

Quarter 4, October –December 2014



Lebanon

Monitoring and Evaluation report, October-December 2014

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, a total of 764 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 398 WFP-contracted shops were visited for shop monitoring.

Highlights

- From October to December 2014, WFP assisted 917,729 individuals; 886,556 Syrian refugees, 9,622 new arrivals and 21,551 Palestine refugees from Syria.
- As of December 2014, WFP contracted 398 shops across Lebanon and injected over US\$393 million into the Lebanese economy through its voucher programme since January 2013.
- Food consumption level continued to be relatively stable, with 75% of households in the post-distribution monitoring (PDM) group reporting acceptable food consumption scores in this quarter, compared to only 54% of households in the pre-assistance baseline (PAB) group with acceptable food consumption scores.
- Households in the Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon region had higher food consumption scores than households in North Lebanon and the Bekaa, possibly due to a higher consumption of meat.
- Funding shortfalls in December resulted in a sharp increase in the percentage of households with poor food consumption scores. The percentage increased from 3% in November to 22% during the assistance gap period. The food consumption levels became stabilized later in the month with 4% of households with poor food consumption score, after loading of full voucher value, US\$30 per person.
- WFP provided technical supports to the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) to establish monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for the emergency National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP). The NPTP provides food assistance to the vulnerable Lebanese affected by the Syria crisis through WFP's e-cards.

Overview of activities

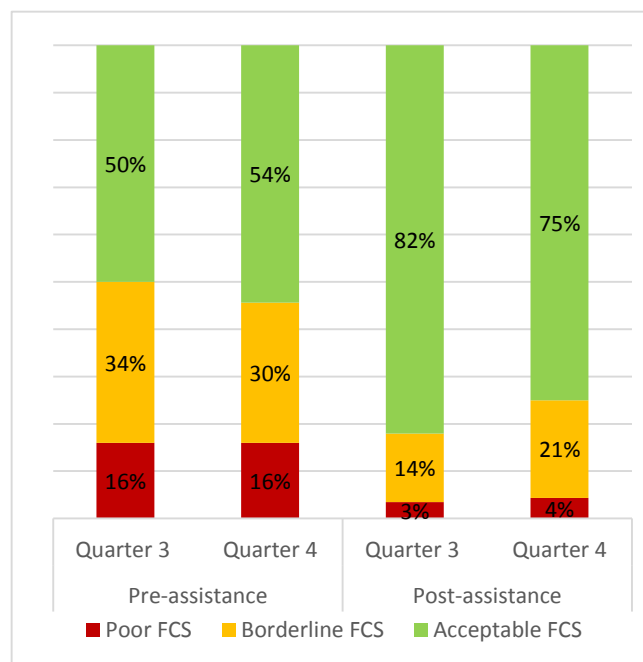
During the last quarter of 2014 WFP reached 917,729 individuals; 886,556 UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees through electronic vouchers (e-cards), 9,622 newly arrived refugees through one-off food parcels and 21,551¹ Palestine Refugees from Syria by cash transfer through UNRWA's ATM card. Some 97 percent of assistance was provided via e-cards. As of December 2014 there are 398 shops contracted by WFP across the country where e-card beneficiaries can redeem their e-card value for food of their choice. In October e-cards were loaded in two trenches (on 5 October with US\$20 per person and the remaining on 22 October) and in December e-cards were loaded late due to the temporal funding limitation. A special analysis on late e-card loading was conducted in December to assess the impact of the funding limitation on beneficiaries' food security status.

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. In North Lebanon WFP continued to struggle to gain access to Wadi Khaled area. As shop monitoring was challenging, WFP instituted specific restrictions on transactions in shops including setting a monthly redemption ceiling for shops.

Food insecurity status of beneficiaries

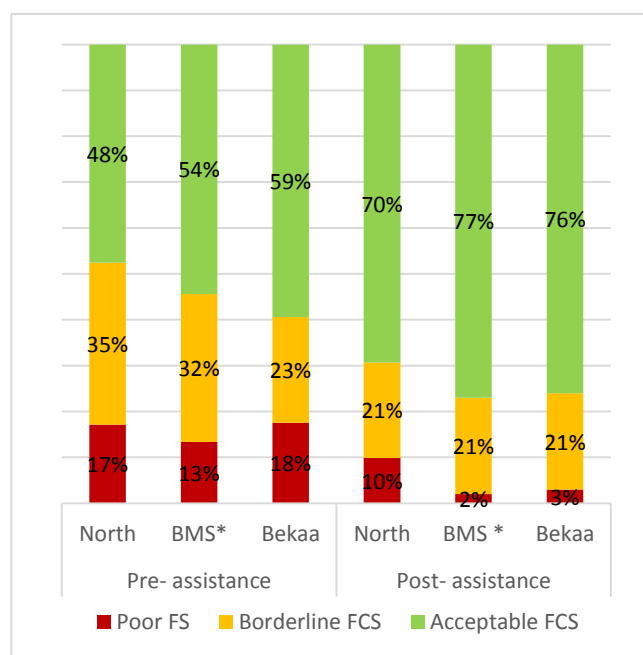
In the fourth quarter of 2014, food consumption levels amongst refugees receiving WFP assistance continued to be stable, with slightly decreased levels from the third quarter of 2014 as shown in Figure 1. This is partially due to the increased expenditure on winterization items and fuel. Refugees receiving WFP assistance (post-assistance group) also reported food consumption levels that are significantly higher than the refugees who are not yet receiving WFP assistance, the pre-assistance group.²

Figure 1. Food consumption scores, comparison between pre-assistance and post-assistance, Q3 and Q4 2014



Source: WFP PAB and PDM Quarter 4, 2014

Figure 2. Food consumption scores, comparison between pre-assistance and post-assistance by region



Source: WFP PAB and PDM Quarter 4 2014

*BMS: Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon

Food consumption levels appear to follow the population vulnerability pattern in Lebanon. Households in the Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon (BMS) region have higher food consumption scores (FCS) ¹ than households in North Lebanon and the Bekaa. This may be due to a higher consumption of meat in BMS. Across all regions of the country, food consumption levels improved significantly after receiving WFP assistance. The

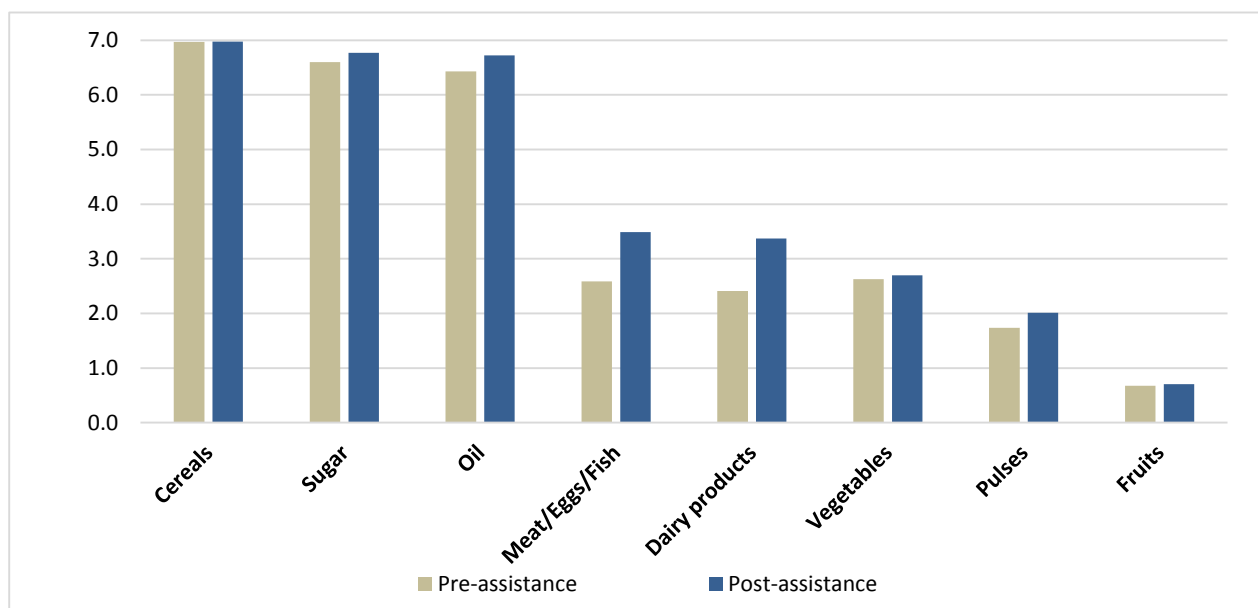
¹ Data reconciliation is on-going.

² WFP collects pre-assistance baseline (PAB) data monthly from the households that are not receiving assistance yet. This exercise has been regularly conducted since January 2014, and generates a 'rolling' baseline every quarter, reflecting the dynamic nature of the refugee population in Lebanon and continuous enrollment into the voucher programme, as refugees arrive and are subsequently targeted for assistance.

improvement is most noticeable in BMS, where 77% of the PDM sample reported acceptable food consumption scores in the fourth quarter of the year, compared to 54% of the PAB sample.

Figure 3 shows the average number of days each food group is consumed. Cereals tended to be consumed on a daily basis, reflecting the population's high consumption of bread and rice. Post assistance group consumed more frequently all food groups than pre-assistance group. Among different food groups, significant gaps were found in meat/eggs/fish and dairy products. On average, post-assistance group consumed meat/eggs/fish 3.5 days a week and dairy products 3.4 days a week whereas pre-assistance group consumed those items 2.6 days and 2.4 days a week respectively.

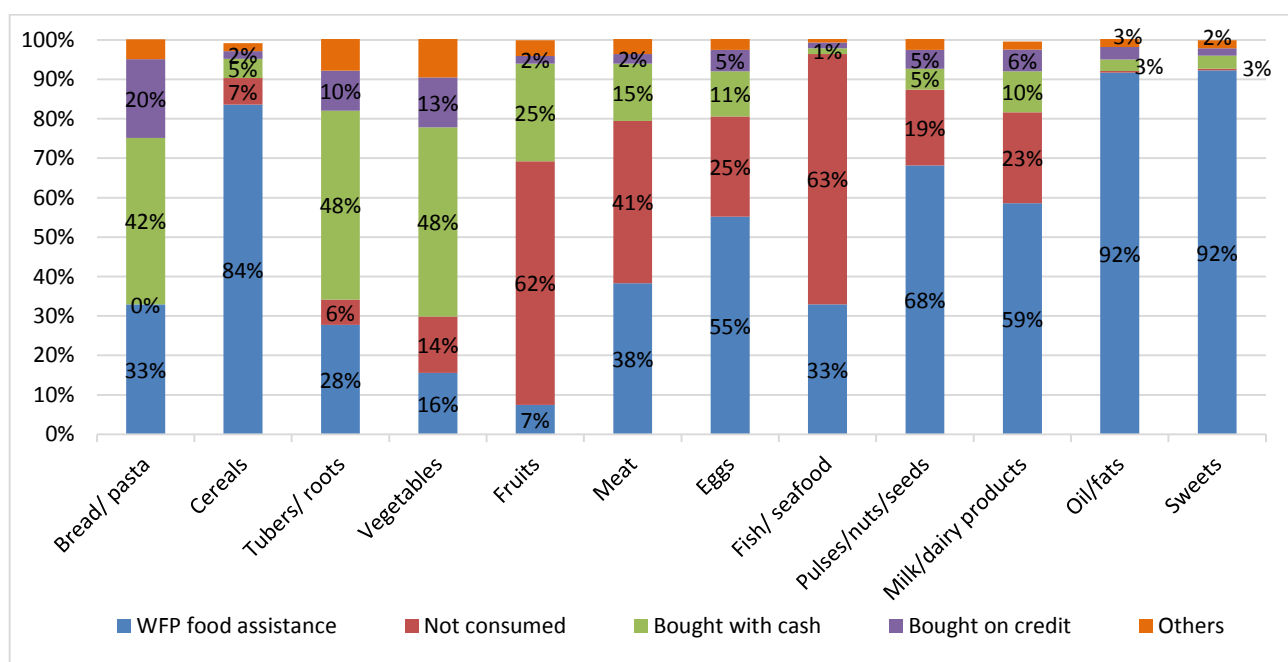
Figure 3. Average number of days each food group is consumed, pre- and post-assistance



Source: WFP PAB and PDM Quarter 4, 2014

For more than half of households WFP assistance was the main source to buy food, specifically to buy staple foods, such as oil (92%), sweets (92%), cereals (84%), pulses (68%), milk and dairy products (59%) and eggs (55%). Cash was the main source to buy tubers (48%), vegetables (48%), and bread and pasta (42%).

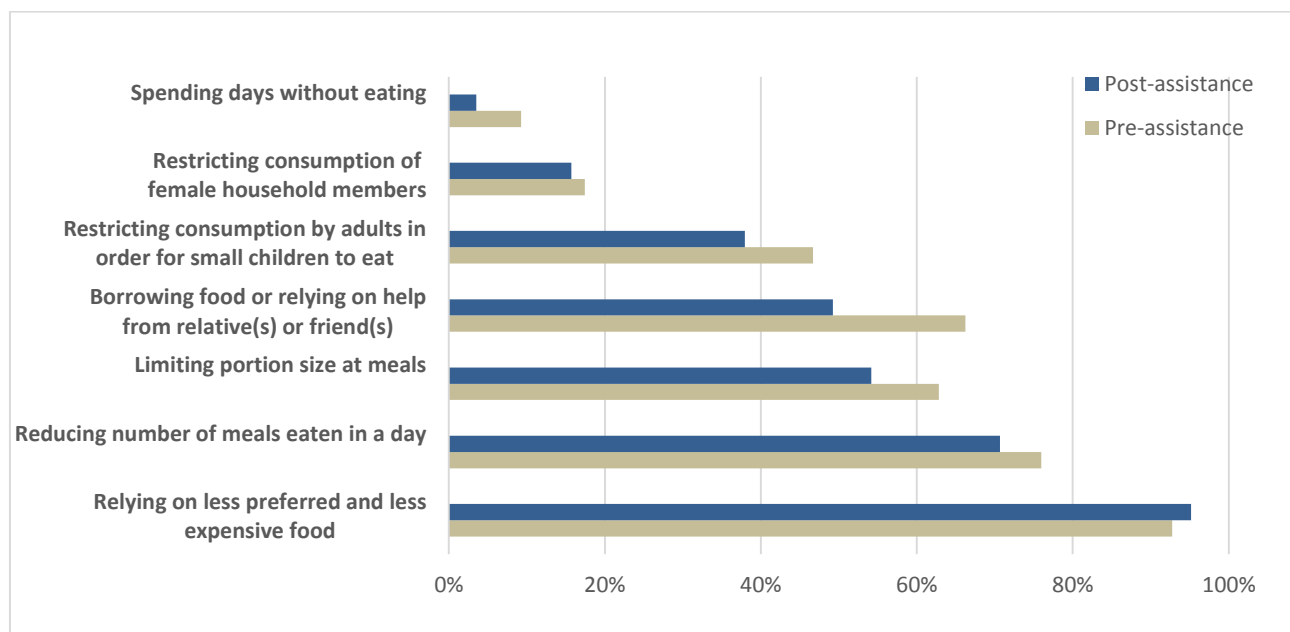
Figure 4. Main source of food by food group



Source: WFP PDM, Quarter 4 2014

Refugee households adopted various types of strategies to cope with a lack of food. The common strategies that both pre-assistance and post-assistance groups adopted were relying on less preferred and less expensive food, reducing number of meals a day, limiting meal portion size and borrowing food or relying on help from relatives or friends. Higher percentage of households among the pre-assistance groups were reducing number of meals a day, limiting meal portion size and borrowing food or relying on help from others.

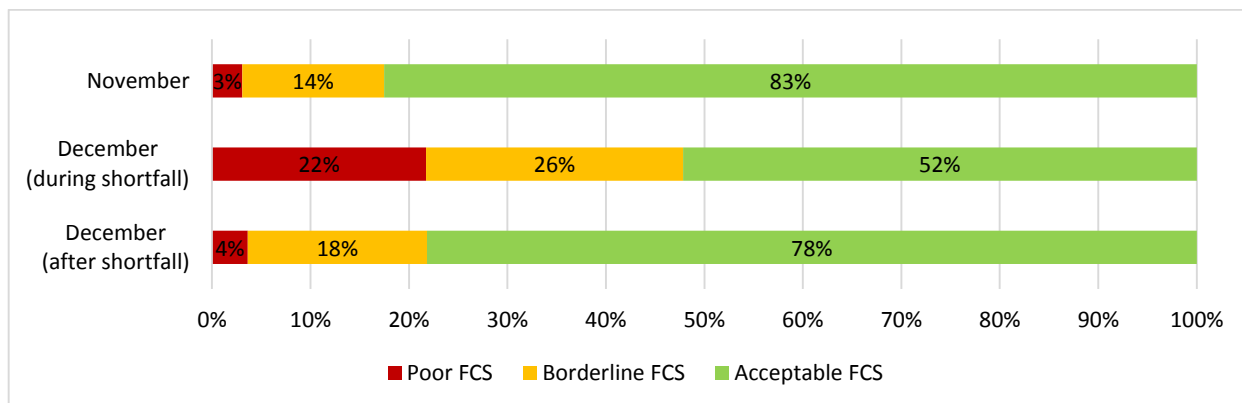
Figure 5. Coping strategies



Source: WFP PAB and PDM, Quarter 4 2014

WFP conducted a special food consumption analysis to assess the impact of funding shortfall on beneficiaries in early December. Due to the temporal funding limitation WFP was only able to load the e-cards on 12 December, a week later than normal. Interviews were conducted in the first two weeks of December to assess food consumption levels during the gap period (between 05 and 12 December). The analysis reveals that during the seven-day gap period, the food consumption levels immediately dropped. As shown in Figure 6, following the re-loading of e-cards later in the month, beneficiaries' food consumption levels were recovered, close to the previous month's levels.

Figure 6. Food consumption score during funding shortfall



Source: WFP PAB and PDM, Quarter 4 2014

Beneficiaries' usage of WFP assistance and feedback

- According to the PDM findings, beneficiary households used WFP e-cards to buy mainly cereals/rice/pasta (44%), oil and fat (21%) and sweets/sugar (14%). The rest was used to buy bread (7%), milk and dairy products (6%), pulses and nuts (3%), meat or fish (2%) vegetables and fruits (1%) and eggs (1%).

- More than 95% of beneficiary households clearly understood the e-card assistance programme, including the monthly value of the e-cards, location of shops, redemption cycle and types of products which can be redeemed.
- Amongst households receiving WFP assistance, 47% reported that women are the primary decision-makers regarding the use of WFP assistance, such as what food to buy, when and where, whereas 29% of households reported that men alone made a decision on the use of WFP assistance. One quarter of households reported that men and women in the household make these decisions together.

Main findings from activity-implementation monitoring

- The main problem at shops reported by beneficiaries during the PDM interview was long queues and overcrowding in shops (19%). Overcrowding could be partly due to beneficiaries' spending patterns; beneficiaries tend to spend their e-card balances as soon as possible after receiving their monthly entitlements on the 5th of each month, and tend to redeem their e-card value all at once instead of spreading it out over several trips, considering time and cost of transportation.
- Some 6% of household reported that prices charged in WFP shops are higher than in other shops in same area.
- E-card distribution process regarding division of roles and responsibilities between WFP and partners needs to be clarified to improve efficiency of the process as well as accountabilities.
- Among the visited households 66% knew whom to contact if they have a problem with their e-cards or food assistance; 27% of them were aware of bank hotline, and 16% were aware of UNHCR hotline and partner hotline each. Some 34% households did not know where to contact. In order to improve beneficiaries' awareness on feedback mechanism, WFP liaised with shops, local authorities and community centres that beneficiaries can visit and get the needed information. WFP also continued to ensure that partner hotline numbers are included in leaflets and posters, and inform the beneficiaries during distributions and household visits.

Recommendations and Action points

- WFP should continue to strengthen its beneficiary feedback mechanism, including partner hotlines, ensuring that beneficiaries are well-informed of relevant hotline numbers.
- Standard Operation Procedures should be developed in order to have streamlined distribution process across the regions.
- In areas where the concentration of refugees is very high, WFP will have to contract more shops, to avoid price increase of goods at WFP-contracted shops and the distortion of local market dynamics. It is also important to reduce waiting time during the peak period.



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