



Lebanon

Monitoring and Evaluation report, January-March 2015

Monitoring brief

WFP conducts a range of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities to receive feedback from beneficiaries on the effectiveness of the programme and to assess the impact of the assistance. Each month field monitors of WFP and cooperate partners visit approximately 240 refugee households for post-distribution monitoring, to gather information on the beneficiaries' socio-economic and food security status, the use of the food assistance and the process of distribution and redemption of e-cards. WFP also conducts shop monitoring to ensure that the contracted shops maintain specified standard. WFP and partners visit all WFP-contracted shops a month to check the quality and price of food and its storage facility.

During the reporting period, 739 households were visited for post-distribution monitoring (PDM) and the same number of households were interviewed for pre-assistance baseline (PAB) at card distribution sites. All 410 WFP-contracted shops were visited for shop monitoring.

Highlights

- From January to March 2015, WFP assisted 896,791 Syrian refugees, 11,972 new arrivals and 21,801 Palestine refugees from Syria.
- As of March 2014, WFP contracted 410 shops across Lebanon and injected over US\$444 million into the Lebanese economy through its voucher programme. Due to limited resources, since January 2015 WFP's monthly voucher value has been reduced by 30 percent, from US\$27 to US\$19 per person.
- During the first quarter of 2015, food consumption levels of refugee households were slightly deteriorated compared to the previous quarter, with 72 percent of households reporting acceptable food consumption scores following WFP assistance. This still represents an improvement when compared to the 56 percent of households with acceptable food consumption scores among pre-assistance baseline (PAB) group.
- With reduction in voucher value, sale of household goods increased significantly with more households reducing expenditure on education or health and spending their savings to buy food.
- As observed in the previous quarter, 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 first quarter of 2015 WFP reached **896,791 UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees** through electronic vouchers (e-cards), **11,972 newly arrived refugees** through one-off food parcels and 21,801¹ Palestine Refugees from Syria by cash transfer through UNRWA's ATM card. As of March 2015 there are 410 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 reduction in assistance by 30 percent of regular monthly voucher value, **from US\$27 to US\$19 per person.**

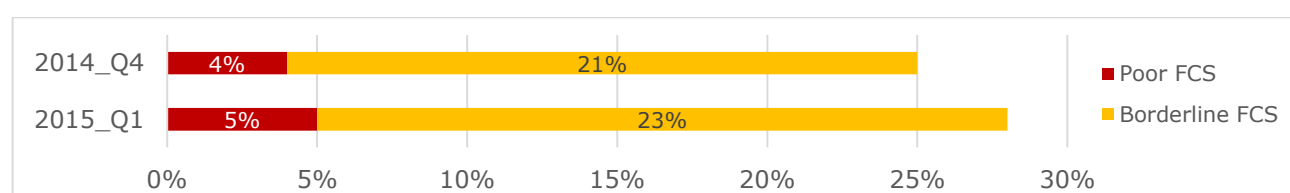
WFP continued to provide technical supports to the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) on M&E data collection and process monitoring for the emergency National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP). The NPTP provide food assistance to the vulnerable Lebanese affected by the Syria crisis through WFP's e-cards.

Access to Asral and Al Qaa, the northeastern border towns in the Bekaa, continued to be restricted due to fluid security situation. However, WFP conducted shop monitoring and PDM activities via phone, using the questionnaire tailored for remote monitoring. Since the government of Lebanon started implementing the security plan in February, restriction in movement affected monitoring activities causing delay and cancellation of several monitoring missions in the Bekaa.

Main Food Security Outcomes

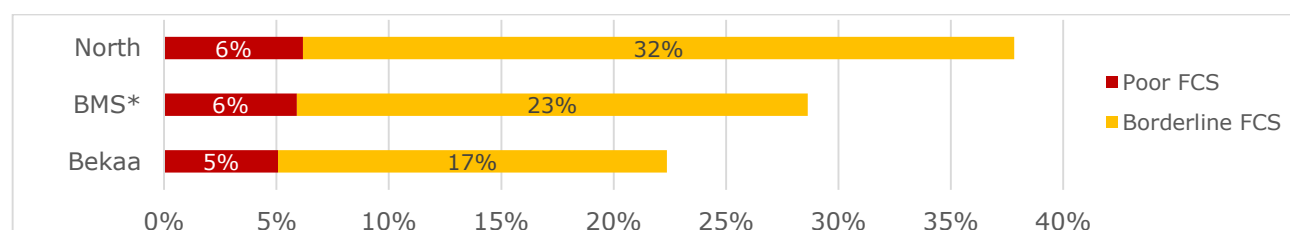
In the first quarter of 2015, food consumption levels amongst refugees receiving WFP assistance remained relatively stable showing a slight deterioration compared to the previous quarter. In particular, lower levels of food consumption are observed in North Lebanon, where relatively lower food consumption levels of animal protein-rich food, pulses, and vegetables are observed (Figure 3). This finding implies that a continued assistance reduction may lead to further deterioration of food security status of refugees.

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



Source: WFP PDM, Q4 2014 and Q1 2015

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

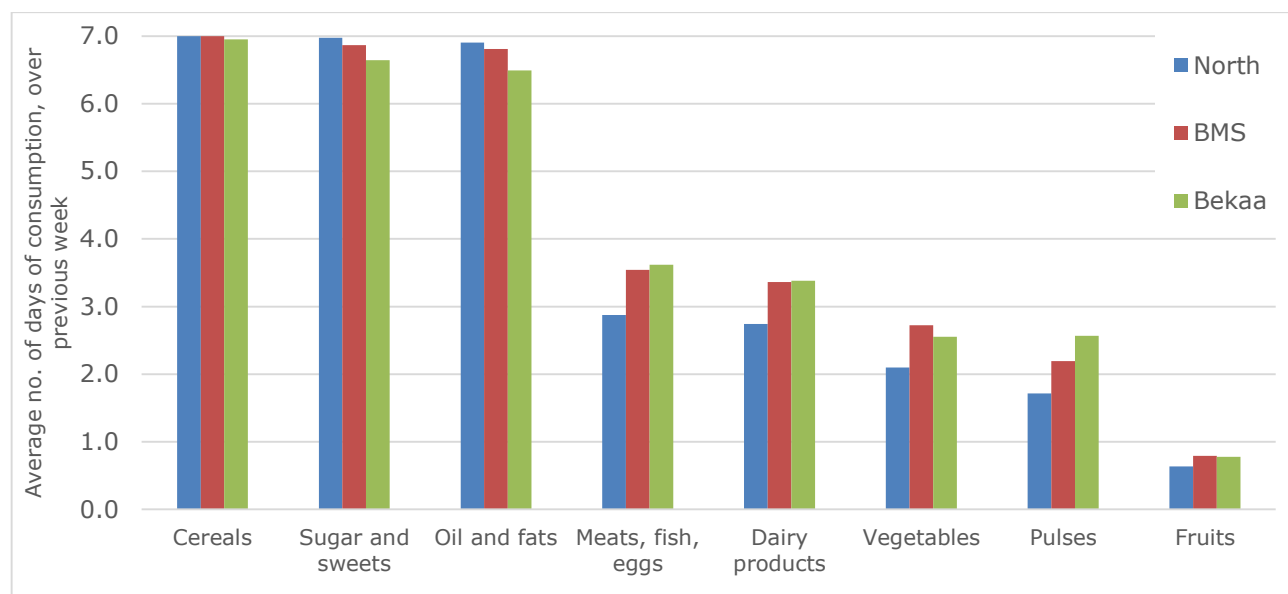


Source: WFP PDM, Q1 2015

*BMS: Beirut, Mount Lebanon, and South

¹ Data reconciliation is on-going.

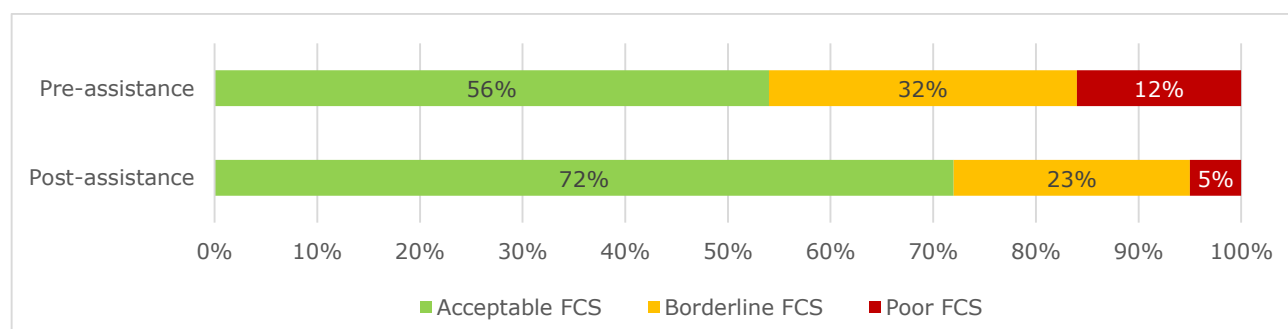
Figure 3 – Frequency of consumption of main food groups, by region (first quarter 2015)



Source: WFP PDM, Q1 2015

PDM findings also reveal that **refugees receiving WFP assistance have higher levels of food consumption** compared to those households not receiving WFP assistance, monitored through the **pre-assistance baseline** (Figure 4). In line with analyses from previous quarters, these results show that WFP assistance contributes to improved and stabilized food consumption status of refugees.

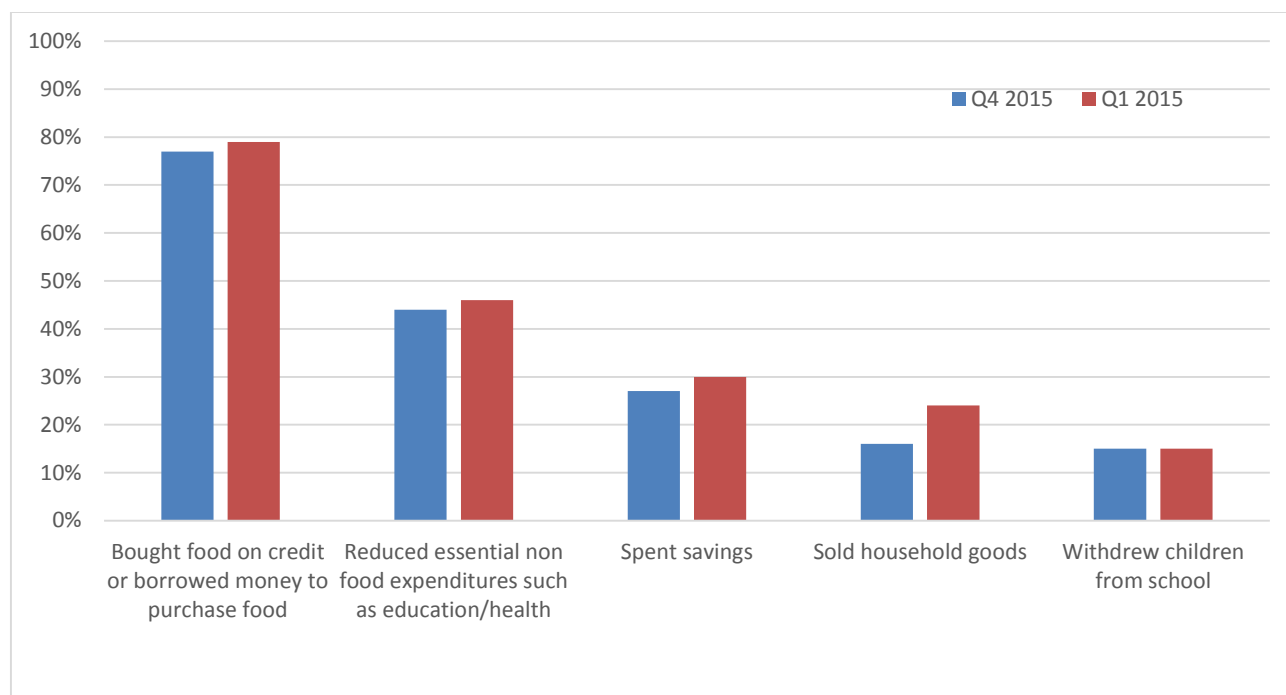
Figure 4 – Pre- and Post-assistance level of food consumption (first quarter 2015)



Source: WFP PDM, Q1 2015; WFP PAB Q1 2015

The frequency of **asset-depletion coping mechanisms** implemented by households to cope with food shortages remained relatively high during the reporting period. Compared to the previous quarter, **sale of household goods** increased considerably, and such deterioration is likely to be associated to the cut in voucher values. Comparative analysis between the first quarter of 2015 and the previous quarter shows that WFP's assistance prevents refugee households from adopting asset-depletion coping mechanisms.

**Figure 5 – Trends in frequency of asset-depletion coping strategies
(last quarter 2014 and first quarter 2015)**

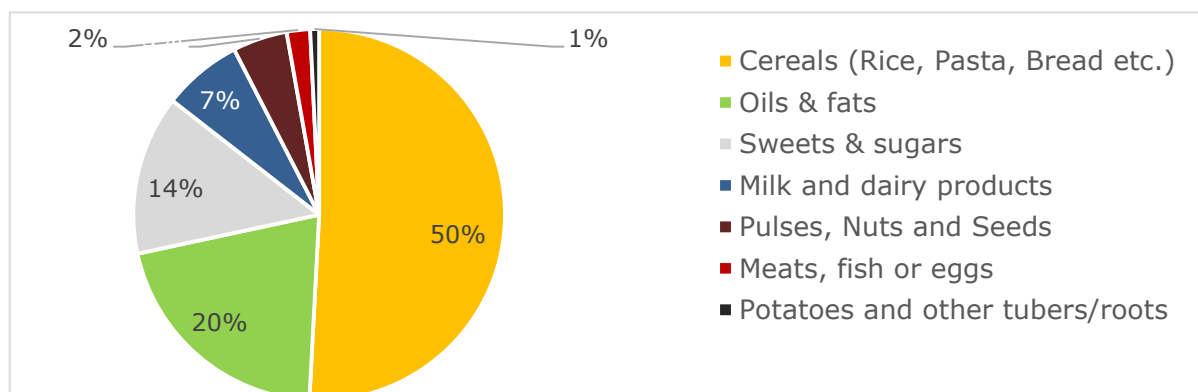


Source: WFP PDM, Q4 2014 and Q1 2015

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-card. One out of five households reported to buy mainly oil and fats, whereas 14 percent reported to buy sugar and sweets. A very small proportion of households reported to purchase mainly animal protein-rich food with their e-card. 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.

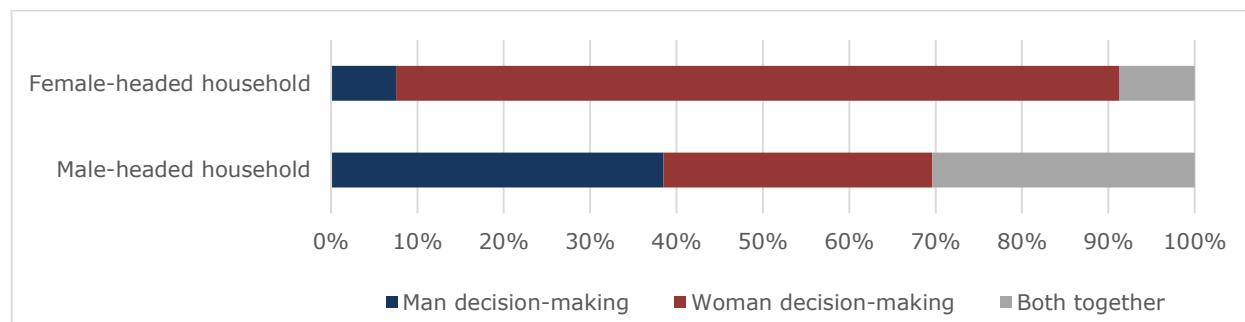
Figure 5 – Distribution of households by main reported food group purchased with e-card



Source: WFP PDM, Q1 2015

Gender and decision making: Amongst households receiving WFP assistance, 42 percent reported that women are the primary decision-makers regarding the use of WFP assistance, such as what, where and when to buy, whereas 1 out of 4 households reported that men alone made a decision on the use of WFP assistance. In close to one third of male headed households, women were the decision makers over the use of e-cards.

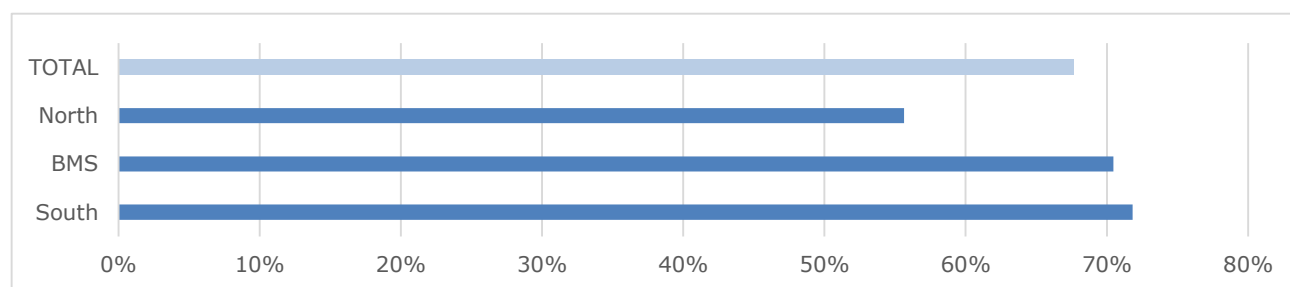
Figure 6 – Sex of decision-maker on voucher use, by sex of head of household



Source: WFP PDM, Q1 2015

Cooking ability and food shortages: When asked about the ability to cook on a regular basis, approximately two thirds of interviewed households reported to be able to cook food every day. However some differences were observed when comparing results by region, with some 55 percent of beneficiaries in the North reported to have such ability. Main reasons for not being able to cook food on a daily basis were lack of enough food and lack of cooking fuel.

Figure 7 – Percentage of households reporting ability to cook food every day



Source: WFP PDM, Q1 2015

Main findings from activity-implementation monitoring

- Irregularities at contracted shops were reported more often during the peak period – few days after loading of e-cards. In order to ensure that the shops are following programme's regulations and policies, WFP's cooperating partners (CPs) recruited volunteers to assist shop monitoring during the peak period to check price tags and expiry dates of food items and to collect beneficiaries' feedback.
- Reaching out to beneficiaries to make PDM household visits was one of the main challenges during PDM exercise as contact details of beneficiaries were not up-to-date. During the validation exercise which took place in February, over 15,000 phone numbers and addresses were updated and shared with UNHCR.

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.
- Refresher training to CP monitors and regular follow-ups with CP's M&E focal points need to be continued to ensure quality data collection and entry.
- In the areas where WFP contracted more shops, the prices of food items were stabilized. Noting that prices in WFP shops reported to be higher than in other shops in the same area, increasing the number of shops where refugee populations are concentrated will help avoid price increase and distortion of local market dynamics.



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