follow-ups with CP's M&E focal points need to be continued to ensure quality data collection and entry.
- Refugees reported that the voucher value is not sufficient as they are unable to meet their basic needs. There is a need to raise funds to assist the most vulnerable refugees. Assessment of the impact of the assistance reduction should be carried out through the comparison of pre and post reduction of the same beneficiaries.



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