



The transition from in-kind food distribution to food vouchers continues across the region

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

Since the start of the refugee crisis, partners across the region had been supporting Syrian refugees with individual food parcels, to ensure that they receive 2,100 kcal per day and to reduce negative coping mechanisms. However, as the number of refugees increased, the food assistance operation has expanded and improved, transitioning toward food vouchers and e-cards enabling refugees to purchase food, helping return a sense of normalcy to their lives, and building ties between refugees and host communities.

Basirma camp in Iraq has now fully transitioned from in-kind food support to food vouchers, following the completion of a retail shop in early April. Preparations are already underway for the expansion of a similar voucher programme and shop in Qushtapa camp. Similarly, in Egypt, an e-voucher pilot was tested this month, in partnership with Fathallah supermarket chains in Alexandria. Meanwhile in Greater Cairo, partners are using Carrefour electronic gift cards.

For refugees living in host communities in Jordan, a partnership with MasterCard has transitioned nearly all assistance to e-cards. In Turkey, more than 152,000 Syrians in 11 camps are being supported with e-cards and approximately USD3.1 million was transferred to refugees in April. In Lebanon, over 870,000 people are being supported with food assistance through various modalities.

The yearly livestock vaccination campaign that was initiated in mid-February continued this month in Lebanon, with the support of the Veterinary Department. Overall, more than 416,000 animals (including cattle and small ruminants) were vaccinated by the end of April, benefitting 13,050 farmers.

NEEDS ANALYSIS:

The majority of refugees from Syria rely on humanitarian food assistance as their primary source of food. Without such support, refugee vulnerabilities would increase, particularly affecting groups such as female-headed households, children, the elderly, those with chronic illness, and persons with disabilities. There is evidence of refugee households resorting to spending their savings, taking their children out of school to work, relying on credit, selling household assets, and reducing food intake. Pre-assistance baseline assessments of newly-arrived refugees and continuous post-distribution monitoring have indicated that the food assistance provided by 3RP partners helps to stabilize and improve refugees' food consumption frequency and dietary diversity. In Egypt the food consumption score has as of recently shown a negative trend.

Simultaneous assessments in Jordan and Lebanon in communities hosting Syrian refugees show that the rural population is the least resilient to inflation and the emerging threats of environmental degradation, land and water scarcity, and climate change. There is need to build the resilience of poor smallholder farmers to the shocks and stresses that can affect their livelihood and food security. Action is needed now to help mitigate the adverse impacts of the crisis that threaten to undermine development gains in Syria neighbouring countries.



Voucher redemption in Basirma camp, Erbil, WFP/Sepideh Soltaninia

Sector Response Summary:



2,358,096 Refugees & Local Community Members targeted for assistance by end-2015
1,823,107 assisted in 2015



Syrian Refugees in the Region:



4,270,000 Syrian Refugees expected by end-2015
3,978,825 currently registered or awaiting registration



3RP Overall Funding Status:



USD 4.5 billion required in 2015 (Agencies)
USD 881.73 million received in 2015



VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS ENSURE THOSE MOST IN NEED ACCESS TO FOOD ASSISTANCE

With resources stretched to the limit in the food security sector, partners have been forced to reduce voucher values and decrease food assistance for Syrian refugees in 2015. There is a growing need for a unified and efficient system to identify and serve the most vulnerable refugees with food assistance. Throughout the region, vulnerability assessments are being conducted to enable partners to prioritize those most in need.

Under such assessment models, beneficiaries are identified for food assistance following a vulnerability assessment which measures the general living conditions of refugees and their ability to cope. Factors taken into account include the number of children in the family, the gender of the head of the family, household expenditure, debts, whether family members have disabilities and general living conditions. If Syrians are found to be no longer eligible for assistance, they can appeal as soon as they are notified via a telephone hotline which has been set up for refugees to access more information.

This month in Jordan, a second round of targeting was implemented, using vulnerability data from various sources. This has resulted in 34,000 people deemed less vulnerable and who will no longer receive food assistance. A further 240,000 people will receive half assistance of USD 14 and 190,000 people will receive full assistance of USD 28.

In Lebanon this month, partners continued to conduct household visits to determine eligibility for food assistance. As a result, 15,291 individuals will not receive food assistance in May. A joint vulnerability assessment is also underway in Egypt with 70 per cent of household data completed during April.

In Turkey, no formal comprehensive needs assessment of the urban-based Syrian population exists, making it difficult to identify and quantify the most vulnerable populations. This will be a priority activity between partners and the Government of Turkey for 2015-2016.

REGIONAL RESPONSE INDICATORS: JANUARY - APRIL 2015



These dashboards reflect the achievements of the more than 200 partners, including governments, UN Agencies, and NGOs, involved in the 3RP response in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Progress and targets may change in line with data revisions. All data on this Dashboard is current as at 30 April 2015.